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DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH AND COMMUNICATION

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DRAMA AND THE STRUGGLE FOR SOCIAL CHANGE ZIMBABWE: THE CASE OF
TSITSI DANGAREMBGA'S SHE NO LONGER WEEPS, GEORGE MUJAJATI'S THE
WRETCHED ONES AND RAISEDON BAYA AND LEONARD MATSA'S SUPER
PATRIOTS AND MORONS.

BY

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This dissertation is submitted to Midlands State University in partial fulfilment of the requirements of Bachelor of Arts English and Communication Honours Degree.

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The undersigned certify that he has supervised the student, NOREEN MUCHEKE'S dissertation entitled, "Drama and the struggle for social change Zimbabwe: The case of Tsitsi Dangarembga's She Nolonger Weeps, George Mujajati's The Wretched Ones and Raisedon Baya and Leonard Matsa's Super Patriots and Morons," submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the Bachelor of Arts Honours Degree in English and Communication at the Midlands State University.

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DATE

DEDICATION

This research is dedicated to my mother Remind Mutendi who toiled day and night to make my education a success.

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ABSTRACT

Despite this rich use to which drama has been put in Zimbabwe, schools, colleges and Universities have largely sidelined the study of drama (plays) on the official syllabi in preference to other genres such as the short story, poems and the novel, as if drama has not richly debated societal challenges by contesting the various levels of inequalities, power relations and social trends that need correction in the Zimbabwean society. This is glaringly clear in the Department of English and Communication at Midlands State University which prioritises the novel, short stories and to some extent poems to drama. Ask any student in the Department which plays he or she has studied, most probably they will not be able to name more than two that they have studied apart from Shakespeare's plays.

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CHAPTER ONE

1.0 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

This study explores the role of written Zimbabwean drama in English in facilitating and shaping social change in post- colonial Zimbabwe. The study discusses the ways in which the characters and/ or the reader may change or transform society for the better. The term drama is too fluid to mean the same thing to different people hence the need to define its meaning in the context of this study. According to Heuvel (1991:2) it is “that form of theatrical expression that is constituted primarily as a literary artefact, according to particular ‘dramatic’ conventions, and empowered as text.” Kiebuszinska (1988) prefers the phrase ‘dramatic work’ to drama. He argues that dramatic work or drama is that which should not be confused with a ‘performance text’ or ‘mise- en-scene’ or simply theatre. Dramatic work is the ‘play’ as read, or the play script. Kiebuszinska (ibid) goes further to argue that a play only ‘lives’ when it is seen on stage and that is when it becomes a ‘performance text’ or simply performance or theatre. The essence of ‘theatre’ therefore lies in the presentation of drama on stage. Therefore, the words play, drama, play script or dramatic work refer to one thing although the words drama and to some extent play are the ones that are preferred and used in this study.

This study is on written Zimbabwean drama in the English language by both black female and male Zimbabwean dramatists. The three selected drama texts (plays) discuss the struggle for social change at different levels of the Zimbabwean society. She Nolonger Weeps discusses the struggle for social change mostly in the home and family and the two other plays examine the struggle for social change beyond the home. They tackle the citizens- state contestation.

In order to better understand the use of written Zimbabwean drama in English in creating new conditions for a new society, one needs to put this role into historical perspective. Written drama has since the advent of colonialism been used as a tool for social change, first by missionaries to convert black Zimbabweans to Christianity then by colonizers to indoctrinate and mentally subjugate the Zimbabwean child in the classroom. During the colonial era, drama and theatre were used by the black nationalists to whip people's emotions and heighten their consciousness about the evils of the colonial system in refugee camps in countries such as Zambia and Mozambique (Kaarsholm, 1994).

After independence, there was a deliberate attempt to use written drama as a means to transform the society. Ben Sibenke's *My Uncle Grey Bhonzo* (1982) discusses the need for social change within the confines of the home and family especially the gender- power relations. George Mujajati's *The Rain of my Blood* (1991) is an attack on a government in post colonial Zimbabwe that is considered to be insensitive to the demands of the war veterans. Cont Mhlanga's *Workshop Negative* (1992) also attacks the hypocrisy surrounding the implementation of the socialist ideology in Zimbabwe. In all this, drama has been used as a tool to transform or inform society on new and positive pathways. Negative attitudes and vices have been attacked in political satires such as Workshop Negative and Gonzo Msengezi's The Honourable MP. By the same token, social comedies such as Stephen Chifunyise's Medicine for Love and Intimate Affairs have also bitterly attacked the patriarchal society for treating the woman as a second class citizen.

1.2 PROBLEM OF STUDY

Since independence in 1980, there have been different individual dramatists with each of them producing plays that contest societal values at different levels within the family and within the context of the state. Despite this rich use to which drama has been put in Zimbabwe, schools, colleges and Universities have largely sidelined the study of drama (plays) on the official syllabi in preference to other genres such as the short story, poems and the novel, as if drama has not richly debated societal challenges by contesting the various levels of inequalities, power relations and social trends that need correction in the Zimbabwean society. This is glaringly clear in the Department of English and Communication at Midlands State University which prioritises the novel, short stories and to some extent poems to drama. Ask any student in the Department which plays he or she has studied, most probably they will not be able to name more than two that they have studied apart from Shakespeare's plays. The study of the Zimbabwean dramatist has thus been neglected for far too long and this in itself is a worrying trend that needs redress and this study will try to give Zimbabwean drama written in English, the attention that it deserves. Drama in English is as rich as the novel that has been given more prominence in official syllabi.

1.3 AIM OF STUDY

The broad aim of this study is to analyse the use of written drama in English as a tool or instrument in promoting the discourse of social change in post- colonial Zimbabwe.

1.4 OBJECTIVES

By the end of the study i will be in a position to:

- Reveal the role played by written drama in accepting and/ or questioning the oppressive social relations in Zimbabwe.
- Examine why and how the selected dramatists, both female and male adopted strategies in the various play that discuss social change within the family and home and beyond.
- Explore the historical and material factors influencing the transformative agenda of written drama during the period under study.

1.5 JUSTIFICATION OF THE STUDY

The starting point is to reiterate that the word drama, play, play script and dramatic work refer to one thing. Furthermore, there is also need to give reason as to why the term ‘dramatist’ has been preferred to playwright in this study. In clarifying this, the study borrows from Litkie (2003) who argues that a playwright is literally ‘maker of plays’ and a dramatist, a writer of plays. Since the basis of the study is the analysis of individual plays as the writer of plays or drama is more appropriate than the playwright hence the choice of dramatist. The selected black dramatists are representative of the trends that emerge. One side focuses on the need for social change within the domestic space of the home and family and the other, goes beyond this to discuss the contestation between the citizens and the state as represented by government officials in the male- authored plays.

The next aspect to explain is the choice of the drama texts in this study. The study does not discuss written drama in Zimbabwe that is written in Shona and Ndebele languages. Besides, including drama in Shona and Ndebele not only would go against disciplinary boundaries as this study is registered in the department of English, but also that the task could have been unachievable and too ambitious.

The near absence of primary drama texts written in English has also translated to a dearth in critical works on drama texts covering this period. At the moment, there is no known critical work on this drama of social change in post-colonial Zimbabwe. The only known commentary on Zimbabwean drama that discusses some aspects of English drama in Zimbabwe is one by Zinyemba's (1986). However, his was explorative and largely descriptive and focused on drama written in both English and Shona (Rohmer, 1999). The earliest published drama text to be analysed in this study is Tsitsi Dangarembga's She Nolonger Weeps (1987) and Raisedon Baya's Super Patriots and Morons (2009). Therefore, this study considers Zinyemba (1986) as a point of departure and unlike his study; this one focuses only on written drama in English.

Above all, the three drama texts are important because they have contributed to the growing canon of the Zimbabwean dramatic literature. It can thus be argued that this is a pioneering study aimed at analysing the contribution of written Zimbabwean drama in English to the broad struggle for social change in Zimbabwe since independence.

1.6 LITERATURE REVIEW

The reviewed literature on written drama for social change will be divided into three different sections: world written drama for social change, written drama in Africa and Zimbabwean written drama in English since 1980.

1.6.1 World Drama and Social change

Drama has always been associated with social change since human creation and as Bolton (1989) argues, the principal purpose of drama is change. He further argues that drama and theatre provide a cultural space for dialogue and exchange of ideas. This is corroborated by Taylor (2000:12) who argues that “drama is human beings confronted by situations which change them because of what they must face in dealing with those challenges.” From these assertions it can be argued that drama is not just read for aesthetic value but more importantly to transform the reader’s condition for the better at various levels of society such as the family, state and state – state power relations.

Internationally, drama has been used as a tool for social change in many countries. According to Kershaw (1992) drama was used as a counter hegemonic tool against Margret Thatcher’s Government in the 1980. Dramatists interrogated and questioned state hegemony on the neo-liberal dispensation that ushered in the doctrine of the survival of the fittest in the British landscape. According to Sandi-Diaz (2007), drama was also used successfully in the 1950s and 60s in peddling the social change agenda in the face of rampant bourgeoisie drama and theatre in Latin America.

Kershaw (1992) suggests that in Russia, drama and theatre were used in the 1920s in the post revolution years to agitate for change in the face of heavy state censorship and persecution of

anti- state actors. This saw the birth of agitational propaganda drama and theatre to rally the ordinary people against perceived injustices in the society. The drama for social change in Russia, Britain and Latin America became known as drama and theatre of cultural intervention. It became a site of fierce cultural contestation and in many ways shaped the direction in which these states moved in the long run (Kershaw, 1992).

According to drama educators (O'Toole and Donelan, 1996), what lies at the heart of an artistic event, in this case drama is the process by which the reader 'authors' his own meaning when he sits down to read a text. In this meaning creation, change is made and therefore drama occupies a potential space for possibilities where knowledge can be transformed. So, if readers are presented with a certain reality, they reflect and interpret it, and in this lies the possibility of taking action to transform the conditions they face in their everyday lives.

1.6.2 Written drama and social change in Africa

In Africa, drama and theatre have been used as tools for social change for long periods of time. In Kenya, Ngugi wa Thiongo, Micere Mugo, Kimani Gecau and Ngugi Wa Miri used written drama and theatre for consciousness among peasants and workers. Because of the power of these media, the state harassed dramatists and eventually banished them from Kenya after their involvement with the Kamiriithu community (Ngugi, 1981). Drama such as *I Will Marry When I Want* was written as part of the broad agenda to question exploitation and domination at various levels of society, from family level, to national and finally, question and expose the role of the international community in the affairs of developing states such as Kenya.

Mangeni (2000) argue that drama does not only reproduce culture and identity but is also an empowering force for social change. Drama therefore should not merely conform to the prevailing conditions but question the social order and the accepted norms. The dramas of Athol Fugard (1993) also played a major contribution towards this goal for social change. Litkie (2003) also argues that drama has played an important role in the democratisation process in South Africa.

1.6.3 Written drama in English and social change in Zimbabwe

The scarcity of primary drama texts written in English in Zimbabwe has meant that very few people have had interest in the genre unlike written drama texts in Shona and Ndebele languages. Written drama in Shona and Ndebele in Zimbabwe has had a privileged position since colonial times when the Rhodesian Literature Bureau encouraged Africans to write using the indigenous languages (Chiwome, 1996). The Bureau encouraged written drama for social change though the dramatist had to restrict himself/herself to contestations within the black family and home and not the state. That tradition of publishing was carried over into independence and until the folding of the Literature Bureau in the late 1990s, there was a fair amount of written drama output in Shona and Ndebele. This was not matched by the output of written drama in English and up to date in any given decade one can count the number of published drama in English. So far in the history of Zimbabwe, there has been Ben Sibenke's My Uncle Bhonzo (1982), Gonzo Msengezi's Honourable MP (1984), Tsitsi Dangarembga's She Nolonger Weeps (1987), George Mujajati's The Wretched Ones (1989) and the Rain of my Blood (1991), Cont Mhlanga's Workshop Negative (1992) and Stephen Chifunyise's Medicine for love and other Plays (1984) and Intimate Affairs and other Plays (2008) and Raisedon Baya's Tomorrow's Plays and other Plays (2009). This number of plays written in

English is a tiny drop in the ocean when compared to plays written and published in Shona or Ndebele languages.

In terms of secondary sources, there is only Zinyemba's (1986) critical work on Zimbabwean written drama. Zinyemba's study purports to discuss Zimbabwean drama yet it only focuses on written drama in English and Shona and drama written in Ndebele is excluded from his study. As a starting point Zinyemba's text is instructive but also risks being 'anachronistic' meaning that is misplacing of persons and events or customs in regard to each other as this book was published in 1986. Even when it was published as a 'fresh' text on the market in 1986, the text fell short in the sense that it did not search for sites of contestations of the official narratives that were then uncritically celebrating the coming of political freedom in 1980 serve for Marechera's (1984) drama sketches.

Chinyowa (2006) has also written on drama but it has been on 'play' as in *mitambo dzepasi chigare*, such as child role play, ritual drama, and storytelling and drama elements in religious festivals and ceremonies. In that case, Chinyowa's study fails to qualify as written drama although it fits well as African traditional theatre, and because of this reason, remotely feeds into this study. Chifunyise and Kavanagh (1988) oriented theatre practitioners of the need to have the 'correct' ideological stance in their drama in the 1980s but their focus was more on theatre than drama. What was correct for them was drama that followed religiously the ZANU PF narrative of its political actors as the leaders who brought independence to the gravid mass of people viewed as people whose role during the struggle was secondary. Thus, my study builds on as well as signal important departures from Zinyemba (1986) in many

ways than one as already highlighted. My study focuses on the largely uncharted territory, published written drama in English in Zimbabwe's history. It is this scholarly gap that my study hopes to address by critically exploring the representations of the themes of social and political change in Zimbabwe as depicted in the three selected dramas in English.

1.7 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Scenarios and anti- scenarios theory

The major theory that is used to inform this study is a combination of Taylor's (2003) scenarios and Diaz's (2007) anti-scenarios theories. Taylor (2003:54) introduces the theory of scenarios and defined scenarios as "an act of transfer, as a paradigm that is formulaic, portable, respectable and often banal because it leaves out complexity, reduces complex to its stock elements and encourages fantasies of participation." In further explaining this theory of social change, Taylor (ibid) adds that scenarios are spaces or positions that transmit common knowledge. They are constituted by actions that are socially accepted and therefore reproduce the social norms and the status quo of the society as they are used by the powerful classes for control. Diaz (2007) explains that Taylor's (2003) scenarios produce society's ideas, beliefs and stereotypes and make visible what appears on the surface. I could add that scenarios in the context of the struggle for social change are myth making and promote illusion or appearance at the expense of the reality.

On the other hand, anti- scenarios as propounded by Diaz (2007) provoke debate among the reader and question social, economic and political structures, helping to bring about change in a given society. In other words, anti scenarios are constituted by actions that contradict the

norm and the status quo that scenarios depict. Anti-scenarios show alternative realities by questioning the structure of a particular given society, such as is the case, about the Zimbabwean society since 1980. Thus, although originally, scenarios and anti- scenarios are two theories, these have been combined together and used as a theory to explain the use of written drama as an instrument for social change in Zimbabwe. Scenarios are vital because they allow for anti- scenarios to occur.

This theory of scenarios and anti- scenarios is the most appropriate for this study since it can be applied to the analysis of drama texts as Diaz (2007) also did in his study on Latin American drama and social change. The theory is relevant as it constitutes the important concept in drama for social change which is what I have set out to investigate in this study.

1.8 RESEARCH METHODS

1.8.1 Textual Analysis

The research method used in this study is qualitative in nature. Qualitative research methods help one to understand social processes taking place in drama rather than concentrate on outcomes or pre-determined products of research (Mantz and Visagie, 2006). Qualitative methods direct the researcher to be interested in the ways people make meaning and sense of their lives, experiences and their structures in the world. Ackroyd (2006) further suggests that using a qualitative approach on data should enable a researcher to construct abstract concepts and modify, confirm or reject the theories previously used in a field of study. Qualitative research methods also require the researcher to declare that the selected sample is representative of the period being covered, the people whose lives are being studied, as well

as being representative of the contradictions in the content under study. In light of the observations above, this study will mainly rely on the textual analysis of the selected written drama texts. The Midlands State University and The Zimbabwe Open University libraries will be crucial for secondary sources on drama in Zimbabwe in particular and Africa and the World in general.

1.9 CHAPTER ORGANISATION

Chapter one is the introduction which defines the area of study, aim and objectives, the statement of the problem and the justification of the study. It also discusses the theoretical framework and finally the chapter organisation. It also presents the literature review on drama and social change, a review that begins with the world, Africa, Zimbabwe.

Chapter two discusses the struggle for social change within the domestic space of the home and family and uses Dangarembga's She Nolonger Weeps to highlight the civil war that should be addressed in the confines of the family and or home.

Chapter three discusses the struggle for social change between the citizens and the state. The drama discusses the need for the political leaders to be responsive to the ordinary people's needs. The play, The Wretched Ones depicts the perennial problem of landlessness among native Zimbabweans and is an attempt to pin down the underlying simmering conflicts that resulted in the 'land invasions', the so- called Third chimurenga in 2000.

Chapter four focuses on the socio- political and economic challenges that bedevilled the Zimbabwean society during the ‘crisis decade (Raftopoulos and Mlambo, 2009). The play, Super Patriots and Morons represents and captures the challenges of the period. Chapter five is the conclusion.

CHAPTER TWO

2.0 SHE NO LONGER WEEPS: IS RADICAL FEMINISM FOR THE AFRICAN WOMAN?

2.1 Tsitsi Dangarembga: The Life narrative

Dangarembga is a pioneering female writer in Zimbabwe best known for her novel, *Nervous Conditions* (1988). She was born in Mutoko in 14 February, 1959 and from the age of six, lived in England until she returned to Zimbabwe, then Rhodesia in 1965 (Velt- Wild, 1993, Zhuwarara, 2001). Velt- Wild (ibid) argues that Dangarembga had a privileged background - her mother and father were among the first Black Zimbabweans to hold both Bachelors and Masters Degrees. Velt- Wild further writes that after finishing her high school, Tsitsi Dangarembga worked as a teacher before she enrolled for a medicine degree at Cambridge University. While there, it is said that she felt out of place in a British society and returned home to pursue a degree in Psychology at the University of Zimbabwe. In 1989, she enrolled for a three year course in Film and Television and ever since, her interest in film has grown. To-date, she has produced quite a number of films and has been the founding Director of Women of Zimbabwe Film Makers until 2013 when she relinquished the post to a younger woman.

2.2 The Play, *She No longer Weeps*: Background information

When Tsitsi Dangarembga enrolled for her Psychology degree at the University, there was a thriving Faculty of Arts Drama Club led by Dr. McLaren and T.K Tsodzo. Dangarembga joined this Drama club which was open to any member of the University regardless of one's faculty. She actively took part in some of the plays and performances on campus, something she enjoyed and that led her to write her own play that came to be known as *She No Longer Weeps* (1987). Her second play called *Lost of the Soil* which explores the alienated lives of Zimbabwean exiles in Britain never got published (Zhuwarara, *ibid*). As stated earlier, Dangarembga had a privileged background that saw her having access to a variety of books written in English. However, one thing stood out, these novels or plays were either written by Europeans or it was a Black male Zimbabwean or African who had written it. It is against this background that Tsitsi "consciously set out to write a novel that would address those issues that she felt strongly about but which she found either missing or not fully reflected in most of those African texts that she read" (Zhuwarara, 2001:235). Although the above quotation was made with reference to *Nervous Conditions*, it can also apply to *She No Longer Weeps*, which incidentally happened to have been written and published before *Nervous Conditions*. Tsitsi Dangarembga is best known as a feminist who believes that women's plight has never been fully addressed in Zimbabwe. Thus, gender power relations appear to be her pre-occupation as evidenced by both *Nervous Conditions* and *She No Longer Weeps*. In both works, she places the women at the centre of her narrative as if she is suggesting that women have been sidelined for too long and that it is time that they take centre in African writings especially those authored by female writers like her. *She No Longer Weeps* focuses on the plight of the woman as illustrated by the main character, Martha. It depicts a female character that is caught up in a vicious cooker known as the patriarchal society.

2.3 *She No Longer Weeps*: The synopsis

She No Longer Weeps centres on the life; trials and tribulations of the main female character, Martha. The play is a social commentary on the patriarchal society in post- independence Zimbabwe where independence did not necessarily bring an equal measure of freedom and opportunities for the woman as she remained under the yoke of the patriarchal society. The main character, Martha, is a single mother of one who admirably raises her daughter single handedly. In the plays, she is impregnated when she is still a struggling female student with no penny to her name. Despite the odds against her, she completes her university education and manages to become a renowned and successful lawyer who does not need a man to complement her efforts in life. With the passage of time, her former lover, Freddy comes back into her life and threatens not only to stifle her newly found freedom and independence, but also take away her daughter from her. Faced with the possibility of losing her daughter to her careless, drunkard former lover, she is left with no option but to kill him with no remorse, hence the title, 'she no longer weeps'. In the play, Martha is portrayed as the exceptional woman who should take the lead in promoting and placing the needs of the women first. Her character is contrasted with that of her mother, the pastor's wife. Representing the typical woman, Martha's mother is shown to endure the patriarchal society as if it was 'natural' for her to do that. However, Martha does not endure and instead of showing resilience and stoicism carves out her own space as an educated and liberated woman. The play reaches its peak when she kills Freddy and fails to feel sorry for his death. It is as if she has killed patriarchy.

2.4 Play Analysis

2.5.1 Deconstructing gender stereotypes

She No Longer Weeps is a play that calls for social change at various levels of society. It can be read as a social satire on one hand and a political satire on the other. Satire is about attacking certain individuals, institutions or even a nation for certain identified follies or weaknesses. The play can be read as one that calls for social change in the home and/ or family. It can also be read as a play that is attacking the Zimbabwean government in the 1980s for its failure to uplift women at a time the government was boasting about strides made to promote women in society. Dangarembga seems to be complaining that the Zimbabwean government had not done enough as much as it should have done. The socialist ideals of equality in the 1980s excluded women and Dangarembga seems to be arguing that the talk on gender power relations was all tokenistic.

So, on that level, Dangarembga seems to be attacking government's rhetoric on women empowerment. Thus, the play can be read at this level as a political satire. However, *She No Longer Weeps* best demonstrates the gender power relations and the civil war in the home and/ or family. The subject of Dangarembga's attack is the patriarchal society that is best represented by both the male and female members in the play. These include Freddy, Martha's former boyfriend and father to her daughter, Martha's mother, father and ironically the two women representing the Women's Association for the Protection of Illegitimate Mother (WAPIM). All these individuals and institutions seem to encourage the enslavement of the female character much to the chagrin of the liberated Martha, whose outlook in life different from the rest. As a pastor, Martha's father disapproves of her actions when she

refuses to go back to her former boyfriend. He is worried about what the society will say if people get to know that a pastor's daughter has had a child out of wedlock. Martha's mother, also socialized to accept the woman's place in society, supports her husband's call for Martha to go back to Freddy even if Freddy had disowned her during the time that she was pregnant. The women's organization, represented by the two women, Mrs Mutsika and Mrs Chiwara also reinforces the ordinary woman's suffering by confirming the patriarchal society's view of the woman. This is the reason why Martha refuses the organisation's help when the two women representatives visit her and encourages her to go and give a talk to other 'unlucky girls' like her. Mrs Mutsika says, "we have a lot of unlucky girls in our careif you would come talk to them about how things are for us women and how these problems can be overcome....you must tell them not to give up, that is only the beginning of their struggle" (p.36).

Martha refuses this invite as to her it does not add any value to the woman's quest for freedom. Her behavior is clearly different from the rest. She even rejects her father's advice to go back to her former boyfriend, a boyfriend who clearly does not value her as an equal. Freddy sees Martha as a second class citizen who should be used and dumped whenever it suits him. This shown when he tells Martha that she is a prostitute. He tells her, "... you want to know? I tell you... you are a bitch and only a bitch ..." (p.12). Freddy is incensed by the fact that Martha is able to stand on her own and not depend on him for sustenance and support. He is used to Getrude whom he treats only as a sex object. He goes to her when he wants to make love. Freddy boasts to Joe that unlike Martha, "Getrude likes me because she doesn't expect me to marry her. She doesn't even expect me to see her regularly, she doesn't expect anything from me all she wants is for me to make love to her when I feel like it"

(p.13). Getrude is a 'nice woman' to Freddy because she allows him to do anything that he fancies with her without her complaining unlike Martha. Any woman who subverts the patriarchal society's expectations is dangerous, loose, a witch or prostitute (Gaidzanwa, 1985). For Martha to be a 'good' woman, she has to be an appendage to a man such as Freddy. This demonstrated by Martha's father's advice to her. He asks her, "Tell me this child, what you think that you a woman can do in life if not take care of a man in life?" (p.27). Admirably, Martha rejects such a view and carves out her own space as an educated and emancipated individual. The climax in the play is when she kills Freddy and she does not weep or show any remorse. This is the turning point in Martha's deliverance from the oppressive patriarchal society.

Freddy, a representative of the patriarchal society has to die if she has to liberate herself. Under normal circumstance one would expect someone to regret after killing another person even when it is done willingly. But this is not so with Martha, who seems to celebrate instead of mourning the passing on of Freddy. Freddy is killed when he comes to claim the child back, the child he had neglected after impregnating Martha at the University. Martha refuses to be a victim from the time she is impregnated. She single-handedly raises her child, completes her university education and rises to become a successful lawyer. That solicits admiration and not sympathy from the reader and when she kills Freddy it is celebrated for she has 'killed' patriarchy, the stumbling block to her success. The question to ask is the significance of Martha's behavior from the way she rejects people's advice to the final killing of Freddy.

Martha's character is significant in many ways. She is the character that carries the theme of social change in the play and in this chapter. The author is clearly attacking patriarchy, a system that cripples and suffocates the woman in the play. There is clearly need to change or transform the way the society operates and that change can only come to fruition if courageous people like Martha challenge and interrogate the society's structures. Change in the play can best be explained using Taylor's (2003) theory of scenarios and Sandi- Diaz's (2007) theory of anti- scenarios. When these two different theories are combined, social change is possible as shall be demonstrated shortly. Taylor's argues that the anti- scenarios refers to that which the society considers to be 'natural' and 'acceptable' to the society. The scenario is dominated by the transmission of common knowledge and what Taylor (ibid) refers to as the encouragement of fantasies. The anti- scenarios, she adds, reproduces actions that are deemed to be socially acceptable. Thus scenarios produce social norms that help to perpetuate the status quo.

In the context of *She No Longer Weeps*, if normalcy is Martha's suffering and acceptance of her 'station' in life as the normal. What is normal to Martha is to be grateful to Freddy for his coming to 'collect' his daughter, he has neglected when it best suited him. The scenario is for Martha to go back with Freddy as advised by her father even if Freddy says she is a 'bitch'. All the other characters outside of Martha are encouraging scenarios in the play including the women who represent the organisation that purports to stand for single women. Their actions will only perpetuate the status quo instead of abetting it. Social change will not become a reality as long as women accept their 'natural' situation in life.

It is only Sandi- Diaz's (2007) theory of the anti- scenario that can provoke change in the play. As Sandi- Diaz argues, debate and social change can only be ushered in the society if there is an anti- thesis that is added to the scenarios. Society can only be change if new agents like Martha are introduced into the society. Social change is only possible if the anti- thesis or the anti- scenarios are introduced into the play. This way, debate is provoked that ultimately results in change of the society's structures. There is therefore need for anti- scenarios to contradict the norm, as through that contradiction alternatives are ushered into the society. Martha has to be the odd one out if she is to succeed in changing the society otherwise she will be part of the society that sees her as an object only fit for the kitchen and the bedroom.

The anti- scenario is introduced in the form of Martha, who is the representative of a new and better society in Zimbabwe. By killing Freddy, Martha is merely affirming the belief that patriarchy is natural and that as a woman she has to accept her situation as the kitchen and the bedroom. Martha is refusing to play the victim of society and men. As a woman she defies odds and rejects the notion that a woman should be patient, be strong and bear her life 'bravely' as her mother counsels. Martha's mother is a stereotype that holds dear the traditional view that a woman should endure pain and be subservient to men. Martha's mother does not understand why her daughter won't endure as a woman. She wonders, "And what kind of love is this that cannot endure a little pain?" She believes that in order to say that you are in love, a woman should suffer and experience pain. In other words, she is merely advising Martha that a woman cannot do without a man even if that same man abuses her as a bloodless object. At this point Martha's behaviour can be saluted for she epitomizes the liberated and emancipated woman in society. Though her character, the dramatist is calling for change of attitudes towards women in society. From this perspective, Martha is an

admirable character who shows the way by refusing to be a stoic female character who suffers in silence. But the question to ask is, whether this is the vision of social change that Zimbabwe should undergo? If what Martha demonstrates is what radical feminism is all about, as Zimbabweans do we really think that feminism is the answer and panacea to the gender power relations as they currently exist in society?

2.5.2 Towards an Africana womanist perspective

What Martha does can best be explained by the theory of radical feminism which argues that society is divided into relationships based on the assertion that the males in society are more superior to their female counter-parts. Radical feminism aims at literally ‘overthrowing’ patriarchy. The theory calls for social change in gender roles and expectations which is what this study is about. However, the theory has a radical agenda of transforming the society with the aim of almost wiping men off the face of earth as it argues that women’s oppression is always located in the men. Thus the men in society are viewed as the other, and the other is an enemy, an outsider.

There are no complementarities between the woman and the man. This is because radical feminism posits that men benefit from the oppression of the woman. Because of this understanding among feminists such as Martha in the play, the killing of Freddy is celebrated rather than regretted. Freddy is viewed as the representative of patriarchy, an ideology that thrives on the woman’s unhappiness and suffering. As such Freddy should die to pave way for Martha’s pursuit of happiness and enjoyment of her newly found material wealth. As suggested by radical feminism, patriarchy perpetuates the dominance of the female character

and eliminating man from the face of earth will liberate everyone from the unjust society. The question still is, is this the kind of social change that the author envisions in the play, a society where women fight men as enemies and the undesirables in society? In other words, is radical feminism the answer to women misery in society?

This study argues that feminism may not be the simple answer to a woman's suffering especially the African woman. Mainstream feminism which originated in the West, and was popularized by the Beijing Conference did not bring any break through to the different women who gathered. Different women come from different backgrounds with their peculiarities that can best be understood and tackled within their particular environments. This is true of the African woman such as Martha in the play. Because she has gone to university and is practicing as a successful lawyer she now believes that mainstream feminism is the panacea to women's suffering. It is unfortunate that her western education ironically blinds her into embracing a foreign ideology such radical feminism. It is clear from this discussion that there is need for another theory that can best liberate the woman without necessarily estranging her from her male counterpart and African values. This alternative theory is African womanism.

Africana womanism is a better theoretical framework that can be used in the analysis of gender power relations in the African context. As a theory it calls for the liberation of the African woman and other women of colour within their families and cultural and traditional set ups. Africana feminism privileges the family and argues that the family should be cherished over the unnecessary alienation of this institution, which works better when the

woman and her male counterpart live harmoniously together. Africana womanism is acceptable to the African woman in an African set up, a set up that ‘encourages negotiation, accommodation and independence’ between the women and their men (Nnaemeka, 1998:11). Hudson- Weems (1998:50) argues that Africana womanism is rooted in the thesis that western feminism which tends to be radical is “not entirely relevant to Africana women.” Although both are concerned with issues of African women and acknowledge the marginalization, oppression and suffering of women, African womanism’s the point of departure is that issues affecting women can best be solved within the family and the African context, not outside. In other words, African womanism does not put emphasis on gender and sexuality as does western feminism (Hudson- Weems, *ibid*). Ntiri (1998:462) concurs with this view and argues that Africana womanism priorities the family and is in harmony with the co-existence of woman and men. Africana womanism encourages the liberation of women as demonstrated by its main tenets. According to Hudson- Weems (1993:143) Africana womanism has the following 18 descriptors or tenets that summary what the theory is about and what it seeks to achieve:

Self- definer, family- centred, genuine sisterhood, strong, in concert with men

Whole, authentic, flexible role player, respected, recognized, spiritual, male-

Compatible, respectful of elders, adaptable, ambitious, mothering and nurturing.

The descriptors show that Africana womanism is a better alternative. It is ambitious, self-definer and in concert with men. These three among other tenets clearly show that Africana womanism does not seek to perpetuate the woman’s suffering and enslavement. Instead it encourages women to be ambitious, while at the same time recognizing the men in society as

vital friends who should be take on board if total liberation is to be achieved. Martha should not kill Freddy but negotiate with him for the good of not only Martha, but also their family. In the African context, women were accorded the status quo with some men and others did far much better than their male counterparts. These include Mbuya Nehanda, Joyce Teurai Ropa Mujuru among others. Their efforts during the first and second Chimurenga in Zimbabwe were recognized by the nation even if they were not men. Both did well within the African family and the African traditional context, which goes to show that Africana womanism, is a better alternative to radical feminism which fights men. Thus, social change sought by Martha should not negate the values of the family and the African cultural values. Thus, Martha's extremism in killing and later not weeping over the death of Freddy is not the answer to women's liberation. It is not known what happened but it is most likely Martha was later arrested and imprisoned for life or worse still hanged for murder. Outside the legal system, Martha also faces the vengeance spirit, ngozi, a well known occurrence among Zimbabweans. Thus, the idea of social change sought by Martha is debilitating as it is the start of an even harder life in or outside prison.

2.6 Conclusion

It can be concluded that indeed disparities exist between men and women but such disparities are not solved by isolating men from women. There is no need for men and women to engage in competition. Mainstream feminism may not be an answer to the plight of the African women. Instead African womanism is a better option as it encourages the women to seek liberation within the context of the family and the African cultural values. Therefore, there should be co-existence, accommodation and understanding between the women and men. This way, both men and women fight the stumbling blocks to human progress not stumbling blocks to women only. After all even the man such as Freddy is a victim of patriarchal

society. Through socialization, Freddy has been taught to disregard the interests of women, not that he was born like that. In this regard, both Freddy and Martha are victims of the same system that has taught Freddy to disregard Martha's feeling. A holistic approach is the solution and such an approach is best articulated by the Africana womanist theory.

CHAPTER THREE

3.1 GEORGE MUJAJATI'S THE WRETCHED ONES: LAND REPOSSESSION AND THE CURSE OF THE LANCASTER HOUSE CONSTITUTION

3.2 Background information: George Mujajati

George Mujajati is one of the leading playwrights in Zimbabwe. He is ranked among the best such as Stephen Chifunyise, Cont Mhlanga, Raisedon Baya and Danai Gurira. Whereas Raisedon Baya and Danai Gurira belong to the younger generation of playwright who become prominent after 2000, George Mujajati, Cont Mhlanga, Gonzo Musengezi and Tsitsi Dangarembga belong to the older generation of playwrights in Zimbabwe. Mujajati is a Lecturer at Morgenster Zintec Teachers' college in Harare.

As a playwright, he became prominent in the late 1980s when he wrote plays that were staged by some of his college students. Among these plays is *The Wretched Ones* which was published by Longman, Zimbabwe in 1989 and *The Rain of my Blood*, published by Mambo Press in 1990. Mujajati is well known for his stance against the neglect of the poor in society. This theme comes out clear in both of his plays. In *Rain of my Blood*, he bemoans the neglect of the war veterans by the state as he seems to argue that government had neglected its own liberators. The same theme is picked up in earlier play, *The Wretched Ones* as shall be demonstrated later in this chapter. The play was published in 1989 but had been performed in various places in 1988. In May, 1988, the play was performed at the University of Zimbabwe's Beit Hall and ever since it has been performed in various places (Mujajati, 1989:37).

3.3 The Wretched Ones: The synopsis

The play centres on the lives of two poor families; Lazarus and his family and Povo and his parents on one hand and Mr Buffalo, a Whiteman and land owner in independent Zimbabwe on the other. Mr Buffalo's son is Daniel, is a privileged young man who instead of siding with his rich father and land owner, sympathizes with the poor people. Lazarus, the leading character goes to steal maize two cobs from Mr Buffalo's maize field to feed his pregnant wife who is dying from starvation. Unfortunately he is caught by Mr Buffalo and is taken to court where he is sentenced to pay two dollars as fine. However, he does not have money and is sentenced to one month in jail as punishment for stealing the two maize cobs. When Mr Lazarus is released from prison after serving his sentence, he discovers that his wife has miscarried and that his daughter, Liza has died after eating poisoned maize cobs from Mr Buffalo's maize field.

3.4 The Curse of the Lancaster house constitution

Zimbabwe was colonized in 1890 by the British alongside other countries such as Kenya, Nigeria, Malawi and Zambia. After Zimbabwe was colonized by the White men led by Cecil John Rhodes and others, the country was divided into different regions and depending on the rainfall pattern and soil fertility levels, the colonizer settled in areas that had abundant rainfall and fertile soils. In 1957 the land apportionment act was enacted that made it legally for the coloniser to remove blacks from their original areas and place them in arid and semi areas such as Gwayi and Shangani reserves. Blacks were resettled in hot and tsetse infested areas

along the Zambezi valley and other regions that received very little rainfall (Nyawo- Viriri, 2012).

During the colonial years that spanned nearly 100 years, the white men continued to expand their dominion over blacks by continuing to annex land that had previously belonged to the black indigenous population. After exhausting all means to reclaim his land back, the black man was forced to arm himself and fight the white men. This protracted armed struggle resulted in Zimbabwe's independence in 1980. However, because the independence as negotiated in London through the Lancaster house constitution, many concessions were made that made that independence incomplete, what WaThiongo (1993) refers to as 'flag independence'.

What made Zimbabwe's independence incomplete and flag independence was the fact that the black leader only had political power and not economic power. Secondly and more importantly for this dissertation, as part of the negotiations at the Lancaster house constitution, it had been agreed that the new black government would not take back land from the white men until the lapse of ten years from 1980. What it meant was the fact that the new leadership led by Prime Minister Robert Mugabe could not forcibly take back their land until well after 1990. According to Raftopoulos and Mlambo (2009:xxviii) the Lancaster house constitution "ended the war in Zimbabwe in 1979, and the constitution that emerged from it together embodied a series of compromises over minority rights in particular on the future of land ownership in the country and guaranteed white representation in parliament." The constitution gave advantage to the white colonizer who was sure to lose the elections in 1980

and for the next ten years after the first election in Zimbabwe nothing could be done to redress the land imbalances in land distribution. The constitution that resulted in Zimbabwe's independence "gave white capital a decade long period of consolidation, during which issues around the radical restructuring of the legacy of economic inequality were effectively put on hold" (ibid:xxviii). This clause in the Lancaster house constitution made it difficult for the black government to take back land and as a result, many blacks continued to live in overcrowded reserves known as the Tribal Trust lands (TTLs). The consequences of the Lancaster house constitution is the one that is dramatized in the play, *The Wretched Ones*. The negative consequences are the ones that have been referred to as the curse of the Lancaster house in the title of this chapter. No social change on land ownership and distribution patterns could be effected until 1990. During that period Zimbabwean became restless as government could not take back land from the white men. The Whiteman who is represented by Mr Buffalo continued to enjoy at the expense of landless black men. This is what the following section will demonstrate.

3.5 Play Analysis

The play analysis begins with the examination of the title, *The Wretched Ones*. The Wretched Ones is a title that takes from Frantz Fanon's almost similar title, *The Wretched of the Earth*. In his critical work of art, Fanon is referring to the ordinary people as the 'wretched of the earth.' In Mujajati's case, the Wretched Ones refers to the underdogs in society, the ordinary poor people who suffer in independent Zimbabwe despite the dawn of independence and black leadership. As Mujajati (1989:37) the 'wretched ones' refers to the 'have nots' who are placed side by side with the 'haves' such as Mr Buffalo, the land owner. The title is a suitable in that the focus of the play is the poor people such as Lazarus and his family and Povo and

his parents. These are the 'have nots' that Mujajati uses to show and demonstrate the plight of the poor in post colonial Zimbabwe. Despite the passage of time, the ordinary citizens such as Lazarus have not benefited from independence that was negotiated in London in 1979. The 'haves' such as Mr Buffalo whose white interests were guaranteed by the constitution are seen to be enjoying more than the indigenous people and this is the state of affairs that Mujajati is bemoaning. There is need for this state of affairs to be corrected yet the government's hands are tied. Through the poor in society such as Lazarus and Povo and his parents, Mujajati discusses a number of themes among them unemployment, betrayal of independence ideals by state authorities and poverty and landless among the poor in the Zimbabwean society. To many characters such as Lazarus, which is also the name given to the poor man Lazarus in the bible, independence in Zimbabwe did not bring any meaningful change to the ordinary Zimbabwean. The situation for the ordinary person did not change much from the colonial times. If the white men owned all the rich land in colonial Zimbabwe, the same persists in independent Zimbabwe. It is against such a background that independence in Zimbabwe can be said to be 'flag independence' as pointed out by WaThiongo. It is largely 'flag independence' or what is commonly known as political independence without economic independence. This is dramatized through the various characters in the play.

First, we meet Mr Buffalo, the land owner and farmer who lives next to the squatter camp where so-called squatters like Lazarus and his family stay. In addition to Lazarus and his family, there is also Povo, a boy who lives at the squatter together with his parents. In the late 1980s when Zimbabweans became increasingly restless as land that they had fought for was not forthcoming, there was talk of 'squatters' as people began to occupy pieces of land at the

outskirts of farms and cities. This was done out of desperation as these people had nowhere to go. In the case of the squatter in the play, it is located on the outskirts of Mr Buffalo's large and expansive farm. At the squatter, the people are clearly poverty- stricken as evidenced by the lives, clothes and the appearance of the squatter camp and the squatters.

On the very page of the page of the play, the stage directions clearly show the poverty at the squatter camp. The camp itself is built from plastic materials and next to the camp is a heap of dirty rags that should be the only clothes that the camp dwellers have for clothes. Next to the dirty rags, is a child who is "covered by torn rags" (p.2). The woman who is introduced to the reader and/ or audience is "wearing a tattered, oversized maternity dress" (p.2). As the play begins, Lazarus' pregnant wife is talking to a fellow squatter, Povo's mother. It does not take time before the reader gets to know that these two families are poverty- stricken. Povo's mother is talking to Lazarus's wife complaining that Povo "has eaten the only piece of bread that I had kept aside for our supper" (p.2). When Lazarus walks in later like the rest of the squatters he is 'dressed in tattered and heavily patched overalls" (p.2) He is weary looking and looks thin from not eating enough. This is the way the characters are described on the very first page of the play. There is a way in which Mujajati is bemoaning the state of affairs, especially the poverty that the reader witnesses at the squatter camp. In the context of the Taylor's (2003) theory of scenarios, the scenario is the situation that the squatters find themselves in. It is a situation that has to be changed and for change to take place, Sandi-Diaz's (2007) theory of anti- scenarios has to be introduced so that debate is provoked and the reality of poverty changed.

After Lazarus's entry, there is an exchange between him and his pregnant wife. The pregnant wife complains that she is hungry and wish Lazarus could find a job so that they can have at least one decent meal every week. This is revealed in the two's conversation:

Pregnant woman: Iam very hungry!

Man: Is that all you can say? (Pause) God knows how much
how much I wish to see you happy and well fed. I try hard
God knows that I try.

Pregnant woman: You don't try hard enough!

Man: How hard should I try?

Pregnant woman: Hard enough to get us at least one decent meal per week.

Hard enough to assure us of a piece of bread per day at least! (p.2)

From the above conversation, it is clear that the man, Lazarus works hard but is not rewarded for his sweat by the system. It is sad that the wife wishes her husband could bring home a decent meal at least once every week. This captures the poverty that characterize the squatters and how desperate they are. Many of the squatters steal from Mr Buffalo's maize field or they will starve to death. Mr Buffalo's life is compared to that of the squatters. He lives in a big house, has a male cook in addition to field workers. His daughter is described as obese from eating too much when the squatters wish they could have at least a decent meal per week. Because the squatters steal from his maize field he asks the police to evict them from the camp. Mrs Buffalo complains to her husband: "Those squatters have not been evicted! They are a nuisance. I saw one of them fighting for leftovers with dogs this afternoon. It's very unhealthy. That squatter camp can become a breeding place for all sorts of diseases" (p.6). That some squatters have to fight for left-overs with dogs shows the level of poverty among squatters. It is ironic that Mrs Buffalo's worry is not that people have to fight with dogs for food but that the camp can be a breeding place for all sorts of diseases.

Mujajati is condemning this divide in society where others, 'the haves' have more than enough when the poor, 'the have-nots' have nothing to fill their stomachs. This scenario or state of affairs in the society has to change. If the present state of affairs is a result of the capitalist system, then the dramatist is appealing for equal distribution of wealth in the society. The play was written when Zimbabwe was a socialist state and what the reader witnesses is inequality that shocks anyone who lives in a socialist state. There is so much inequality in a socialist state. The wealth including land has to be re-distributed among all citizens. Thus, there is need for social transformation in Zimbabwe. Things as they are cannot be left to continue like that. Thus, the scenario which Taylor (2003) defines as the norm and the socially accepted has to be changed if a better has to be created.

Mr Buffalo calls the squatters that steal from him pests. He says: "... what! The thieving wretches! (Pause) Why didn't you tell me about all this before? (Pause) Anyway, I know how to catch them! Yes, there is only one way to deal with such pests" (p.6). A pest is an insect and the implication is that the squatters are insects or that poverty has reduced them to the status of insects. These are the same squatters that are fighting with dogs over left-overs. So, it is not also surprising that they are referred to as pests. Mr Buffalo's daughter also has a negative attitude towards the squatters. When she sees them fighting with dogs over left-overs, she wonders why they fail to get better jobs so that they can buy food for themselves. Her father, Mr Buffalo weighs in and argues that the squatters are leading that harsh life because "... they are very lazy! They don't want to work! That's why they are so poor!" (p.11). Only Mr Buffalo's son, Daniel understands the plight of the squatters. He feels for them and argues that the squatters have a hard life because jobs are hard to come by. Despite Daniel's logical advice to both his father and sister, his father Mr Buffalo would have none of

it and argues that the squatters are poor because they either lazy or foolish and that an intelligent person would not live the life of a squatter. Again, there is need to change the mindset and attitude of people such as Mr Buffalo, his daughter and mother. Only Daniel can be a change agent in that he has a better vision of tomorrow's society, a society that treats everyone with respect. If everyone with means can be like Daniel then the society can be a better one and the squatters would not be in such precarious positions.

Later Lazarus is driven by poverty to steal two maize cobs from Mr Buffalo's maize field. In the court room, more insight is given into Lazarus' life. The reader gets to know that Lazarus is an orphan who was last employed ten years ago. Both his parents were killed during the liberation struggle and that he did not go to school due to lack of school fees. He had stolen the two maize cobs to feed his pregnant wife who had spent two days without eating anything. He is fined to two dollars which he fails to pay due to poverty. Because he cannot pay the fine of two dollars, he is sentenced to one month in prison with hard labour. When he is taken away to prison, those in prison are happy and laugh at him with scorn. Again, the dramatist is appealing to the conscience of the more privileged in society so that they can also treat the less privileged with passion and love. The attitude of those who are laughing at him should also change.

After one month Lazarus comes back from prison and he looks 'fatter' (22). It is ironic that Lazarus becomes fatter when he is in jail. Regrettably he is told that his pregnant wife miscarried and that his daughter, Liza died from eating a poisoned maize cob from Mr Buffalo's maize field. Later the policemen come to evict the squatters from Mr Buffalo's

farm. Povo's mother tries to put up a fight in resisting eviction and argues that with the policeman.

Povo's mother: Why should we leave?

Policeman : Because this is not your land!

Povo's mother: But we lived here long before Mr Buffalo bought this farm.

Mr Thompson who owned this farm before Mr Buffalo allowed us to stay here! (p.24).

Despite the protest, the squatters are evicted from the land of their ancestors. As Povo's mother argues they cannot move leaving their relatives buried at the squatter camp. However, the squatters cannot fight the armed policemen and so are evicted not before lives have been lost from the poisoned maize cobs. This state of affairs is what Mujajati is against. He seems to be asking why blacks can be called squatters in their own ancestors' land. It is ironic that the colonizer, Mr Thompson and Mr Buffalo now own the land that the squatters are supposed to own. The government could not do anything about this state of affairs as its hands were tied by the clause in the constitution that said land could not be taken away from the whites. However, it could be bought by government or individuals on a willing- seller-willing – buyer basis. Unfortunately according to Nyawo- Viriri (2012) the white farmers decided on a currency of their choice which made buying land very difficult. The result was that land remained in the hands of the few whites who had grabbed it from the indigenous people such as Lazarus and Povo's parents.

3.6 Conclusion

The chapter analyzed Mujajati's *The Wretched Ones* and suggested that it is a play that discusses landlessness in Zimbabwe after independence. The chapter argued that the blacks could not have their land back because of the clause in the Lancaster house constitution that prohibited the black government from taking back land from the white men. As a result, people became squatters in their own country of origin as illustrated through the Lazarus and his family and their fellow squatter, Povo and his mother. Mr Buffalo was discussed as the white man that still owned land at the expense of the landless black men. It was also suggested that in line with the theories of scenarios and anti- scenarios, the scenario or state of affairs in Zimbabwe after independence had to change to allow blacks to participate in the economy of the country by giving them their land that had been stolen from them by the colonizer.

CHAPTER FOUR

4.1 SUPER PATRIOTS AND MORONS: THE AFRICAN LEADER AND THE BETRAYAL OF INDEPENDENCE IDEALS

4.2 Raisedon Baya: The author's narrative

Raisedon Baya is one of the leading dramatists who belong to the young generation of dramatists in Zimbabwe. Baya is a critic, journalist and former teacher. He has a theatre company and runs a festival in Bulawayo known as Intwasa festival. He has written a number of unpublished stage plays that have been performed in Zimbabwe and abroad. Among these are: *Crocodile of Zambezi*, co-authored with Christopher Mlalazi, *Two Leaders I Know*, co-authored with Stephen Chifunyise, *The Water Story*, and *What they Said, What they Got* among others. His only plays that have been published include: *The Moment*, *Madmen and Fools*, *Tomorrow's People* and *Super Patriots and Morons*. All these plays were compiled into a play anthology and published in 2009 with the aid of a publishing grant from the Culture Fund of Zimbabwe.

4.3 The Super Patriots and Morons: The synopsis

The play centres on three groups of people, the ruling party represented by the Super Patriot, the opposition parties represented by the three voices in the play and the ordinary people in society represented by Shami, the teacher and Looksmart. These characters are located in an unnamed country where the Super Patriot who is the political leader of the country rules his people through fear, intimidation, violence and arrests. The situation described in the play

resembles the one that happened in Zimbabwe between 2000 and 2009. This is the period that has come to be known as the crisis decade in Zimbabwe (Raftopoulos and Mlambo, 2009). The crisis decade refers to that time in Zimbabwe when there was stagnation and strife in the society. There were shortages of almost everything and people queued in endless queues for basic commodities such as bank notes, salt, fuel, mealie-meal and cooking oil among other basic commodities.

In the play, the Super Patriot is told to leave office by the opposition who accuse him of having failed the nation. He refuses to vacate office and asks Bazooka, his henchman and spy agent to go into the queues and get to hear what people are saying about him. Bazooka goes to the streets and meets Shami, the teacher and Looksmart who are queuing for basic commodities. They complain about the situation and decide to present a petition to the Super Patriot over the deteriorating situation in the country. After hearing this plan, Bazooka goes back to report to the Super Patriot who is angered by what the people want to do. He asks Bazooka to bring Shami the ring leader of the group to him. She is later arrested and tortured for trying to present the petition. Meanwhile the reader learns that the teacher has been hanged for a similar offence. Through these characters, the Super Patriot and his ruling party, the Super Patriots Party is shown to be relying on violence, intimidation, arrests and starvation to punish and discourage the opposition members from contesting his rule. Simply put, the leader of the ruling party and nation is cruel, violent and not capable of being a true leader who loves his people.

4.4 Play Analysis

Whereas *The Wretched Ones* centres on the plight of the landless poor, *Super Patriots and Morons* is about the disillusionment in independent Zimbabwe that comes with a selfish, cruel and thoughtless leader, the Super Patriot. The reader knows Baya and Matsa, the co-authors are writing about Zimbabwe because in the author's notes to the anthology, Baya says that the plays in the anthology are inspired by events that happened in Zimbabwe (Baya, 2009). Throughout the play, the two dramatists insist that political and social change is necessary because the new leaders in independent Zimbabwe represented by the Super Patriot have failed to make life for the majority of the people such as Shami, the teacher and Looksmart pleasant. Presumably, these are the people are directly and indirectly contributed to the independence of Zimbabwe. But what informs the two dramatists in writing *Super Patriots and Morons*?

The dramatist are inspired and informed by the crisis in Zimbabwe that happened between 2000 and 2009. The crisis began when land was repossessed by the blacks. This angered the white community and a series of events followed that deepened the crisis. Zimbabwe was isolated and the economy was a free fall that culminated in an inflation rate of 231 percent. The leaders also compounded the crisis by their arrogance, mismanagement, corruption and violence. This is what the chapter will discuss in the following paragraphs.

Super Patriots and Morons depicts the conditions obtaining in neo-colonial Zimbabwe. The play depicts the tribulations of the ordinary people such as Shami in a crisis-laden country. The play focuses on the leader, the Super Patriot and depicts the disillusionment that emanates from mismanagement of the economy and the attendant corruption. The ordinary

people such as Shami, the teacher and Looksmart symbolize the sacrifice that has been betrayed by the national leadership such as the Super Patriot. It is this leader that is being attacked and laughed at by the dramatist. This way, the plays can be read as a satire.

Abrams (1957:82) defines satire as “the literary art of diminishing a subject by making it ridiculous and evoking towards it attitudes of amusement, contempt, or scorn.” The target of the dramatists’ scorn and contempt is the leader and his party supporters such as Bazooka, his henchman and spy agent. Abrams further differentiates between comedy and satire and argues that comedy evokes laughter as an end in itself but satire uses laughter as a weapon and against a butt. The butt can be a country, an individual, a class of people, tribe or institution. Usually what is being scorned is a butt that exists outside the play. In this case, the butt is the political leadership that governed Zimbabwe during the crisis decade. This is the political leadership that is represented by the Super Patriot. What should be understood about satire is the fact that satire has an important duty, to change society for the better. This is corroborated by Abrams (ibid) who says that the importance of satire is the fact that it “is corrective of human vice and folly” (p.83). The target of scorn or attack is the Super Patriot and other negative characters such as Bazooka who uses violence to silence opposition members. This scenario (Taylor, 2003) or state of affairs in the play should be changed if a new and better society is to emerge from the crisis.

In the play the Super Patriot and his Super Patriot Party is depicted as a class of people that uses any means necessary to preserve its power and wealth that comes with it. Many tactics are used to achieve this end such as the killing of Shami’s husband, the hanging of the teacher

and the false arrest of Shami. Shami's husband is tortured until his death. She points this out in this speech: "My husband was not mugged. He was beaten to death by the Youth Militia (*to Smart*) after they accused him of supporting the opposition. The Youths came to our house, knocked down our door and beat him to death right in front of my children" (pp.170-171). Shami's husband's death is a painful one but it is less painful because the reader does not witness it. The teacher's death is most painful because the reader gets to witness it. It is also more painful because the teacher is killed by his former friend, Looksmart, who joins the Youth Militia after he fails to get a job after graduating from the University. Because the teacher opposes the ruling party and the leader, he is hanged and suffers a painful death as shown in this speech by Looksmart: "Yes, we got him alright. Dangling from the roof truss with a rope round his neck. Not a good sight, sir. Eyes popping out... his trousers... messed up...eh!" (p.170). What is painful about the teacher's death is the fact that his 'crime' is his desire to present a petition to government over the deteriorating situation in the society.

What happens in the play is true of many African countries where leaders use the Police and the Military to suppress legitimate dissent among the opposition parties and the ordinary citizens. This also happens in novels such as *Petals of Blood*, *A Man of the People* and *Matigari*. The depiction of the leadership in *Super Patriots and Morons* is based on the socio-economic and political circumstances in Zimbabwe. The ordinary people are seen in endless queues they join hoping to find money, cooking oil, salt, sugar and fuel. The teacher captures this when he talks to Bazooka. He says, "Do I have a choice? I need to get bread and other basic stuff that are not in my house. (*Counting his fingers*) Maize. Salt. Cooking oil. Sugar. Cash! (p.146).

From the discussion so far, what has emerged is that the dramatists recreated in the play, the reality of the socio historical experiences obtaining in Zimbabwe during the crisis and anyone who questions the Super patriots was referred to as a puppet or sellout and an agent of imperialism. In the play the Super Patriot who seems to represent the ZANU PF leadership believes that change is not necessary as he is God's chosen leader who should rule forever. He justifies this position by suggesting that he is the black Moses and Messiah that delivered people from the bondage of colonialism. He also uses his participation in the liberation struggle to suggest that he is the greatest person in the country and that "there is no history greater than my history. Mine is a history of a living legend" (p.133).

This nationalist rhetoric echoes the ZANU PF narrative of sovereignty, the liberation struggle, patriotism and the imperialist, while the opposition MDC and other parties are branded as the puppets and sellouts. This observation is shown in the play when the Super Patriot declares to Bazooka that he is the people's "Black Moses. Their Messiah. I risked a lot delivering them from the imperialist..." (p.135). this is laughable coming from a leader who leads a nation that is described by Looksmart as the "land of the living dead" (p.146). The reference to the land of the living dead is a metaphor that implies that there is no life in the society and that the ordinary citizen is a walking zombie. The people have since 'died' from a wide range of challenges they face in their everyday life. That a pregnant woman Shami can be in the queues struggling to get food is something that shouts out to be changed. This is why characters such as Shami and the teacher hatch a plan to mobilize other people and come up with a petition to be presented to government. Unfortunately, their plan is leaked to the special branch led by Bazooka who reports this to the Super Patriot. In the context of social change, Shami is the change agent who is keen on introducing 'anti-scenarios' to the

prevailing social order. Unfortunately, other characters such as Looksmart who are supposed to join in the match, shift sides and join the Patriotic Youth Militia. Instead of marching to government buildings to present a petition, Shami's plan is thwarted as she is falsely arrested even if she is a pregnant woman. The result is that no visible change takes place in the play as the ring leader is arrested.

The other change agent in the play is the teacher. He leaves his class to also joining queues in search of food. Like Shami he is appalled by the crisis in their country and suggests that they come up with a petition that they should present to government. The teacher is seen in the queues by Bazooka the spy agent who reports him to the officials. When his students fight and hurt each other in his absence, he is summarily dismissed from work. Later because of his activism alongside Shami, he is hanged by the Patriotic Youth Militia that includes Looksmart. The arrest of Shami and the hanging of the teacher signal the lack of action in the play.

The other change agents are the three voices that urge the Super Patriot to go or leave office as the head of state. As soon as the play opens the reader reads about the impasse between the leader and the opposition. On the very first page, one of the voices urges the leader to go. He says: "You've failed. Failures must go, and go now!" (p.132). This is the usual voice of the opposition parties in Zimbabwe which they took from Mavhaire when he urged the President years back to leave office and go because he had failed the nation. When the MDC came into office, they picked the chorus and also urged the president to leave office as he had failed. This is what is dramatized by the voices in this play. However, the opposition voices' call to

the Super Patriot to leave office falls on deaf ears. On the very last page of the play, the voices still urge the leader to go but he declares that he is not going anywhere and it is this defiance that closes the play. He tells the voices that are urging him to go: "I'm not going anyway! Never! Ever! This is my country and it belongs to me!" (p.179). This declaration is one that forecloses any possibility of change in the society. Such calls were rampant at the peak of the crisis decade but they fell on deaf ears. As a result, there was no change in Zimbabwe at the time and this is replaced in the text. The Super Patriot vows to stay put and tells the opposition figures that he will not go anywhere as the country is his.

The behavior of the leader in the play does not instill hope in the other characters. Neither does it instill hope in the reader. The leader is selfish and cruel. He thinks about himself and makes sure all those who want to remove him from office are eliminated violently. This is what the dramatists are attacking in the play. Leaders should be the people's servant and serve the interests of the ordinary citizens. This is not what the reader finds in the play. Moreso, this is not what the ordinary people, who were the bulwark of the revolution fought for. Thus the Super Patriot is negating the ideals of an independent Zimbabwe. The Super Patriot shows that power is "the ultimate aphrodisiac in both sexual and asexual sense. Power confers enormous privileges... with power, men play god, they control lives and times of people" (Agbese, 2000:7). When he hears that people are on their way to present him with a petition, the leader is not supposed to respond that challenge with violence, false arrests, intimidation, incarceration, threats, rape, torture and deliberately starving his opponents. This is why when the Sangoma and the Prophet tell him the truth about the situation he condemns them to jail without trial. As a deluded leader who believes in his own imagined greatness he relishes in the praise singing that is heaped by his praise singers such as Bazooka as in the

following lines: "...Your excelling Excellency. I see you triumphant, victorious, and heroic. I see you heading the African Union for life. Your face replacing that of Franklin on the U.S notes. Your birthday made an international holiday" (p.141). This is the kind of praise singing that the Super Patriot relishes in. The same extravagance is not matched in the services that he provides to his people. Thus, the Super Patriot is a candidate for change but there are no change agents that are capable of transforming him or the country that he controls so much with fear and violence. Therefore, at the level of characters, there is not much change that takes place.

The only change that takes place is in the transformation of Bazooka. After getting fed up with the leader's unstoppable killings of opposition members, Bazooka decides to join the people rather than remain on the side of the leader. "*(stops and turns)*. I don't care anymore, George. I don't. Even if you send after me. I don't care. I don't want this anymore. No. No more. I belong with the people..." (p178). Although Bazooka's transformation is positive and welcome, it comes too little, too late. A number of people have died at his hands among them the teacher, Shami's husband and a host of others. After all, his transformation may not mean anything to the Super Patriot who boasts that Bazooka will come back to rejoin the party despite this rebellion. Thus, although this is a moral victory for better values for the society, it may not translate into any radical transformation of the society beyond the individual.

4.5 Conclusion

Social, economic and political change in the play does not occur at the level of characters in the play. All the characters in the play, bad or good do not change much especially in the

context of introducing new and better values for a better society. The Voices in the play do not change much of the society for the leader resists their call for him to leave office. Shami, the teacher and Shami's husband are the only radical characters that may have ushered in positive change in the society. Unfortunately, they are killed before they can do anything about the rot, stagnation and quagmire in the society. Bazooka is the reader's only hope. Unfortunately he may come back and rejoin the ruling and continue with the status quo.

Having said this, change in the play occurs at the level of consciousness among the characters. More importantly, in plays of social change according to Sandi- Diaz (2007) change is targeted at the reader. It is the reader who gets challenged by the reality of the play. If the play dramatizes the ineptitude of the political leadership in society, the reader will read the play, then reflect on the events in the play. It is after reflecting that Sandi- Diaz (ibid) argues that the reader will then act and then transform his or her own society. Thus, if there is corruption in the society, the reader will be faced with the task of transforming his own corrupt society outside the text. After all, the butt in the play merely represents a historical figure in real life that should change for the better of his or her society. Looked from this angle, the play has great potential for transformation even if characters do not manifest that change in their interaction.

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION

This study explored the role of written Zimbabwean drama in English in facilitating and shaping social change in Post- Colonial Zimbabwe. The study discussed the ways in which the characters facilitated or resisted change in the three plays studied. Change or transformation was discussed as it manifested in the various characters such as Martha in *She No Longer Weeps*, Lazarus and Mr Buffalo in *The Wretched Ones* and the Super Patriot in *Super Patriots and Morons*. The term drama was defined according to the context of the study. Heuvel's (1991) definition of drama was adopted for the study. Drama or play was defined as "that form of theatrical expression that is constituted primarily as a literary artefact, according to particular 'dramatic' conventions, and empowered as text" (p.2) .

The aim of the study was to analyse the use of written drama in English as a tool or instrument in promoting the discourse of social change in post- colonial Zimbabwe as illustrated by the three plays. In the first chapter that analysed *She No Longer Weeps*, it was argued that the social change that was envisioned by the main character, Martha was as misleading as the mainstream feminism that she embraces. She kills Freddy, her child's father to symbolize the death of patriarch in the society. More disturbing was the fact that by killing Freddy Martha implied that she did not need a man in her life and this was interpreted as too extreme a position in view of what the theory of Africana womanism says. Whereas feminism sees men as enemies to be killed because they inhibit the woman's growth and independence, Africana womanism calls for the co- existence of man and woman in society especially in the context of the family and the African cultural values. Thus, what Martha does was dismissed as un- called for in pursuance of the importance of the family institution

in an African context. Whereas the oppression of women was condemned, the killing and separation of men and women was also considered not to be the solution for women's oppression in a patriarchal society.

In chapter two, the theme of social change revolved around the character of Lazarus, a squatter who is jailed for stealing two maize cobs from a White man's farm. The chapter demonstrated the need for land repossession in Zimbabwe in the late 1980s. It was argued that many blacks were reduced to paupers because they could not have land to till. As a result many were reduced to squatters in their own country of origin as demonstrated by the poor characters that include Lazarus and Povo's mother. Thus social change was prevented from happening in Zimbabwe and in the play because of the clause in the Lancaster house constitution that guaranteed privileges for the white man. This may have contributed to the 'land invasions' that rocked Zimbabwe in 1998 and 2000. Change had been long overdue and people led by the Svosve villagers took the initiative by 'invading' the Whiteman's land.

In the last play in chapter four, which focuses on the black leadership in post colonial Zimbabwe, it was also argued that there is need for continuous checks and balances to make sure power does not corrupt and corrupt absolutely. As shown through the Super Patriot, power can corrupt and disadvantage citizens. In the play, the leader is blind to the people's suffering as he thinks that he no one else can replace him as the leader. The play shows what not to be a leader as the Super Patriot's every other move negates the ideals of independence. He is shown to be part of the crisis instead of coming out as the solution to it. Therefore change was said to be difficult as long as society had leaders such as the Super Patriot.

Conclusively, it was argued that the only change that takes place in the characters in all the three plays is at the level of consciousness. There is no radical change that takes place in the characters. The only radical change that takes place is in chapter one when Martha kills Freddy. However, this is dismissed as extreme and needless competition and enmity between men and women. Thus, change could only manifest itself in the reader of the plays. Using the theory of Sandi- Diaz (2007) it was argued that the only change could take part in the reader. After reading the plays and getting to know the plight of the characters, the reader can then reflect on the unfortunate reality of the plays and then act to transform the situation in the plays in his or her own real life. This way, the plays still helped in transforming society.

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