

ABSTRACT

This paper explores the reconciliatory possibilities of the theatrical piece *Rituals* (2011) penned by Stephen Chifunyise and directed and produced by Daves Guzha. The *Rituals*' theatrical piece memorialises as well as condemns a culture of violence demonstrated during the 2008 harmonised elections in Zimbabwe. Through "ritualized" performance, a community embarks on a metaphysical journey focused on exorcising the ghosts of political violence still haunting individuals, communities, politicians, and the nation as a whole. These day-to-day modes of healing and reconciliation, dramatised through *Rituals*, suggest that communities can create platforms for peace, cultivate tolerance and permit dialogue to prevail if victims are brought face-to-face with perpetrators of violence with the hope of ironing out political differences. It is going to be argued in this paper that although the political drama in *Rituals*, centralises politicians as major culprits that fomented violence, its failure to go beyond political meta-narratives constricts its capacity to explore the complexities of violence in Zimbabwe. These complexities are informed by factors such as lack of voter education, existence of age-old grudges, and fragmentation of community values, among others. Another critical strand to be explored in this article is one that interrogates *Rituals*' potential to reach out to the wider audiences at grassroots levels, since the political drama in *Rituals* speaks to the "upper class" and intellectual circles, thereby foreclosing critical debate and "voices" that should emerge from "below" which are communities many of whom were directly involved. By adopting a down-top methodological approach, the article seeks to place communities at the forefront in confronting questions of violence, peace-building and reconciliation in Zimbabwe.