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Fictions, nation-building and ideologies of belonging in children's literature: An analysis of Tunzi the Faithful Shadow --Manuscript Draft--

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Response to reviewers

Thanks for the positive feedback. I managed to effect the minor corrections that were required. I have to admit, the article reads better after the revisions

Full Title Fictions, nation-building and ideologies of belonging in children's literature: An analysis of *Tunzi the Faithful Shadow*

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4 **Abstract** This article demonstrates, through Michael Gascoigne's *Tunzi the Faithful Shadow*
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6 (1988), that literature for children is sometimes employed by the government into the service of
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8 propagating dominant state ideologies in Zimbabwean schools. Such texts disseminate issues of
9
10 inclusion and exclusion that characterise all nation building projects. I argue, through a reading
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12 of *Tunzi the Faithful Shadow*, that texts for children studied in Zimbabwean schools have been
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14 shaped by a distinctly Zimbabwean socio-historical context which includes, but is not limited to,
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16 the formation of a new national sensibility after the liberation war and the political unrest in the
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18 emerging nation.
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24 **Key Words** Zimbabwe; nationhood; *Tunzi the Faithful Shadow*; children's literature; fictions
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Nation, crisis and the part played by literature

This article seeks to demonstrate, through Michael Gascoigne's *Tunzi the Faithful Shadow* (1988), how literature for children has at times been employed by the government, in collaboration with schools, into the service of propagating dominant state ideologies in Zimbabwe. I argue that texts for children studied in Zimbabwean schools have been shaped by a distinctly Zimbabwean socio-historical context which includes, but is not limited to, the formation of a new national sensibility after the liberation war and the political unrest in the emerging nation. These texts, all written after independence, include the aforementioned *Tunzi the Faithful Shadow*, *Takadini* (Hanson 1997), *Crossing the Boundary Fence* (Chater 1998) and *Friend Billy and the Msasa Avenue Three* (Mucheri 1989). All of the texts focus on certain aspects in the history of Zimbabwe and disseminate particular ideological views regarding these aspects. *Tunzi the Faithful Shadow* is important in that unlike *Crossing the Boundary Fence* and *Takadini*, for instance, it addresses the problems of nationhood in the post-colony where the major players do not conform to easy identification as was the case during the colonial period. It is no longer a matter of 'black' against 'white'. It is from this background that I find the text important.

In *Tunzi the Faithful Shadow*, Temba, the protagonist, saves Tunzi, a dog, from a snare and takes him home to his parents who agree that he can keep the dog on condition that the dog's owner is not found and the dog behaves. As luck would have it, both conditions are successfully met, especially after the dog saves Thoko, Temba's sister, from a snake. The story's adventure begins when Temba decides to take Tunzi hunting and they both fall captive to two 'bandits', Jabulani and Mazula, who decide to involve them in their plan to rob Moyo, the local shop owner. After making futile attempts at escape, Temba and Tunzi are finally brought by the

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4 'bandits' within the vicinity of home, where the robbery is supposed to take place.
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7 The text is not slow in taking up the momentum of conflict which characterized the 1980s
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9 in Zimbabwe. Three archetypes, 'dissidents', 'poachers' and 'bandits' embody the aberrance of
10 this national strife. As early as Chapter Two, the author makes reference to 'dissidents' who are
11 destabilizing the country with the help of outsiders. In the same breath, mention is made of
12
13 'bandits' who try to survive through armed robberies. Chapter Three then makes reference to a
14 final category: 'poachers'. In these archetypes, the author manages to usher into motion a
15
16 chronicle of value-judging. The line between who is legitimate and who is not in the narrated
17
18 nation is drawn. This is done, largely, by insinuations that nationality is inherent. Some are born
19
20 with this spirit and others are born without it. Gascoigne defines the 'dissidents,' 'bandits' and
21
22 'poachers' in essential terms. They are constituted as irrational beings acting out of sheer evil.
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24 They harbor innate attributes which make them unfit to belong to the nation. Gascoigne
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26 deliberately weakens their case for belonging to the nation. Thus, hegemony is entrenched
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28 through discourse.
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32 The issue of belonging is a contentious one whenever the nation is called to question.
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34 Eventually, it leads to the violent marginalization of certain elements as power is redistributed
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36 within the evolving nation. This redistribution always entails the exclusion of other groups as
37
38 they fall outside the center of power. In *Tunzi the Faithful Shadow*, one witnesses the active
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40 involvement in such matters. Jochen Hippler (2005, p. 9) makes an important observation when
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42 he says:
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46 The process of constituting the nation plus the greater participation of and ability to
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48 politically mobilize the population that has become the "nation" does, however, mean
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50 that conflicts previously lying dormant in the society and which had little chance of being
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4 articulated by virtue of the population being excluded from politics can be effectively
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6 intensified. This is all the more true if the determination of who actually belongs to the
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8 nation” has not been settled or is disputed...
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12 In *Unsettling Narratives: Postcolonial Readings of Children’s Literature*, Clare Bradford (2007)

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14
15 applies postcolonial theory to children’s texts. She brings to the reader’s attention the various
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17 ways in which children’s literature has evolved to challenge some assumptions about children’s
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19 literature such as the notions of innocence and simplicity. The engagement of children’s texts
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21 with issues of nationhood, race and ethnicity, for example, is of key interest. Although
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25 Bradford’s focus is on settler communities such as Australia, Canada and New Zealand, the
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27 problems she highlights can be applied to former colonies of the West. For example, how do
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29 emerging nations harmonize differences in the post-colony? How do children’s texts address
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31 issues of belonging in the postcolonial context? These questions draw the reader of children’s
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35 texts face to face with the ideological constructions which characterize children’s texts.

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38 Categories of race, ethnicity, gender and nationhood point to the instability and impermanence of
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40 identities, subjects which permeate postcolonial texts for children. Yet, because there is nothing
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42 natural about these various categories, their constructions in children’s texts cannot escape the
43
44 ideological hold of writers as well as interpreters.
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48 Gaby Thompson-Wohlgemuth (2009) offers an important account of how children’s texts
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50 can be manipulated, by the state, into disseminating the state’s ideological views to children. The
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52 study focuses on how children’s texts were assimilated into mainstream, or what can be
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54 considered ‘adult’, literature in the former German Democratic Republic. This assimilation was
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56 done mainly through translations of selected children’s books from other languages into German.
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60 This form of re-writing is what Thompson-Wohlgemuth would regard as a form of ideological
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4 manipulation. Translations were done with the view of guiding readers in the interpretation of
5
6 texts while educating them into the dominant socialist ideology. Similar to the socialist era in
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8 Russia during the time of Lenin, writers, publishers, editors and educators were all incorporated
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10 by the government into a socialist machine whose goal was to inculcate political values into the
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12 reader. Of course this had its fair share of resistance from some writers and publishers, but it
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14 suggests the extent to which literature for children can be made part of the state's propaganda
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16 machine.
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21 The scheme to control literary activity in the former German Democratic Republic noted
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23 by Thompson-Wohlgemuth (2009) demonstrates the importance ruling classes place on
24
25 literature. It also illustrates the extent to which ruling classes strive to construct particular
26
27 versions of nationhood. According to Breuilly (2005, p. 61) "the activity of the state is devoted
28
29 to the maintenance and exercise of its sovereignty against both external and internal threats." To
30
31 maintain and exercise sovereignty is to strive for national success and continuity. This is the part
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33 where said fictions play a critical role. These fictions depend largely on narration. As noted by
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35 Geoffrey Bennington (1990, p. 132):
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41 The idea of the nation is inseparable from its narration: that narration attempts,
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43 interminably, to constitute identity against difference, inside against outside, and in the
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45 assumed superiority of inside over outside, prepares against invasion and for 'enlightened'
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47 colonialism.
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51 What this signifies is that in the absence of narration, the *idea*, thus 'imagined' ceases to exist. In
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53 fact, Timothy Brennan (1990, p. 49) is of the view that "[n]ations, then, are imaginary constructs
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55 that depend for their existence on an apparatus of cultural *fictions* in which imaginative literature
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57 plays a decisive role" (my emphasis). Through fiction, the idea of nations as imagined is
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4 perpetuated.
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7 The novel is especially important in dealing with the crisis of formlessness because it is
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9 the prototype of bounded idiosyncrasies. In the novel one is certain to come across difference
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11 which, were the novel not bounded, would leave it shapeless. More importantly “It was in the
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13 novel that previously foreign languages met each other on the same terrain, forming an unsettled
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15 mixture of ideas and styles, themselves representing previously distinct peoples now forced to
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17 create the rationale for a common life” (Brennan, 1990, p. 50).
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21 Part of national crisis, in some instances, is the nation’s political and cultural
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23 amorphousness, which finds expression in what Brennan (1990, p. 44) calls “the national longing
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25 for form.” This longing entails the “fictional uses of ‘nation’ and ‘nationalism’” (46) in literary
26
27 and political discourse as a way of resolving the apparent amorphousness. Brennan stresses that
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29 “uses here should be understood both in a personal, craftsmanlike sense, where nationalism is a
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31 trope for such things as 'belonging', 'bordering', and 'commitment'. But it should also be
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33 understood as the *institutional* uses of fiction in nationalist movements themselves” (46). Both
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35 the fictional ‘craftsmanlike’ and ‘institutional’ uses of nation and nationalism are evident in the
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37 subject matter of *Tunzi the Faithful Shadow* and how it is used in schools.
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43 Having established that nations are by habit prone to crisis, and that fictions attempt to
44
45 establish the nation’s eternalism, it is now imperative to explore why children’s literature is
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47 important. Anderson (2006) states that children do not necessarily determine which books are
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49 suitable for the category of children’s literature. The business of selection is left to a panel of
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51 ‘experts’ who have authority in various institutions. Anderson (2006) identifies publishers,
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53 scholars, teachers, library personnel, parents and award committees as part of a panel of
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55 selectors. Missing from the list is the role played by the state. It is not far from the truth to say
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4 the regulatory role of this panel rests with the state whose interests lie solely in the preservation
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6 of the idea of nation and its accompanying consciousness. Through various check and control
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8 measures, the state decrees the ‘institutional’ uses of fiction. In Zimbabwe, institutions involved
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10 in curriculum issues from development to change and implementation include the Curriculum
11
12 Development Unit (CDU), Zimbabwe Schools Examination Council (ZIMSEC), Ministry of
13
14 Education, Sports and Culture, Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education and the Standards
15
16 Control Unit (SCU). Gratefully, notions of ‘innocent,’ ‘simple’ and ‘pure’ texts have been
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18 rejected by critics of children’s literature who have challenged the idea of a stable child identity
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20 and the assumptions surrounding the literature (Peter Hunt, 1999, Karin Lesnik-Oberstein, 1994
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22 and 2004). These critics have made it possible to approach children’s texts as ideological
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24 constructs, which can best be understood from various angles such as postcolonial, Marxist,
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26 Feminist and Poststructuralist.
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34 When one considers that literature is part of the ideological structure of society (Louis
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36 Althusser, 1970) there can be no doubt of ideological manipulation of all literary categories. This
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38 Marxist understanding of literature finds expression in the works of Terry Eagleton (1986),
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40 Ngugi wa Thiongo (1997) and Emmanuel Ngara (1990). It is a view which is content with the
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42 existence of a politicised author, contrary to the ‘dead’ author of the structuralist period. What
43
44 they point out is that writers are products of history and, as a consequence, their works are not
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46 free from ideology. Paulo Freire’s (1972) perception of education, as either liberating or
47
48 oppressive, falls within this ideological framework. To Freire, the manner in which subjects are
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50 educated may be complicit to their oppression. He calls such an education “the ‘banking’
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52 concept of education” characterised by the continued oppression of the marginalised (Freire,
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54 1972, p. 46). When the author, who writes with ‘children’ in mind, is thus resurrected, it is
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4 possible to arrive at the ‘craftsmanlike’ uses of fiction. The text, in targeting children, is meant
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6 to ‘school’ the latter about nation and nationhood along the lines of the dominant ideology of the
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8 time. The dog in the story, the ‘bandits’, the ‘dissidents’ and the events themselves can all be
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10 read figuratively as notions of belonging and commitment. The attempt to ‘school’ subjects is
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12 meant to create objects out of them. This, however, is not to undermine the existence of
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14 subversive children’s literature. Texts which do not support the state ideology do exist, but in
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16 most cases they remain on the shelves and do not find their way into the school curriculum in
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18 Zimbabwe.

21 **Archetypes and allegory in *fictions* of nation and belonging**

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28 The crisis of nation captured in *Tunzi the Faithful Shadow* is limited to the ‘dissident’
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30 problem during the first decade after Zimbabwe’s independence from colonial rule. This
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32 ‘problem’ has been largely suppressed for various reasons, with isolated remarks from politicians
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34 now and then. The Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace in Zimbabwe (CCJP) had,
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36 arguably, the most comprehensive report on events during this period published after a relative
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38 silence of nine years since the signing of the Unity Accord which ended the conflict. CCJP’s
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40 report on the ‘disturbances’ in Matabeleland and Midlands from 1980 to 1988 dates Zimbabwe’s
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42 crisis of nationhood to the liberation war era. While the report makes reference to the first
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44 interactions, based on conflict, between the Nbebele and the Shona, the two relatively dominant
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46 ethnic groups in Zimbabwe, there is a suspicion that such conflicts are fictions belonging to
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48 recent attempts at narrating the nation and justifying retributions against weaker groups (CCJP,
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50 1997). CCJP, however, insists that crisis could be read in the uneasy relationship between the
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52 liberation war factions ZIPRA, under the leadership of Nkomo’s ZAPU, And ZANLA, under
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54 Mugabe’s ZANU PF. Such frictions found their way into the Zimbabwe of the 1980s, politically
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4 dominated by Mugabe and ZANU PF.
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7 In his autobiography, Joshua Nkomo (2001) contested the legitimacy of the new
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9 Zimbabwean government in running the affairs of the nation-state. In the autobiography, there
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11 are numerous insinuations of crisis. If Nkomo, and not Mugabe, was the legitimate ‘father’ of the
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13 nation, as the former suggests, if the Zimbabwean community felt cheated and underrepresented,
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15 as he continues to imply, and if the ‘national’ spirits had found favour with Nkomo, and not
16
17 Mugabe, then a crisis was already established, its roots stretching as far back as the origins of the
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19 ‘nation,’ contrary to the CCJP account. Nationhood was not going to be easy.
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24 The political, economic, military and civic showdown which followed in the wake of
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26 Zimbabwe’s independence represents an expression and culmination of crisis. Whether the
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28 events between 1980 and 1988 are labeled ‘civil war,’ or ‘dissident era’ or ‘Gukurahundi’¹, they
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30 demonstrate part of the problems which characterize various emerging nation-states. Differences
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32 are merely found in the ways in which these problems are dealt with. Some resort to military
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34 force, others to electoral democracy (which gives individuals the illusion of control), but the case
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36 remains: some sections of the ‘nation’ are consequently marginalized.
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41 Formal violence ended in 1987, with the signing of the unity accord between the
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43 erstwhile belligerents Robert Mugabe and Joshua Nkomo, an arrangement which, in principle
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45 meant the re-formation of the nation, but in reality was the conditional re-instatement of formerly
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47 marginalized sections of the nation and the *legitimation* of an established political centre. A year
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49 later (in 1988), the text meant for children, *Tunzi the Faithful Shadow* was published by College
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51 Press. However, the text does not carry the momentum of unity which one would like to believe
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53 was more appropriate in 1988. Instead, it emerges in the shadow of the civil and political crisis.
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58 ¹ Gukurahundi was the Shona term given to the military offensive, by the North Korean trained fifth brigade,
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60 against so-called dissidents in the Matabeleland and Midlands provinces in Zimbabwe during the 1980s. Literally, it
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62 refers to the first rains which wash away chaff.
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4 The story itself takes place during the crisis and is implicated in the perpetuation of that crisis.
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7 It is not an overstatement to say *Tunzi the Faithful Shadow* emerged during a period
8
9 when nationalism in Zimbabwe was in crisis. The anti-climax of conflict from 1983 to 1987
10 followed disrupted the campaign of reconciliation by the new black government in the early
11
12 eighties. The text became part of the narratives of nationhood which did not end at community
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14 libraries and bookshops, but penetrated the school curriculum in the 1990s, alongside Charter's
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16 *Crossing the Boundary Fence*, which was also published in 1988. The choice of *Tunzi the*
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18 *Faithful Shadow* by the education board under the supervision of the Ministry of Education and
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20 Culture in Zimbabwe could not have been coincidental. What better way to produce *fictions* of
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22 the nation as eternal and successful than through literature in class? What better way to invent
23
24 the nation? In this regard, one is reminded of Brennan's 'institutional uses' of nation and
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26 nationhood where the school becomes the institution entrusted with the role of disseminating
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28 ideological views about the conflicts in Zimbabwe. Part of the conditioning which would be
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30 done by education boards was the setting of national examinations targeting specific issues. In
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32 that way, teachers and pupils would be steered towards certain issues and away from others.
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34 Because both would be more concerned with immediate results, that is, passing the
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36 examinations, it would not be a surprise that little was done in the direction of determining the
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38 content of teaching and learning. In Foucault's view: "Whoever determines what can be talked
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40 about also determines what can be known" (1978, p. 46). Thus, one sees the calculated move, on
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42 the part of the authorities, to construct knowledge regarding the nation.
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53 In *Tunzi the Faithful Shadow*, the author appropriates the aforementioned archetypes –
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55 'dissidents', 'poachers' and 'bandits' as they existed in the dominant political discourse of the
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57 1980s in Zimbabwe, redefines them and determines what will be known of them and how it will
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4 be known. In similar spirit education boards in Zimbabwe appropriate the text into schools where
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6 readers are to be 'guided' in reading the text. In effect, the examinations board, which would
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8 develop questions for examining pupils, had the prerogative to dictate what was to be known of
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10 the text. By determining what to talk about, one naturally names the subject in whatever way
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12 he/she deems proper. This naming belongs to the discourse of control. It involves constituting the
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14 subject in a specific way. Whoever occupies the centre labels those at the margin in value-laden
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16 terms. Edward Said (1978) explores this phenomenon in *Orientalism*. Colonial discourses, as he
17
18 reveals, derive their legitimacy from labeling the other. To label one is therefore to control
19
20 him/her. While, in earnest, the perceived other can and does reject the naming, the author of
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22 *Tunzi the Faithful Shadow* screens out the voices of the so called 'dissidents,' 'bandits' and
23
24 'poachers,' while the curriculum boards screen out other texts which could be considered
25
26 subversive. By deciding not to discuss these categories at length and selecting an 'appropriate'
27
28 text for children, Gascoigne and the curriculum boards, respectively, create the illusion of
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30 triumph on the part of the nation. They create the impression that the crisis in the post-
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32 independent nation is fleeting and undeserving of a lengthy discussion. The nation is to be seen
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34 as a success.
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43 Gascoigne, hence, does not create the political labels "dissident", "bandit" and "poacher".
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45 What he does is to reproduce them in his reconstruction of the nation-state for the consumption
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47 of the reader. He defines the "dissidents" as people who "thought they had a cause to fight for,
48
49 but...were wrong" (Gascoigne, 1988, p. 47). To put it in simpler terms, "dissidents" according to
50
51 Gascoigne are misguided. The author is at pains to prove that they are not rational in either
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53 motive or conduct. In the meantime, Gascoigne treads cautiously in his identification of the said
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55 'dissidents'. They remain vague throughout the text. Unlike the bandits who are given form and
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4 names, the ‘dissidents’ remain an elusive part of the story. They are just out there causing
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6 instability, but are fast running out of time because, outsiders that they are, the army will destroy
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8 them. The nation will thus continue on its eternal and successful path.
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11 There are areas which *Tunzi the Faithful Shadow* conveniently overlooks. The text does
12
13 not clarify how security forces are dealing with the dissidents. It says nothing about casualties.
14
15 But then, the text, according to the publisher, is for children and these are ugly aspects which are
16
17 presumed unsuitable for child consumption. Or was this part of the overall design on the
18
19 discourse of belonging? Freire (1972, p. 56) is of the view that hegemonic power works “by
20
21 mythicizing reality, to conceal certain facts which explain the way men exist in the world...” It is
22
23 apparent that Gascoigne is not out to enlighten the reader concerning the conflict in the
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25 postcolony, but by concealing ‘certain facts’ seeks to eliminate some people from the national
26
27 project. CCJP (1997, p 31, 38) concedes that ‘dissidents’ *were* a reality and they did commit
28
29 crimes ranging from petty theft to murder. What the report hastens to point out is that, at some
30
31 point, ‘dissident’ became synonymous with the Ndebele ethnic group; a synonymy which
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33 resulted in the indiscriminate violation of the Ndebele speaking communities². In *Tunzi the*
34
35 *Faithful Shadow*, this is conveniently ignored.
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43 The second group, the ‘bandits’ have no worthwhile motive in life, ostensibly. The author
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45 says they “were just criminals, out to rob anybody” (Gascoigne, 1988, p. 48). They are also
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47 people living at the fringes of society. Like the dissidents, they do not belong in the new nation.
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49 They have innate characteristics which make them unfit for belonging. Dhlula says of Jabulani,
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51 one of the bandits, “I’m afraid I’ve never really liked him even as a small boy” (32). The
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53 suggestion here is that essence precedes existence, a doctrine vehemently refuted by the cultural
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59 ² A detailed account of this chapter in the history of Zimbabwe can be found in the CCJP report
60 (1997)
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4 theorists. Identities, according to Stuart Hall (2000) are culturally and historically contingent.
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6 Discourses of domination such as slavery and colonialism utilize the idea of innate values so as
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8 to fix their victims at precise cultural and historical points. One sees such attempts in *Tunzi the*
9
10 *Faithful Shadow*. The text presents an essentialist account of identities. The bandits, dissidents
11
12 and poachers are portrayed as innately evil and incapable of change. Such ideas negate the nature
13
14 of human beings which, as Freire (1972, p. 96) would explain, is the ability to transform the
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16 world and to be transformed by the world in turn.
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21 The ‘poacher’, who represents the third category, is not explicitly defined, but Dhlula’s
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23 comment regarding the category’s activities must not go unnoticed. After finding a dead ox
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25 together with his son, Temba, Dhlula declares: “This is the worst kind of brutality” (Gascoigne,
26
27 1988, p. 30). Doesn’t it strike the reader as shocking that brutality perpetrated against an ox by a
28
29 group of men, whose motives are not stated but are believed to be obvious, is classified as of *the*
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31 *worst kind*, during a time of ethnic conflict in which figures of those murdered have “varied
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33 dramatically” from 700 to 20 000 people (CCJP, 1997, p. 6)? Ideologically motivated
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35 refractions, such as the importance of animals and friendship, are meant to make the reader
36
37 oblivious to the fact. *Tunzi the Faithful Shadow* reflects the environment of its conception. If the
38
39 dominant political ideology would rather certain issues were ignored, then they would have to be
40
41 ignored. ‘Poachers’, as the name suggests, are illegal. They are out to rob the nation of its
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43 resources. In Zimbabwean urban culture a ‘poacher’ is simply someone who does not belong. At
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45 parties and beer drinking ceremonies, for example, a ‘poacher’ would be someone who joins
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47 without invitation. In most cases such people are ridiculed before being expelled from such
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49 gatherings.
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57 Carrying the archetypes is an allegory, whose part in the overall design of the story is to
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4 mislead the reader into imbibing the surface plot about Tunzi the dog. Tunzi, the animal in *Tunzi*
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6 *the Faithful Shadow*, is not a character in the sense of the traditional fable. He is not gifted with
7
8 human language. He does not propose to women or visit relatives, or quarrel with other animals
9
10 as the hare does in many traditional folktales. He is, however, endowed with qualities and traits
11
12 which make him an animal hero. One of his great qualities is his ability to comprehend reality.
13
14 Twice, (firstly, during Temba's first encounter with the dog and secondly when Temba is
15
16 training the dog) the reader is informed that the dog "seemed to understand" (Gascoigne, 1988,
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18 p. 11, 17). The dog is also able to "trust Temba completely" (17). It is this quality which makes
19
20 the dog a very important component of the story since this comprehensive ability makes its
21
22 agency a possibility. It will not come as a wonder that Tunzi will perform tricks in rescuing his
23
24 family members with considerable proficiency. When such a representation of animals occurs
25
26 outside a fable (which *Tunzi the Faithful Shadow* is not), it is misleading. Since the belief that
27
28 animals "must" have feelings is consummate with many people's beliefs, it operates within an
29
30 obviousness (Althusser, 1970) which seeks to make it difficult to detect the ideological content
31
32 behind such a representation. It is against this background that the researcher argues that the
33
34 formation of the dog Tunzi is an ideological construction, whose intention is to disseminate
35
36 certain values about loyalty, faithfulness and friendship, all of which respond to the question:
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38 who is Zimbabwean? Only once does Gascoigne, perhaps in a moment of forgetfulness,
39
40 acknowledge the fact of the "dog's instinct" (1988, p. 11).
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50 The allegory of Tunzi the dog embodies the price which must be paid for belonging. It
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52 brings to the reader's attention the notion of difference, considering that the dog was not human,
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54 and the conditional acceptance of this difference into mainstream society. This condition is given
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56 the name faithful. Faithful meant serving and saving a human being. It meant taking orders,
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4 being dragged along on a leash and being starved because the boy-master, Temba, has wandered
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6 too deep in the woods and got caught. After going through all this faithfully, the dog belongs. It
7
8 becomes part of the family.
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11 *Tunzi the Faithful Shadow*, emerging from, and submerged in crisis, defines who belongs
12
13 to post independent Zimbabwe. As the analogy of the dog above suggests, conforming to shared
14
15 values and beliefs, adhering to certain modes of behavior and reducing oneself to a shadow, a
16
17 blind follower of the dominant ideology, earns one a place in the nation family. Ideologies on
18
19 nation and nationhood seek to homogenize subjects. Difference is usually interpreted as foreign
20
21 and intolerable. In this regard, crisis is conceived, before it materializes. Gascoigne informs the
22
23 reader that dissidents and bandits "...were evil and should be rooted out" (48). One finds in such
24
25 a discourse the interplay of emotions of hate and hostility which can only be salvaged through
26
27 violence. The act of *rooting* recommended in the text is an act of intimidation against the reader.
28
29 It resonates of the snake metaphor used by the then prime minister of Zimbabwe during the
30
31 political disturbances in the 1980s. Mugabe likened his erstwhile rival Joshua Nkomo to a "cobra
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33 in a house" which had to be eliminated (Joshua Nkomo, 2001, p. 2). Amusingly, the dog
34
35 procures its right to belong by destroying a snake which had invaded the family space. Likewise,
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37 some elements have to be eliminated from the nation, argues Gascoigne. Those considered as
38
39 existing beyond the rule of the state, are thus exposed, their belonging a matter of serious doubt.
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41 At this point they become what Breuilly (2005, p. 62) calls "non-person(s)." To this end, Spencer
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43 and Wollman (2005, p. 198) note that:
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53 at the heart of nationalism as a project, *whatever form it takes*, is a logic that tends

54 towards exclusion. There must after all always be people who are not part of the nation;
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4 the nation is always framed with the presumption of the existence of the outsider, the
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6 other, against which the nation itself is defined and constructed (my emphasis).
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10 Certain individuals and groups are eliminated, first at the level of discourse, then through exile,
11 imprisonment and death, among other state sanctioned forms of *literal* elimination. Symbolic
12 elimination can be said to consist of being patronized, labelled, ridiculed or ignored, which can
13
14 later be compounded by violence, elections or any other strategy of control.
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21 Symbolic elimination is enacted through discourse dramatizing actions from real life. By
22 relying on allegory and archetypes, the author prescribes who belongs to the nation and who does
23
24 not. At the centre of the nation is the government. It controls national sentiment and fights
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26 deviation from the prescribed sentiment. This is done in liaison with the school and the family.
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28 Enemies are misrepresented so as to justify acts of retribution against them. They are given
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30 depicted as threats to the nation. The danger the ‘snake’, ‘dissidents’, ‘bandits’ and ‘poachers’
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32 poses has to be explicated. Afterwards, any form of exclusion is justified.
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38 In *Tunzi the Faithful Shadow*, military force accompanies ideological force. Gascoigne
39 transposes this military force into the text and gives it a euphemistic role. The reader is alerted
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41 that security forces are “dealing” with the dissidents. The security forces are part of what
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43 Althusser (1970, p.3) calls the repressive state apparatus whose role is to intervene with force
44
45 against subjects when subtle ways have failed. Althusser says they function “massively and
46
47 predominantly by repression” (ibid). If a certain claim (for example, the illegitimacy of
48
49 dissidents) is reinforced by the emphasized legitimacy of a repressive power, it becomes harder
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51 to challenge. The ideological representation of the military as a legitimate force in this instance
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53 influences the reader’s judgment concerning both the military and the ‘dissidents’. The military
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55 belongs, as a constructive force whose major role is to safeguard the nation-state from internal
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4 and external threats, while the ‘dissidents’ do not belong since they are bent on destabilizing the
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6 nation.
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9 Discussion on who belongs to Zimbabwe would be incomplete without mentioning the
10 maintenance and nourishment of the ideological representation of government. The
11 representation of government in *Tunzi the Faithful Shadow* is mediated through the educational
12 ideological state apparatus. What is apparent in the text is that Government belongs as a *de facto*
13 member. It does not matter who government is. Various adults and the school propagate these
14 ideas in the text. Every encounter between Temba and an adult in the text is an opportunity to
15 socialize the former. In all these encounters, Temba, the child, is socialized into singing and
16 parroting government’s praises. In this case, the family and the school make children subjects of
17 the dominant ideological view. Government is portrayed in such glorious terms that would make
18 the reader suspicious. The school is also praised for its role in teaching the young about
19 government virtues. This contradicts perceptions of the classroom as the domain of
20 “psychological violence” (Ngugi, 1987, Freire, 1972).
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38 The achievements of government are as follows: building many schools, establishing
39 growth points, building clinics and encouraging communities to engage in development projects.
40 In the first instance Temba is advised by Moyo, the shopkeeper, to count his ‘blessings’ because
41 the government has built many secondary schools. Dhlula later on harangues Temba with a
42 speech on the merits of government (Gascoigne, 1988, p. 23). On discovering that the schools
43 teach pupils about the achievement made by the government, the adults are content. Gascoigne
44 nourishes the ideological representation of both the school and the government and how the two
45 institutions have fed into each other. The school is presented as a paragon of truth and
46 knowledge. The teachers and the lessons they deliver are completely trusted.
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4 Paulo Freire (1972) rejects this ideological representation of the school. In his critique of
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6 what he calls the banking concept of education, Freire explains how dehumanizing education
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8 relies on ‘narrating’ to the learner. To narrate is to tell just as Temba is told about the
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10 government by his father. At school the geography teacher has been telling him about the
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12 government as well. Everywhere he turns, there is someone to narrate the story of government
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14 while he passively listens. One can project this narrating metaphor outside the text and conclude
15
16 that children’s literature involves a narrating adult and a narrated child. Education is regarded in
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18 this case as “an act of depositing, in which the students are depositories and the teacher is the
19
20 depositor” (Freire, 1972, p. 45). The child Temba (and of course the young reader) is rewarded
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22 by the adults for his ability to imbibe their teachings meticulously. Dhlula is particularly glad
23
24 that Temba is paying attention at school and he considers it beneficial that the education
25
26 provided for the young by the schools prioritised attempts at building national consciousness. In
27
28 actual fact, the education was meant to socialise the child about certain values which are
29
30 congruent to the dominant ideology. Michael Hechter (2000) dismisses the notion of patriotism
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32 as mere jargon which seeks the advancement of one group’s interests at the expense of others. It
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34 is with this view in mind that the adult narrators in *Tunzi the Faithful Shadow*, so commissioned
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36 by the author as purveyors of an absolute truth, are seen as perpetuating the polarity already
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38 created by the conflict. They objectify Temba and make him susceptible to a developing
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40 polemic. What Gascoigne is interested in is not just the development of the nation, but also the
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42 national consciousness to go with the nation.
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53 To extend the issue of belonging further, it might be important to look at the aspect of
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55 language. Three languages feature in the text. These always appear in the following order
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57 whenever they are used together in reference to an object: Ndebele, Shona and English. In
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4 Zimbabwe, Ndebele and Shona are the languages of the most dominant groups in demographic
5 terms. The duiker, the otter and the baobab tree are given their Ndebele and Shona equivalents.
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9 In *Tunzi the Faithful Shadow*, through the English language, the local languages are harmonized.
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11 This harmonization, however, raises more problems. The mild references to the local languages
12 only serve to illuminate the dominance of the English language in the text and the exclusion of
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14 other ‘minority’ languages from the text. Zimbabwe boasts other languages such as Chewa,
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17 Ndaou and Shangani, which are not in any way covered under the umbrella of English, Shona and
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19 Ndebele. This, invariably, excludes the communities, who speak these languages, from the
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24 nation Gascoigne narrates.

25 26 27 **Conclusion**

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What the article has demonstrated is how a particular children’s text is at times used for the purpose of disseminating the dominant ideological views of the Zimbabwean society. *Tunzi the Faithful Shadow* illustrates this point by alluding to the conflict in the early years of independence in Zimbabwe. Issues to do with inclusion and exclusion in the ‘new’ nation take centre stage through the portrayal of various categories such as ‘dissidents’, ‘poachers’ and ‘bandits.’ Even the depiction of the animal, Tunzi, contributes towards these issues. The ideas in *Tunzi the Faithful Shadow* are meant to ‘school’ (considering that it is read at school) children in a monolithic version of the nation story. It systematically defines who belongs and who does not belong to the Zimbabwean nation through archetypes and allegory. It exemplifies the part literature, even that meant for children, plays in the construction of nations and hegemonies. It is implicated in narrating the preferred nation and form of nationhood and not a mere reflection of what happens in society. Children’s fiction, in other words, is inseparable from ideologies of belonging and exclusion in their construction of nations and nationhood.

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Biography Cuthbeth Tagwirei is a Lecturer in the Department of English and Communication at the Midlands State University in Zimbabwe. He currently teaches Literature, Language and Media, Theories of Literature and Children's Literature. He has written articles on Latin American literature and Zimbabwean children's literature. His research interests include Zimbabwean literature, gender, nationalism and discourse. He is currently working on a Doctoral thesis: "'Should I Stay or Should I Go': Zimbabwe's White Writing, 1980 to 2011."