

**Return migration, space and identity in Daniel Mandishona's *White Gods Black Demons*
(2009)**

By

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Declaration

I, Jairos Kudakwashe Bhowa, hereby declare that this dissertation for the Bachelor of Arts in English and Communication degree at the Midlands State University, hereby submitted by me, has not been previously submitted for a degree at this or any other institution, and that this is my work in design and execution, and all reference materials contained herein have been duly acknowledged.

Signature _____ Date _____

I hereby certify that the above statement is correct.

Promoter: Dr. T. Musanga _____ Date _____

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I am deeply indebted to my promoter Dr. T. Musanga for his dedicated mentorship and patience. I also wish to thank my family and members of the English and Communication Department at Midlands State University whose numerous interventions redeemed this dissertation.

Dedication

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

Abstract

This study explores the relationship between return migration, space and identity in Zimbabwean Literature as exemplified by Daniel Mandishona's *White Gods Black Demons* (2009). It employs postcolonial theory in its exploration of the relationship between return migration, space and identity in Mandishona's text. Return migration is largely depicted as a metaphor of failure in most of the selected stories where some of the characters return to their homeland either sickly or mad and ultimately commit suicide. However, the research will also consider the various tactics and strategies that returnees employ to re-integrate in their homelands.

Key Words: Return migration; identity; space; re-integration

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Chapter 1: Theoretical Introduction

1.0 Introduction

This study examines the depiction of return migration and its relation to space and identity in Daniel Mandishona's *White Gods Black Demons* (2009). The study considers return migration related to the concepts of space and identity. Derman and Kaarhus' (2013) view of migration as a strategy is critical to my understanding of the depiction of return migration in *White Gods Black Demons*. Derman and Kaarhus (2013: 2) conceive migration 'as a strategy and opportunity for coping with displacement, violence, poverty and vulnerability' in the face of a crisis. Return migration is a concept that is often occluded in most studies of migration. King (2000:7) argues that return migration 'is the great unwritten chapter in the history of migration.' Most literature on Zimbabwean migration largely focus on internal or external Zimbabwean out-migration. However, little has been said about return migration.

1.1 Historicizing and contextualizing (return) migration in Zimbabwe.

Zimbabweans, as a consequence of the Zimbabwean crisis that worsened in post-2000, engaged in a massive 'exodus' within and across the Zimbabwean borders in search of better opportunities. Raftopoulos and Mlambo (2009: 202) argue that a key aspect of the crisis:

was the rapid decline of the economy, characterised by, amongst other things: steep declines in industrial and agricultural productivity; historic levels of hyperinflation; the informalisation of labour; the dollarization of economic transactions; displacements; and a critical erosion of livelihoods.

Thus, migration is a fundamental aspect of the country's social, political and economic landscape. Weeks (1999) notes that migration is a permanent or temporary change in the usual place of residence across space in a given time period. Zimbabwe is a country whose borders are fluid as testified by in and out migration. Throughout Zimbabwe's history, the country has always been in movement.

Pasura (2010) notes that the Mfecane conflict in Zululand of the nineteenth century resulted in Nguni-speaking Ndebele people settling in western parts of present day Zimbabwe around 1840. Later on, the 1890 colonisation of what later came to be known as Zimbabwe by the Cecil John Rhodes led Pioneer Column resulted in forced internal displacement and dislocation as Africans were removed from their fertile lands and relocated onto arid lands. Zhuwarara (2001: 12), commenting on the forced internal displacement and dislocation, notes that:

more alarming to Africans was that thousands of people were forced to move into areas which had poor soils and little rainfall in order to make way for white settlers. In the long run, there was a wholesale movement of people which radically altered the demographic map of the country.

Thus, British colonial rule institutionalised migration in Rhodesia. Mazur (1986) states that the control of migrant labour force was a fundamental characteristic of Rhodesian government's effort to control and exploit Africans and taxes were imposed to force labourers to migrate to white-controlled farms and mines. A large number of Africans, as a consequence of colonialism, migrated from their homelands to colonial farms and mines in search for money to pay taxes and this impacted greatly on internal migration.

Cliffe (1989) posits that the land issue in colonial Rhodesia became the focal point of protest by a new generation of Africans in the 1950s and 1960s. This period witnessed a massive exodus of Africans into the neighbouring countries such as Zambia, Mozambique and Botswana escaping the anti-colonial war. Consequently, by 1979 it was estimated that there were over '210 000 Zimbabwean refugees in Mozambique, Botswana and Zambia' (Makanya 1994: 107). Crush and Tevera (2010) assert therefore that for the majority of people who went into exile during the war of liberation, migration was seen as temporary, with no intention of permanent settlement. With the attainment of independence in 1980 a large number of Africans who had escaped war in the neighbouring countries returned to Zimbabwe.

Migration in Zimbabwe is not only confined to transnational movement. Zimbabwe in the 1980s witnessed a heightened movement of people from rural to urban areas in search for employment. Thus, Potts (2010) states that internal migration in Zimbabwe in the 1980s broadly conformed to expected patterns, with people moving from rural to urban areas in response to economic opportunities. In 1991 the government of Zimbabwe introduced the Economic Structural adjustment Plan (ESAP). ESAP promoted a free market for goods and services in Zimbabwe and the Zimbabwean industries could not stand international competition. Hammar *et al* (2003) concur that ESAP resulted in the deindustrialisation of Zimbabwe since local industries collapsed after having failed to face international competition on the Zimbabwean market. Raftopoulos and Mlambo (2009: 188) argue thus:

Large numbers of workers were retrenched as industries closed down, and as the public spending was cut in line with structural adjustment policies. By 1994, government statistics revealed that 20,710 workers had lost their jobs since the beginning of economic liberalisation programme.

The failure of the Economic Adjustment Plan resulted in the shift of 'expected patterns' of internal migration since most workers were retrenched and returned to the rural areas. Raftopoulos and Mlambo (2009: 189) argue that 'structural adjustment increased pressure on land and natural resources as retrenched urban workers either sent their families to their rural homes or went with them.' ESAP therefore had a tremendous effect on migration as retrenched workers relocated to the rural areas. Gappah's (2009) 'The Mupandawana Dancing Champion' highlights this phenomenon of urban to rural migration through her depiction of Mdhara Vitalis who is a retrenched worker.

Mlambo (2010) observes that throughout Zimbabwe's history until 1990, the country had been predominantly a destination for migrants. ESAP therefore did not only affect internal migration but it also affected the international patterns of migration. ESAP also impacted on Zimbabwean transnational migration as most people who had been retrenched or whose income had been significantly eroded by ESAP were forced to relocate to neighbouring countries such as South Africa and Botswana. Tevera and Zinyama (2002) argue that Zimbabwe was a recipient of labour migrants from Zambia, Malawi and Mozambique but the economic situation of the 1990s affected the distribution of population into and out of the country. Hammar *et al* (2010) argue that the Zimbabwean crisis is destabilising the Southern African Development Community (SADC) region and has ceased being a national issue to becoming a regional political and immigration crisis. Crush and Tevera (2010) posit that immigration statistics show that in the 1980s about twenty thousand people crossed from Zimbabwe into South Africa each year. This figure rose to seventy five thousand in 1994, reaching five hundred thousand in 2000 and doubling to one million two hundred and fifty thousand in 2008. Another key factor in Zimbabwean out-migration is the land reform programme. In 2000 the Zimbabwean government embarked on a land reform programme

where white commercial owned land was repossessed and redistributed among black Zimbabweans. Thus, Derman and Kaarhus (2013:285) that the Land Reform Programme saw ‘some 150,000 farm workers and unknown number of commercial farm families flee the country.’

The Zimbabwean government also executed a ‘clean-up campaign’ dubbed ‘Operation Murambatsvina’ (Operation Restore Order). Derman and Kaarhus (2013) observe that the 2005 clean up campaign displaced around seven hundred thousand urban Zimbabweans. This clean-up campaign forced many Zimbabweans, especially the urban poor who were the main victims to migrate to the rural areas. Tibaijuka (2005:20) notes that Operation Murambatsvina was carried out, according to the government to arrest ‘disorderly or chaotic urbanisation, stopping illegal market transactions and reversing environmental change by inappropriate agricultural practices’. Similarly, Potts (2010) observes that one of the major reasons of the operation was to push urban dwellers out of the city and back into the rural areas. Derman and Kaarhus (2013: 7) concur that, ‘although it might have served to discourage rural-urban migration, the operation caused massive suffering in several of Zimbabwe’s cities and increased the impoverishment of Zimbabweans.’ Tagwira’s (2008) *Uncertainty of Hope* highlights the impact of the operation on urban dwellers which includes homelessness, disease, death, poverty and urban to rural migration. Raftopoulos and Mlambo (2009: 221) note that:

Operation Murambatsvina was based on an assumption that those pushed out of urban areas could ‘return’ to homes in the rural areas, but [...] half of them were urban-born and did not have a rural home to return to.

South Africa in 2008 witnessed xenophobic attacks that displaced and heightened the insecurity of most migrants who were forced to relocate to their counties of origin. Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2009) argues that the May 2008 xenophobic attacks claimed the lives of sixty two people and displaced over two hundred thousand people. The recent resurgence of xenophobic attacks triggered a forced return of Zimbabweans who had migrated to South Africa. The *Sunday Mail* of 19 April 2015 states that two thousand Zimbabweans were in a process of repatriation back to Zimbabwe as a consequence of the attacks. Zimbabwean popular culture as exemplified by P.O. Box TV's (2015) *So Far So Good* highlights the impact of these xenophobic attacks on the concept/reality of return migration in Zimbabwe.

1.2 Mapping perspectives of return migration, space and identity.

The above section has contextualised and historicised migration in Zimbabwe. However, this section zeros on return migration and seeks to problematize the relationship between return migration, space and identity in Zimbabwean literature. King (2000: 8) notes that, 'Return migration may be defined as the process whereby people return to their country or place of origin after a significant period in another country or region.' Similarly, Stefansson (2004) observes that return migration involves the movement of emigrants back to their home countries either voluntarily, through compulsion or as a result of deportation by the receiving country. In general, after the act of return, the returnees engage in a process of readjustment and reintegration. This is summarised through the perspective of a returnee in Markowitz and Stefansson (2004:12) who states that, 'You can go home. But you can't start from where you left. To fit in, you have to create another place in that place you have left behind'. The idea of return migration is therefore more than merely the act of going home and the notion of reintegration implied in return migration exceeds simply fitting in one's old life.

Preston (1993) argues that upon return from a chosen destination, the migrant needs to be reintegrated into the original society as it will be unrealistic to assume that the social and economic milieu to which migrants returned, had not changed after they left their communities. That is, more than just crossing geopolitical borders of their countries into other countries, the migrants also cross cultural and linguistic boundaries in their movement and this helps in reconstructing their identities or rather 'national identities.' Similarly, Primorac (2006) notes that migration unsettles culture's territorial and linguistic boundaries. Hall (1995: 47-8) corroborates this when he observes that return migrants 'are people who belong to more than one world, speak more than one language (literally and metaphorically)'. However, return migration can be traumatic as observed by Stefansson and Markowitz (2004: 8):

Because of the mismatch between the imagined and experienced homecoming, coming home can be more difficult and emotionally destabilizing than leaving home and settling in a new part of the world.

The idea of return migration as posing challenges for returnees is also echoed by Gmelch (1980) who outlines that return migration implies a multiplicity of challenges such as reintegration, readjustment and adaptation to the new environment of settlement. Stefansson (2004) also highlights that return and reintegration into the home country may be ripe with difficulties for returnees especially when such societies have been transformed in the interim through war, political upheaval or economic crisis.

The issue of space in migration in general involves emotional and spiritual attachment. For Zhuwarara (2001) the forced dislocation and relocation of Africans from their ancestral lands is synonymous with the destabilisation of African identity and an assault of African religion, culture and knowledge systems. White (1995) observes that the issue of migration often brings into question many aspects of identity that make up the individual's personality and

psychological self-image. The issue of identity is central in migration studies and often upon return the migrant might realise a shift in his or her assumed identity. Markowitz and Stefansson (2004:10) highlight that the return migrant might face a cultural shock on the homecoming and thus 'return is experienced as a 'culture shock', a trauma or a new displacement, whereby returnees become alienated from their homeland.' White (1995) states that with migration the levels of plurality, identity shift and ambivalence are perhaps greater than in many other aspects of life.

Thomas (2008) argues that return migration can be categorised in four theoretical approaches namely: neo-classical view, new economic of labour migration theory, structural approach and transnational approach. The theoretical perspectives, to a certain degree, help account for returnee's desire to return home. Thomas (2008) notes that the neo-classical perspective projects returnees as a category of people who would have had failed to obtain the expected benefit of higher earnings abroad. Thomas (2008: 657) observes further that in contrast to the neo-classical theory, the new economics of labour migration Theory (NELM) considers return migration 'as part of a defined plan conceived by migrants before their departure from their countries of origin'. NELM theorists therefore see migrants as motivated by the desire to obtain savings, skills, and other resources which will be useful upon their return. Ammassari (2004) notes that for NELM theorists the time abroad is often considered as a temporary enterprise, and most migrants are said to return home after achieving their goals.

Ammassari (2004) notes that structural theories to return migration stress the importance of the political, social, and economic circumstances in the home countries, not only as key factors in the return resolution, but also as components affecting the ability of returning migrants to make use of the skills and resources that they have acquired abroad. The structural theories, unlike the other two theories of return migration, do not regard the success

of the migration experience abroad as a key factor in the resolution to return; instead they focus on the productivity of return migrants after their return home. Cassarino (2004) posits that structural theorists argue that returnees may not be able to reintegrate and consequently may decide to leave again if the 'gap' between their own norms and values and those of home is insurmountable. Return migration is also linked to transnationalism. Cassarino (2004: 7) states that transnationalism perceives reintegration as a process of re-adaptation which may entail the abandonment of identities acquired while abroad:

One of the main contrasts between Transnationalism and structuralism lies in the fact that according to transnationalists, returnees prepare their reintegration at home through periodical and regular visits to their home countries.

Cassarino (2004) states that, the Social Network Theory propounded by Gallup (1997) helps explain return preparedness of the return migrants. Cassarino (2004) argues that social networks are vital in the process of return migration and the individual's resource mobilization and preparedness for return. Cassarino (2004: 271) conceptualises 'preparedness' as not only 'the willingness to return home but also their readiness to return home.' Therefore the maintenance of social networks with the country of origin helps facilitate the return decision. Cassarino (2004) states that reintegration is a process of adaptation and negotiation and the rediscovery of the true characteristics of their origin. Reintegration is therefore not an insertion in the place or country of origin upon the return migrant's return. Cassarino (2004) notes further that networks and resource mobilisation are not only central components in return migration as the willingness and readiness of the migrant to return is also integral to their ability to reintegrate. Social networks are therefore essential to successful return and reintegration.

1.3 Statement of the problem

The major problem to be investigated in the study is the depiction of the complexities that govern return migration in Daniel Mandishona's *White Gods Black Demons*. This research problem can however be split into minor research problems such as:

- The relationship between return migration and the heightened insecurity in the host land.
- The idea of return migration as a positional strategy.
- Return migration as a metaphor of failure.

1.4 Purpose of the study

The topic and area of study have been chosen for a number of reasons. The study seeks to offer a more nuanced analysis and understanding of the nature and impact of return migration (voluntary and forced, local and global) on identity (ethnic and diasporic) in Daniel Mandishona's *White Gods Black Demons*. There is absence of in-depth study of return migration in Zimbabwe and the existing literature on the subject largely focuses on the impact of the 'Zimbabwean Crisis' on out migration and its impact on development and its impact on gender issues in Zimbabwe.

1.5 Objectives of the study

The central objective of the research is based on the need to establish the multiple dimensions of return migration in Daniel Mandishona's *White Gods Black Demons*. To achieve this objective the study seeks to situate its exploration of return migration in a context informed by post-colonial theory. This has the obvious advantage of unravelling the complexities of the factors that cause the return migration of Zimbabweans.

1.6 Questions guiding the study

In this study, the following questions shall inform the basis of this investigation:

- What is return migration and what are the driving forces behind this phenomenon?
- What are the re-integration challenges faced by returnees upon their return to the country or place of origin?
- What are the re-integration strategies employed by returnees upon their return to their places of origin?
- Does return migration result in the reconfiguration of identities?

1.7 Research methodology

The methodological approach that I will use is a literary survey of the selected Zimbabwean fictional literature that explores and covers the issue of return migration (voluntary and involuntary, local and global). The text will be subjected to critical textual analysis that draws on theoretical perspectives that are mostly located in postcolonial theory.

1.8 Theoretical framework

The theory guiding this research study is postcolonial theory. Boehmer (1995) points out that postcolonialism encompasses a set of theories and approaches found in film, political science, anthropology, sociology and literature. Young (2003) states that postcolonialism is an approach that concerns itself particularly with literature written in formerly colonized countries and is a heterogeneous field of study where even its spelling provides several alternatives. There are a plethora of scholars associated with postcolonial theory who include: Fanon, Spivak, Said, Bhabha and Ashcroft. However, the ideas of Said (1978) and Bhabha (1994) inform this study.

1.9 Conclusion

The chapter introduced the area of study and focused on key issues such as literature review, questions guiding the study, rationale for the study, theoretical framework informing the study and research methodology. My next chapter will consider the idea of seeing return migration as a metaphor of failure and I will analyse ‘A secret sin’ and ‘A wasted land’. I will argue that the two stories mainly project return migration as a phenomenon chiefly associated with individuals who would have failed to successfully adapt to life in the host land. Their return therefore does not warrant celebrations as they have betrayed the dreams and aspirations not only of the concerned individuals but also their relatives, peers and community in general.

Chapter 2: Return migration as a metaphor of failure in Daniel Mandishona’s ‘A secret sin’ and ‘A wasted land’

2.0 Introduction

The previous chapter explored literature on migration as a way of historicising and contextualising the area of study. However, this chapter analyses Mandishona’s ‘A secret sin’ and ‘A wasted land’ in relation to the idea of seeing return migration as a metaphor of failure. The idea of seeing return migration as failure is predicated on Mandishona’s depiction of return migration as a phenomenon chiefly associated with individuals who would have failed to successfully adapt to life in the host land. Their return therefore does not warrant celebrations as they have betrayed the dreams and aspirations not only of the concerned individuals but also their relatives, peers and community in general.

2.1 Author's profile and brief text information

Daniel Mandishona's *White Gods Black Demons* (2009) is a collection of ten stories. Most of the stories chronicle the lives and experiences of Zimbabweans upon their return to their homeland. Daniel Mandishona is an architect and was born in Harare in 1959. Mandishona was expelled from Goromonzi Secondary School in 1976. He later migrated to the United Kingdom where he lived in London from 1977-1992. Mandishona first studied Graphic Design and then studied Architecture at the Bartlett School, University College London. He owns an architectural practice in Harare.

2.2.1 Return migration and failure to reintegrate in 'A wasted land'

The story 'A Wasted Land' explores the experiences of Uncle Nicholas. Uncle Nicholas migrated to England during the height of Zimbabwe's liberation struggle to study Pharmacology. He however returns to Zimbabwe soon after the attainment of independence in January 1981. There is no precise information about the exact year of Uncle Nicholas' departure to England. We are told that Uncle Nicholas was 'much too young when he left for London.' (p. 50). This alludes to the vulnerability of Uncle Nicholas as he was 'too inexperienced to cope with the exhilarating freedoms of this new world'. This inexperience therefore largely shapes the unstable identity that Uncle Nicholas assumes in England which ultimately results in his suicide.

Uncle Nicholas failed to integrate in England as it is rumoured that he was once imprisoned 'for six years in a British jail for wife-battering and child abuse' and was later on deported for threatening to kill his wife (p. 48). Thus, Cerase (1974) categorise returnees like Uncle Nicholas as returnees of failure. Cerase (1974) notes that returnees of failure refer to individuals who could not integrate in their host countries and their difficulties in taking an

active role in the receiving societies or in adapting themselves to the host country were strong enough to motivate their return. This categorisation perfectly describes Uncle Nicholas who failed to integrate in England even after twenty five years in the diaspora.

The reason for Uncle Nicholas' return remains obscure in the text. Uncle Nicholas' return is important in return migration especially when exploring the metaphor of return to the homeland as a result of a failed migration experience in the host country. As such it is important to consider the fact that Uncle Nicholas returns back to Zimbabwe when he had become mentally deranged. Uncle Nicholas' mental illness can be understood as a symbol of his failure to integrate in England. This is also exemplified by Gappah's (2009) Peter in 'Something Nice from London.' Peter returns to Zimbabwe from London in his ashes and is packed in a small envelope for his burial. Cassarino (2004) refers to such return as compelled return since the return is not the result of the migrant's decision. Neo-classical theorists argue that return only occurs as a result of the migrant's failed experiences abroad and seems to corroborate Uncle Nicholas' traumatic experiences in the diaspora and his decision to return.

Upon his return to Zimbabwe Uncle Nicholas is rushed straight to the 'psychiatric unit of Harare Hospital' (p. 47). His admission into the psychiatric section alludes to the issue of space and how it relates to the idea of return migration. Uncle Nicholas could not be accommodated in any other physical space except the psychiatric hospital from which he was supposed to be reintegrated into his country of origin. Thus, at a symbolic level, his admission into the psychiatric section of the hospital soon after his arrival is a reference to the marginalised space that returnees are made to occupy after their return. This has an impact on the identity of Uncle Nicholas whose identity shifts from being the pride of his family to a burdensome individual incarcerated in madness. As noted by Woodward (1970) identity is not static but it is fluid and this fluidity is seen when the narrator observes that 'In the early

years, my father made sure everybody in the street and beyond knew that his young brother Nicholas Musoni [...] was studying clinical pharmacology at the University of London' (p. 49). This demonstrates that Uncle Nicholas was at one point a source of pride to his family. However, this pride transmuted into disdain upon his return:

But in the days after Uncle Nicholas' death and before his own suicide my father rarely talked about him. When he did he no longer referred to him as my 'kid brother' but as 'that unfortunate brother of mine. (p. 49)

Therefore, upon his return to Zimbabwe with nothing to write home about, Uncle Nicholas' identity is reconfigured and redefined from a potentially successful individual to a failure who returns to his country of origin insane.

The social network theory emphasizes the importance of communication between the migrant and the stayee population in the country of origin as an important reintegration tool upon the migrant's return. The stayee population is one of the essential agency in the reintegration process of the return migrant. Uncle Nicholas' communication with his family in Zimbabwe is largely flawed. The narrator notes that:

For the last eight years of his self-imposed exile he had stopped writing altogether. My father wrote to him regularly but in the end there was no such person at that address. Nobody knew what Uncle Nicholas was doing or where he was doing it. (p. 48)

An individual's degree of attachment to his/her country of origin during the migrant's stay abroad is important in the re-adaptation process. However, Uncle Nicholas' ties with Zimbabwe were loose as most of his relatives hardly knew him. Markowitz and Stefansson (2004) note that homecoming can be so traumatising that one would feel out of place in a

place which has always been imagined as home. Uncle Nicholas' failure to reintegrate back home in Zimbabwe reaches its climax when he commits suicide. The suicide can be interpreted as a response by Uncle Nicholas not only to his failure to reintegrate but also a metaphor of failure to be accommodated in Zimbabwe, hence his stay in the psychiatric hospital.

This section considered 'A wasted land' where I argued that Mandishona depicts return migration as a traumatic experience that is characterised by madness and ultimately leads to suicide. The suicide is a concrete metaphor of failure to adapt and fashion identities that are largely flexible, adaptive and reflexive. The next section analyses 'A wasted land' where return migration is again depicted as essentially characterised by failure and the assumption of deceptive identities.

2.3 Return migration and strategic deception in 'A secret sin'

The previous section analyses 'A wasted land' where I argued that Mandishona depicts return migration as a traumatic experience that is characterised by madness and ultimately leads to suicide. However, this section examines 'A secret sin' and seeks to show how return migration is related to the development of identities predicated on deception. The story 'A secret sin' explores the experiences of Jerry Machingauta's failed migration experience in England. Jerry Machingauta migrated to England in 1974 at the age of nineteen to study Civil Engineering. Jerry returns back to Zimbabwe after having received a telegram informing him of his father's sickness. It is this telegram which compels Jerry Machingauta to return to Zimbabwe. Despite the fact that the telegram was compelling, one cannot categorize Jerry Machingauta as a forced returnee in the theoretical sense of the term. Jerry Machingauta can be categorised as a decided returnee as he returns back to Zimbabwe out of his own consent. Cassarino (2008) argues that a compelled returnee is a migrant who returns to his country of

origin due to unfavourable factors which interrupt the migration cycle. Cassarino (2008) elaborates that decided return refers to the migrants who choose on their own to return to their countries of origin. However, there is more to Jerry Machingauta's return decision which has to be investigated for one to fully explore the return, space and identity complexities highlighted in the story.

Jerry Machingauta's return and arrival in Zimbabwe is an antithesis of his departure to England. No one awaits Jerry at the airport upon his arrival to Zimbabwe. Markowitz and Stefansson (2004) observe that homecomings can be much more disturbing than settling in other parts of the world especially when confronted by downright hostility and lack of welcome from the stayee population in the homeland. We are therefore told that:

There was nobody waiting for you at the airport when you arrived... There was none of the incandescent jubilation that accompanied your departure; none of the wild ululating. (p. 64)

This lack of welcome upon the migrant's return can result in the disillusionment of the returnee. Markowitz and Stefansson (2004) concur that the hostility which diasporic homecomers experience upon their return to the homeland can leave the return migrants disillusioned and disappointed and sometimes feel alienated from their country of origin. Jerry Machingauta appears disillusioned as he quietly observes the city in the taxi since he has no one to talk to or tell him about the changes which have taken place in the country or the city in particular during his protracted years in England. Stefansson (2004) argues that return to the home country maybe rife with difficulties for the returnee, especially when the society of return has been changed in the interim by political upheaval, war or economic crisis. Such is clearly the case for Jerry Machingauta who left Zimbabwe (then Rhodesia) during the war only to return in the post-colonial era and as such the country as a whole must

have had changed in the interim and this is thus disillusioning for Jerry Machingauta who receives no welcome upon arrival. The narrator observes this disillusionment through the reiteration that: ‘How different it had been that balmy day in October 1974 when you left, a starry-eyed nineteen-year-old with a grand vision of a bright future.’ (p. 64). This statement reflects that things had changed during Jerry Machingauta’s protracted stay in England and therefore, there was need for strong reintegration and unlike Venus in the story ‘Smoke and Ashes’ in Mandishona’s *White Gods Black Demons*, who receives a welcome from her friend at the airport which would then assist her in the reintegration process in the period of her return to Zimbabwe as she is told about changes which have taken place, Jerry Machingauta’s return is not accompanied by such a welcome. The narrator clearly reflects the disillusioning and lonely experience of Jerry Machingauta’s return by stating that: ‘After completing the arrival formalities you sat alone in the back of a battered taxi’ (p. 64). Therefore, for Jerry Machingauta, return is a solitary and lonely journey.

Jerry’s father request demands him to articulate his life experiences in England: ‘Tell me about England, my son. Tell me about the land of the white man. The land of the BBC, the Queen, cricket and snow.’ (p.64). Jerry chose to talk about the English landscape, and about the infrastructure which has little bearing to his life experience in England. The above noted request by the Jerry’s father reflects the unequal relationship between the coloniser and the colonised. It reflects the colonial context of England as the metropolis and Zimbabwe as the periphery. This therefore leads one to the concept of Orientalism by Said (1978). The ‘land of the white man’ is as such the centre to which people in the periphery migrate to and consequently, return from and as such their identities should be perceived as shaped by the coloniser-colonised relationship inherent in the host country England which is perceived as the centre. This coloniser-colonised relationship in migration is also reflected in *Harare*

North (2009) by Brian Chikwava and hence the title *Harare North* which is reflective of England as the metropolis or the centre. This explains why Jerry Machingauta responds to the request by describing the infrastructure in the land of the ‘big brother’ to Zimbabwe (England) which is therefore the metropolis with more sophisticated infrastructure. The third person narrator notes that:

You told him about the glass buildings of the West End and the historic steel and concrete bridges of the River Thames that united opposite shores without touching the water, structures that ingeniously spanned space without ever seeming to belong to it.
(p. 64)

Therefore, as a strategy to be reaccepted in the origin country, Jerry Machingauta chose to show his knowledge of the metropolitan country England which his father seems to hold in high esteem and describes it as the land of the Queen who appears to reign over Zimbabwe as well as he describes him as ‘the Queen’ and not the Queen of England. This reinforces Said’s (1978) concept of Orientalism where everything about Europe is regarded in high esteem and everything about the ‘Other’ is regarded as primitive.

Jerry Machingauta chooses to create and portray a pseudo-identity to his father for him to be reaccepted in the origin country. Markowitz and Stefansson (2004:12) clearly postulate that upon return to the homeland the returnee has to fight to fit in ‘you have to create another place in that place you left behind’. Jerry Machingauta chooses to create a space of misrepresentation of the actual things which conspired in the host country England. His father asks him: ‘And your life in England? How was your life in England, my son?’ (p. 65). This request by Jerry Machingauta’s father leads Jerry to misrepresent and deliberately obliterate the confession of his true life in England which was an antithesis to what his father expected him to become. Cassarino (2004) argue that returnees may be faced with social pressures

while at the same moment trying to renegotiate their places in the society. For Jerry his father's request becomes pressure to his psyche since he has much more to restrain than to tell his family. For his father Jerry was his only son in whom he thrust all hope just like Lucifer Mandengu in Charles Mungoshi's *Waiting for the Rain* (1957) in whom his father thrusts a lot of trust more than his other children. This is reflected in the following reiteration: 'You were the one amongst his three children who showed any promise, the only one who seemed destined for greater things.' (p. 62). Therefore, Jerry was a beacon of hope for his family and therefore to be reaccepted back in the family through his father, Jerry Machingauta did not have to give a true confession of the life he lived in England.

Jerry Machingauta does not want his father to know that he failed to take heed of his advice upon his departure to England. The narrator notes that, 'And when you finally left for England your father warned you about the dangers of unknown cities, about the bright lights of Babylon camouflaging a deep internal rot.' (p. 62)

The third person narrator's exploration of the back-stage of the mind of the character Jerry reflects that Jerry Machingauta experienced an identity shift during his stay in 'the land of the Queen' where he chased after the queens of the land clearly ignoring his father's warning against 'Babylon' a Biblical allusion which alludes the rot of sin and immorality in the land of the ungodly. Jerry Machingauta appears to have had been sexually involved with numerous white ladies some of whom he cohabited with even without the consent of their parents as is in the case of Zoey Bellingham who is a young teenager and he stays with her without the consent of her parents: 'First there was Zoey Bellingham, a bespectacled and loose-limbed teenager whom you met in a pub in 1977 and lived with for a whole year without her parents' consent.' (p. 65). Therefore, three years after his arrival in the host country (England), Jerry Machingauta ceased to take heed of his father's advice and warning

about the dangers in 'Babylon'. And it is this that Jerry Machingauta has to keep in the back-stage of his mind so as to appear as though he took heed of his father's advice. From this perspective Jerry Machingauta assumes the identity of a deceiver upon his return to the homeland so as to be reaccepted by his family.

Therefore, Jerry chose to be reaccepted by his 'own people,' through the obliteration of the truth of his sexual identity which he assumed in England and which has a bearing to his return identity. This misrepresentation of the returnee's identity in return migration is not uniquely Jerry Machingauta's attribute but this is also reflected in the P.O. Box TV's text 'Wenera' (2014) where Bhutisi seeks to misrepresent facts about his stay in neighbouring South Africa but this strategy fails to work since Boss Kheda realises Bhutisi's lies. Gappah (2009) in the story 'My Cousin Sister Rambanai' also reflects that the misrepresentation of the truth is one of the strategies employed by the returnees of failure upon the return to the origin country. Rambanai also misrepresents the truth not only about her life and experience in the United States of America but also about her return to Zimbabwe. Therefore, misrepresentation of facts is one of the commonly used reintegration strategies by return migrants upon their return to the origin country. The question which remains unanswered is: will the strategy work for Jerry Machingauta or it will become flawed as is in the case of Bhutisi in 'Wenera' (2014) and Rambanai in 'My Cousin Sister Rambanai'? This question becomes paramount especially after considering the utterance of Jerry Machingauta's father that: 'Always tell the truth, my son. The good thing about the truth is you don't have to remember what you said.' This reiteration compels Jerry Machingauta to remember everything he is to tell his family members for the reintegration strategy to be successful.

Jerry Machingauta keeps secrets from his father and family members as he gives an account of the life he lived in England, that is, over and above keeping secrets about his immoral

relationships with ‘numerous white girls,’ Jerry also absconded his tertiary studies at Imperial College where he was studying Civil Engineering. Therefore, Jerry Machingauta is ashamed of telling his father that the 30 years he spent in the Diaspora were wasted years since he failed to achieve his childhood dream. The narrator notes that:

You couldn’t tell your father that after Mtizi left you because of alcoholism you abandoned your studies and became a regular at the pubs in your neighbourhood frequented by self-made failures like yourself. (pp. 68-9).

Therefore, Jerry Machingauta’s identity changed from a naïve 19 year old boy pursuing his childhood dreams of becoming an engineer to becoming an alcoholic and it is this that Jerry seeks to deliberately obliterate from his account of the self so that he may be reaccepted into the family. This reminds one of Peter in the story ‘Something Nice from London’ in *An Elegy for Easterly* (2009) by Petina Gappah; Peter migrates to England to pursue his tertiary studies but he abandoned the studies all the same. From this perspective, Jerry Machingauta becomes a failed migrant.

Cassarino (2004) notes that from a Neo-classical perspective return is viewed as the outcome of a failed migration experience which did not yield the expected benefits of migration. Such an argument becomes significant after considering the migration experience of Jerry Machingauta who leaves Zimbabwe in pursuit of better conditions in England, Jerry even tries to secure a job: ‘To make ends meet you got as job as a night shift packer in a supermarket but they made you redundant after four months.’ (p. 69). This shows that Jerry Machingauta’s dream of accumulating income in the host country (England) became fruitless hence his return to the origin country. The Neo-classical view can therefore help to account for Jerry Machingauta’s conviction never to return again to England as reiterated by the narrator: ‘When you left you told her you were coming back but deep down inside you knew

you were not going to do so.’ (p.69). This further suffices the Neo-classical argument that return migration is a process undertaken by failed migrants. That is, for Jerry Machingauta the migration experience to England was fruitless since he even failed to fulfil his own educational dreams to become an engineer as such the narrator notes that: ‘You couldn’t tell your dying father that England was not the paradise of your teenage dreams.’ From such an argument it goes beyond doubt that Jerry Machingauta is a returnee of failure.

The narrator notes that Jerry Machingauta was a regular at the pubs which were ‘frequented by self-made failures’ like Jerry Machingauta. From that perspective Jerry Machingauta is a ‘self-made’ failure who chose the pleasures of ‘Babylon’ and totally ignored his father’s advice and warning against such pleasures. Jerry Machingauta’s alcoholism made him to live a disorderly life which even attracted the attention of the police as noted by the narrator: ‘That night you and three of your mates ended up freezing to the bone in the cells of a south London police station for being drunk and disorderly.’ (p.66). Therefore, Jerry Machingauta is a rebellious child returning back to the homeland after 30 wasted years in the Diaspora. The third person narrator who appears to be Jerry’s back-stage mind warns Jerry: ‘But certain things are better left unsaid, Jerry.’ (p.65). This shows that the most significant reintegration strategy for Jerry Machingauta was to totally annihilate the true account of his life experiences in England.

Jerry Machingauta returned to the origin country not only with the burden of a secret and sinful memory of the life he lived in England but he was also empty-handed upon his return. This fact further substantiates the Neo-classical view to return migration. The third person narrator of the story *A Secret Sin* equates Jerry Machingauta to his aunt another returnee of failure who came back to the origin country not better than she left:

That like your Aunt Peregrina Masuku you had wasted thirty years of life and come back to your father's deathbed with only the clothes on your back and a baggage of bittersweet memories. (p. 69)

The above statement leads one to an important observation that time should be perceived as an important factor in return migration. The time spent in the host country no matter how long or how short has a bearing on the life of the migrant upon return. One might consider an instance of Jerry Machingauta who migrates to England only to return 30 years later which means that he was age 49 at the time of his return and he was therefore grown up and expected to take up family responsibilities but the years he spent in England were 'wasted' since he failed to accumulate tangible and intangible resources during his stay abroad. The importance of time is emphasized on the following citation: 'Thirty years lost in the Diaspora.' (p.62). This shows that the manner in which the migrant spends time abroad is important to the final migration outcome. Therefore, time is an important phenomenon in return migration.

It appears that during his stay in England Jerry chose not to tell anyone about his family since he was ashamed of being associated with them. The narrator notes that: 'You always felt embarrassed to tell her about your past, your illiterate parents and your half-crazed brother Chamu'. (p.67). This reflects that Jerry Machingauta chose to obliterate the story of his life, his past and his family as an integration strategy in England. It appears that during his stay in England Jerry did not want to be associated with his father or family. It is interesting however to note that Jerry returns back to Zimbabwe because of his father's illness, the same father he does not want to be associated with during his stay in England. This takes this investigation to one of the concepts of Bhabha (1994), that is, the concept of ambivalence. Bhabha (1994) notes that ambivalence is the complex interplay of wanting one thing and at the same time

wanting its opposite. If so, it is viable for one to argue that Jerry Machingauta appears to be ambivalent towards his relationship with his family; at one point he decides to identify his family along with himself and tries by all means to formulate strategies for them to reaccept him and on the other hand he does not want anyone to know about them since he is ashamed of them. This clearly reflects that Jerry Machingauta is ambivalent of his relationship with his family.

Cassarino (2004) states that the Social Network Theory views returnees as being bearers of tangible and intangible resources upon their return to the origin country. It is crucial to view return migration with particular focus on these elements so as to successfully characterise the success or failure dichotomy. Jerry Machingauta returns back to Zimbabwe without the financial capital and this is observed through the fact that during his stay in England Jerry Machingauta was unemployed and he stayed in ‘a grimy northern town’ just like the place the narrator of the story Brian Chikwava’s *Harare North* (2009) it is difficult to accumulate income while living under such conditions. After living college Jerry officially became an illegal migrant and it is difficult for illegal migrants to get employment in the host country. This argument becomes pertinent after considering the condition of Shingi in Brian Chikwava’s *Harare North* (2009) who was also unemployed and takes on the lowly paying job as a British Bottom Cleaner (BBC). Whether knowingly or unknowingly, Jerry Machingauta’s father makes an allusion to this by referring to England as ‘the land of the BBC,’ which is not only a lowly paying job but also an emasculating job which the narrator of *Harare North* (2009) despises and as such Jerry Machingauta fails to obtain any financial benefit in England since he was unemployed during his stay abroad. This surely has an impact on the identity of Jerry Machingauta as a failure. Over and above having an impact on the identity of Jerry Machingauta, the lack of tangible and intangible resources might have a

possible impact on circular migration after Jerry realises that these resources are needed in his reintegration experience to the origin society.

At this stage one might consider an appreciation of the third person narrator's declaration on the first sentence of the short story which reflects to the reader at an initial stage that Jerry Machingauta is a returnee of failure. The narrator reiterates that: 'Thirty years lost in the Diaspora. That was you Jerry Machingauta.' This declaration only becomes viable after placing into cognisance Jerry Machingauta's identity shift in England as he lived a life of cohabitation with numerous girls, alcoholism and the abandonment of college and moreover, he fails to accumulate any income to allow his reestablishment upon his return to the origin country. Jerry even fails to tell his father his true life experience in England for the mere reason that he is too ashamed of this life. This therefore cements the narrator's argument that Jerry Machingauta wasted 30 years in the Diaspora. That is, all of Jerry Machingauta's sexual indulgences, alcoholism and abandonment of his Civil Engineering studies culminated to the final failure of Jerry and as such the narrator concludes: 'Time is longer than rope, Jerry.' (p.69). This clearly reflects the impact of time in the migration experience and in the case of Jerry; time proved him a failure who returns home only with clothes on his back and 'a baggage of bittersweet memories' which he carries at the back of his mind. And this therefore justifies Jerry's reintegration strategy of never mentioning the truth of the life he lived in England and this is elaborated by the narrator who notes that: 'And you couldn't tell him that in the thirty years that was your secret life in the land of the BBC, the Queen, cricket and snow you had achieved nothing.' (p.69).

It appears therefore that totally annihilating the truth from his chronicle of the life in England was a viable strategy for Jerry Machingauta to be reaccepted back to the origin country and into his family in particular. It appears that his father expected him to achieve something

especially by migrating to England and this partially explains why Jerry chooses not to tell his father that he was a returnee of failure who had achieved nothing in his thirty years in the Diaspora.

This section has contributed to the endeavour of this chapter (to investigate the metaphor of return migration as failure) by focusing on the idea of deception which is inherent upon the migrant's return to the origin country after failing to integrate in the host country.

2.4 Conclusion

It is paramount to round up by reflecting that as has been shown by the above investigation, the stories 'A Wasted Land' and 'A Secret Sin' depict return migration as a euphemism for a failed migration experience abroad. It is essential to also note that this chapter covered what this researcher refers to as the 1st phase of return migration in Zimbabwe which underlies the return of migrants who left the country during the colonial era and then return after the country's attainment of independence. Jerry Machingauta has been understood as a representation of a certain category of returnees who choose deception to allow their reacceptance in the origin country. Michelle (Uncle Nicholas' daughter) has also been considered as a failed returnee but even as such her failures to integrate in the origin homeland have been understood as being a challenge for most second generation returnees. Uncle Nicholas commits suicide as a response to his failure to reintegrate in the origin country. Therefore, return migration has been depicted in the two short stories as a manifestation of a failed migration experience in the host country to such an extent that it influences the return of the migrant to the origin country. The next Chapter will explore the space struggles which are inherent upon a migrant's return to the homeland through an exploration of the short story 'Kaffir Corn'.

Chapter 3: Return migration and the contestation for space in ‘Kaffir Corn’

‘This is our home...but does it exist outside your memory? Or, if the country remains the same, will you find yourself so changed and uprooted that it refuses to take you back, to reincorporate you to its common life?’ (Cowley in Storti 2001:179)

3.0 Introduction

The previous chapter explored the metaphor of return migration as failure of the migration experience in the host country. The reintegration strategy of deception upon return among other strategies was unearthed and its impact to space and identity issues was as such unveiled.

This chapter intends to carry on with the investigation of return migration, space and identity issues with particular focus on the space conflict which is inherent upon various categories of migrants' return to the homeland in Mandishona's 'Kaffir Corn' in *White Gods Black Demons*.

3.1 Summary of 'Kaffir Corn'

'Kaffir Corn' chronicles the experience of Mr Gwanhure who claims to have had chased away Mr Bradford the former white owner of Pangolin Farm and he has since received a letter from the government giving him ownership to the land from which the white farmer was chased. This version of the story is challenged and made complex by 'war vets' who not only claim to have had chased away 'Mr Allan Bradford' but also being the true owners of the farmland since they claim to be descendents of the original owners of Pangolin Farm, their ancestral land which was grabbed from their ancestors in 1886. Uncle Reggie and his wife Aunt Monica have since returned from South Africa and they hope to benefit from the government's land reform programme as well.

3.2 A Search for 'home' in 'Kaffir Corn'

'The search for homeplace is the mythical search for the axis mundi, for a centre, for some place to stand.' (Lippard 1997: 27)

Return to the homeland brings about a connotation of 'home'. The return home, however, should not be misunderstood as a simple act of 'reinsertion' in the culture and society once left behind as argued by Markowitz and Stefansson (2004). Therefore, the return to the homeland becomes a site for the contestation, and (re)negotiation for space. If such is the case, the paramount question(s) should be: what is 'home'?

The concept of 'home' is further problematized by Markowitz (2004:23) who concurs that: 'Home (land) is a highly packed signifier that encapsulates a concept of a place and encompasses a feeling born of desire, laced with nostalgia. It brings together memories and longings, spatialities and temporalities, immediate family and ancestors long-gone...and physical sensations with tangible and that which cannot be spoken.' Therefore, the concept home upon the return of a migrant to the homeland should be investigated with such an understanding in mind. Such an understanding of home is applied in this section to provide a conceptual understanding of the return of Uncle Reggie and Aunt Monica who return from South Africa after 3 years. Their search for a 'home' upon their return to the homeland is of major interest in this section.

The return story of Uncle Reggie and Aunt Monica in 'Kaffir Corn' serves as a testimonial that upon their return to the homeland, people employ various reintegration strategies as they seek to occupy a certain socio-economic, physical and political space in the homeland and therefore return migration becomes the vortex for the contestation for space in their endeavour to be re-established in the origin country. Uncle Reggie and Aunt Monica have just returned from South Africa after three years.

The story 'Kaffir Corn' provides insufficient information for one to be able to determine the reason for Uncle Reggie and Aunt Monica's return to Zimbabwe. Therefore, one can choose to investigate this from the political, social and economic circumstance in Zimbabwe to

account for their return decision since this might as well account for the reintegration strategies applied by the returnees. Thomas-Hope (1999) concurs that Structural theories of return migration emphasize the importance of: political, economic and social conditions in the countries of origin as major factors in the return decision of the migrants. From this view, one understands that the situation in the country of return has a bearing on the return of migrants to the origin country. If such is the case, the post-2000 Land Reform Programme becomes a force which attracts Zimbabweans to return back to their country of origin.

It appears that Uncle Reggie and Aunt Monica return back from South Africa with the intention of benefiting from the land reform programme. The narrator notes that: ‘The conversation soon turns to farming, with Uncle Reggie and Aunt Monica listening very intently because they are soon to be the beneficiaries of a sizeable tract of farmland to the south of the country.’ (p. 35). This intended possession of land should be understood as an act of making claim to particular geo-physical space upon the return of a migrant as a reintegration strategy to re-establish oneself in the origin country. As cited by Lippard (1997) the search for a home is a search for a ‘centre’, therefore, the possession of land by Uncle Reggie and Aunt Monica can be understood as a search for a centre. Markowitz (2004) also states that return is a homecoming to a home that is created through the act of return and as such Uncle Reggie and Aunt Monica can be understood as being involved in the act of creating a home.

Stefansson (2004) states that home is a return to people who ‘have to take you in’ upon one’s return to the homeland. Therefore, the people to whom one returns to upon the return to the homeland are important since these are the ones who make one feel at home upon one’s return to the origin country. This brings this argument to Gallup’s (1997) Social Network Theory which emphasizes the importance of ties with the stayee population so that returnee

might be reaccepted in the homeland. The importance of family ties upon return is also acknowledged by Markowitz (2004:24) who notes that home 'is the place and its people that you come from and the place and the place and its people that you return to.' Therefore, if people are 'home' then the Gwanhure family is important in the (re)establishment of a home by Uncle Reggie and Aunt Monica. This explains why Uncle Reggie and Aunt Monica accompany the narrator's family to their newly allocated farm. Cassarino (2004) further states that networks in the country of return can provide assistance in providing access to valuable resources of information, employment, housing, business opportunities and social support in the reintegration process. Therefore, the ties between the narrator's family with Uncle Reggie and Aunt Monica can be considered as part of the former's effort (re)construct a home upon their return to Zimbabwe. It is also most probable that through this tie with the narrator's family, Uncle Reggie and Aunt Monica are to benefit from the land reform through the narrator's father's political connections; this can be drawn from the following reiteration by the narrator:

Father knew the government official responsible for the farm allocations in the province of his choice-an old comrade from the embryonic days of the 'Struggle'-and was given a list of half a dozen farms to choose from. (p. 35)

From a Social Network view therefore, Uncle Reggie and Aunt Monica seek to negotiate their re-establishment in the origin country not only by possessing physical space (in terms of the land) but they are also taking advantage of the social ties with the narrator's family to construct a home in the process.

It might even be argued that Uncle Reggie and Aunt Monica also seek to re-establish themselves economically upon their return to the origin country. This argument is substantiated after having considering the fact that the two returnees also seek to employ a

farm manager after having possessed the land. The employment of a farm manager reflects that Uncle Reggie and Aunt Monica intend to take a commercial farming perspective. . This can be evidenced through Aunt Monica's utterance that: "We don't know anything about farming, so we will employ a good farm manager,.'" (p. 37). Therefore, the search and establishment of a home upon a migrant's return to the origin country has economic factors since the finances are some of the essential components that run a home.

3.3 Return to the source: the challenges of belonging

'It is usually assumed that a sense of place, or belonging, gives a person stability. But what makes a place home? Where is home?' [Madan Sarup 1996:1]

The reader of Terdiman (1989) is one who understands that for every discourse there is a counter discourse. In fact, as Terdiman (1989:65) would say 'for every discourse a...counter discourse...no discourse is ever a monologue.' Such also is the nature of the land reform discourse(s) of post-2000 Zimbabwe in relation to return migration which are in constant interaction with each other yet still that interaction should not be perceived with a naïve eye but they should be understood as power interactions as it were. The story 'Kaffir Corn' serves the purpose of a testimonial to such counter interactions of discourses of land possession and return migration. Interestingly, one can perceive the centre and margin interaction from such discourses in the story 'Kaffir Corn' through two counter discursive narratives of the return of the Gwanhure family versus the return of the Haka family. This interaction poses important space and identity questions leaving the concept of belonging to a particular space shrouded in obscurity.

The story 'Kaffir Corn' chronicles a very interesting conflict of space upon the return of migrants to their 'homeland'. There are two types of return which are highlighted in the story,

that is, the return of the Gwanhure family (which represents the government discourse on return migration and the land reform programme) and the Haka family (which represents a historical return) and having mentioned it as such it becomes the task of this researcher to unpack the space and identity issues which arise from such a clash. The researcher will seek to explore and investigate if there is any discourse that can be privileged more than the other as the returnees are visualised in a space conflict. The Haka Family and the Gwanhure family engage in a conflict for the Pangolin Farm in which the later makes ancestral claims so as to substantiate their return to the 'homeland' and the former seek to substantiate their return narrative to the land in question using the authority of the government through a letter from the Ministry.

In order to fully and in the same breathe, logically unpack the space conflict in this story one needs to return to the genesis of the land issue in Zimbabwe and its impact to migration and this researcher argues that this is the simplest avenue through which the conflict between Mr Gwanhure and the Haka family can be understood holistically. Said (1978) concurs that the present is the mirror of the past, and it would be extremely gullible to study it ignoring the role played by the colonialists in shaping the present. The land issue in Zimbabwe can be traced back to the country's first contact with the British settler regime. The British presence in the geopolitical landscape Zimbabwe saw black Africans being driven into arid and semi-arid landscapes of the country making way for white settlers. Charles Mungoshi's (1957) *Waiting for the Rain*, clearly captures the land dynamics in Zimbabwe through the portrayal of Hampshire Estates and Manyene Tribal Trust Lands with the later having poor soils and the former having rich and fertile soils. Zhuwarara (2001:12) states that, 'In the long run, there was a wholesale movement of people which radically altered the demographic map of the country.' Therefore, despite the dislocation having various spiritual implications as has

been noted in various other researches on the land question in Zimbabwe, the dispossession of black Africans from their lands had an impact on migration in Zimbabwe and this heightens the departure of this research from various other researches interested in the land question in Zimbabwe.

In relation to the above, the possession of land by any black African who makes claim of being 'Zimbabwean' is considered as return to the land which was historically dispossessed of them even when one is not a descendent of the generation dispossessed of that particular land and as such one is reminded of the significance of Doris Lessing's (1988) *The Grass is Singing* whereby Moses and other black Africans are represented by the Grass which is reoccupying Dick Turner's farmstead and therefore, that is, the return of the native to the land which was once dispossessed of them. This researcher considers this conception of return migration as the government's discourse on return migration and land distribution otherwise known as land repossession which shows that element of reclaiming and thus the term repossess. There also exists another discourse which problematizes the relationship between the land reform programme and return migration which is a counter discourse to the conventional conception of the same issue, that is, the return of a generation which makes claim to ancestral and historical ties to the land of return. One is reminded of the Aime Cesaire's (1939) *Notebook of a Return my Native Land*. Such a conflict of discourses is clearly captured in Mandishona's *Kaffir Corn*.

The story 'Kaffir Corn' recounts an interesting space conflict upon the return of migrants to their homeland, a conflict which significantly reconfigures the identities of both parties involved. Mr Gwanhure proudly holds a letter from the Ministry which confirms him as the new owner of Pangolin Farm and according to the narrator, Mr Gwanhure cannot wait for the time he can relocate to the newly possessed land and finally become a part of 'Nature'. This

return discourse is countered by the Haka Family which makes ancestral and historical claims to the same land which Mr Gwanhure also makes claim of. The Haka family challenges the return of Mr Gwanhure and literally claims that their return is the authentic return since they have historical ties to the land which was stolen from their forefathers by the white settler Mr Bradford. The Haka family reiterates that: 'This land was taken from Chief Haka by force in 1896, during the First Chimurenga.' (p. 44). Therefore, the Haka family substantiates their claim to the land of return by making reference to historical connections of to the land. Lippard (1997:7) states that the place of return is a 'layered location replete with human histories and memories...it is about connections, what surrounds it, what happened there, what will happen there.' In light of the above, the Haka family makes reference to the imbalances of history, the history of colonisation, the history of dispossession so as to make claim of the space of return. The colonizer-colonized dichotomy is therefore recaptured where the colonized African was marginalised, in fact, to use the terminology of Said (1978), the colonized was Othered, driven away to a marginal geographic space and therefore, in other terms the Haka family is simply reiterating that the colonial grabbing of their land by the white settler regime in 1896 led to their out migration to other geographical spaces and for them the land reform programme has provided an opportunity for them to return to their land which they historically 'belong' to. Raftopoulos and Savage (2005:11) state that during the land reform programme, 'examples have been cited of communities that drew on their historical experiences of dispossession as in Svosve area'. Even as such it is not to be ignored that the land reform programme is replete with a plethora of discourse which interaction one to the other as is represented by the interaction between the Haka family and the Gwanhure family as such the geographical space (Pangolin Farm) remains enshrined in conflict; a space conflict.

Undoubtedly, given the interaction between the Haka family and Mr Gwanhure (including the discourses they represent) one needs to critically extend the theoretical landscape of Postcoloniality from the colonizer-colonized dichotomy to include the margin-centre dichotomy within the same geopolitical landscape so as to fully capture the interaction between the ‘dominant discourse’ and the ‘marginal discourse’ within the same country whereby one discourse is privileged more than the other. Mwanga (2009:1) concurs that African postcolony writers depart from writing back to the colonial centre and focus on ‘local forms of oppression that are seen parallel to classical colonialism’. As such, over and above becoming an avenue through which the Haka family re-migrates to their ancestral homeland, the post-colonial land reform programme in Zimbabwe appears to be an opportunity for the family to rewrite the historical colonial imbalances of land dispossession. Postcoloniality is about rewriting and this further justifies this researcher’s yearning for a shift in the theoretical conception of the Post Colonial Theory when researching on such issues as the return of migrants during the land reform programme. The Haka family critically anchors a need for the re-imagination of the relationship between Zimbabwe’s land reform programme and return migration which clearly subverts the conventional discourse of the programme. Both Said’s (1978) and Bhabha’s (1994) ideas on Postcoloniality will be instrumental in this research on the contestation for space upon return to the ‘homeland’.

Both the Haka family and Mr Gwanhure make claim of violently repossessing the land of their return. Whoever is ‘true’ between the Haka family and the Gwanhure family on the violent dispossession of Mr Bradford of the land, one thing is clear about return migration and space, and that is, one is not simply reinserted in the space of return but rather there is a space struggle whether literal or otherwise. Fanon (1968:35) states that all decolonization (which includes the repossession of one’s land) is always a violent act. This has an

implication on return migration in that, upon return, one is not simply reinserted in the space of return but rather there are contestations to the space which one returns to. Mr Gwanhure just like the Haka family is proud of his violent action against Mr Bradford the white owner of Pangolin Farm as in their effort to repossess the land. Bhabha (1994:86) concurs that mimicry is the process by which the colonised subject is reproduced as ‘almost the same, but not quite,’ therefore, mimicry is the reproduction of the colonizer’s set of behaviours, culture and manners. The British settler regime violently grabbed land from the black Africans and in some cases actually executing them as is the case with Charuma Mafuta in *Kaffir Corn* who was hanged ‘for fighting the British in 1887’ (p. 44). If Mr Mafuta’s claim of violence against Mr Bradford is anything to go by, one can argue that upon their return to their ancestral homeland the Haka family mimics the colonial violence inflicted on their forefathers by the Bradford family. For Bhabha (1994:86) ‘mimicry is at once resemblance and menace’. In light of the violent dispossession of the land from Mr Bradford, mimicry can be considered as ‘menace’ in that it can it provides an avenue for the destruction of contestation of colonial hegemony on the colonized subject. Ashcroft et al (2011) highlight that for Bhabha (1994) mimicry reveals the limitations in the authority of the colonial discourse almost as though colonial authority inevitably embodies the seeds of its destruction. Therefore, through mimicry of the violence and displacement of their forefathers by the Bradford family, the Haka family makes reclamation of their ancestral land upon their return and this return mimics both the violence and the displacement (since Mr Bradford is also displaced) inflicted on their forefathers by their former colonizers.

The return of the Haka family to the Pangolin Farm seems to them a reclamation of the true self in which the self is identified in relation to the land of return. Mr Mafuta who represents the Haka family states that, ‘This is the land of my ancestors, Mr Gwanhure.’ (p. 44). King

(2000) refers to this type of return as the ‘ancestral return’ which in this sense can be paralleled to a ‘return to the source’ as Cabral might have it. It is a return to the source since the migrants are perceived as return to the place of their various histories and memories, in the case of the Haka family, it is a spiritual source since this is the land where their ancestors were not only buried but also executed by the British settlers. For the Haka family, return is more than just an act of repossessing the land but also and most importantly a search for belonging. For King (2000) the ancestral return is an enactment of family heritage and a search for a ‘home’ and belonging. The utterance “This is the land of my ancestors,” critically identifies the Haka family not as mere return migrants but as having strong emotional attachments with the land to which they are returning to. From that perspective the return of the Haka family is the relocation of the dislocated ‘Other’ who through colonial imbalances was driven into marginal spaces.

Despite substantiating their claim to the land of return from a historical perspective, return for the Haka family is noticeably more than just a simple act of going home but it has been enshrined in political and legal implications. The Haka family seeks to rewrite their family history not only from a marginal space but to use the terminology of Spivak their return narrative is reiterated from the position of subalternity since they have no approval from the government; a letter to speak for them as it were. For purposes of this research this researcher borrows Spivak’s chapter title: *Can the subaltern speak?* This is done to pose a question whether the return narrative of the Haka family can be heard more than that of Mr Gwanhure (who holds an approval letter from the government) or not? Stefansson (2004) observes that return migration to the homeland may be rife with difficulties for returnees, especially when such societies have been transformed in the interim through war, political upheaval and economic crisis. The geo-territorial space which the Haka family makes ancestral and

historical claim to, is enshrined in political and legal connotations which includes the disregard of the authority of the government Ministry responsible for the allocation of land. Therefore, the Haka family respond to their marginality by disregarding the authority of the government letter which declares Mr Gwanhure the owner of Pangolin Farm: ‘You are not the first person to come with a letter from the Ministry, Mr Gwanhure. There have been other people before you. Four, five, six... We have lost count.’ (p. 44)

The disapproval of the letters from ‘the Ministry’ to make claim, and repossess the geographical space of their ancestors has strong legal and political implications which shows the complexities which enshrine the second-generation return migration. The persistence of ‘the Ministry’ in sending people to possess the same land which the Haka family makes ancestral claim to reflects that the return of the Haka family to their homeland lacks legal recognition. Markowitz and Stefansson (2004:9) argue that upon return to the homeland ‘returnees may be confronted by lack of legal recognition’ which can leave ‘the returnees disappointed and disillusioned and sometimes alienated from the homeland’.

The Haka family resorts to violence against the Gwanhure family so as to make claim of their ancestral land. Therefore, the Haka family respond to their subalternity by resorting to violence and it appears as though the subaltern in the position such as that of the Haka family can only reassert the self from an Othered position through violence, violence to the white colonizer and violence to the dominant black African who dwells on the same space and seeks to marginalise them. King (2000) rightly argues that ancestral return is an existential journey with various opposing forces which the migrants have to confront. The Gwanhure family ends up fleeing away from the Haka family but Mr Gwanhure tells his family that he is to sort the issue out since he believes that the letter gives him eternal right to repossess the land and the Haka family’s narrative of return is therefore regarded as useless.

There remains a striking and complex identity matrix which remains shrouded in obscurity since one is made to ask questions whose answers are not provided in the short story 'Kaffir Corn'. The narrator notes that: 'What had particularly annoyed my father were Mr Mafuta's parting words as we drove from the house. He had accused my father of being a *muchekadzafa*.' (p. 44)

It is the narrator's grandmother's definition of a *muchekadzafa* that is most compelling:

It means a lazy person who benefits from somebody else's hard work, like a hunter in the habit of finishing off animals already injured by another hunter. That's a *muchekadzafa*. (p. 45).

Mr Mafuta accuses Mr Gwanhure of being a 'muchekadzafa' for the reason that he was trying to possess the land of which he didn't fight for. In a way, this is a way through which the subaltern or rather to use Said's (1978) term the Other speaks back to the centre. Mr Gwanhure in this sense represents the centre since he is privileged by the government over the Haka family. It is interesting, however, to note that, the Haka family just like Mr Gwanhure claim to be the ones who chased away Mr Bradford from the farm and as such anyone who possesses the land without fighting for it is a *muchekadzaka*; a coward. As such, the *muchekadzafa* identity in the story 'Kaffir Corn' poses a critical identity question: who is the *muchekadzafa*? Is it Mr Gwanhure? Is it Mr Mafuta (the Haka family)? This question remains ambiguous since Mr Gwanhure and the Haka family claim to have chased away the former white owner of the farmland, Mr Bradford. Mr Gwanhure makes the same claim of being the one who chased away Mr Bradford from the farm.

As such from the Mr Gwanhure's perspective, the Haka family are the *muchekadzafa* and at the same moment the Haka family perceives Mr Gwanhure as a *muchekadzafa*. McCrone

(2002) argues that the perceptions of other people play an influential role in shaping an individual's identity others can exercise power over individuals through upholding or rejecting a claim to a particular identity. The *muchekadzafa* identity is therefore critical in understanding the condition of the Haka family and their perception by the society as they fight to repossess the land of their ancestors through a contested return to the homeland and the same is also true for Mr Gwanhure.

The identity of the Haka family is also reconfigured by the narrator's father Mr Gwanhure as reiterated by the narrator who states that: 'I have only ever seen him this moody when he talks about the legion of 'sell-outs' who jumped ship during the 'Struggle'. (p. 44)

As such one can argue that the Haka family is also stamped with the 'sell-out' identity since they have betrayed even the rule of the government by dishonouring the letters from the government which give Mr Gwanhure authority of the possession of the land. One can thus notice the counter interaction of the discourses of return migration in relation to the land reform in Zimbabwe. The discourses on the periphery such as that of the Haka family are qualified as 'sell-out' discourses while the dominant discourses are privileged. The Haka family is therefore, considered as 'sell-outs' to the government cause since they dishonour the government rule on the allocation of the land. At this point one can clearly perceive the centre-periphery dichotomy in the post-independent Zimbabwe where the margin speaks back to the centre which is represented by the government and in this case the government is represented by Mr Gwanhure and the periphery is represented by the Haka family. Bhabha (1994:177) argues that 'identity is claimed either from a position of marginality or in an attempt at gaining the centre'. The Haka family is making claim to a certain identity, that is, the identity of being the true, authentic and cultural owners of the land. They make this identity claim from a marginalised position in an attempt to voice their return narrative.

However, the conflict for space in Kaffir Corn between the Haka family and Mr Gwanhure (who represent two conflicting discourses of return to the native land) remains unresolved since Mr Gwanhure assures his family members that he is to take proper action for him to repossess the land from which he has been evicted by the Haka family thereby maintaining the marginal position of the Haka family. From this degree of perception return migration becomes a complex interplay between two discourses as they struggle one against the other for space, consequently, reconfiguring the identities of the parties involved. The story therefore remains shrouded in obscurity on the question: who belongs to the land?

3.4 Conclusion

This chapter has critically examined the return of migrants to the homeland and it reflected how space becomes implicated as a nexus for contestation as migrants seek to create and search for a home upon their return to the homeland. It has been found out that space is the centre of contestation especially when two counter-discourses make claim of the same space upon their return. The researcher problematized the Postcolonial conception of the colonizer-colonized discourses as they interact by extending the framework to understand the relationship between two conflicting discourses from Africans one representing the centre and the other representing the margin. This has been instrumental on the investigation of the contestation for space upon the return of the Haka family and the Gwanhure family.

Chapter 4: Instabilities in the host country and return migration

These foreigners are called on to leave; their shops burned, their street stalls are wrecked, and in fact the government...commands them to go, thus giving their nationals satisfaction

(The Wretched of the Earth 1968:122)

4.0 Introduction

The previous chapter explored the space contestation upon the return of migrants to the homeland. Zimbabwe's land reform program has been problematised as a nexus for the contestation and conflict of space upon the return of different types of migrants to their 'homeland' and as such identities have been realised to be reconfigured on the face of such space conflict. The concept of 'home' was also placed into scrutiny for purposes of gaining a deep understanding on the concept of space upon one's return to the homeland.

This chapter will investigate the socio-economic and political space and identity issues in the return experience of the migrant to the origin country. The chapter will also explore the relationship between return migration and uncertainty and heightened insecurity in the host country in Mandishona's two short stories: 'Blunt Force Trauma' and 'Smoke and Ashes'. As such, issues such as the impact of xenophobia to return migration will be investigated in-depth hence the above cited quotation from Fanon (1968) which highlights the relation between instability in the host country and foreign population displacement.

4.1 Summaries of the stories

4.1.1 'Blunt Force Trauma'

The story unfolds around a death of Eldridge Gunguwo a returnee from South Africa who struggles to reintegrate himself in Zimbabwe. Insight is provided on the cause of death of

Eldridge and has been identified as Blunt Force Trauma. As the story unfolds one learns that Eldridge had been keeping a lot of secrets from his family and friends and this leads to complexities around the character of Eldridge.

4.1.2 'Smoke and Ashes'

The story is set during the March 2008 and June 2008 Zimbabwean elections. It is centred on the temporary yet significant return of Venus to Zimbabwe and she has just returned to cast vote. The story is told through the lenses of an unnamed first person narrator who is close friends with the returnee.

4.2 The great storm in paradise: return migration and reintegration in 'Blunt force trauma'

"We're requesting those who come from outside to please go back to their countries".

[King Goodwill Zwelithini in *The Herald* 17/03/2015]

Mandishona's 'Blunt Force Trauma' chronicles the return and reintegration narrative of Eldridge Gunguwo who flees South Africa's xenophobic culture by running into the arms and 'comfort' of his origin country yet still this leads him into a tragic death. For clarity purposes it is essential to appreciate the significance of the title of the story 'Blunt Force Trauma' at this initial stage. Wikipedia refers to Blunt Force Trauma as physical trauma to the body which results from physical attack, impact or injury. This is the very same cause for Eldridge's death which is suggestive of the intensity of the political violence in his country of return. Therefore, the title of the story (Blunt Force Trauma) signifies not only the political violence in the country but the failures of the reintegration strategies employed by returnees upon their return to the homeland and as such the title suggests the shattered hopes of the returnees to be successfully reincorporated in the origin country. One can only but ask the

question: is the author suggesting that once one leaves the country of origin, there is no hope of being reaccepted in the origin country? The retort to this question is best provided through an investigation of the return narrative 'Blunt Force Trauma' through the packing and unpacking of space and identity complexities which surround the return of Eldridge Gunguwo to Zimbabwe.

The mobility of Zimbabweans into neighbouring South Africa has a long historical background dating way back to the colonial era to the present day. Crush (2010) argues that Zimbabweans even during the colonial period Zimbabweans migrated to South African, plantations, mines and farms. Post independent Zimbabwe did not bring about a closure of the movement into South Africa hence youths continued to migrate into South for socio-economic and political reasons. Such is the case with Mandishona's Eldridge who migrates to South Africa in 1992. It is however, interesting to note that Eldridge migrates to South Africa at a time whereby Zimbabwe's economic was declining due to the negative effects of ESAP; that is, Hammar *et al* (2003) state that ESAP resulted in the deindustrialisation of Zimbabwe and this obviously resulted in the influx of Zimbabweans into neighbouring countries especially South Africa for economic reasons.

South Africa therefore became a land of opportunity for Zimbabwean youths as argued by Hungwe (2012). This perspective is reinforced through the Eldridge in the short story 'Blunt Force Trauma' who even refers to South Africa as 'a true paradise on earth' (p. 74). Being in South Africa for Eldridge is therefore a dream come true. In confirmation of his reiteration that South Africa is 'a true paradise on earth', Eldridge assumes a rich life and luxurious in the host country South Africa since he manages to possess financial prowess despite of his marginal position in South Africa where foreigners, Zimbabweans in particular are branded with the '*makwerekwere*' identity which is a highly marginal space wherein the migrant is

perceived as a criminal and hindrance to South African development. The implications of the *makwerekwere* identity will be unearthed in this section at a later stage. Eldridge's financial muscle in South Africa is reflected through his ownership of a 'mini-cab business'.

Eldridge's 'paradise' is invaded through xenophobic attacks which result in the diminishment of his mini-cab business by South African locals through an act of what can be best described as arson. Eldridge is accused of being a '*kwerekwere*' who is strange and unwanted in South Africa. One of Eldridge's South African friends reiterates the following: 'They hate your success because you are a *kwerekwere* [...] They don't like successful foreigners here.' (p. 75)

The above reiteration is a typical instance of a xenophobic culture which various scholars refer to as part of South Africa's culture of violence and fear. Neocosmos (2006) defines xenophobia as a political discourse of foreigners in both state and citizens in post-Apartheid South Africa. From this standpoint one can argue that the xenophobic eviction of Eldridge from South Africa reflects that no matter one's duration of stay in the host country or economic stability in the host country, the host country remains an unstable geopolitical space for non-locals since they endlessly assume a peripheral space as is represented by Eldridge. That is, despite the fact that Eldridge stayed in South Africa for 'a decade and a half' he remains an outsider and this brings with it the great question of home and belonging in migration literature. This great question of home and belonging in migration literature is to be developed and explored in-depth later in this section.

The reading and understanding of the story 'Blunt Force Trauma' makes one argue that migrants possess a marginalised identity in the host country since they are subject to resentment and spite by the local population on the basis of their 'foreignness'. The *makwerekwere* identity is one such form of identity which is imposed on the Zimbabwean

migrants in South Africa as is exemplified by Eldridge who is referred to as a '*kwerekwere*'. Hungwe (2012:133) argues that 'the term *Makwerekwere* describes non-South Africans in South Africa and reflects the level of resentment the host population has for non-South Africans.' This resentment of the *makwerekwere* in South Africa culminates in xenophobic attacks in which foreigners are literally robbed of their possessions, killed or displaced from their geographical spaces. Eldridge is one of such victims of South Africa's xenophobic culture in which his properties are demolished by South Africa's local population. This can be understood from a historic stand-point where in May 2008 xenophobic attacks resulted in the death of 62 people and displaced more than 80 000 people (Hungwe 2012). Therefore, even though Eldridge in *Blunt Force Trauma* becomes a victim of such attacks in 2004, his situation can be paralleled to this historical event which resurged in April 2015 where several other foreigners were attacked, killed or displaced through xenophobic attacks. From such a perspective Eldridge becomes a representation of the thousands of victims of xenophobia.

These xenophobic attacks trigger Eldridge to rethink the notion of home and belonging and he therefore, leaves South Africa after the xenophobic storm in his 'paradise'. The notion of 'home' needs to be reshaped from scholarly perceptions for one to fully understand Eldridge's final decision to leave South Africa for Zimbabwe despite of the fact that he was financially stable in the host country. The concept of home is essential in migration literature since it is often assumed that return migration involves an act of going home. Often times home is juxtaposed to the host country and for Stefansson (2004) home is conceived in association with comfort and security and this is specially so in the event of instabilities in the host country whereby one longs for 'home' which is secure and comfortable. Therefore, during the stay abroad, the origin country is understood in contrast to the host country, it is

this interaction of two divergent perceptions of homely spaces and other spaces that Buttimer and Seamon (1980) refer to as the ‘dialectics of home’.

The fact that Eldridge fled from the unstable, xenophobic South African geopolitical space to Zimbabwe reflects the interaction of the idea of home and other spaces in his mind whereby he conceived home as a more secure space, this can be understood as part of what Rushdie refers to as ‘imaginary homelands’ which implies that home might just be a utopian idea which is difficult to realise. This idea of home as an unachievable space shall be developed latter in this section. Nevertheless, it is clear that for Eldridge, the xenophobic attacks on him and against his business meant that South Africa was an unsecure space which had to be left as was advised by his friend. Skey (2011) argues that home can only be perceived as a space of stability when defined in relation to those spaces which fail to provide a sense of familiarity or comfort. This as well provides an explanation for Eldridge’s desperate act of returning to Zimbabwe after spending more than a decade in South Africa. From such an understanding one can argue that for Eldridge return migration is an act of desperation and failure to adapt to the xenophobic environment in the host country where foreign nationals are conceived as *makwerekwere* who are subject to refute and violence. One can therefore argue that Eldridge is a returnee of failure who fails to construct survivalist identities as counter-identities to the marginal *makwerekwere* identity. This is also captured in P.O. BOX T.V’s ‘So Far So Good’ (2015) where Bhutisi returns back to Zimbabwe his origin country after having failed to construct survivalist identities to counter the South African xenophobic violence.

It is interesting to note that upon his return to Zimbabwe, Eldridge’s first notable reintegration strategy is realised through his marriage. Marriage is an important institution in the Shona culture and it signifies maturity and responsibility. Tatira (2010:11) argues that

‘Shona people believe that it is through marriage that an individual is accepted into adulthood and into the spiritual realm and hierarchy (*mudzimu*) after death’. Therefore, the marriage of Eldridge to Melody should be understood as a symbolic act and a crucial reintegration strategy. The narrator reiterates that: ‘A few months after his return, he met and fell in love with Melody...Their daughter Maxine was born at the beginning of 2005...’ (p. 75)

Eldridge’s marriage upon return to Zimbabwe can thus be understood as a symbolic act of creating a home upon one’s return ‘home’. This is crucial in that it helps Eldridge to be reaccepted back into the Zimbabwean Shona culture since marriage is an important institution in this culture since it signifies stability. The speed at which Eldridge marries upon returning to the origin country might be understood as a desperate act of creating a home for oneself upon return and also assume a stable life which is an antithesis to South African life as a foreigner.

It should be noted that the story ‘Blunt Force Trauma’, reflects that reintegration is not a one stage act but it a process. As such Eldridge is shown to seek economic stability in the origin country upon his return to the origin country. Eldridge takes advantage of the country’s electricity crisis so as to achieve economic stability. The narrator notes that: ‘Electricity had become a luxury for most people and Eldridge, a qualified electrician, made a decent living carrying out solar installations and repairing generators.’ (p. 75)

Cassarino (2004) through the Preparedness Theory argues that migrants accumulate tangible and intangible resources during their stay in the host country to facilitate their reintegration upon the return to the origin country. From that angle, Eldridge’s qualification as an electrician can be understood as one of the resources Eldridge returns to Zimbabwe possessing and this becomes his major contrast with other returnees of failure such as Jerry Machingauta in Mandishona’s ‘A Secret Sin’ and Uncle Nicholas in Mandishona’s ‘A

Wasted Land' who both return to the origin country without any resource tangible or intangible to facilitate their reintegration. Eldridge is therefore seen in act of re-establishing himself in the origin country economically.

The reader of 'Blunt Force Trauma' is made to ask the question: at what cost do the return migrants return back to the origin country? This question comes into mind after considering one of the strategies of reintegration used by Eldridge upon his return to Zimbabwe and that is, his strategy of joining the opposition political party. Eldridge therefore assumes a certain political identity in his act of trying to become a part of the society of return and also contribute to the 'development' of the Zimbabwean society. Eldridge coverts his political identity as a tactic to such an extent that not even his wife is of the knowledge that Eldridge is a card carrying member of the opposition party. Eldridge therefore assumes a covert political identity as a tactic which however fails to work and finally leads to his tragic death. It appears that the story 'Blunt Force Trauma' reiterates that one returns to the origin country at the expense of one's own loss of life. The death of Eldridge should therefore be conceived as a failure of reintegration into the origin country and this can also be related to the death of Uncle Nicholas in the story 'A Wasted Land' which has also been appreciated as a symbol for the reintegration failure.

This section has successfully unpacked the relationship between hostility in the host country to return migration. The next section will explore the temporary return of Venus in the story 'Smoke and Ashes'.

4.3 Strategic temporary return migration and the restoration of 'order'

'Going home should mean returning to that firm position which we know, to which we are accustomed, where we feel safe' (Heller 1984: 239)

The story 'Smoke and Ashes' narrates the temporary return of Venus from the United States of America. For a clear understanding of the return narrative of Venus to Zimbabwe it is paramount to explore the significance of the title in relation to return migration. 'Smoke and Ashes' can be taken to signify a complete state of disorder in which things have fallen apart and there is little or no resemblance of the original order of things. This understanding is essential after taking into cognisance the political environment to which Venus returns to. Venus returns to Zimbabwe in the throes of economic and political crisis, the country is thus portrayed to be in a state of sheer disorder. Venus not only returns to Zimbabwe at the time of elections but she returns only to cast a vote which she believes will impact change on the socio-economic setup of the country. The title itself gives the reader little hope that the return migrants can ever change things as they anticipate since the country is in 'Smoke and Ashes' and therefore beyond the state of revival.

As has been reflected in the previous chapters, for one to completely understand return migration and the space and identity complexities that underpin it, it is essential to look at return migration as part of a process whereby one initially leaves the country of origin, stays in the host country and then returns to the origin country. In this way return migration is rightly situated and contextualised. This situation of return migration acknowledges the fact that return migration is a well thought strategy which might or might not have been affected by one's stay in the host country. As is the title of this chapter, this researcher argues that the return of Venus to Zimbabwe is partially pushed by the instability in the host country where she is 'othered' as Said (1978) would say. This argument will be sufficed by the following investigation of the return narrative of Venus to Zimbabwe.

Venus in Mandishona's 'Smoke and Ashes' returns to Zimbabwe in March 2008 for a single purpose, that is, to cast her ballot. The narrator notes that: 'You were coming back home for one purpose, and for one specific purpose only; I want to vote.' (p. 6)

One thing is clear therefore in this story, that is, Venus returns back to Zimbabwe to vote but a lot more is left unanswered especially taking into cognisance the fact that Venus left Zimbabwe in 1998 only to come to cast a vote ten years later which means that she was too distanced from Zimbabwe to be affected by the political and economic landscape of the country to the extent of returning to vote, to effect 'change' as she would argue; the question(s) one would ask then would be: is Venus' return a philanthropic act driven from a heart that seeks to effect change even on matters which do not affect her? Or rather, is the host country so unstable for Venus that she wishes to return to Zimbabwe and she wants to return to Zimbabwe after effecting economic and political change through a vote? These questions will be instrumental in this section as this researcher seeks to unearth the depiction of return migration, space and identity complexities in Mandishona's 'Smoke and Ashes' with particular focus on the relationship between return migration and instability in the host country.

At this stage it is therefore essential to take a critical appreciate from a chronological standpoint the migration narrative of Venus from the point of departure from the origin country up to her integration in the host country and this is done so as to fully unpack the return complexities which underpin her return. More than just leaving Zimbabwe in her mid-twenties, Venus also left her job as an Accountant at a bank in Zimbabwe because the economy of Zimbabwe was in throes at that point in time. The narrator, notes that, 'there was an economic downturn in the country...things were not working for you.' (p. 5). This pushed

Venus to leave the country upon winning an American green card at a lottery. Therefore, the reasons for Venus' initial departure for the United States of America were largely economic.

In the United States of America Venus takes up a job at an abattoir, the narrator describes Venus' job as follows: 'plunking broilers and road runners eight hours a day, six days a week.' (p. 17). This shows that despite her Accounting degree, Venus' identity is redefined and she takes up a marginal job which she is even 'embarrassed' to let people know of and as such she lies to the narrator that she works at an 'international financial institution' because of this embarrassment. This is the same issue with Rambanai in Gappah (2009) *An Elegy for Easterly* in the short story 'My Cousin Sister Rambanai' who lies to her family upon return that she worked for an insurance company in Texas yet she was a dancer. Haggins and Schech (2000) argue that most migrant workers find themselves under utilizing the qualifications and skills upon arrival in the host country and engage in work that has no relation to their qualifications. This is also captured and clearly reflected in Chikwava (2009) *Harare North* through characters such as Shingi and Aleck who work as BBC (British Bottom Cleaners). Concerning this engagement in embarrassing jobs such as that Venus is involved in; the narrator of *Harare North* reiterates the following: 'Aleck picking old peoples kaka of bed and coming here walking around like he is district administrator...' (p. 118)

The same applies to Venus who plucks chicken in the United States of America which shows a radical redefinition of identity from a job in a bank to a job in an abattoir for plucking chickens. This unstable situation which sees a Venus engaging into a job outside her Accounting qualification might be read as one of the push factors which push Venus to return to Zimbabwe to cast a vote, to make her voice be heard as she says: 'I want to vote. [...] I want change.' (p. 6) The temporary return of Venus to Zimbabwe should therefore be read

from such an understanding for one to have a clear understanding of the identity complexities which underlie her return story.

It is important to note that upon her return, Venus is highly ambivalent about her relationship with Zimbabwe. The term ambivalence was developed into the postcolonial theory by Bhabha (1994) and it is the complex mix of attraction and repulsion which involves wanting one thing and also wanting its opposite. It is fact that Venus comes back to Zimbabwe to cast her vote and yet still her ambivalent view towards the country is one that one cannot help ignore. Venus distances herself from her Zimbabwean identity yet still she associates with Zimbabwe politically, thus, she returns back to Zimbabwe to vote, to impact change as she would argue. The narrator takes note of this ambivalence by citing that: ‘I noticed your use of the second person singular, the subtle distancing of your newly Americanised soul...’ (p. 7).

Venus is ambivalent because she is never simply or completely separated from Zimbabwe as seen by her need to vote so that she could contribute in the change for the better as it were. Therefore, Venus is associated with Zimbabwe in that she wants change in the country and at the same time, she is also affiliated to the host country (United States of America) which impacted greatly to her identity through mimicry. The narrator notices this change in Venus as he argues that she is not the same Venus of 1998; most significant to this identity shift is the plastic surgery on Venus: ‘The crooked bridge of the nose is now straight, your lips narrower, meaner-plastic surgery, perhaps?’ (p. 8).

If it is anything to go by that Venus puts on a plastic surgery, this might be attributed to the stereotypes and denigrations that follow the African in the West. This is best described in Said (1978) *Orientalism* where the East is perceived as the West’s Other. This can as well apply to the African situation whereby everything that is not Western is perceived as inferior, uncultured and immoral. Said (1978) argues that the orient is everything that is opposite to

the occident which in this case refers to the West. Therefore, the process of Othering is invested on difference and sameness to such an extent that anything that is not Western is Othered as Spivak would argue. This best explains the issue of Venus's plastic surgery which might be understood as a reaction to the myths and stereotypes associated with migrants of African origin the West. Therefore, Venus mimics the Americans through her plastic surgery as a response to those prejudices and myths associated with Africans. The concept of mimicry was developed into postcolonial theory by Bhabha (1994) who argues that mimicry describes a situation whereby the colonial or dominant culture encourages the colonized subject to 'mimic' the colonizer by adopting the colonizer's culture and set of habits. Therefore, Venus can best be understood to be mimicking the American culture which is symbolised by the plastic surgery and this further explains the change which the narrator notices on Venus upon her return to Zimbabwe.

Venus' purpose of return fails since she fails to impact change in the country through the cast of a ballot, that is, she fails to impact the regime change which she desires and strongly believes would change the economic landscape of the country. It appears to the reader that unlike Eldridge Gunguwo in 'Blunt Force Trauma', who is desperate, Venus has an option and she takes advantage of her in-betweenness by returning back to the United States of America. The term in-between or liminal space was developed into Postcoloniality by Bhabha (1994) and in-betweenness is best described as a state of neither being here nor there. Therefore, Venus takes advantage of her in-betweenness and leaves Zimbabwe for the United States of America. Most importantly, one can argue that return migration is not an end to the migration cycle but should be understood as a part of a large migration process.

4.4 Conclusion

This chapter has therefore successfully reflected the depiction of the relationship between instability in the host country and return migration. It has been argued that the conceived homely spaces in the minds of migrants (as is exemplified by Eldridge) drives them to return to the country of origin which is perceived as secure and comfortable. Marriage as an institution in the Shona culture has also been implicated to impact on the reintegration and stability of the migrant upon return. It can be argued therefore, that return migration is an active process of (re)creating a home upon return to the origin country. The story of Venus in ‘Smoke and Ashes’ brought with it dynamics in the conceptualisation of return migration, a relationship has been realised between return migration, instability in the host country and the need to impact change in the origin country through a critical analysis of the return narrative of Venus. It can be argued therefore, from the investigation engaged in this chapter that instability in the host country results to two types of return migration which are: temporary and permanent. This conclusion has been reached after an analysis of the two stories ‘Blunt Force Trauma’ and ‘Smoke and Ashes’. The following chapter will be a conclusion of this research on return migration and the space and identity complexities which underlie return migration. More than just drawing a conclusion from this and the previous chapters, the next chapter will explore whether the aims and objectives of this research have been achieved.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

The previous chapters in this research investigated the depiction of return migration, space and identity in Daniel Mandishona’s *White Gods Black Demons* (2009) with particular focus on five short stories, these are: ‘A Secret Sin’, ‘A Wasted Land’, ‘Kaffir Corn’, ‘Blunt Force

Trauma' and 'Smoke and Ashes'. These short stories were not selected out of the vacuum but rather they were carefully selected with great attention to three phases of return migration in Zimbabwe.

This researcher therefore segmented this research on the depiction of return migration, space and identity in *White Gods Black Demons* (2009) into three phases. The first phase constituted of the migrants who left the origin country in the post-independent era for various reasons and an investigation on their return, space and identity complexities was done in Chapter 2. The second phase was mainly interested in the post-2000 era with particular attention to the land reform programme, Chapter 3, therefore, explored the contestation for space upon the return of migrants to the homeland with particular focus on the land reform as the hub for space conflict upon the return of migrants. The third phase is a result of the researcher's need to find out whether or not return migration might be impacted by the unstable situation(s) in the host country and therefore Chapter 4 investigated the relationship between instability in the host country and return migration.

Before one can measure whether or not this research fulfilled the purpose and objectives of this research it is important to provide a brief and particular overview of Chapter 1 since it is that the objectives were identified and the gap being covered by the research was explored. More than just mapping the perspectives to return migration, space and identity and contextualizing return migration in Zimbabwe, the first chapter was both a map and compass for this researcher since it here that the objectives of the research study were stipulated. This researcher announced that the major objective of the research is based on the need to establish the multiple dimensions of return migration in Daniel Mandishona's *White Gods Black Demons* (2009). The questions guiding the research towards its objectives and goals highlighted the need to unveil:

- The driving forces behind return migration in Zimbabwe
- The strategies of reintegration upon return
- Whether or not return migration results in the reconfiguration of identities

The research unveiled the driving forces behind return to the origin country which include failure of integration of the migrant in the host country. This has been highlighted through Jerry Machingauta in 'A Secret Sin' and Uncle Nicholas in 'A Wasted Land'. Uncle Nicholas reflects a high level of failure of integration in the host country England which is signified by his mental illness, this character has been juxtaposed to Gappah's Peter in the story 'Something Nice from London' in *An Elegy for Easterly*. Jerry Machingauta also fails to integrate in the host country England as is shown through his immorality through womanizing and he also abandons his studies and he doesn't wish to return to England because of this failure of integration. Therefore, return migration from this perspective can be argued to be a metaphor of failure, where return can only be achieved after the migrant's failure to integrate in the host country.

Instability in the host country has been shown to be one of the reasons which impact to the return of Zimbabweans to their country of origin. Due to xenophobia the character Eldridge in 'Blunt Force Trauma' is shown to return to Zimbabwe despite of his economic prosperity in the host country South Africa. Therefore, instability in the host country has been shown to impact to the return migration of Zimbabweans.

The Haka family in the story 'Kaffir Corn' provide a different dimension all together on the driving force behind return migration in Zimbabwe in that their return has been argued to be a return to rewrite family history and therefore their return was influenced by the need to rewrite their family history of colonial dispossession and they seek to rewrite this history through the repossession of their ancestral land. It is important to note that the return migrants

in all the stories investigated in the previous chapters reflected that return migration is a positional strategy in its own right.

The return migrants in the previous chapters reflected that various migrants employ diverse reintegration strategies upon their return to the origin country or homeland. It has been argued that Jerry Machinguta in 'A Secret Sin' employs the strategy of lying and leaving out the truth of the migration experience abroad so as to be reaccepted by his family and society. This researcher has argued that this reintegration is familiar with other returnees such as Rambanai in Gappah (2009) *An Elegy for Easterly* in the short story 'My Cousin Sister Rambanai' and this reintegration strategy can also be associated with P.O.BOX T.V's 'Wenera' where Bhutusi also employs the same strategy of reintegration. The story 'Blunt Force Trauma' also reflected a plethora of strategies of reintegration applied by Eldridge which include among others, his marriage to Melody which this researcher has argued that this act of marriage should be perceived as a reacceptance tactic upon return.

Challenges of reintegration have noted in the investigation which includes lack of legal recognition as is the case with the Haka family in 'Kaffir Corn'. This challenge has been shown in the throes of a space conflict upon the return of migrants to the 'homeland'. Therefore, the challenges for reintegration have been shown to have space and identity complexities which underpin them. Even Jerry Machingauta's strategy of misrepresenting fact or lying to his family as it were has been shown as a response to this challenge of reintegration in which the return should be provided with moral and spiritual space upon return to the homeland. The climax of this challenge of reintegration space and identity has been shown through Uncle Nicholas who finally commits suicide as a response to his failure to claim a particular space for himself upon return, infact, Uncle Nicholas is argued to have been subjugated to a marginal space upon the return to the origin country.

In that note, return migration has been shown to result in the reconfiguration of identities upon return. Uncle Nicholas' (*A Wasted Land*) identity is reconfigured from the source of pride of his family to the shame of his family upon his return to Zimbabwe and as such upon his return he is subjected to a marginal space as is symbolised by his incarceration in the psychiatric unit of a hospital upon his return. The identity of Jerry Machingauta is clearly reconfigured soon after his return to the origin country and he assumes another 'better' yet artificial identity. The fluidity of identity has also been shown through the character Venus who upon return fails to identify herself with her country of origin, a situation which leaves her in an in-between space.

It can thus be argued from the above discussion that return migration is replete with various dimensions in Zimbabwean literature which range from forced return migration to voluntary return migration within which various other complexities can be unpacked which include the relationship of return migration and failure of the migration experience abroad. It can thus be argued that return migration can be perceived as a reflection of failure of the migration experience abroad (with only a few exceptional cases which include that of the Haka family). This researcher argues that return migration is undoubtedly packed with space complexities which result in the conflict for space upon the return of migrants as has been shown in chapter 3 of this research. It can also be argued that return migration is a positional strategy in response to socio-economic and political factors both in the host country and the origin country; this argument is sufficed after taking into cognisance the depiction of Venus (*Smoke and Ashes*) whose return is influenced by the need to cast a vote which changes the political and economic situation in the origin country and also Eldridge (*Blunt Force Trauma*) who returns to Zimbabwe because of the social landscape of the host country South Africa.

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