

From “bush” to “farm”: Emplacement and displacement in contemporary white Zimbabwean narratives

The Journal of Commonwealth Literature

1–16

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DOI: 10.1177/0021989415573033

jcl.sagepub.com



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Abstract

In this article we discuss how places of belonging are imagined in relatively recent white Zimbabwean narratives dealing with issues of land, landscape, and belonging. Two white Zimbabwean narratives, Peter Rimmer’s *Cry of the Fish Eagle* (1993) and Douglas Rogers’ *The Last Resort* (2009), are read for the ways in which the paradoxically imagined spaces of the “bush” and the “farm” can be seen to enable, in alternate forms, exigent accommodations with place under different historical and political circumstances. In *Cry of the Fish Eagle*, which preceded Zimbabwe’s land reform process of the 2000s, “bush” is a privileged category by virtue of its supra-national allowance of a claim to white belonging in “Africa” at large. In *The Last Resort*, on the other hand, the “bush” is a derelict wilderness rescued by the ingenuity of white subjects, who create “farms” of splendid regenerative capacity in an effort to purchase belonging in the Zimbabwean nation-state.

Keywords

belonging, emplacement, farm, landscape, nation, places, spaces, white narratives, Zimbabwean literature

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