

ANGLIA RUSKIN UNIVERSITY

GENDER, HISTORY AND TRAUMA IN ZIMBABWEAN
AND OTHER AFRICAN LITERATURES

PAULINE DODGSON-KATIYO

A thesis in partial fulfilment of the
requirements of Anglia Ruskin University
for the degree of PhD

2015

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am grateful to my academic advisor Professor Guido Rings for his unfailing support, advice and guidance.

I would also like to record my thanks to the following friends and former colleagues who have engaged with my work and encouraged me over several years: Rick Allen, Helen Cousins, Mark Currie, Susan Docherty, Mary Joannou, Mala Pandurang, Lesley Stevenson and Gina Wisker.

ANGLIA RUSKIN UNIVERSITY

ABSTRACT

FACULTY OF ARTS, LAW AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

GENDER, HISTORY AND TRAUMA IN

ZIMBABWEAN AND OTHER AFRICAN LITERATURES

PAULINE DODGSON-KATIYO

July 2015

Taking an interdisciplinary approach, this research explores Zimbabwean literary and other cultural texts within the broader context of the construction of identities and the politics of inclusion and exclusion in nationalist and oppositional discourses. It also analyzes two texts by major non-Zimbabwean African writers to examine the thematic links between Zimbabwean and other African writing.

Through combining historical, anthropological and political approaches with postcolonial, postmodern and feminist critical theories, the thesis explores the ways in which African writing and performance represent alternative histories to official versions of the nation. It further investigates questions of gender and their significance in nationalist discourses and shows how writing on war, trauma and healing informs and develops readers' understanding of the relationship of the past to the present.

Considered together as a coherent body of work, the published items submitted in this thesis explore how Zimbabwean and other African writers, through re-visioning history and writing from oppositional or marginal positions, intervene in political debates and suggest new transformative ways of constructing and negotiating identities in postcolonial societies.

Key words: African literature, Zimbabwean literature, war and trauma, history, negotiating identities, marginality

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acknowledgements	(i)
Abstract	(ii)
Table of Contents	(iii)
Copyright Declaration	(iv)
Critical Appraisal	1
Appendix I Statement of Collaboration	
Appendix II Published Works Submitted for this PhD	

COPYRIGHT DECLARATION

Attention is drawn to the fact that copyright of this thesis rests with

- (i) Anglia Ruskin University for one year and thereafter with
- (ii) Pauline Dodgson-Katiyo

This copy of the thesis has been supplied on condition that anyone who consults it is bound by copyright.

Critical Appraisal

<i>Introduction</i>	2
Chapter 1: Research Trajectory	4
Chapter 2: Research Context	10
Chapter 3: Theory and Methodology	19
Chapter 4: History, Politics and the Construction of Identities	36
Chapter 5: Gender, War and Trauma	43
Chapter 6: Further Research Development	52
<i>List of Works Cited</i>	55

Introduction

This critical appraisal seeks to demonstrate that the publications presented constitute a coherent body of work displaying “independent critical powers” and making a significant contribution to the knowledge and understanding of Zimbabwean and African literature, thereby meeting the University’s requirements for the award of PhD by published work.

Chapter 1 gives an account of the research base and development of my work, outlines my research aims, and indicates, in brief, the significance of my work.

Chapter 2 provides the research context. Firstly, it outlines the field of study and the development of Zimbabwean literature within the broader field of African literary studies. Secondly, it provides a literature review, focusing on criticism of Zimbabwean literature.

Chapter 3 outlines the main theory and methodology of the thesis in relation to two areas, “Decolonizing the Mind” and “Feminism and Psychoanalysis.”

Chapters 4 and 5 comprise appraisals of each individual item, explaining in each case its genesis, aims and methods, its characteristics, findings and significance to the field of African literary and cultural studies. Each item is evaluated and possible limitations are identified. The chapters are organized thematically: chapter 4 is centred on history, politics and the construction of identities (items 4, 5, 6, 7, 9) and

chapter 5 on gender, war and trauma (items 1, 2, 3, 8, 10, 11, 12). Although each item is only covered in detail in one chapter, I have included some cross-referencing where an item relates to both themes. These chapters include analysis of the ways in which historical, anthropological and political theories have informed my work. They also demonstrate the thematic linkages between my work on Zimbabwean literature and my work on other African literary texts.

Chapter 6 discusses more recent development of my research in work already written and awaiting publication, and in on-going and future projects. It places this development within the context of the work in this submission.

Chapter 1: Research Trajectory

In this chapter, I explain how I acquired a research base in African literature through my work in educational institutions in Zimbabwe from 1982-8 and how this research was developed from 1990 onwards. I then outline my research aims and the significance of my work.

Acquiring a Research Base

My interest in African literature was formed in the 1980s when I held a number of professional roles in Zimbabwe which, in various ways, enabled me to analyze, teach, disseminate and promote African literature, particularly Zimbabwean. These included: lecturing at the Institute of Mass Communication and the University of Zimbabwe, working in the Ministry of Education's Curriculum Development Unit, and producing and presenting programmes for the educational station, Zimbabwe Radio 4. This work was undertaken in a transitional period since Zimbabwe was newly independent and, after a long period of settler rule, was changing its curricula so that the focus was on Africa.

My role as a curriculum developer required me to obtain a knowledge of cultural and literary practices in Zimbabwe and the Southern African region, and to disseminate this knowledge to school students, teachers and the general public. It also required me to participate in the development of literature and performance in the country. This involved interviewing writers, other cultural practitioners and policy makers; researching and running conferences, workshops and panel discussions; and setting up a drama teachers association. I was a member of the National English Panel

and wrote a draft syllabus for the new English 'A' level. I also co-edited an African poetry anthology, *Coming Home: Poems of Africa* which became a set text in schools and at the University of Zimbabwe (Dodgson, Gecau and Ngara 1989).

Although my research at this time was largely practice-based, I regard it as highly formative in my later work. I had the enriching experience of working with well-established African writers, academics and filmmakers who came to Zimbabwe either as temporary residents or as festival and workshop participants.

The Development of My Research

My academic career in the UK began in 1988 when I took up my first post at a British university. I brought back to the UK a vast amount of empirical material (interviews, newspaper and magazine articles, reports) but, not having studied the sociology of literature, did not think I had the skills needed to make them the main focus of my research. Instead, in the early years of my research, I drew on this material to complement my more textually based work.¹

I had developed knowledge and skills in literary criticism and textual analysis in my undergraduate and postgraduate work in the 1970s and early 1980s. However, as an undergraduate and postgraduate student in traditional English departments, I had been immersed in the methodologies of close textual analysis and the application of literary history and author studies in the interpretation of texts.² I now found myself in a position where I had to acquire knowledge of contemporary critical theory, including postcolonial theory, if I were to proceed with my research. This was facilitated by the fact that I was required to teach critical theory on both

¹ My first conference paper "Culture and Literary Production in Zimbabwe," presented at the ACLALS 1989 conference, drew on both textual analysis and empirical research (Dodgson 1992).

² BA English, University of Cambridge; MLitt English, University of Oxford, Thesis: "William Carlos Williams's *In the American Grain*: The Discovery and Colonization of America."

undergraduate and postgraduate courses. I acquired this knowledge through an extensive reading programme and developed it through discussion with other academics at conferences, seminars and workshops.

Although I felt well equipped to undertake research in terms of my knowledge of Zimbabwean and other African literature and my more recently acquired knowledge and skills in critical theory, I was unable to publish much research in the mid-to-late 1990s because I took a management career route and did not have the time to devote significantly to research. However, given that I knew I would return to research and publication at some point, I continued to read African literature, literary criticism and critical theory and this reading underpinned my teaching. I also gave some conference papers and wrote occasional articles (including items 1, 2) but my most productive period was 2006-12 when, following university restructuring, I took on departmental head rather than senior management roles (items 3 – 12).

Research Aims

Until the late 1990s, Zimbabwean literature was regarded as a small, specialist field with only a limited body of published literary criticism, mainly on those authors who were known internationally. It was my intention to contribute to this field but recognizing that Zimbabwean literature was influenced by and was part of broader African literary studies, I also continued to teach and research other African literature to complement my Zimbabwean study. To that end, I devised the following aims:

In relation to Zimbabwean and other African literature:

1. To explore the socio-political contexts of the literary construction of identities;
2. To investigate questions of gender and their significance in discourses of the nation;

3. To show how representations of war, trauma and healing inform and develop an understanding of the interrelationship of past and present;

In relation to Zimbabwean literature:

4. To examine the ways in which writing and cultural production present alternative histories to both anti-colonial and patriotic history discourses;
5. To combine historical, anthropological and political approaches in my analysis of Zimbabwean texts.

The Significance of My Work

In addressing my research aims, my work has made a significant contribution to the analytical and interdisciplinary study of Zimbabwean literature. It has introduced new critical and cultural material and has engaged with, expanded and, in some cases, challenged the work of other scholars. My most important contribution has been my work on Yvonne Vera. My analysis of her novel *Without a Name* (item 1) was one of the earliest pieces of criticism on Vera. In addition to continuing to write on her work myself (items 2, 8, 12), I also commissioned and edited Vera criticism: firstly, I included a mini-symposium on her work in *Rites of Passage in Postcolonial Women's Writing*, a volume in the Cross/Cultures series which I co-edited (Dodgson-Katiyo and Wisker 2010)³ and, secondly, I co-edited (with Helen Cousins) the volume on Vera in the prestigious US-based Africa World Press *Emerging Perspectives* series (item 11) which was only the third volume on a Zimbabwean writer.⁴

My work on gender has been wide-ranging; it has included analysis of male and female-authored texts and has been situated within critical discourses on the representation of women and on masculinities. My early work (items 1, 2), as Flora Veit-Wild has acknowledged, foregrounded gender in Zimbabwean writing during a

³ This has not been included in this submission because it includes essays on literature from regions other than Africa.

⁴ The volume was described as “a valuable addition to the criticism” in *The Journal of Commonwealth Literature's* annual bibliography (Warren 2012: 602).

period when this was an under-researched field (Veit-Wild 2006: 199). I also applied French feminist theory to Zimbabwean women's writing (item 2), a common critical practice now but which was original when I published my article. As a result of my work on gender, my paper on contemporary male writers (item 4) was selected for a panel on Zimbabwean literature at a University of Stellenbosch conference in 2004 and, subsequently, the chair of the panel, Robert Muponde invited me to contribute to *Manning the Nation* (item 6), a pioneering book on Zimbabwean masculinity and fatherhood in the growing field of men's studies in Southern Africa. My essay on diaspora cultural production in the UK, published in 2007 (item 7), was one of the first in this area, an area that is now developing with the growth of Zimbabwean media studies. A further essay on a biography of Seretse and Ruth Khama by two Zimbabwean exiles was included in one of two important volumes on Southern African auto/biography published in the *South African Journal of Literary Studies* (item 9).

Placing my work within interdisciplinary paradigms brings my methodology close to that of a small number of other scholars in the field with whom I have worked, notably Muponde and Ranka Primorac. However, they work mainly within the intersection of literature and politics whereas my work increasingly has incorporated political, historical and anthropological content (items 8, 9, 12 and work in press).

I have published three essays in collections published in India by the well-established Indian scholar of African literature, Mala Pandurang (items 3, 5, 10). Although these collections are not distributed worldwide, they, nevertheless, contribute to Indian academic work in African literature and enhance my international profile.

I have disseminated my work by giving papers at conferences including the major Association of Commonwealth Language and Literature Studies (ACLALS) triennial conferences and at conferences, also run triennially, by the European branch (EACLALS). As evidence of esteem, I received invitations:

- (from Henry Schwarz) to contribute entries on Hove and Dangarembga for the Wiley-Blackwell *Encyclopedia of Postcolonial Studies*;
- (from Franca Ruggieri) to join the Università Roma Tre project *Isola/Isole: Da Itaca ad Atlantide*;
- (from Ernest Emenyonu) to co-edit, with Helen Cousins, a special issue of *African Literature Today* on “African Returns” and to chair a panel on this theme at the African Literature Association (ALA) conference at the University of Bayreuth in 2015.

I have also written book reviews for *African Literature Today*, *Journal of African Affairs* and *Journal of Southern African Studies* and acted as a peer reviewer for *Liberator*, *World Literature Today*, and for the publisher Rodopi.

Chapter 2: Research Context

The Broader Context

Before independence, the Rhodesia Literature Bureau had supported the publication of ‘safe’ fiction in English, Shona and Ndebele which steered away from political issues and questions of race and offered moral guidance as to the way people should live their lives. Shortly after independence, in contrast to this, local publishers brought out short adventure fiction, glorifying the liberation struggle. From the 1980s onwards, there were two seemingly contradictory movements in Zimbabwean literary culture: one, aiming to develop a Zimbabwean national literature which would be ‘authentic’ in its representation of indigenous Zimbabwean culture and the other, aiming to promote pan-Africanism through linking with major writers from other countries and disseminating and teaching their work. Although there have been periods when, for political reasons, these two movements have been in conflict, for most of the post-independence period, they have run parallel to each other in an attempt to establish Zimbabwean writing as part of the African literary canon. To this effect, African literature was introduced into the school and university curricula in the 1980s and, as stated in chapter 1, my empirical, broadcasting and curriculum work contributed to this development. I also participated, through workshops and conducting interviews, in the Zimbabwe International Book Fair (ZIBF) which was established in 1983 and held annually in Harare until 2006. The ZIBF was a major event, attracting publishers and writers from across Africa and elsewhere and including an annual conference for writers and academics. The fair was a critical

feature of the integration of Zimbabwe into the mainstream of African literature, ending the country's cultural isolation.

Two African writers, in particular, influenced Zimbabwean writing, Ngugi wa Thiong'o and Chinua Achebe. Ngugi was a major influence in the early years of Zimbabwe's independence. In political exile from Kenya, he frequently visited Zimbabwe to give lectures and hold workshops in which he advocated working towards a national culture and in which he shared his experience of 'Africanizing' curricula in East Africa. His novel *A Grain of Wheat* was translated into Shona; it was also an 'A' level English set text. Although Ngugi's work supports the nationalist agenda in its representation of anti-colonial wars, it also criticizes political corruption and continuing inequality in the postcolony. Achebe's work, in raising issues around language, colonialism, traditional society, independence and gender, influenced several of the Zimbabwean writers who emerged after independence. Although, with the exception of Chenjerai Hove, these writers' work does not directly criticize politically corrupt systems to the same extent that Achebe's representations of Nigeria and Ngugi's of Kenya do, they, nevertheless, reveal the contradictions in the new society and the state's failure to meet people's expectations. In this sense, their work fits into a broad pattern common in African literature of moving from the colonial encounter to the "disillusionment of independence" (Zhuwarara 2001: 25).

I taught Achebe's and Ngugi's work in Zimbabwe and interviewed Ngugi and several of his Kenyan colleagues for Zimbabwean educational radio. When, later in my career, I came to write on Ngugi and Achebe, largely for an Indian readership (items 3, 5), I was influenced by my experience of the reception of their work in Zimbabwe and its importance in developing Zimbabwean literature. My work, therefore, has focused on in-depth analysis of Zimbabwean writing together with

further research into work by major African writers. In this way, I have been able to integrate my study of Zimbabwean literature into broader African trends.

The Development of Zimbabwean Literature

Zimbabwean literature in English is a relatively new field in comparison to that of other national literatures in Anglophone Sub-Saharan Africa such as Nigerian, Ghanaian and Kenyan. This is partly because Zimbabwe remained under colonial or settler rule for longer than most other countries and because it was cut off from international cultural and intellectual developments during the period following the Rhodesian Unilateral Declaration of Independence (UDI) in 1965 until independence in 1980.

Veit-Wild (1992) places black Zimbabwean writers in three groups.⁵ Most of the work of the first group was published in the period between UDI and independence when Lawrence Vambe and Stanlake Samkange, the two most prominent writers in this group, spent many years in exile. Their work consists of fictional recreations of traditional history and society, usually from a nationalist perspective and foregrounding the effects of colonialism and settler rule. The second group began to publish in the 1970s when most but not all of them were in exile and some continued writing into the 1980s and 1990s. Some of these writers wrote from a nationalist perspective and there were several multi-authored war poetry anthologies. However, the best-known fiction writers (Charles Mungoshi, Dambudzo Marechera, Stanley Nyamfukudza) were considered to be disillusioned with or uninterested in nationalism and their work has been referred to as a literature of pessimism (Veit-Wild 1992; Zhuwarara 2001).

⁵ The groups are mainly but not exclusively organized in generations.

The third group of writers Veit-Wild surveys emerged in the mid-late 1980s. These writers include Chenjerai Hove, Tsitsi Dangarembga and Shimmer Chinodya, all of whom continued to publish into the 2000s. Their work is characterized by their critical approach to national and social issues and themes. Taken collectively, they point to the contradictions in the liberation struggle rather than glorifying it, and they write from a gendered perspective, Hove and Dangarembga foregrounding the position of women (although in markedly different ways) and Chinodya exploring masculinity and gender relations. The two most prominent new writers of the 1990s, Alexander Kanengoni and Yvonne Vera can be seen as a continuation of this third group. Their thematic concerns - war and its aftermath, relations between men and women, history and politics - are similar to those of the writers Veit-Wild cites. Kanengoni, a former combatant, writes of the liberation struggle from a nationalist perspective but, nevertheless, criticizes the conduct of the war and describes both the perpetrators and victims of violence. Vera's work, like Dangarembga's, is centred on the experiences of women although it ranges over a longer historical period (from the late 19th century to the 1980s). The style of Vera's work, though, differs from Dangarembga's realism and is closer to the poetic style of Hove's writing. Veit-Wild concentrates on black writers but an extended grouping would include the work of white writers, the dominant mode of which is life-writing including Peter Godwin's auto/biographies and Alexandra Fuller's semi-autobiographical fiction.

The writers who have come to prominence in the 21st century, whom I would place in a fourth group, suggest new departures in Zimbabwean writing. Following the economic and political crisis in Zimbabwe in the early 2000s, most of them live elsewhere in the world, mainly in Europe or the United States. The fiction of the most successful writers of this generation is comic or tragi-comic, using humour to draw

attention to the plight of Zimbabwe and of Zimbabweans abroad. Brian Chikwava and NoViolet Bulawayo both experiment with language; Petina Gappah uses the short story form to satirize the ruling elite; and Tendai Huchu breaks new ground in linking homophobia and political violence. The exodus of Zimbabwean writers from the country and the publication of diaspora writing have situated Zimbabwean literature within a cosmopolitan framework incorporating Euro-African, American and other influences.

My work centres on the writing of the extended third generation, notably Vera (items, 1, 2, 8, 11, 12) but also Hove (items 1, 12, Dodgson-Katiyo 2015b), Dangarembga (items 2, 10), Chinodya (item 4), Kanengoni (item 12) and Fuller (item 8). I have also written, although less extensively, on second and fourth generation writers, Mungoshi (item 6), Nyamfukudza (item 12), Chikwava (item 4) and Gappah (Dodgson-Katiyo 2014).

Literature Review

In this brief review, I concentrate on monographs and essay collections on Zimbabwean writing. For reasons of space, I have not considered articles or books on individual writers.⁶ However, where they have influenced or otherwise had an impact on my work, I have referred to them in Chapters 4 and 5.

Kahari's *The Search for Zimbabwean Identity* (1980) and Zimunya's *Those Years of Drought and Hunger* (1982) were the only significant studies in the early 1980s. Both had been written before independence and focused on fiction by pre-independence writers. Kahari sets Zimbabwean writing in English in the context of

⁶ There are several monographs on Marechera but he has not been a major subject of my research. There are *Emerging Perspectives* volumes on Marechera, Dangarembga and Vera, and other essay collections on Vera (Muponde and Maodzwa-Taruvinga 2002) and Mungoshi (Vambe and Chirere 2006). The literature on Achebe and Ngugi, including monographs, is extensive.

pre-colonial traditions and culture. Zimunya argues that during the UDI years up to about 1975, there was a “cultural drought” (1982:3) in Zimbabwe owing to the country’s isolation. He identifies black Zimbabwean writing of the late 1970s as a crisis literature which depicts the loss of tradition and the disintegration of the family. Thematic comparisons are made between the texts but the analysis of each individual text is based on description and quotation.

Gaidzanwa’s *Images of Women in Zimbabwean Literature* (1985) analyzes images of women in (mainly) pre-independence English, Ndebele and Shona literature. Gaidzanwa classifies the images in groups according to the women characters’ status (wives, mothers, without husbands) and their location (rural, urban). She argues that predominantly negative images, particularly of urban women, do not reflect the reality of women’s lives and further suggests that, from a sociological perspective, these images are damaging since they influence the way women are seen and treated in society. Gaidzanwa draws attention to the issue of gender and makes useful comparisons across literature in the three languages but her discussion of the texts is restricted to image analysis and works better in relation to the Ndebele and Shona texts than those in English. I interviewed Gaidzanwa and produced a programme on her work for Zimbabwean educational radio, mainly to raise awareness of the need for more research on gender in Zimbabwean literature.

Veit-Wild’s *Teachers, Preachers, Non-Believers* (1992) was the first substantial work on Zimbabwean pre and post-independence literature. I have outlined in a previous section an important facet of her work, i.e. her classification of Zimbabwean writers into three groups. Veit-Wild also includes summaries of their life and work. The research is based mainly on ethnography, including questionnaires and interviews. The value of Veit-Wild’s research lies in her empirical material and in her

broad contextualization of Zimbabwean writing. Her textual analysis is less developed, drawing out key themes from individual works without detailed commentary.

Zhuwarara's *Introduction to Zimbabwean Literature in English* (2001) provides readings of selected texts for a school and undergraduate readership. Zhuwarara is a nationalist critic who regards history and orality as the most important facets of Zimbabwean literature in English, arguing that although that literature is "dependant upon borrowed forms," its "sensibility [...] is more often than not, rooted in African oral traditions"(8). Zhuwarara also notes that, before independence, writers living in Rhodesia were not able to access literary developments and trends elsewhere in Africa. Zhuwarara's commentary tends to be explanatory and polemical, often drawing on comparisons between Zimbabwean and other African texts. Despite Zhuwarara's emphasis on orality, Vambe's *African Oral Story-telling Tradition and the Zimbabwean Novel in English* (2004) claims that early critics have under-valued its importance. Vambe's work investigates the interface of orality and the modern novel in an attempt to re-assert the importance of the oral tradition. Vambe argues that contradictions which emerge in different forms of orality reveal alternative histories of cultural resistance to colonialism. He demonstrates this effectively in relation to pre-independence texts but is less confident in his analysis of post-independence texts which challenge nationalism and which employ modernist techniques.

Berndt's *Female Identity in Contemporary Zimbabwean Fiction* (2005) is a survey of the construction of female identities situated within postcolonial and post-structuralist paradigms. Berndt's work and my work intersect: she was influenced by my research in the early 2000s (items 1, 2); I later drew on her work (items 10, 12); I have edited her work (in Dodgson-Katiyo and Wisker 2010) and we have shared

conference panels. In her book, Berndt discusses post-independence texts, focusing on the female subject's reaction to her double oppression by colonialism and by Shona and Ndebele patriarchy. Berndt's application of her knowledge of the social structures and traditions of Zimbabwean society provides interesting analysis; as do her detailed commentaries on language and stylistics.

Muponde and Primorac's *Versions of Zimbabwe* (eds. 2005) is an essay collection which celebrates diversity in literature and culture in opposition to the official nationalist ideology of patriotic history. It includes an essay by Vambe in which he argues that sociological readings, such as Veit-Wild's, are of only limited value in the study of Zimbabwean literature. Primorac's monograph, *The Place of Tears* (2006) is an extensive study of fiction and politics in Zimbabwe. Concentrating particularly on the analysis of space and displacement, it uses Bakhtinian and linguistic criticism as theoretical models. Although the book covers pre and post-independence fiction, it follows the ideological orientation of *Versions of Zimbabwe* in setting the criticism within the context of 21st century oppositional discourses.

Muchemwa and Muponde's *Manning the Nation* (eds. 2007) moves the study of gender in Zimbabwean literature from a focus on women to a broader base of gender studies that includes masculinities. Most of the essays are on literary representation, including my essay on Mungoshi, with a few (textually based) political essays. In this, it breaks new ground, moving beyond Horace Campbell's study of patriarchy and the liberation struggle (2003) to which I had previously referred in a conference paper delivered in 2005 (later published as item 8).

Malaba and Davis's *Zimbabwean Transitions* (eds. 2008) is a special issue of the journal *Matatu*. In similar vein to *Versions of Zimbabwe*, this work covers white writing (including Rhodesian settler writing), black writing in English, Shona and

Ndebele, and cultural institutions and practices. Across the essays, it aims to chart the development of Zimbabwean identities and to show the ways in which writing reveals the hybridity of Zimbabwean society. In this it is broadly successful despite an eclecticism partly derived from its origin as a set of conference papers. The analysis of gender in male-authored texts in essays by Malaba and Alden complements the work published in *Manning the Nation* including my essay in that volume.

Since 2008, there have been no monographs or critical collections on Zimbabwean literature in English.⁷ One book of note, however, is Graham's *Land and Nationalism in Fictions from Southern Africa* (2009). Graham's book is divided between Zimbabwean and South African literature and deals with two periods, the 1970s and the period of reform in the 1990s and early 2000s. Graham explores why, in certain places and at certain times, national identities are constructed through representation of land in literature. There is much interesting analysis in the Zimbabwean chapters but Graham is reliant on textual study and does not have the detailed knowledge of Zimbabwe that writers of earlier periodical articles on land and literature have drawn upon.

⁷ There have been two edited books on individual authors: Cairnie and Pucherova (2012) on Marechera and Cousins and Dodgson-Katiyo (2012) on Vera (item 11).

Chapter 3: Theory and Methodology

Decolonizing the Mind: Fanon and Ngugi

The work of the Martiniquan psychiatrist and political thinker Frantz Fanon has been influential in African critical and cultural theory. In *Black Skin, White Masks* (Fr. *Peau noir, masques blancs* 1952; Engl trans. 1967), Fanon offers a psychoanalytical interpretation of relations between blacks and whites. Fanon sees the inferiority complex of the black in relation to the white as a double process, first economic and then “the internalization - or better, the epidermalization – of this inferiority” (1967a: 11).

According to Fanon, the colonized black man⁸ becomes white as he adopts the culture and language of the colonial nation. The native educated in the metropolis, on his return to his country, is dislocated from his peer group by the adoption of a different language. He reacts to white perceptions of his inferiority by assimilating further into the colonial language and culture in order to emphasize that there is now a rupture between him and his less educated countrymen and women. This desire for whiteness makes the black man an “obsessive neurotic” (60) who constantly attempts to escape from his own individuality and wants to annihilate his own presence. The resulting alienation causes a delirium bordering on the pathological.

Fanon combines the academic and the literary in *Black Skin, White Masks*; in some paragraphs, his writing, in its imagery, rhythm and cadences, is close to poetry. This style of writing may reveal the influence of his secondary school teacher, the Martiniquan writer and politician Aimé Césaire, whose work Fanon quotes and

⁸ Fanon writes generically of the colonized subject as male. I have retained Fanon’s gendered language as indicative of anti-colonial discourse during the period when Fanon was writing.

references. To this extent, Fanon's work has an affinity with that of the *négritude* poets whose avant-garde practice drew on psychoanalysis, dream symbolism and surrealism. However, after the publication of *Black Skin, White Masks*, Fanon went to Algeria where he worked as a psychiatrist and participated in the anti-colonial war against France. *The Wretched of the Earth* (Fr. *Les damnés de la terre* 1961; Engl. trans. 1965) is based on this experience and Fanon's commitment to revolution and to revolutionary violence as a means of opposing colonial violence. In this work, Fanon turns his attention to national consciousness and is critical of *négritude* which he sees as "unqualified assimilation" (1967b: 179).

His important essay "On National Culture" was first delivered in Rome in 1959. In the essay Fanon argues that colonialism's attempt to counter nationalism through economic development would never be enough to meet people's demands. Psychology and culture are important components in relations between the colonist and the colonized. Colonialism wants to make the people it has colonized believe that they have been rescued from darkness and that if the settlers left, the natives would fall back into "barbarism, degradation and bestiality." To counter this, colonized people, particularly the educated whom Fanon refers to as native intellectuals, want to recover a glorious pre-colonial past which they can release from the distortion and disfiguring of colonial representation in order to free themselves of "self-contempt, resignation and abjuration" (169).

In the colonial unconscious, colonialism is a mother protecting her child "from itself, from its ego and from its physiology, its biology and its own unhappiness which is its very essence" (170). The native intellectual even though subjected to this disparagement may believe that he can take a universal standpoint and not choose between Europe and Africa but this, Fanon argues, is erroneous. In effect, the

intellectual goes through three phases. The first is the assimilationist phase in which he adopts European culture as if it were his own. The native writer is inspired by European literature and wants to follow new European trends such as symbolism and surrealism. However, as political mobilization takes place around him, he sometimes realizes that taking on European attributes has made him “a stranger in his own land” (176). Since he cannot find an equivalent to the power of the colonizer in his native land, he is terrified by the void he sees there. He seeks to separate himself from the culture he has assimilated but if he fails to find another culture equal to that of the colonial power he often “fall[s] back upon emotional attitudes and will develop a psychology which is dominated by exceptional sensibility and susceptibility.” This results in what Fanon calls “muscular action” (177). It consists of a search for exoticism and a desire to become as native as possible. The intellectual now sees native people as the fount of goodness and endorses their customs. This is the second phase that begins with the native intellectual being “disturbed” and deciding, as he sees it, “to remember what he is.” He then encounters the problem that his separation from his people through assimilation has cut him off from their life and culture which he can recall but from which he is distanced in reality. In cultural terms, “old legends will be reinterpreted in the light of a borrowed aestheticism and a conception of the world which was discovered under other skies.” Fanon describes the literature of this phase as “just-before-the-battle.” It may be humorous or allegorical but is also sterile and can be characterized by distress, difficulty and disgust: “We spew ourselves up; but already underneath laughter can be heard” (179).

The third phase Fanon calls the fighting phase in which the intellectual awakens people from their lethargy and produces a literature which is revolutionary and national. In this phase, he comes to understand that in attaching himself to what he

thought was people's culture and attempting to bring tradition to life, he was only attaching himself to their "outer garments" and not their "hidden life, teeming and perpetually in motion." Fanon opposes culture to custom "which is always the deterioration of culture" (180). He emphasizes that it is the struggle for liberation from colonialism which comes first and that a new culture evolves with that struggle. Fanon argues that *négritude* is of little value if nations are not free and independent. The native intellectual needs to address the people, not the oppressor, and this may call for new forms of address including change in methods of oral storytelling. If liberation is achieved, then not only will colonialism disappear but also colonized man. National consciousness according to Fanon will lead to international consciousness. Fanon's use of the term national consciousness as distinct from nationalism is significant given that nationalist governments have in many cases, including that of Zimbabwe, not brought the liberation and freedom their people anticipated. Although Fanon's work is recognized for its innovation and is widely quoted and interpreted, there is a sense in which both the political and psychoanalytical work is transitional and incomplete given that Fanon died before the independence of most countries in Africa and the Caribbean.

The Kenyan writer Ngugi wa Thiong'o is influenced by Fanon but, to some extent, he simplifies Fanon's arguments by eschewing psychoanalysis and combining Fanon's theory with broader Marxist theory and praxis. In *Homecoming* (1972) Ngugi's essay "Towards a National Culture" develops Fanon's thesis in "On National Culture" more specifically within a Sub-Saharan African context. Ngugi argues that culture is dynamic and dialectical, changing with an evolving environment. He sees the role of the African writer as communal and argues that the individual writer, writing for himself, is inimical in African culture. Ngugi argues that tradition is not

synonymous with tribalism and that a revolutionary African literature would be Pan-African with Africa at its centre but also opening out to the “Third World.” In “The Writer and His Past” Ngugi follows Fanon in arguing that the educated African attempts to recover African history from colonial misrepresentation and the Hegelian notion of Africa as “the land of childhood [...] enveloped in the dark mantle of the night” (quoted in Ngugi 1972: 41) but finds this difficult because colonial education has detached him from his roots.

In his 1986 essay collection, *Decolonizing the Mind*, Ngugi describes the ways in which language was used as a weapon of cultural and political domination by the colonial authorities in Kenya including the punishment and humiliation of children who spoke their mother tongue, and not English, in school. He argues that there are two opposing forces in Africa: imperialism and resistance. In his Introduction, he explains the effects of imperialism on African people in similar terms to the way Fanon describes the effects of colonialism: “It makes them see their past as one wasteland of non-achievement and it makes them want to distance themselves from that wasteland.” They identify with what is furthest from them, that is, other people’s languages and they think there is little point in challenging colonialism. This results in “despair, dependency and a collective death-wish” (1986: 3).

In “The Language of African Literature,” Ngugi argues that debates on “what is African literature?” among African writers have concentrated on subject matter and the racial origin and geographical location of the writer but not on what is most important, the language in which the literature is written. He suggests that colonial education is at fault. Children learn folk tales in their mother tongue but schooling (or at least, secondary education) forces them to use colonial language and, thus, makes language a “means of spiritual subjugation” (9). Colonialism controlled how people

saw themselves and their perception of the world through both “the destruction or the deliberate undervaluing of a people’s culture [...] and the conscious elevation of the language of the colonizer” (16). The importance of language lies in its specificity to culture, history, way of life and ways of seeing the world.

Explaining why African literature has developed in European languages, Ngugi suggests that, ironically, nationalism is a likely cause. The nationalist bourgeoisie wanted to explain their independence to the world in a confident and cohesive manner that would be widely understood. Thus, their anti-colonial literature was in the colonial language. As neo-colonialism became a common practice after the euphoria of independence, the style of writing changed to reflect the new realities. It became simpler and often addressed the reader directly but since it was still written in the colonial language, it could only reach the middle class: “it settled there, marking time, caged within the linguistic fence of its colonial inheritance” (22). Ngugi sees this literature as “another hybrid tradition, a tradition in transition, a minority tradition that can only be termed as Afro-European literature” (28-9). If Africans write in European languages, they are contributing only to the development of those languages by “injecting Senghorian ‘black blood’ in their rusty joints to enrich them” (9).

Ngugi’s solution resembles Fanon’s fighting phase. He argues that writers need to write in African languages in order that those languages will develop and give the people who speak them a sense of self-worth. However, this has to be combined with writing that is anti-imperialist and supports democracy and socialism. This gives the literature an international dimension, allowing it to form links with people and literatures across the world. However, Ngugi warns that writing this type of literature puts the writer in danger from non-democratic governments, as he knew from his own experience of detention.

As explained in Chapter 2, Ngugi had significance influence on writers in Zimbabwe in the early years of independence but more in relation to politics and style of writing than choice of language. The issue of whether literature in English could be regarded as African has been less of an issue in Zimbabwe than in other African countries. The most prominent writers of the four generations I have outlined in Chapter 2 have chosen either to write in English (most of the writers) or to write in English and an indigenous language (Mungoshi and Hove in Shona and English). This may be for a number of reasons. One reason is that, at independence, English was a first language for white Zimbabweans and, in accord with the then reconciliation policy, was considered a Zimbabwean language. Other reasons include the long period of colonial/settler rule in which English was necessary for clerical employment; the pre-independence grammar-based teaching of Shona and Ndebele; the limitations of Shona and Ndebele fiction which tended to be moralizing and followed a self-help model; the pre-independence exile of some writers in English-speaking countries; and the need to attract external publishing and readership (pre-independence because of Rhodesian censorship; post-independence, because of limited funding for publishing in Zimbabwe). There is Zimbabwean writing in the indigenous languages but it is less prominent than the writing in English. Moreover, the hybridity Ngugi criticizes has further developed with the growth of diaspora communities and a globalized marketplace. However, Ngugi's and Fanon's call for a revolutionary literature which goes beyond anti-colonialism has been influential in Zimbabwe. This is mainly manifested in the way the literature has evolved stylistically, drawing on idioms, rhythms, ways of speaking and ways of understanding and interpreting the world which are found in Shona and Ndebele. I would argue, though, that rights discourses too have developed and liberation has

been inflected in other ways to those they envisaged, most notably in relation to gender.

Feminism and Psychoanalysis: Cixous and Kristeva

As criticism on African and Black women's writing developed in the 1970s and 1980s, it centred on the figure of the mother as representative and archetypal, and on mother/daughter bonding. However, in much Zimbabwean writing, the mother and the mother/child relationship are problematic. Therefore, I have chosen to analyze gender through the lens of French feminism. This is not without risk since both feminism and psychoanalysis have been regarded as irrelevant foreign imports in Africa. I shall address this issue later in this section. I begin with an overview of the work of the Algerian-born French poststructuralist writer Hélène Cixous. In its creativity, playfulness and transgression, the style of Cixous's writing can be compared to the psychoanalytically influenced writing of Fanon's *Black Skin, White Masks*. She, too, uses psychoanalysis but she also questions some of its basic tenets.

In "Sorties" (Fr. 1975; Engl. trans. 1986), Cixous challenges paired hierarchical oppositions such as nature/culture, strength/weakness, reason/emotion. She argues that one of the opposites is less valued and seen as subordinate, even though they may need each other, and that the subordinate is often associated with the feminine. These pairs contribute to the formation of subjectivity and sexual difference with the dominant self fearing and repressing or negating the other. Woman is seen as other, necessary for the construction of man's identity but also threatening it.

Although Cixous's critique is largely drawn from Jacques Derrida's theory of deconstruction, it can also be linked to Edward Said's theory of Orientalism in which the West represents its relationship to the East through binary oppositions with the

West as the 'self,' masculine and superior to the East and the East as inferior, feminine and 'other.' The West needs the East in order to define its own identity, an identity based on not being the East. Similarly, the binary opposition of colonizer/colonized can be seen in relation to Algeria, Cixous's country of birth. In the binary France/Algeria, France is seen as strong and Algeria as weak although colonial France needed Algeria to define itself while denying rights to the Arabs. However, the opposition self/other or France/Algeria is inadequate when 'othering' includes other forms of identity. Cixous demonstrates this in her autobiographical work, *Reveries of the Wild Woman* (Fr. *Les rêveries de la femme sauvage* 2000; Engl. trans. 2006) in which she describes how as a French-Jewish female child, she was subjected to Arab anti-Semitism including stone throwing, thus bringing into question the binary of strong/weak.

As an alternative, she points to the gradation of shades within colours as a way of breaking down oppositions. In *Portrait du Soleil* (1974) and *Vivre l'orange/ To Live the Orange* (1979) she focuses on orange both as colour and fruit. The colour includes different shades from dark to light; the fruit is of different forms and types including blood-orange and has to be experienced through all the senses in seeing, peeling, sucking, tasting. For Cixous, the orange also represents subjectivity and (more problematically) origin. *Orange* is pronounced with a soft 'g' and can be transposed as *Oran-je* (The origin, her birthplace Oran and the 'I' of subjectivity). Clearly, all writers do not have the same identification with orange that Cixous has. However, it is an example of how Cixous attempts to break down the overarching culture/nature division through writing in a way which allows writer and reader to experience the wor(l)d using all the senses. This can be compared to the work of Vera who describes *what* we can see, feel and touch and *how* we see, feel and touch in detailed poetic

prose. Like Cixous, Vera too breaks down the nature/culture division, seeing materiality together with or within nature rather than in opposition to it.

Cixous draws on psychoanalytic terms and concepts to mock the ways in which Freudian psychoanalysis has analyzed and interpreted 'woman.' This can be seen as a 'writing back' to those in power, parallel to the writing back to empire practised by postcolonial writers, which is defined and analyzed in the key postcolonial text *The Empire Writes Back* (Ashcroft et al 1989). In "The Laugh of the Medusa" ("*Le rire de la Méduse*" 1975; rev. and Engl trans. 1976), Cixous plays with Sigmund Freud's statement that the sexuality of women is "a dark continent" to psychoanalysis, arguing that "it is still unexplored only because we've been made to believe that it was too dark to be explorable. And because they want to make us believe that what interests us is the white continent with its monuments to Lack" (1976: 884-885). In Freudian and Lacanian models of the child's entry into the symbolic, once the child understands sexual difference, the woman is signified as Lack. It is this that Cixous refuses to accept, arguing that there is "no womanly reason to pledge allegiance to the negative" and refuting the Freudian concept of penis envy: "What's a desire originating from a lack? A pretty meager desire"(891). She adopts the idea of the return of the repressed: women "muffled throughout their history, have lived in dreams, in bodies (though muted), in silences, in aphonic revolts" (886) but "they are returning, arriving over and again, because the unconscious is impregnable" (877).

Cixous's attempt to question and challenge psychoanalysis can be seen in her appropriation of the story of Dora and of Greek mythology. Dora was the name Freud gave to his patient Ida Bauer, a young woman suffering from a persistent cough and aphonia whom Freud diagnosed as a hysteric. Dora withdrew from psychoanalysis, leaving Freud with an incomplete and unsuccessful case history. She refused his cure

and her symptoms remained. Nevertheless, Cixous sees this as a heroic act of resistance since Dora's refusal to speak is the only resistant gesture available to her in her historical and cultural circumstances.

The representation of Medusa as monstrous and vengeful suggests an old order in which women had power and were feared. For Freud, Medusa represents fear of castration but for Cixous, Medusa is "not deadly. She's beautiful and she's laughing" (1976: 885). Cixous is also interested in the moment when matriarchy is replaced by patriarchy, that is, when Apollo decrees that the father only is parent to the child. In doing this, Apollo brings in a new era. Together with Athene, he exonerates Orestes from the crime of matricide and overturns the power of the ancient female goddesses, the Furies. For Freud, this is "a victory of intellectuality over sensuality – that is, an advance in civilization" (2001: 114). One of the problems for those who want to interpret the myth differently is that Orestes's sister, Electra takes her brother's side, having urged him to kill their mother in revenge for their father's death. Cixous explains Electra's position by seeing her as existing at a threshold; she exists within a period of violence in a society at the point of transformation in which excess energy is out of control. What is interesting to Cixous is that this excess (anger and madness) is present at the birth of patriarchy. Parallels can be drawn in critical interpretations of the representation of women as mythic, as goddesses or as ancient rulers in Vera's, Achebe's and Ngugi's work and of women on the threshold of social change in Dangarembga's and Vera's work.

The theory for which Cixous is best known is *écriture féminine* or feminine writing. This is derived from her ideas on libidinal economy. Cixous rejects the idea of the gift as mere exchange. Giving in order to receive as in a market transaction does not recognize difference. In "Sorties," she describes a feminine form of giving,

partly derived from the anthropologist, Marcel Mauss (giving part of yourself with the gift) and the philosopher Georges Bataille (consumption producing excess energy). The feminine economy, according to Cixous, “lies in the way and how of the gift, in the values that the gesture of giving affirms, causes to circulate” (1986: 87). This form of giving moves away from stable to shifting identities and, working outside conventional structures, produces excess.

This economy is expressed in a new form of writing. An alternative to the symbolic, *écriture féminine* breaks rules, uses slippage, is fluid and subversive and without closure. Although Cixous has, as previously stated, suggested that women’s silence under certain historical conditions is an act of resistance, when women do speak she regards their speech (and the act of speaking) as transgressive. Women’s speech and women’s voice are present in *écriture féminine* which is also referred to as ‘writing the body.’ It belongs to the pre-symbolic unity with the mother, is derived from women’s sexuality and erotic pleasure and can go in many different directions, as can women’s orgasmic pleasure. It creates Barthesian *jouissance* (Fr. *jouir* – to enjoy, have an orgasm; *jouer* – to play) or the pleasure of the text. In its association with woman and woman’s body, it, too, like women’s speech, is transgressive. Playing on two meanings of the French verb *voler* - to steal, to fly – Cixous describes this writing as stealing (from the symbolic) and flying (sometimes to secret places). The writer, though, can be either male or female. It is the writing that is feminine, not the writer.

Cixous can be criticized for the contradictions in her work. She addresses women and encourages them to write and, yet, defines some writing by men as *écriture féminine*. Moreover, the writing practice she advocates has been criticized as essentialist, ill-defined and elitist. So too has the work of Vera, whose fiction together

with that of Dangarembga transgresses the law of the father in the symbolic order. Further criticism of Cixous's work specifically in relation to postcoloniality is that she appropriates blackness as a signifier for woman as other to man. In "The Laugh of the Medusa," the "dark continent" of Freud is also the dark continent of the male conqueror who intends to "penetrate" and "pacify" women. Cixous suggests that "the old Apartheid routine" is used against women, that women can be taught that "their territory is black" and, addressing women directly, that "you are Africa, you are black" (1976: 877). This reversal of black and white can be seen as another form of the Manicheism Fanon condemns. Moreover, it ignores the fact that some women are doubly 'othered' as they are biologically female and black. As the postcolonial theorist Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak asserts in "Can the Subaltern Speak?", if colonialism effaces the male subaltern, then the female subaltern is "even more deeply in shadow" (1994: 83).

Although criticism of Cixous along the above lines is hard to refute, it is to Spivak that I now turn in order to find a justification for applying Cixous's theory to African texts. Having written critically on French feminism in several essays, in "French Feminism Revisited" (1993), Spivak states that "in the face of patriarchal reappropriation of decolonization, isolationist nationalisms and internalized gendering," she thinks "there can be exchange between metropolitan and decolonized feminisms" (2009: 161). In re-examining "The Laugh of the Medusa," she commends Cixous for engaging in the task of pluralization, seeing Cixous's strength as lying in her opposition to single-issue feminism. Cixous states: "In woman, personal history blends together with the history of all women, as well as national and world history. As a militant, she is an integral part of all liberation" (1976: 882). Spivak, appearing to mimic Cixous's style in her use of spatial metaphor, agrees with this: "the

fundamental struggle [...] is to split open, and fill all general, unified struggles with plurality” (2009: 179). Spivak poses the question of whether Cixous can be part of “the struggle for national liberation, or against imperialism.” She does not answer this question; instead, she points out that national struggles too are pluralized - “travelling up and down, and in a discontinuous way – and that “the way in which Cixous attaches to this moving base is, inevitably, interpretable” (179). It is because Cixous’s work is “interpretable” that I risk using it. To use Cixous requires some adaptation and an engagement with her work as well as with the literary text. In my view, though, it provides productive results.

The Bulgarian-born philosopher Julia Kristeva is considered largely as a feminist critic but she has also been influential in her formulation of theories around marginality, abjection and melancholia. The influence of the Russian formalist Mikhail Bakhtin is evident in her early work, most notably in relation to ideas on *heteroglossia* (diversity of voice and speech, particularly in the narration of novels) and marginality. In France in the 1970s, she trained in psychoanalysis and, from then on, her work in language has drawn on the theories of Freud, Jacques Lacan and Melanie Klein. Kristeva’s work can be seen as broadly Lacanian. However, she adapts Lacan’s model of the pre-symbolic, the mirror phase and the entry into the symbolic in order to introduce what she refers to as semiotic language.

In *Revolution in Poetic Language* (Fr. *La révolution du langage poétique* 1974; abridged Engl. trans. 1984) Kristeva agrees with Lacan that the language of law and regulation is located within the realm of the symbolic where the child becomes the speaking subject but she insists that there is another language other than the symbolic and that is semiotic language. The semiotic begins in the pre-symbolic or (to use Lacan’s term) the imaginary. Grounded in the presence of the mother, it consists of

rhythmic flows, drives or pulsions that are gathered in a *chora* or receptacle. This becomes a language, albeit one without structured meaning, and is associated with the child's earliest experience of the mother's body. Kristeva proposes a phase between the pre-symbolic and the symbolic. This is a thetic or threshold phase, roughly equivalent to the Lacanian mirror phase in which the child identifies with an external image (such as its reflection in a mirror) and sees that image as its ego ideal. On the child's entry to the symbolic, the unity with the mother is ruptured and the child recognizes the difference between self and other. However, Kristeva departs from Lacan in seeing the movement from the semiotic to the symbolic in terms of continuity rather than rupture. After the mirror phase, when the child enters the symbolic, the semiotic flow has to be repressed to allow for the articulation of structured speech. However, according to Kristeva, the semiotic is not entirely lost; it re-emerges in uncontrollable ways, becoming a subversive force within the ordered social world and putting pressure on the symbolic. This language is anarchic, disruptive, irresponsible and joyous.

In *Desire in Language* (Fr. *Polylogue* 1977; rev. expanded Engl. trans. 1980), Kristeva argues that the semiotic can be found in avant-garde literary and artistic practice. The semiotic there has a revolutionary force, disturbing the rules of the symbolic. It returns like the repressed and is both the pre-condition and the excess of the symbolic. As the symbolic recuperates the semiotic, the semiotic has to find new directions and new ways of transgressing. The play of the semiotic on the border or margins of the symbolic results in *jouissance* and is a movement towards liberation.

Kristeva further explores relations between the symbolic and semiotic in *Powers of Horror* (Fr. *Pouvoirs de l'horreur* 1980; Engl. trans. 1982) in which she argues that the symbolic expels or abjects the maternal body of the semiotic and thus represses

the maternal in language. Defilement such as menstrual blood, pollution or incest is rejected by the symbolic order. However, what is abjected returns in what is unclean or impure on the borders of human bodies – blood, vomit, excrement and open wounds. Bodily leaks are the body in excess which, going beyond the body's own borders, remind us of the fragility of the opposition of inner/outer and of our own death (of becoming corpse or cadaver; Lat. *cadere*, to fall). Kristeva suggests that even the thin skim on the top of milk reminds us how fragile the line is between inner and outer and, by extension, life and death. The abject threatens a disturbance or breakdown between subject/object: “the abject has only one quality of the object, that of being opposed to I [the subject]” (1982: 1) and self/other. Thus, it threatens a breakdown in law, order and rules. Abjection is ambiguous because “it does not radically cut off the subject from what threatens it [...], abjection acknowledges it to be in perpetual danger” (9). However, this can be related to avant-garde practice in that: “when narrated identity is unbearable, when the boundary between subject and object is shaken, and when even the limit between inside and outside becomes uncertain, the narrative is what is challenged first.” The narrative continues but “its linearity is shattered, it proceeds by flashes, enigmas, short cuts, incompleteness, tangles, and cuts” and, later, the narration becomes a “crying out [...] of suffering-horror” in a language which may be violent or poetic (140-1).

In *Black Sun: Depression and Melancholia* (Fr. *Soleil noir: Dépression et mélancolie*, 1987; Engl. trans. 1989), the fragility of life and being is further explored but in this work, Kristeva focuses on an all-encompassing depression in which the subject experiences the absurdity of life:

I live a living death, my flesh is wounded, bleeding, cadaverized, my rhythm

slowed down or interrupted, time has been erased or bloated, absorbed into sorrow [...]. On the frontiers of life and death, occasionally I have the arrogant feeling of being witness to the meaninglessness of Being, of revealing the absurdity of bonds and beings (1989: 4).

This melancholia derives not only from current events but also from past traumas such as unresolved grief over the death of someone loved. Kristeva argues that meaning, including the meaning of life, collapses for a depressed person who experiences him/herself as fragmented. This breakdown suggests a disassociation between subject and speech. Kristeva's way of expressing this disassociation – "the speech of the depressed is to them like an alien skin; melancholy persons are foreigners in their maternal tongue" (53) - has resonances with Fanon's descriptions of the alienation of the colonized.

Kristeva's theories of semiotic language, the abject and melancholia can be applied, in varying degrees, to the work of Vera, Dangarembga, Hove and Chinodya who represent fragmented subjects suffering from loss (of language, of the mother, of kinship relations, of self, of country) and incomplete grief. Within a broader context, Zimbabwean nationalists have claimed that the writing of Dangarembga and Vera is marginal since it calls for a different type of liberation to that signified by the nationalist struggle against colonialism. In Vera's use of poetic, semiotic language and Dangarembga's and Vera's inscription of the body and female sexuality, their writing also represents the return of the repressed and the transgression of the abject. In particular, Vera, following on from Marechera, is considered an avant-garde writer who defied convention through non-linearity and through representing potential breakdown in subjectivity.

Chapter 4: History, Politics and the Construction of Identities

In this chapter, I offer an evaluation of five individual items on the above theme. The items on Zimbabwean literature are considered in order of publication before the item on Ngugi wa Thiong'o which is a bridging text between Chapters 4 and 5. Full details of critical and theoretical works cited in the items are given in the bibliography of each item.

“Returning to the House of Hunger: Zimbabwean Writing Under Pressure” (item 4) was delivered at the *Forging the Local and the Global* conference at Stellenbosch University in 2006 and published in the conference proceedings. It is centred on Shimmer Chinodya's novel *Chairman of Fools* and also includes discussion of two short stories, Brian Chikwava's “Seventh Street Alchemy” and Rory Kilalea's “Unfinished Business.”

The paper analyzes the ways in which the three writers show Zimbabwe as a dysfunctional society. In Chinodya and Chikwava's work this is achieved through postmodern techniques and representations of illness and displacement. Given Marechera's influence on Chinodya, I use the figure of Marechera as an ur-text for *Chairman of Fools*.⁹ I also suggest that Chinodya's appropriation of bipolar disorder to reveal life in contemporary Zimbabwe is a revision of Dangarembga's use of illness as metaphor in *Nervous Conditions*¹⁰ within a postcolonial rather than colonial context. I link Chikwava's story to *Chairman of Fools* in its use of parallel lives to show psychological disorientation. In my analysis, I make reference to Kristeva on

⁹ Similarly, I use Dangarembga's *Nervous Conditions* as a palimpsest for my analysis of Hove's *Bones* and Vera's *Without a Name* in item 1. See Chapter 5, 44.

¹⁰ See discussion of bulimia in *Nervous Conditions* in item 2, 4-5.

melancholy and incomplete mourning and Mbembe on the way postmodern split identities counter the postcolonial opposition of dominance and resistance. My discussion of Kilalea's satirical story concludes that, although it shows paranoia and unease, it does not effectively reveal the state of the country.

The section of my essay on *Chairman of Fools* remains the most detailed discussion of this novel and my placing of it, together with the Chikwava story, within a postmodern paradigm is an innovative approach to Zimbabwean literature. Further, in discussing the trope of illness as metaphor in writing by men (and in Chinodya's representation of a crisis in masculinity), I go beyond critical analysis of the same trope in Dangarembga. However, the commentary on Kilalea and the discussion towards the end of the essay on questions of readership and the direction of Zimbabwean writing were undeveloped and less successful. In this respect, the essay shows its origins as a speculative conference paper intended to invite discussion.

“Sins of the Fathers’: Revealing Family Secrets in Mungoshi’s Later Fiction” (item 6) was an invited contribution to *Manning the Nation*, the first collection of essays on fathering and masculinity in Zimbabwean society. The essay analyzes the father/son relationships in two of Mungoshi's later stories, “The Empty House” and “The Sins of the Fathers.” Until recently, there has been relatively little criticism on Mungoshi despite the importance of his work in the historical development of Zimbabwean literature. In the only collection of critical essays on Mungoshi (Vambe and Chirere 2006), three essays, by Muponde, Primorac and Gagiano, are based on the short stories but do not cover the texts I analyze with the exception of Gagiano's brief discussion of “The Empty House.”

My essay aims to demonstrate that the two stories reveal unease in Zimbabwean society around generational conflict, national identities and the promotion of masculinity. I discuss “The Empty House” as a satire on the Zimbabwean ‘open’ society of the early years of independence and show how its concentration on the son’s marriage results in a failure to engage with the wider contradictions of a society in transition. In contrast, “The Sins of the Fathers,” set in contemporary society, shows the ways in which the son, Rondo has been weakened by his father’s cruelty and bitterness. This familial story has political resonances and offers an effective critique of nationalism and ethnic prejudice. In my analysis of the story’s representation of political consciousness and its relationship to a past hidden history, I employ political and historical work on the nationalist history of Zimbabwe, most notably Ranger’s idea of patriotic history and White’s study of the assassination of the nationalist leader Herbert Chitepo in 1975.

An essay by Muchemwa, also in *Manning the Nation*, includes briefer commentary on “The Sins of the Fathers.” Muchemwa and I did not see each other’s essays before submission. In his analysis, Muchemwa too argues that the story subverts traditional constructions of masculinity and fatherhood. However, he focuses on parental tyranny and does not explore the historical context to the same extent that I do. My essay remains the most detailed analysis of the two stories in published work on Mungoshi.

“Asylum Stories: Constructing Zimbabwean Identities in the Diaspora”(item 7) was presented at a conference organized by Anglia Ruskin University and revised for book publication. At the time of writing, there were short empirical studies of the Zimbabwean diaspora in the UK written from economic and development perspectives but there was no published work on their cultural representation. The

essay was also written before the growth of Zimbabwean-UK fiction. I, therefore, set myself the task of finding texts which would explore the range of Zimbabwean experience in the UK; these included journalism, media and performance texts.

The essay suggests that diaspora Zimbabweans present counter-narratives which offer different representations of their experiences to those put forward by the Zimbabwean and British governments. In contrast to these monolithic discourses, Zimbabweans represent their lived experience in the diaspora in fragmentary and competing ways. To show this, I examine cultural constructions of home and exile within the context of the lives of people who do not know when or whether they will return to their country of origin, and how this 'not knowing' influences the ways in which Zimbabweans negotiate the space between Africa and Europe. My section on performance considers the context and content of the improvised play *Qabuka* and other forms of performance such as vigils or testimony. I analyze these performances in relation to work on political theatre and narratives of victimhood in South Africa. I further analyze written articles by Zimbabwean refugees within the context of their challenges to British media hostility to asylum seekers, and the British and Zimbabwean responses to the performance of the *Big Brother* contestant, Makosi. In my conclusion, I employ Welsch's concept of transculturality to describe the ways in which Zimbabweans negotiate their relations with the UK and Zimbabwe.

As indicated above, my essay is original in its analysis of popular Zimbabwean texts within a diaspora framework and is, thus, an early example of research within the fields of diaspora and African-European studies which have developed significantly since then. In the same year as the publication of my essay, Mano and Willems (2008) published a longer sociological study of Makosi.

“The Story of *Seretse and Ruth*: A Southern African Foundational Fiction” (item 9) was peer-reviewed and published in a special issue on auto/biography in the South African *Journal of Literary Studies*. It analyzes the fictionalized biography *Seretse and Ruth* by Wilf and Trish Mbanga, putting it within the context of a resurgence of interest in Botswana (partly owing to Alexander McCall Smith’s detective fiction) and comparing it to other past and contemporary biographies of the first President of Botswana, Seretse Khama. The article aims to show that *Seretse and Ruth*, ostensibly a Zimbabwean diaspora-authored text within the broad field of Southern African biography, also includes Zimbabwean national and autobiographical subtexts. To this end, the article examines selected passages from Michael Duthfield’s earlier biography of the Khamas to show how Mbanga and Mbanga put the story he tells within the context of their own lives. Drawing on the work of Sommer on Latin American foundational fictions, I argue that Mbanga and Mbanga also posit an imagined alternative foundational fiction for Zimbabwe in which that country develops cross-culturally and harmoniously like Botswana, rather than violently. I suggest that this ignores both the divisions within Botswana society and the different historical trajectory of Zimbabwe.

My article is the only critical analysis (apart from reviews) of *Seretse and Ruth*. Its publication in an issue of *The Journal of Literary Studies* dedicated to auto/biography makes it available to international scholars of Southern African writing.¹¹ The article links with other work I have undertaken on issues of ethnicity and inclusion and exclusion (items 6, 7, 12, Dodgson-Katiyo 2015b).

¹¹ The volume with brief summaries of articles was included in the journal *Biography*’s annual bibliography of works about life writing (Wachter 2009).

“Reading Working Class Literature: Rethinking Class in *A Grain of Wheat*”

(Item 5) is an invited contribution to a collection of essays on Ngugi wa Thiong’o. *A Grain of Wheat* is a text I have taught and is of continuing interest to me because it deals with war and post-independence disillusionment, themes which are important in my work on Zimbabwean literature. My original title was “Racing to the Past in *A Grain of Wheat*.” Unfortunately, the editor changed the title without consulting me. I would not have used the term ‘working class’ since it does not describe Ngugi’s social position and is not applicable to the Kenyan peasantry. Moreover, my essay is not focused on class.

The essay considers *A Grain of Wheat* as a transitional novel: firstly, because its description of a transitional society moving from anti-colonial war to independence is mirrored by the shifting (and sometimes uncertain) positions of both narrator and reader and, secondly, because there are two versions of the novel and the time difference between them (1967; 1986) suggests that the novel has evolved in alignment with Ngugi’s political self-positioning. The essay aims to analyze whether Ngugi’s narrative strategies and the changes he made in the revised version allow readers to interpret the text in ways which challenge the author’s preferred reading. My analysis, therefore, uses a deconstructive approach, comparing the earlier and later texts and also suggesting that contradictions in Ngugi’s position are revealed when the competent reader is familiar with both versions. The changes in the revised text have been recognized by Greenfield. However, her analysis and conclusions are based mainly on Ngugi’s reasons for making the changes. My essay contributes to an understanding of the novel through focusing on potential readings of the texts.

This final item in Chapter 4 explores history and politics in relation to war and its aftermath. It, therefore, can be linked to my work on the legacy of war in

Zimbabwean literature described in Chapter 5. Ngugi's re-writing of *A Grain of Wheat* in order to present a version of the anti-colonial war which unambiguously supports the Kenya Land and Freedom Army can be paralleled to (and contrasted with) the approach taken by Zimbabwean writers, such as Vera, who attempt to show the contradictions in Zimbabwe's war and the early years of independence, particularly in relation to gender.

Chapter 5: Gender, War and Trauma

In this chapter, I offer an evaluation of seven individual items on the above theme. Firstly, I consider the item on Chinua Achebe, which, like the previous item on Ngugi, bridges Chapters 4 and 5. Then I evaluate the texts on Zimbabwean literature in order of publication. Full details of critical and theoretical works cited in the items are given in the bibliography of each item.

“Gender and the Politics of Opposition in *Anthills of the Savannah*” (item 3) is an invited contribution to an essay collection on Achebe, which can be linked to my work on history and politics described in Chapter 4. Achebe’s representation of a dysfunctional society can be paralleled to Ngugi’s critique of political corruption and to the unease and opposition the Zimbabwean texts reveal with regard to a narrowly defined and exclusionist nationalism.

In the first part of my essay, I consider the political story Achebe tells through different narrators and suggest that in its depiction of power and corruption in the imaginary state of Kangan, *Anthills of the Savannah* is a fictional companion to Achebe’s tract *The Trouble with Nigeria*. I point to Achebe’s reformist agenda and contrast it to the revolutionary agenda exemplified in Ngugi’s writing. I concur with Stratton that an important facet of *Anthills of the Savannah* is Achebe’s foregrounding of women’s place in society. This is achieved, in part, through an embedded self-reflexive critique of his own earlier work, notably *Things Fall Apart* and intertextual references to other African literature and film which I identify. In arguing that the portrayal of the reluctant narrator Beatrice provides the conduit for an alternative form of politics, I show the complex ways in which Achebe identifies Beatrice with

the prophetess Chielo and the goddess Idemili (both previously represented in *Things Fall Apart*). This can be compared to my research on Vera. Vera draws on Achebe's representations of religion and female spirituality and, as I suggest, the figure of Beatrice in *Anthills of the Savannah* influences Vera's depiction of Thenjiwe as both symbolic and real in *The Stone Virgins* (item 2). In arguing that the novel's ending shows Beatrice in an emergent political role, I go beyond Gikandi's assertion that her importance lies in her role as witness. In later work, I look at new identity politics in the fiction of the Botswana writer Unity Dow (Dodgson-Katiyo 2015c).

“Coming in from the Margins: Gender in Contemporary Zimbabwean Writing” (item 1) was a peer-reviewed essay published in *Post-Colonial Literatures: Expanding the Canon*, a collection which situates individual essays on North American and Commonwealth writers within a common postcolonial theoretical framework. “Coming in from the Margins” analyzes two Zimbabwean novels, Hove's *Bones* and Vera's *Without a Name*. The section on *Bones* draws on criticism of the novel. However, the section on *Without a Name* was one of the first analyses of a Vera work and was, therefore, written without engagement with other Vera criticism. In my essay, I situate the two novels within the development of Zimbabwean post-independence writing, placing them within the context of what has come to be seen as oppositional writing and suggesting that Dangarembga's *Nervous Conditions* is a palimpsest, putting pressure on my discussion of *Bones* and *Without a Name*.

In Hove's novel, multiple viewpoints challenge the official versions of history and put those on the margins at the centre of the novel. I discuss the ways in which Hove's novel is a resistant text: the movement away from linear time, the literal translation of Shona idiom into English, belief in the ancestral spirits and the

supernatural, and memory by re-enactment. I argue that resistance also lies in the protagonist, Marita handing down the role of truth-teller to the younger woman, Janita. Vera, similarly, represents marginality in her focus on the individual story of Mazvita, a poor peasant woman whose desire for anonymity moves away from the postcolonial theme of the sharing of women's histories (portrayed in *Nervous Conditions* and *Bones*). My analysis focuses on Vera's deconstruction of the triad woman/mother/Africa through her parallelism of Mazvita's bodily disintegration and the masquerade of whiteness in the township of Harari. To some extent, I draw on French feminist theory in my analysis of Mazvita's rupture of the mother and child unity of the imaginary in her act of infanticide. I conclude that the work of Hove and Vera (and Dangarembga) suggests that Zimbabwean writing has taken a different trajectory from that envisaged at independence and that it is works such as *Bones* and *Without a Name* which are likely to represent Zimbabwean literature in postcolonial/African canon formations. The inclusion of Vera and Hove on university syllabuses in Africa and North America indicates that this conjecture was correct.

“Sisters and Survival in Zimbabwean Women's Writing” (item 2) is a peer-reviewed article written for a special issue of the *Atlantic Literary Review* on postcolonial women's writing. The essay compares the representation of women in Dangarembga's *Nervous Conditions* with that in Vera's last novel, *The Stone Virgins*. It demonstrates that Dangarembga's and Vera's use of complex narratives and their foregrounding of consciousness is a significant departure from previous Zimbabwean women's writing.

I follow Booker in developing Stratton's concept of 'paired women' in African women's writing. Although I agree with Booker that there are several pairs of women

in *Nervous Conditions*, I focus on the central pairing of Tambudzai and Nyasha. I argue that Tambudzai's ideal self is a performative construction but that as adult narrator, Tambudzai needs Nyasha as her double, an other or demon self, in order to understand and then write her family's story. The essay examines how Nyasha's rebellion and the temporary rebellion of Tambudzai are both, in part, expressed through their bodies and how their punishment for stepping outside their traditional female roles is also 'written' on their bodies. Similarly, in my analysis of the pairing of Thenjiwe and Nonceba in *The Stone Virgins*, I explore the relationship between transgression and physical pain. I draw on French feminism, particularly Cixous's concept of *écriture féminine*, arguing that the writerliness of Vera's text allows her to break taboos and 'speak the unspeakable' since grappling with the aesthetic difficulty of the text enables the reader to accept the difficulty of the content. Towards the end of the essay, I briefly consider alternative versions of history, a theme I develop in later work on Vera (items, 8, 12).

The significance of the essay lies in its comparison of Dangarembga's and Vera's work, in its use of French feminism and its emphasis on female sexuality. It was published in the same year as Boehmer (2003) on desire and transgression in Dangarembga and Vera (but not *The Stone Virgins*). However, Boehmer uses queer theory as a methodology, not feminism.

“In the Enemy's Camp: Women Representing Male Violence in Zimbabwe's Wars” (item 8) was a paper presented at the ACLALS conference at the University of Malta in 2005. It was peer reviewed and published in 2009 in the *Cross/Cultures* series. In analyzing representations of war in *The Stone Virgins* and Alexandra Fuller's *Scribbling the Cat*, it continues the comparative research I had undertaken on

Vera in items 1 and 2. The essay focuses on the ways in which the women writers graphically describe the violence of two soldiers and, following on from this, reveal the contradictions and ambiguities in the process of healing.

My analysis of Vera's text comments on the contrasting positions of Sibaso and Cephas in relation to Nonceba, the mutilated sister. I explore Sibaso's distorted version of history, linked to Campbell on deformed masculinity, and Cephas's restorative history, explaining that the latter is not unambiguous. The Vera analysis is placed within the historical context of spectacle in warfare, using Frederikse and Werbner, and De Certeau on the Freudian concept of the return of the repressed. My commentary on Fuller brings out the contradictions in Fuller's position as writer and participant, focusing on Fuller's lack of political understanding in her positioning of her text within a broad humanist discourse and her attempt to appropriate the guilt of the Rhodesian soldier, K.

The originality of my essay lies in my analysis of Vera's contrasting depictions of men's responses to war and in my critique of Fuller's position, particularly my argument that although she claims kinship with K, she also, through a feminine orientalist gaze, sees him as 'other.' When I presented my paper, there was no criticism (other than reviews) on *Scribbling the Cat*. Rauwerba (2009) on African white identity in Fuller was published in the same year as my article. Gagiano's article on *The Stone Virgins* (2007) was published after my paper had been presented and submitted but before it had been published. My work (here and item 12) and Gagiano's intersect in their analysis of masculinity, war and healing in Vera's work but I situate my analysis more specifically within Zimbabwe's recent history. A weakness of the context, rather than content, of my essay is the time lag between submission/review and publication in the Rodopi *Cross/Cultures* series.

“Tsitsi’s Tambudzai: The Nervous Condition of *The Book of Not*” (item 10) is an invited contribution to an essay collection on African women’s writing. Setting the context for *The Book of Not* by describing the reception of *Nervous Conditions* resulted in some overlap between this essay and items 1 and 2. However, this was necessary to establish the importance of Dangarembga’s work for the likely readership. In the essay, I consider the reasons why *The Book of Not* has been less well received than Dangarembga’s first novel. Firstly, I locate this dissatisfaction in the novel’s transitional position between the first novel, now a modern classic, and the third, yet to be written novel, which will finish the story of the protagonist Tambudzai. Secondly, I argue that the novel is gendered in different ways from *Nervous Conditions* as it moves from the collective subjectivities of the earlier novel to individual subjectivity. I explore the contrast between the racism and emphasis on hygiene and consumption which Tambudzai experiences with her desired but unachievable ideal of *unhu* (mutual wellbeing). Further to this, I analyze Tambudzai’s interiorizing and attempted resistance to her supposed inferiority.

A weakness of the essay is over-contextualization, particularly towards the end, where it speculates on the structure and content of Dangarembga’s putative trilogy. Nevertheless, I would point to the essay’s discussion of abjection through Kristeva (linking to my earlier use of French feminist methodologies in items 1 and 2 and specifically of Kristeva in item 4) and its discussion of the significance of the war story as original aspects of the essay which was one of the first critical commentaries on *The Book of Not*. However, its publication in India without international distribution has meant that it has not been widely read by scholars of Zimbabwean literature.

Emerging Perspectives on Yvonne Vera (item 11) is an essay collection on Vera in the US *Emerging Perspectives* series. My co-editor, Helen Cousins and I proposed this volume firstly, because Vera was an important writer who should be included in the series and secondly, because Vera research had developed significantly since the previous Vera collection, *Sign and Taboo* (Muponde and Maodzwa-Taruvinga 2002). In the intervening period, there had been periodical articles on Vera, notably in *Research in African Literatures* (2007) and, as stated in Chapter 1, a mini-symposium on Vera had been published in *Rites of Passage in Postcolonial Women's Writing* (Dodgson-Katiyo and Wisker 2010).

The aim of the collection was to present new research on Vera, particularly on her critically neglected short stories and on her last novel, *The Stone Virgins*. *Sign and Taboo* was published before *The Stone Virgins* and the only essay it includes on that novel is a contribution from Ranger who had read it in manuscript. Cousins and I invited contributions from scholars who had already published on Vera and we also sent out a call for papers in order to attract newer researchers such as PhD students.

Our final selection consisted of 10 essays by well-established researchers, three by post-doctoral researchers and four by PhD candidates. The seventeen academic essays were distributed across four sections: "Political and Historical Re-imaginings," "Trauma and Violence," "Vera and Traditions" and "Crossing Spaces." Our view was that these headings would cover a broad spectrum of Vera's work. The heading "Crossing Spaces" was selected following my reading of Vera's PhD thesis on space in African prison writing, thus linking Vera's academic and creative work. The book also included a section of Tributes/Interviews. An introductory essay is credited to Cousins and me; in fact, my contribution was about 20% of the essay, and consisted

mainly of relating Vera's work to its Zimbabwean context. As Samuelson notes in her Preface, the volume is distinctive in the number of contributions from Southern Africa, thus promoting literary studies on Vera in her region.

“Telling Versions of the War: Vera and the War’s Legacy” (item 12), my contribution to *Emerging Perspectives on Yvonne Vera*, places Vera’s fiction within the context of the liberation struggle and its aftermath and focuses on war and trauma. One of my aims was to show how Vera’s work intersects with that of male writing on war but also brings a gendered feminine perspective to the history of the nation. To do this, I had, to some extent, to provide descriptions of the male-authored texts since readers would not necessarily have knowledge of Zimbabwean war writing. My essay covers three Vera works, the short story “Ancestral Links,” *Without a Name* (previously analyzed in item 1) and *The Stone Virgins* (previously analyzed in items 2, 8). There is some small overlap with my discussion of Kanengoni’s *Echoing Silences* in item 8 although there I compare that text to Fuller’s work, not Vera’s. Before my essay was published, Chan’s review article, which I consulted and referenced, compared *The Stone Virgins* and *Echoing Silences*. However, Chan writes as a political scientist using fiction to illustrate the failure of citizenship in Zimbabwe and in Africa more generally.

In addition to the comparison with other war writing, I would point to the originality of my discussion of Vera’s literal and metaphoric use of ideas around burial. In my previous discussion of *Without a Name* (item 1), I referred to the symbolic significance of death and burial in that text. In this essay, I extend this analysis significantly, linking Vera’s imagery to ideas of the anthropologist Werbner on state-buried memory and anti-memory. I have subsequently taken this further in an

essay on Hove's poetry (Dodgson-Katiyo 2014b), analyzing his late poetry in relation to anthropological work on burial and mourning in Zimbabwe.

Chapter 6: Further Research Development

Although I have retired from full-time teaching and management, I still consider myself to be an active teacher and researcher. In 2013, I was appointed as an external examiner for the MA English by Research at the University of Malta. In this role I have examined two theses on African women's writing, both of which encouraged me to re-visit some of my own work in this field and to review criticism and theory I had previously read.

In addition to the work I have submitted, I have three items on Southern African literature in press which are summarized below:

“Robben Island and the Walled Cavern: *The Island and Antigone*” (Dodgson-Katiyo 2015a) is an invited contribution to a funded project at Università Roma Tre on islands and literature. The essay sets the context of Robben Island literature through brief discussion of D.M.Zwelonke's semi-fictional account of prison life, *Robben Island*. It then analyzes the workshop play *The Island* by Athol Fugard et al in which two prisoners perform Sophocles's *Antigone*. I conclude that reading/seeing *The Island* together with *Antigone* reveals and enacts the contradictions in apartheid and post-apartheid society.

““Stream of My Blood’: The Fragility of Hove's Poetry” (Dodgson-Katiyo 2015b) is to be published in a volume in the *Emerging Perspectives* series. This essay takes as its starting point Hove's “Small People, Big Wars: A Personal Memoir” in which he asks how writers should respond to war, torture and pain. It then explores the ways

in which Hove's writing on violence in his poetry has changed over a twenty-year period. In my analysis, I incorporate discussion of victimhood in political discourse and anthropological studies on violence, pain and burial in Zimbabwe's recent past.

“Women Investigators Uncovering Transgression in Unity Dow's Fiction”

(Dodgson-Katiyo 2015c) originated as a conference paper presented at EACLALS 2011; it has now been peer-reviewed and is to be published in a collection on contemporary African literature. In this essay, I draw on sociological and anthropological readings to analyze Dow's fiction. I argue that Dow's representation of informal groups of human rights workers moves towards a grassroots politics of identity, based primarily, but not exclusively, on gender. This new identity politics challenges both traditional power structures and the power of the postcolonial elite.

I intend to continue writing on Zimbabwean diasporic writing, for example, the work of Petina Gappah and Tendai Huchu. The work of these writers is important in the continuation of my research since they write from oppositional positions, and issues of gender and sexuality are central in their fiction. I presented a paper on Gappah at the EACLALS 2014 conference (Dodgson-Katiyo 2014).

The fact that much Zimbabwean writing is now written outside Zimbabwe has led me to develop a wider interest in African diaspora writing. An early example of this is a paper I presented on the British-Sierra Leonean writer Aminatta Forna at the ACLALS 2013 conference (Dodgson-Katiyo 2013). I am now researching another diasporic field – that of Somali writing. To that end, I am working on the major Somali writer Nuruddin Farah and the fiction of the younger women writers, Nadifa Mohamed and Cristina Ali Farah. In this way I intend to continue to combine research

on the work of established African writers with research on younger, less well-known writers.

List of Works Cited

- Ashcroft, Bill et al. 1989. *The Empire Writes Back: Theory and Practice in Post-Colonial Literatures*. London and New York: Routledge.
- Berndt, Katrin. 2005. *Female Identity in Contemporary Zimbabwean Fiction*. Bayreuth: Bayreuth African Studies.
- Boehmer, Elleke. 2003. "Tropes of Yearning and Dissent: The Troping of Desire in Yvonne Vera and Tsitsi Dangarembga." *Journal of Commonwealth Literature* 38 (1): 135-148.
- Cairnie, Julie and Dobrota Pucherova, eds. 2012. *Moving Spirit: The Legacy of Dambudzo Marechera in the 21st Century*. Zurich and Berlin: LIT Verlag.
- Campbell, Horace. 2003. *Reclaiming Zimbabwe: The Exhaustion of the Patriarchal Model of Liberation*. Cape Town: David Philip.
- Cixous, Hélène. 1974. *Portrait du Soleil*. Paris: Denoël.
- _____. 1976 [1975]. "The Laugh of the Medusa." *Signs* 1 (4): 875-893.
- _____. 1979. *Vivre l'orange/To Live the Orange*. Paris: Editions des femmes.
- _____. 1986 [1975]. "Sorties." In *The Newly Born Woman*, by Hélène Cixous and Catherine Clément, 63-132. Manchester: Manchester University Press.
- _____. 2006 [2000]. *Reveries of the Wild Woman: Primal Scenes*. Evanston IL: Northwestern University Press.
- Cousins, Helen and Pauline Dodgson-Katiyo, eds. 2012. *Emerging Perspectives on Yvonne Vera*. Trenton NJ: Africa World Press.
- Dodgson, Pauline. 1992. "Culture and Literary Production in Zimbabwe." In *From Commonwealth to Postcolonial*, edited by Anna Rutherford, 248-258. Sydney: Dangaroo Press.
- Dodgson, Pauline, Kimani Gecau and Emmanuel Ngara, eds. 1989. *Coming Home: Poems of Africa*. Harare: Zimbabwe Publishing House.
- Dodgson-Katiyo, Pauline. 2013. "Exchanging Stories and Broken Circuits in Aminatta Forna's *The Devil that Danced on the Water*." Paper presented at the ACLALS conference, University of the West Indies.
- _____. 2014. "Zimbabwe Ruins: Petina Gappah's Spectrum of Her Country." Paper presented at the EACLALS conference, University of Innsbruck.

_____ (forthcoming 2015a). "Robben Island and the Walled Cavern: *The Island and Antigone*." In *Isola/Isole: Da Itaca ad Atlantide*, edited by Franca Ruggieri. Rome: Università Roma Tre.

_____ (forthcoming 2015b). "'Stream of My Blood': The Fragility of Hove's Poetry." In *Emerging Perspectives on Chenjerai Hove*, edited by Caroline Rooney and Tinashe Mushakavanhu. Trenton NJ: Africa World Press.

_____ (forthcoming 2015c). "Women Investigators Uncovering Transgression in Unity Dow's Fiction." In *Contemporary African Literature: Thematics and Criticism*, edited by J.K.S. Makokha and J.Roger Kurtz. Amsterdam and New York: Rodopi.

Dodgson-Katiyo, Pauline and Gina Wisker, eds. 2010. *Rites of Passage in Postcolonial Women's Writing*. Amsterdam and New York: Rodopi.

Fanon, Frantz. 1967a [1952]. *Black Skin, White Masks*. New York: Grove Press.

_____ 1967b [1961]. *The Wretched of the Earth*. Harmondsworth: Penguin.

Freud, Sigmund. 2001[1939]. *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, vol. 23. London: Vintage.

Gagiano, Annie. 2007. "Reading *The Stone Virgins* as Vera's Study of the Katabolism of War." *Research in African Literatures* 38 (2): 64-76.

Gaidzanwa, Rudo B. 1985. *Images of Women in Zimbabwean Literature*. Harare: College Press.

Graham, James. 2009. *Land and Nationalism in Fictions from Southern Africa*. New York and Abingdon: Routledge.

Kahari, George. 1980. *The Search for Zimbabwean Identity: An Introduction to the Black Zimbabwean Novel*. Gweru: Mambo Press.

Kristeva, Julia. 1980 [1969; 1977]. *Desire in Language: A Semiotic Approach to Literature and Art*. New York: Columbia University Press.

_____ 1982 [1980]. *Powers of Horror: An Essay in Abjection*. New York: Columbia University Press.

_____ 1984 [1974]. *Revolution in Poetic Language*. New York: Columbia University Press.

_____ 1989 [1987]. *Black Sun: Depression and Melancholia*. New York and Oxford: Columbia University Press.

Malaba, Mbongeni Z. and Geoffrey V. Davis, eds. *Essays on Zimbabwean Literature in English, Ndebele and Shona. Matatu* 34. Amsterdam and New York: Rodopi.

Mano, Winston and Wendy Willems. 2008. "Emerging Communities, Emerging Media: The Case of a Zimbabwean Nurse in the British *Big Brother* Show." *Critical Arts* 22 (1): 101-128.

Muchemwa, Kizito Z. and Robert Muponde, eds. 2007. *Manning the Nation: Father Figures in Zimbabwean Literature and Society*. Harare and Johannesburg: Weaver Press and Jacana Media.

Muponde, Robert and Mandivavarira Maodzwa-Taruvinga, eds. 2002. *Sign and Taboo: Perspectives on the Poetic Fiction of Yvonne Vera*. Harare: Weaver Press.

Muponde, Robert and Ranka Primorac, eds. 2005. *Versions of Zimbabwe: New Approaches to Literature and Culture*. Harare: Weaver Press.

Ngugi wa Thiong'o. 1972. *Homecoming: Essays on African and Caribbean Literature, Culture and Politics*. London: Heinemann.

_____. 1986. *Decolonizing the Mind: The Politics of Language in African Literature*. London: James Currey.

Primorac, Ranka. 2006. *The Place of Tears: The Novel and Politics in Modern Zimbabwe*. London and New York: I.B. Tauris.

Rauwerba, Antje M. 2009. "Exile Encampments: Whiteness in Alexandra Fuller's *Scribbling the Cat: Travels with an African Soldier*." *Journal of Commonwealth Literature* 44(2): 51-64.

Research in African Literatures. 2007. "Yvonne Vera." 38 (2): 1-76.

Said, Edward. 1978. *Orientalism*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.

Spivak, Gayatri Chakravorty. 1994 [1988]. "Can the Subaltern Speak?" In *Colonial Discourse and Post-Colonial Theory: A Reader*, edited by Patrick Williams and Laura Chrisman, 66-111. Harlow: Pearson.

_____. 2009 [1993]. "French Feminism Revisited." In *Outside in the Teaching Machine*, 158-192. New York and Abingdon: Routledge.

Vambe, Maurice Taonezvi. 2004. *African Oral Story-telling Tradition and the Zimbabwean Novel in English*. Pretoria: UNISA.

Vambe, Maurice Taonezvi and Memory Chirere, eds. 2006. *Charles Mungoshi: A Critical Reader*. Harare: Prestige Books.

Veit-Wild, Flora. 1992. *Teachers, Preachers, Non-Believers: A Social History of Zimbabwean Literature*. London: Hans Zell.

_____. 2006. "De-Silencing the Past: Challenging 'Patriotic History': New Books on Zimbabwean Literature." *Research in African Literatures* 37 (3): 193-204.

Wachter, Phyllis E. 2009. "Annual Bibliography of Works About Life Writing, 2008-2009." *Biography* 32 (4): 696-837.

Warren, Crystal. 2012. "Introduction: Zimbabwe to [Bibliography of] South Africa and Zimbabwe." *Journal of Commonwealth Literature* 47 (4): 601-602.

Zhuwarara, Rino. 2001. *Introduction to Zimbabwean Literature in English*. Harare: College Press.

Zimunya, Musa. 1982. *Those Years of Drought and Hunger: The Birth of African Fiction in English in Zimbabwe*. Gweru: Mambo Press.

Gender, History and Trauma in Zimbabwean and Other African Literatures

List of Publications Submitted for PhD by Published Work, Pauline Dodgson-Katiyo

These are listed in order of discussion in Chapters 4 and 5 of the Critical Appraisal

Chapter 4: History, Politics and the Construction of Identities

Item 4: Dodgson-Katiyo, Pauline. 2006. "Returning to the House of Hunger: Zimbabwean Writing Under Pressure." In *Forging the Local and the Global*, 78-82. Stellenbosch: Stellenbosch University.

Item 6: Dodgson-Katiyo, Pauline. 2007. "'Sins of the Fathers': Revealing Family Secrets in Mungoshi's Later Fiction." In *Manning the Nation: Father Figures in Zimbabwean Literature and Society*, edited by Kizito Muchemwa and Robert Muponde, 46-57; 186. Harare and Johannesburg: Weaver Press and Jacana Media.

Item 7: Dodgson-Katiyo, Pauline. 2008. "Asylum Stories: Constructing Zimbabwean Identities in the Diaspora." In *Neo-Colonial Mentalities in Contemporary Europe: Language and Discourse in the Construction of Identities*, edited by Guido Rings and Anne Ife, 67-83. Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing.

Item 9: Dodgson-Katiyo, Pauline. 2009. "The Story of *Seretse and Ruth*: A Southern African Foundational Fiction." *Journal of Literary Studies* 25 (1): 64-79.

Item 5: Dodgson-Katiyo, Pauline. 2007. "Reading Working Class Literature: Rethinking Class in *A Grain of Wheat*." In *Ngugi wa Thiong'o: An Anthology of Recent Criticism*, edited by Mala Pandurang, 120-133. New Delhi: Pencraft International.

Chapter 5: Gender, War and Trauma

Item 3: Dodgson-Katiyo, Pauline. 2006. "Gender and the Politics of Opposition in *Anthills of the Savannah*." In *Chimua Achebe: An Anthology of Recent Criticism*, edited by Mala Pandurang, 149-163. New Delhi: Pencraft International.

Item 1: Dodgson, Pauline. 1999. "Coming in from the Margins: Gender in Contemporary Zimbabwean Writing." In *Postcolonial Literatures: Expanding the Canon*, edited by Deborah Madsen, 88-103. London and Sterling VA: Pluto Press.

Item 2: Dodgson-Katiyo, Pauline. 2003. "Sisters and Survival in Zimbabwean Women's Writing: Tsitsi Dangarembga and Yvonne Vera." *Atlantic Literary Review* 4 (4): 80-95.

Item 8: Dodgson-Katiyo, Pauline. 2009. "In the Enemy's Camp: Women Representing Male Violence in Zimbabwe's Wars." In *Shared Waters: Soundings in Postcolonial Literatures*, edited by Stella Borg Barthet, 67-74. Amsterdam and New York: Rodopi.

Item 10: Dodgson-Katiyo, Pauline. 2010. "Tsitsi's Tambudzai: The Nervous Condition of *The Book of Not*." In *African Women Writers: Re-imaging Gender*, edited by Mala Pandurang and Anke Bartels, 171-185. New Delhi: Pencraft International.

Item 11: Cousins, Helen and Pauline Dodgson-Katiyo, eds. 2012. *Emerging Perspectives on Yvonne Vera*. Trenton NJ: Africa World Press.

Item 12: Dodgson-Katiyo, Pauline. 2012. "Telling Versions of the War: The War's Legacy in Vera's Fiction." In *Emerging Perspectives on Yvonne Vera*, edited by Helen Cousins and Pauline Dodgson-Katiyo, 101-120. Trenton NJ: Africa World Press.