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DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH AND COMMUNICATION

DISSERTATION TOPIC

Lifting The Veil: White Zimbabwean Writing and The Treatment of Double Consciousness in Doris Lessing's *The Grass Is Singing* (1950), John Eppel's *Absent: The English Teacher* (2009) and Andreas Eames' *The Cry of the Go- Away Bird* (2011).

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A dissertation submitted to the Department of English and Communication, Midlands State University in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the Bachelor of Arts English and Communication Honours Degree.

May 2014

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DECLARATION

I, Shamiso Misi, Registration number R104727M, hereby declare that this dissertation is my own original work that has not been previously submitted for any degree or examination at any other university. Proper citation and acknowledgements in line with copyright law and ethical requirements have been strictly adhered to, in writing this thesis. This dissertation is submitted to the Department of English and Communication, Midlands State University in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Bachelor of Arts English and Communication Honours Degree.

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DEDICATIONS

To the fountain of life and wisdom, Jesus Christ, the reason why I live, be glory and honour.

To my beloved mother, Melody Maphosa, who has given me her unwavering support and has been constantly on her knees on my behalf. She recognized the potential in me and encouraged me to pursue my dream.

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ABSTRACT

Double consciousness is not peculiar to African Americans who have suffered from the injustices of slavery. It can be traced among those who are excluded from center to the periphery in domination and control, irrespective of race or location. Though the white race has considered whiteness as a stable identity, or signifier of rationality, sanity, power, it can be noted it is an unstable identity that is always under construction. White people also find themselves occupying the bottom space in the hierarchy of power and domination. Resultantly, they find themselves secluded, alienated and failing to belong hence suffering from double consciousness. This research therefore seeks to validate the argument that white people suffer from double consciousness by focusing on literature written by white Zimbabweans. It pays particular attention to Doris Lessing's *The Grass Is Singing* (1950), John Eppel's *Absent: The English Teacher* (2009), and Andreas Eames' *The Cry of the Go-Away Bird* (2011).

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1.0 Chapter One

1.1 Background of Study

One's perception of life is shaped by events they encounter in life. The surrounding events build one's consciousness of self. Double consciousness commonly refers to a condition of failing to reconcile two identities that blacks in America experienced due to slavery (McWhorter 2003:1). Williams (1994:7) opines that slavery was not born of racism: rather, racism was the consequence of slavery. Williams implies that slavery led the white man to look at the black man with contempt and regard him as a lower race unfit for America, a white man's country. Slavery denied blacks in America the right to either learn their African culture or to learn the American culture as observed by Douglas (1845) in his narrative, *Narrative of the Life Frederick Douglass an American Slave*. This was done to keep the Negro subordinate or inferior while the white man achieved his goals and establish a superior identity. Resultantly, such behavior led to the Afro- Americans' failure to integrate in any of the two cultures. Africa was their homeland but due to displacement (slavery) they found themselves on American soil which was native to white Americans. Their experiences on American soil stripped them of their identity for they had a quest for belonging.

However, in the Zimbabwean context, it is the whites who may be said to experience double consciousness. Zvobgo (2009:15) dates their first established settlement in Rhodesia around 1880 when Cecil John Rhodes' Pioneer Column came in search of gold. However, when they failed to make profit from the gold exploration, the British South Africa Company encouraged settlement for farming purposes. Mlambo (2000:15) observes that in 1891, about 1500 whites permanently resided in the country but the population increased after the first World War such that the estimated population from the 1960s to 1979 stood at 240 000.

Mlambo further argues that in 1969, approximately 59, 5% of the white Rhodesian population had been born outside the country, and 25% had been born in Rhodesia. This implies that the white Rhodesian population did not only consist of immigrants but others had become citizens by birth. It is also this younger generation that has written a proliferation of texts that has accounted for white Zimbabwean discourse after 2000.

Whites who settled in Rhodesia are varied in terms of origin. Maravanyika and Huijezenveld (2010:22) point out that British settlers perceived the Portuguese, Greek, Polish, Boers, Russians, Americans, Germans, Swiss and French settlers not only as foreigners, but also as of a lower calibre. It is of interest to observe that the white community was also fragmented for the British disregarded other white ethnic groups and regarded the country as their own hence Maravanyika and Huijezenveld (2010:19) claim they wanted to create a neo- Britain. This accounts for the reason why in texts such as *Absent: The English Teacher*, (2009) George is regarded by Wilhelmine, a German woman, as a racist because he is British.

Mlambo (1998:25) observes that “Rhodesian authorities wanted to make Rhodesia a white man’s country” hence they displaced natives from their land. Javangwe (2011:1) points out that white Zimbabwean narratives' displacement discourse seeks to displace natives [from the landscape] in order to people the evacuated spaces so as to create their own identities. Machingaidze (1991:559) gives a clear detail when he suggests that Premier Coghlan told the all settler legislative assembly in 1927, “This is essentially a country where the white man has come and desires to stay, and he can only be certain of doing so if he has certain portions of the colony made his exclusively.”

It is this behavior that has caused the black Zimbabwean majority to have their own

definitions of the white community in Zimbabwe. While they established their own identities as Zimbabweans, native blacks define them as foreigners who should give them back their land which they took by force. It thus becomes imperative for the white community to observe this fact if they are to understand the native community's definition of them.

Furthermore, the desire to make the country a neo-Britain led the Rhodesian state to solicit for more whites in Britain to come and settle in the colony. Mlambo (1998:30) notes that “Southern Rhodesia was marketed as a good place for investment and one needed to gather at least £ 2000 in order to be established.” Since this is a lot of money, it means that those who came and settled in Rhodesia under these conditions forsook their homes and invested their all in the new area of settlement. This is one of the reasons why among the white Zimbabwean community there exists some who have no links with their motherland, but have established strong ties in Zimbabwe.

However, it is interesting to note that the white Zimbabwean population never exceeded 4% of the total population though they controlled 90% of the economy in terms of the means of production, while the black majority which constituted 96% of the total population only controlled 10%. These differences continued even after independence. Moyana (1999:60) argues that “in 1992, Zimbabwe’s white community accounted for 0.8 per cent, or about 82 000, of a total population of 10.5 million. Of these, 62 000, or 0.6 per cent, claimed to belong in Zimbabwe as citizens. Nevertheless, they complained of being ‘locked out’ and ‘not wanted’, of being outcasts in the country of their birth.”

Whites continued to enjoy their economic privileges until the year 2000 when they were displaced from their land during the agrarian reform. Tagwirei (2013:28) observes that Chater’s text, *Crossing The Boundary Fence*, illustrates that “whites were not willing to share

the wealth they owned at the expense of blacks.” He further argues that blacks were still subordinate and he agrees with Nkosi (2008) that the ruling party’s reconciliatory tone was just “a mere ruse to preserve economic disparities from Rhodesia.” Thus one can say that it was just the name Rhodesia that was changed to Zimbabwe but the land issue which had been central to the struggle had not been addressed.

Furthermore, the Lancaster House Agreement of 1979 did not only protect the interests of the whites and maintain their status quo on land as suggested, but also allowed other whites to come and purchase land or farms under the Willing Buyer Willing Seller principle. The Lancaster agreement failed to address the issue of land to the black majority’s satisfaction hence the Zimbabwean government led by the ZANU-PF party decided to confiscate land by force and distribute it to the black majority, the original owner.

It is after the year 2000 that this discussion seeks to situate the white man’s identity in Zimbabwe. During the period prior to the agrarian reform, white writing focused on their claim of belonging to Zimbabwe (on the land) and how as the superior race they defined black identity. They represent themselves with a definite self-consciousness. However, having lost the land and finding themselves displaced they felt their identity threatened and had to rethink their place in Zimbabwe. Narratives such as; *African Tears: The Zimbabwe Land Invasions* by Catherine Buckle, *The Secrets of Old Mukiwa* and *Soldier Blue* by Paul Williams, and of late, *Absent The English Teacher* by John Eppel as well as *The Cry of the Go- Away Bird* by Andreas Eames, to mention just a few, project the pain the white Zimbabwean community endured because of displacement. They also depict that they feel their identities threatened hence they try to identify themselves as belonging to both the white and black Zimbabwean community.

These narratives are an account of how life has changed for the white community in Zimbabwe since the withdrawal of land from their hands into the black Zimbabwean's hands. They depict that whites who thought they had been integrated into the Zimbabwean society realized that they were non-citizens as they lost cases in court and were blamed for the economic crisis in the country. *African Tears: The Zimbabwean Land Invasions* (2001) is a novel that portrays the writer's experiences when besieged by the war veterans leading to her forced departure. Whites who thought they had been integrated into the Zimbabwean society realized they were non-citizens as they lost cases in court and were blamed for the economic crisis in the country. As a result, they saw that they did not belong either to Zimbabwe, for they were not native to Zimbabwe, or Europe, for they could not trace their European lineage, hence the challenge of belonging.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Though some scholars have discussed the idea of white Zimbabwean identity, their scope of research has not focused on the subject within the framework of double-consciousness. This research therefore intends to study white Zimbabwean identity within the boundaries of double consciousness in texts by white Zimbabwean writers. It seeks to apply Dubois' concept of double consciousness to the racial politics in Zimbabwe as seen in works of fiction. It is of interest to note that Dubois (1903) identified whites as those with self-consciousness, thus prescribing the black man's identity. My research inverts this logic in order to locate whiteness within the boundaries of ambivalence of identity resulting from two heritages, one, which is European, and the other, which is African.

1.3 Aims

- To trace white Zimbabwean writers' consciousness of identity in pre and post independent Zimbabwe particularly the period after 2000.

1.3.1 Objectives of Study

- To examine white Zimbabwean writers' treatment of identity before independence.
- To examine white Zimbabwean writers' treatment of white Zimbabwean identity in relation to the reconciliation discourse.
- To assess white Zimbabwean writers' treatment of white Zimbabwean identity in relation to the land reform discourse.

1.4 Significance of Study

This research can be valuable to the Zimbabwean nation and the world at large in various ways. It can help the government to revisit and redress problems of the white community. It can also help the government to enact policies that address racial discrimination and protect minority races. Furthermore, the research will help identify effective ways for the underprivileged to channel their concerns to the responsible authority without fear or feeling vulnerable. Other scholars and researchers who may want to further their studies can find the research a spring board for literature since the research is likely to provoke much debate.

It is imperative to note that Zimbabwean literature is divided between black and white implying that, the two have each focused their works on their experiences and are quite silent about the experiences of the other. Therefore, this study seeks to inform both race of the need to bridge the gap and include the other as an equal in their narratives.

1.5 Review of Literature

1.5.1 Introduction

The following review of literature focuses on scholarly works on Zimbabwean literature, in general, and white Zimbabwean literature, in particular. The starting point of the literature review is to define double consciousness and how it has been defined across disciplines. A review of white Zimbabwean literature will follow with attention being paid to the works of Muponde and Primorac (2005), Hughes (2010) and Pilosof (2012), among others.

1.5.2 Review of Literature on Double Consciousness

The phrase “double consciousness” stems from the first chapter of Du Bois’ *The Souls of Black Folk*, (1903) called “Of Our Spiritual Strivings.” However, Du Bois is not the first to coin this term. He borrowed it from the medical field where it referred to a Negro disease, drapetomania, which is a mental illness defined by an unrestrained propensity to run away. Being an African American, Dubois uses the term to describe the felt contradictions between the proclaimed values and the daily experiences of the blacks in America. It is imperative to quote the famous passage in which Du Bois explained the term in order to understand the concept. He says,

“After the Egyptian and Indian, the Greek and Roman, the Teuton and Mongolian, the Negro is a sort of seventh son, born with a veil, and gifted with second-sight in this American world,- a world which yields him no true consciousness, but only lets him see himself through the revelation of the other world. It is a peculiar sensation, this double consciousness, this sense of always looking at oneself through the eyes of others, of measuring one’s soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity.

One ever feels his two-ness, - an American, a Negro; two souls, two thoughts, Two warring ideals in one dark body, whose dogged strength alone keeps it from being torn asunder. The history of the American Negro is the history of this strife, - this longing to attain self-conscious manhood, to merge his double self into a better and truer self. In this merging he wishes neither of the older selves to be lost.

He would not Africanize America, for America has too much to teach the world and Africa. He would not bleach his Negro soul in a flood of white Americanism, for he knows that Negro blood has a message for the world. He simply wishes to make it possible for a man to be both a Negro and an American, without being cursed and spit upon by his fellows, without having the doors of Opportunity closed roughly in his face” (Du Bois 1903:8-9).

When Du Bois described double consciousness, he captured how the presence of two identities or streams of consciousness has led the Negroes to have an identity crisis. The Negro has two thoughts and two souls because he knows there exists two cultures; African and American, which should constitute his being, but he has been denied the right to learn both. The American social values regard the African as the lowest caliber hence he is the ‘seventh son’ who is racially discriminated. Their dark complexion or color as well as their race distinctly separate blacks from the white American world hence they are ‘born with a veil’.

Du Bois' (1903) words are therefore important for they depict how alienation and acculturation has led the Negro to define himself through the eyes of the white community that stripped him of his identity. His words describe therefore that, double consciousness is a state or condition that comes at a point when it dawns on them (Negroes) that due to their race or color they are a problem and they are different.

Schaefer (2008) observes that double consciousness is a result of racial discrimination and color differences. He highlights that “the veil has been interpreted as race itself and its impact on the lives of black Americans, the racial lens through which white Americans view black Americans and the double consciousness with which black Americans experience their world” (3). Thus it can be argued that double consciousness is a condition that results from seclusion of one race by another due to color difference such that the one excluded fails to have a definite sense of belonging.

McWhorter (2003) adds on to Du Bois’ concept by suggesting that double consciousness is a result of seclusion. This he illustrates when he applies it to contemporary America where whites have denied Blacks entry into American society. He says, “double consciousness is often claimed to describe modern black Americans because of whites’ resistance to blacks’ true inclusion in the American fabric.” (13). He further contends that Du Bois’ concept has “evolved to a new double consciousness where the authentic black person stresses personal initiative and strength in private but dutifully takes on the mantle of victim-hood in public” (13). This implies that double consciousness is used here to refer to modern black Americans’ inferiority complex.

Furthermore, Lyubansky (2004) also focuses on double consciousness among African Americans. He opines that “acculturation and racial discrimination are responsible for the reflex action that evolves as double consciousness.” (5). This he contends in his research on “Black Jurors who felt that their racial groups are more unjustly treated, helpless, and vulnerable and the most distrusted.” (3). Lyubansky’s research focuses on the Black American community but does not include the white community about their feelings towards the treatment of the race.

Sawyer (2004) also focuses on blacks in Latin America. Here he contends that double

consciousness is a result of inclusionary discrimination. This he illustrates by arguing that though Latin Americans are patriotic and critical national symbols, they have historically had unequal access to social, political and economic power. This implies that though they are patriotic citizens they are discriminated against.

Moreover, Somersan (2006)'s discussion highlights that double consciousness is not peculiar to African Americans but is a possible becoming condition that occurs to those who are excluded from power especially nation building. He postulates that "It would appear that persons situated at either opposite ends of the spectrum of dominance possess a common attribute, the two-fold, and/or dialectic nature of their consciousness. ... the more one is removed from the center of the socio-economic, the stronger the sense of double consciousness (or plurality)" (158-159).

Double consciousness thus becomes a condition possible to be felt, read and heard by anyone who is secluded. Somersan (2006) gives the various societies where this can be traced: "the Basque in Spain, the Irish, Welsh and Scottish in the UK....Turks and Kurds in Germany, Moslems in Greece [...] Native Americans, Hindus, Budhists [...] Moslems in USA and UK especially after events of 9/11(2001)." (161). Therefore double consciousness refers to the multiple reactions the dominated have in response to their seclusion. It is thus imperative to explore feelings of White Zimbabweans after they have been excluded from Zimbabwe's nation building.

In a nutshell, the various scholars cited above studied Dubois' idea of double consciousness on blacks in America. Their observations have also identified blacks as the disadvantaged while the whites are advantaged. They all agree that double conscious is a result of seclusion either from power, culture or economic issues. However, Somerson (2006) links double

consciousness with hegemony and argues that soul plurality or double consciousness depends on ones positioning in society. The more they are secluding from the center to the periphery, the more their consciousness is altered. Somerson is thus suggesting that double consciousness can occur to any race as long as they are discriminated against.

1.5.3 Review of Literature on White Zimbabweans' Displacement

The history of Zimbabwe dates the first actual settlement of whites in Zimbabwe around 1890. Hughes (2010) asserts that they did not seize land with guns alone but displaced natives in order to establish a credible sense of entitlement and propagate the conviction that they belong on the land. This implies that they maintained their European consciousness of racial superiority. Raftopoulos and Mlambo (2009) are of the view that whites depended on seizing resources from Africans in order to establish a more personal form of ownership. Thus whites in pre-independent Zimbabwe established themselves as a superior race, with the obligation to exploit other races in the name of civilization.

Pilossof (2012) observes that after independence whites maintained their status and managed to live in a country ruled by blacks, through operating with them without constructing their identity around them. After a century of permanent settlement, they were displaced from their farms due to the Agrarian reform which sought to redistribute land to the black Zimbabwean majority. Whites became insecure and lived in fear and with no land entitlement; they had no sense of belonging. This failure to belong is cemented by the president's statements that "white commercial farmers [...] belong to Britain and [they should] go there [but] if they want to live here, we will say stay but your place is in prison and nowhere else" that were printed in the Bulawayo chronicle as well as the Herald of 5 September 2002 (Muponde and Primorac 2005:105)

1.5.4 Review of Literature on White Zimbabwean Writing

Lessing (1958a:700) observes that “all white African writing is the literature of exile, not from Europe but Africa.” This implies that whites in Africa (Zimbabwe) write experiences they encounter in a country that is not their own and unravel their toil and suffering hence ‘of exile’. Lessing can also be understood as saying that whites in Africa write as people who belong to Africa when literally they are no longer there, thus their literature is ‘the literature of exile not from Europe but Africa’. This is why she further contends that “their writings establish cultural authority which is the whites’ capacity to understand and represent the land they inhabit” (700). It thus becomes imperative to observe how White Zimbabweans represent themselves on the African land.

Javangwe (2011:1) seems to agree with Lessing’s idea when he discusses narratives by white Zimbabweans. He opines that;

White writers such as Ian Douglass Smith and Peter Godwin construct their self-identities and that of the nation of Rhodesia by discursively removing the native blacks from the Rhodesian space in a process that creates suitable conditions for the physical and cultural grafting of the white settler.

This implies that white Rhodesians’ identity is built on their ability to displace the original dwellers of the land and inscribe themselves as the owners. This is true to what transpired in Zimbabwe when it was colonized. It becomes true that their representation of the land they inhabit is that of domination. However during their time of domination they fail to account for the Black people’s definition of whiteness since they want to claim they did not exist. The white society’s claim is that the land belongs to the white community alone and the real Black society never existed thus the need to only learn the white culture.

White Zimbabwean writers deliberately leave out the role of whites or colonizers in institutionalizing racism in Zimbabwe. This is illustrated by Tagwirei (2013:24) who observes that “Chater’s *Crossing the Boundary Fence* is silent on the role of white people in institutionalizing racism in Zimbabwe and the fact of colonial violence.” Tagwirei is of the view that the white Zimbabwean community, represented by Chater, has a single consciousness. They define their identity from a single standpoint, which is the colonizer’s point of view. They fail to account for the black people’s feelings. This is shown by his assertion that “Chater claims that the Blacks lived very well on the White man’s farm immediately after colonial occupation” (27).

Furthermore, Tagwirei (2013:20) observes the racial dynamics of the text when he says *Crossing the Boundary Fence* is about;

Musa a black girl and Diana a white girl, who cross the racial divide symbolized by a fence separating their two farms, in order to become friends [highlighting the] possibility of [whites] and [blacks] to develop and sustain true friendships as well as appreciate that race and culture do not translate to superiority and inferiority (20).

Tagwirei’s observation thus points out that Chater has realized that the black world exists and he can be part of that community since Diana befriends Musa and invites her into their house. Though Tagwirei’s reveals the white Zimbabwean community’s awareness of the existence of the other world, the black community, he fails to account for the former’s awareness of the latter’s definitions of whiteness. Thus, Tagwirei portrays whites as having a single consciousness.

Moyana (1999:1) observes that “white Zimbabwean literature sensitizes readers on global racism.” This is because “whites fail to recognize black men as equal citizens hence in their

literature they simply referred them as ‘boys’ when in reality they were adults with families” (6-7). This implies that they prescribed the black person’s identity. Moyana (1999:309) argues further that “there has been no time when the Rhodesian novelists attempts to show an understanding of what African nationalism meant and how it was threatening to engulf white dominance.” This points out how whites have failed in the past to realize the blacks' desire and ability to dominate. They have not desired to navigate Black Zimbabwean society hence they fail to understand what African nationalism means.

Moyana (1999:309) quotes Chennels who argues that, “white settlers failed to understand what was happening around them... they and their novelists had few means of correctly analyzing the situation they found themselves in.” She illustrates her argument by focusing on literature by white Zimbabweans before and after 1980 till the 1990s. Moyana (2011:9) concludes that “reading the Rhodesian novel is to experience hoe literature can produce value, how words can communicate attitudes which result in a psychological state in the reader.”

Veit-Wild (2006:195) argues that “the white Zimbabwean author [...] now speaks from the position of the other, of an ethnic minority, us[ing] autobiographical fiction to question and to define identity.” Speaking from the position of the other implies there is another position which is ideal. This development is quite important in the study of White Zimbabwean literature because it hints on the White community’s new awareness that they have always lacked. Chennels (2005:136)’ argument that “in Zimbabwe, minor and major histories have swapped places...” becomes quite relevant.

Reading through Chennels (2005) and Harris (2005), one realizes that displacement has given White Zimbabwean literature a new turn. These bring to light that White Zimbabweans have

dual identities. They have altered streams of consciousness. Harris (2005:109) opines that the narrator of *Mukiwa: The Story of a White Boy in Africa* does not only see himself belonging to a white Rhodesian community, but also sees himself as part of the black community.” This implies that though white Zimbabweans identify with whiteness, they also feel part of the black Zimbabwean community since they are Zimbabwean citizens.

Muponde and Primorac (2005) define white identity as ambiguous as revealed in her observation, “white Zimbabwean identity is a complex process in which tensions between belonging and ownership, [...] displacement and settling, [...] personal and national memories and histories are negotiated.” 139). The fact that white identity is referred as complex depicts that it is not stable thus, suggesting the possible existence of two streams of consciousness. They further highlight that “a short twenty- four years has reduced an arrogant and politically all- powerful white elite to an anxious and embattled minority” (2005:135). This implies that the white minority that once held a dominant position is now subordinate though they may have nostalgic memories of the past. This ambivalence of identity is what Du Bois defines as double consciousness.

1.5.5 Conclusion

Du Bois’ (1903) definition of double consciousness thus becomes imperative to note in our discussion of white Zimbabwean literature. It helps us interpret the behavior of the characters, authors often engage, in the portrayal of white Zimbabwean literature after the agrarian reform. It helps us understand how blacks perceived whites before and after independence and see if the point has come when whites realized that their color separates them from the rest of the Zimbabwean citizens.

1.6 Theoretical Framework

This research employs Homi Bhabha's (1994) perspective of postcolonial literary theory as a critical procedure to examine white Zimbabwean literature paying particular attention to texts cited as case study. Its function is to pinpoint the shifting nature of White Zimbabwean identity. To achieve that, the research makes use of Bhabha's (1994) concept of liminality (cultural hybridity) to inform the works of writers such as John Eppel, Andreas Eames and Doris Lessing that are indicated in the topic. Applying the concept in the post-colonial context helps to question the notion that privileges one culture over the other. It promotes an awareness of the fact that there exist several, interlocking or contrasting realities and knowledge systems that produce multiple identities. This concurs with Du Bois' (1903) concept of double consciousness which advances the existence of dual identities because of exposure to various cultures.

Bhabha (1994) uses various paradigms to locate culture in the present age that is dominated by the prefix 'post' used to describe the present and future. Firstly he introduces the paradigm of the 'beyond' which he defines as:

neither a new horizon, nor a leaving behind of the past [rather it is] the moment of transit where space and time cross to produce complex figures of difference and identity, past and present, inside and outside, inclusion and exclusion. (1).

The beyond therefore, defines identity as ever under construction because it is the moment of transits. It suggests that cultures that define identities are not distinct rather, they are complex, it is a fusion of the past and the present, and they are always being negotiated. Bhabha's (1994) argument concurs with Du Bois' assertion that the African Americans cannot identify themselves as purely African nor can they identify themselves as purely American, rather they find their identities including both heritages. He also suggests that the African American is always struggling to merge his two selves for he does not want any of the two to be lost.

His also finds his identity in the moment of transit that is ever trying to be established.

The second paradigm Bhabha suggests is the liminal space. He makes use of Greene's architectural site work, the boiler room and the stairwell. Bhabha (1994) refers to the stairwell as the liminal space. The liminal space is an in-between space or identity that accounts for the merging of the past and present. He opines:

The hither and thither of the stairwell, the temporal movement and passage that allows, prevents identities at either end of it, settling into primordial polarities. This interstitial passage between fixed identifications opens up the possibility of a cultural hybrid that entertains difference without an assumed or imposed hierarchy. (4).

The liminal space is the in-between space that emerges when cultures interact. Cultures tend to borrow elements of another culture when the two come in contact. The former does not retain its original state but assumes a new form which is complex and this condition is what he refers as cultural hybridity. Du Bois (1903) refers to the same condition as double consciousness which defines the African American's merging of the African culture and the American culture. He therefore cannot have discrete identity but attain his new position without an imposed or assumed hierarchy.

Furthermore, he describes cultural hybridity as unhomeliness. Bhabha (1994:9) argues that:

To be unhomely is not to be homeless, nor can the unhomely be easily accommodated in that familiar division of social life, into private and public spheres. [...] The unhomely moment relates the traumatic ambivalence of a personal, psychic history to the wider disjunctions of political existence.

This is what Du Bois describes as the African American experience; the failure to belong. The African Americans are not homeless but they fail to belong in the private and public spheres

in the society they reside. They are segregated for their skin color which brings about the question of belonging since their history is embedded with ambivalence and deliberately left out in the political sphere or national history.

The white Zimbabweans' experience resonates with the African American experience, or Bhabha's idea of cultural hybridity. They fail to belong in their home, the Zimbabwean society because of their skin color. They have a traumatic ambivalence of a personal, psychic history to the wider disjunctions of political existence. Their history denies them acceptance in the society they claim to belong because it imposes memories of exploitation, colonization, discrimination and exploitation.

Kalua (2007:2) says, "According to Bhabha, a "third space" emerges when two cultures encounter and translate each other, setting in motion the process of transformation in the subject, a kind of consciousness which is an interface between the cultures. [It is] also known as hybridity [...] the fact that identity is a product of enunciation, that it is formed contingently and indeterminately between cultures." Such views are relevant to White Zimbabwean literature, where white Zimbabwean identity has been projected as a complex process constructed along binaries. They explain that the complexity of their identity should be understood as cultural hybridity since their consciousness comprise of two cultures that have merged into one.

1.7 Research Design and Method

This research will rely on Primary sources to be discussed in detail that include; *Absent: The English Teacher* (2009), *The Grass is Singing* (1950) and *The Cry of the Go-Away Bird* (2011). It will also make use of secondary sources which are interpretations and evaluations

of primary sources.

1.8 Chapter Layout

The research is arranged as follows: The first chapter introduces the research by elaborating on the background of study, statement of the problem, aims and objectives, the significance of study as well as the literature review and Theoretical Framework. The second chapter will focus on the representation of white Zimbabwean identity prior to independence with particular reference to Doris Lessing's *The Grass is Singing*. (1950). The third chapter will focus on white Zimbabwean identity after the agrarian reform with particular reference to John Eppel's: *Absent: The English Teacher*. (2009). The fourth chapter will explore white Zimbabwean identity after the agrarian reform paying particular attention to Andreas Eames' *The Cry of the Go-Away Bird*. (2011). Chapter Five provides the summary and conclusion of study.

2.0 Chapter Two: Settler double consciousness in Lessing's *The Grass is Singing*

2.1 Introduction

The previous chapter focused on Du Bois' concept of double consciousness by contextualizing it on white Zimbabweans. It revealed that White Zimbabweans fail to identify themselves as neither Europeans nor Africans due to alienation, segregation, displacement and seclusion. Their ancestors distanced themselves from Europe because they tried to make Zimbabwe a neo- Britain detached from British influence. On the other hand, they are alienated from the native Africans because the later defines them as evil, inhuman, intruders, invaders and aliens. White Zimbabweans therefore fail to belong in both worlds.

The present chapter looks at how whites represent the white community in their literature. An overview of the various literatures by white Zimbabweans claiming to belong to the Zimbabwean land focus on whites who have been prosperous. They follow the white culture that associates whiteness with purity, prosperity, wealth, health and dominance. However, poor whites and those who fail to compete economically are deliberately left out. Writers project a homogeneous white community that endured until they finally made it.

This chapter focuses the analysis on whites who were failures in the Rhodesian community that claimed to be the perfect white society. It focuses on Lessing's *The Grass is Singing* (1950) which presents the tragic story of Mary Turner who marries Dick Turner, a poor white farmer. The introduction and conclusion of the story shows the murder of Mary by Moses their black servant. The rest of the novel reveals Mary's ordeal from childhood to her foolish marriage with Dick Turner and eventually her death. Scholars have interpreted the text as falling under the social realist tradition.

This chapter therefore seeks to contextualize these racist and prejudiced attitudes of the white

Rhodesian culture. It seeks to unravel that the white Rhodesians' prejudiced attitudes are not only focused on the native blacks but also on other whites. These whites fail to prove that whiteness is a symbol of perfection, beauty and prosperity. These poor whites find themselves failing to be integrated into the white Rhodesian society. They cannot fit into the native black society because white culture considers it a taboo to regard a white as an equal to a "nigger." These poor whites therefore find themselves struggling with two non-reconciling identities. They have two streams of consciousness which cannot unite. They are alienated from both the white Rhodesian society and the native Zimbabwean society. This chapter therefore focuses on this ambivalence of identity employing Du Bois' concept of double consciousness.

2.2 *The Grass Is Singing* (1950) within the framework of Double Consciousness

The Grass is Singing begins with a newspaper announcement of the death of Mary Turner the protagonist in the story. A closer look at the life of the deceased as projected in the story reveals an ambivalence of identity relevant for this discussion. Though the story is presented in flash-forward, one is made aware that Mary tries to run away from her traumatic childhood hence she spends her young adulthood in the city disconnected from her family. The protagonist's life is characterized by parties and she enjoys mingling with various male friends but avoiding intimate relationships with them. Mary is comfortable with her way of life, she has a peace of mind and this marks her true identity.

However, there comes a moment in her life when it dawns on her that she does not really fit into this society which leads her to begin to question her identity. This first encounter comes when she overhears her friends discussing her behind her back. Their discussion sensitizes her that her friends despise her because she does not seem to care about marriage though she is above thirty years of age. She becomes stressed and starts to question her identity,

personality and other people' definitions of her. These feelings are captured by the narrator as follows:

She was stunned and outraged; but most of all deeply wounded that her friends could discuss her thus. She was so naive, so unconscious of herself in relation to other people, that it had never entered her head that people could discuss her behind her back (139).

Just like Du Bois (1903:3) who questions his identity when the girl in his class refuses his invitation card, Mary's encounter makes her realize she is different from the others. It dawns on Mary that she is a problem and she becomes aware of other people's stereotypical definitions of her. Mary begins to define herself through the eyes of her friends hence she begins her desperate search for a marriage partner. It is interesting to note that Mary becomes alienated from her friends who represent the rest of the white Rhodesian society. She has not cared about marriage though she mingles with men. Though she is not growing any younger, she is content, yet white culture expects her to settle down and marry thus making a family that will perpetuate the white legacy.

More so, Mary is not content with her marriage to Dick such that at times she hates him. Her discontent reaches a pitch at one point and she tries to escape to the city, which to her is the epitome of white culture and identity. However, upon arrival, the protagonist realizes that starting again is impossible hence she cannot fit into this society anymore. The narrator describes Mary's situation in the excerpt that follows:

The man opposite to her was staring at her, looking closely at her face. Then he glanced at her shoes, which were still red with dust, because she had forgotten to wipe them. Looking grieved, but at the same time shocked, even scandalized, he said that the job had been filled already, and that he was sorry. She felt, again, outraged; for all

that time she had worked here; it had been part of herself, this office, and how he would not take her back. "I am sorry, Mary," he said avoiding her eyes; and she saw that the job had not filled and that he was putting her off (Lessing 1950:111).

Mary recognizes that she is no longer at home in the city; it has moved on devoid of her.

Bahlaq (2011:52) observes that "Mary's life in town does not exist anymore. Her former boss has refused her request for a job and her clothes mark her off as being of the poor whites. Everything looks different." Though Mary has been part of this work place, she realizes she is no longer welcome by those she loved to associate with. They seclude her indirectly and the city that symbolizes true whiteness to her rejects her such that she feels alienated from it. Mary is left with the option of returning to the farm which she hates. Hopkins and Potter (1992:31) opine that "though Mary returned with Dick to the farm, the desire to live had died out in her." Mary's identity as a White Rhodesian has died out in her.

Back on the farm, this psychological death of Mary Turner results in her refusal to associate with the Slatters, who are the only neighbors making her white community. She avoids meeting the Turners or contacting her friends because she feels she is of a lower class to them. The narrator observes that "it was impossible to fit together what she wanted for herself and what she was offered (Lessing 1950:43)." Buyu (2007:22) states that "*The Grass is Singing* displays the suffering of an individual in a world which she finds hard to fit in." Mary therefore begins to live a life of her own.

It is interesting to note that Mary is also alienated from the native black community. Though her life depends on blacks and she is poor like them, she despises and fears them. The narrator captures Mary's hatred of the natives in the following quotation:

If she disliked the men, she loathed the women. She hated the exposed fleshiness of them, their soft brown bodies and soft bashful faces that were also insolent and

inquisitive, and their chattering voices that held a brazen fleshly undertone. She could not bear to see them sitting on the grass, legs tucked under them in that traditional timeless pose (104).

Though she is sexually attracted to Moses, her native black servant, she cannot bring herself to accept it. The narrator informs the reader that she tries to exert her power on him and one particular event is when she commands him to clean the floor which he has cleaned before. The end result is captured in the following statement: “for a moment they looked at each other with hatred.” (163). Mary thus fails to fit into neither the white Rhodesian community nor the native black community. This is why she spends most of her time idle and is upset by the smallest event that happens around her. Psychologically she has ceased to exist because she is alienated from both communities.

More so, through Dick Turner, Lessing shows that white Rhodesians are alienated from both the white Rhodesian society as well as the native black society. Lessing notes that Dick “rarely comes to town for he dislikes the suburbs which seem as ugly little houses that have nothing to do with the African land and the huge blue sky that he loves. He is not comfortable with the fashionable shops and expensive restaurants” (48).

The suburbs distinguish the white community from the native community. They are the epitome of white culture. Dick's despising these residential areas expresses his dislike of the white society which the suburbs symbolize. He is alienated from this society such that he feels more attached to the Rhodesian landscape that he devotes his life to. At one point the narrator reveals Dick's thoughts: "The farm was not just a money-making machine, he loved the earth [...] he loved every tree on his land and he knew he could never live anywhere else." (139). Land thus, informs Dick's sense of belonging. It is his source of identity hence he can never imagine himself living anywhere else.

Pilosof (2010:156) reinforces this idea when he suggests that "it is the physical landscape that is most important to the white settlers." He further notes that white farmers connect more with the landscape than they ever do with the (black) people living there. Hughes (2010:8) also notes that "whites consummated their bond with virgin land."

Moreover, Dick's deliberate use of farming methods different from those practiced by Charlie Slater reveals his alienation from the White Rhodesian community. Unlike Charlie who exploits the land to gain as much profit as he can, Dick uses the land but returns something to it. The narrator highlights that "he loved the earth and planted trees to put something back into the land." (199). The reader is also made aware that Charlie Slater constantly visits the Turners and pretends to be concerned with their welfare because he envies Dick's farm because of its rich dark soils.

Dick's keenness to the land is poles apart from Charlie's life-threatening brutality towards his. Since it is the custom of whites (colonizers) to exploit resources (land) in order to gain wealth, Dick decides to defy the norm. His behavior concurs with Zeus' (2002:32) arguments that whiteness "is a social construct which can be contested by other whites."

However, though Dick clings to the native land, it denies him a definite bond. The continuous failure of the land to yield profitably for him indicates the rejection of whites by the native community. His effort in trying to adopt various farming methods is futile. He tries rearing pigs which die soon after the piglets are born. He invests so much in preparing a place to keep bees but they never come to settle. When he finally tries to grow tobacco, a crop that has given others a great amount of progress, there are long dry spells which lead to the death of the plants. Dick is thus referred to as a poor white because he fails as a farmer.

Dick's poverty leads the society to disrespect him and think of eliminating him. Since whiteness considers riches as the maker of superiority, Slater uses his pecuniary power to

gain admiration while Dick's lack of it adds to the community's distaste of him. This deficiency of money decreases them to the level of natives, although to concede is intolerable. Though their white Rhodesian society despises them, it must pretend to support them in order to keep up appearances.

Furthermore, the weather is constantly referred to as hot and not conducive for the Turners' survival. The narrator constantly refers to the weather as hot and burning such that Mary has to bath constantly and this result in a quarrel with Dick over the quick rundown of water in the house. The narrator notes that “and the days passed [...] hot days with slow winds that picked up dust from the fields and carried it everywhere.” (74). The weather has as significant part to play in the text. The dust, wind and sun heat symbolize the hostility of the native black community. Though the Turners cling to the land as their symbol of identity, the environment denies attachment to them. Thus Gyuris (2012:189) argues that “ in Lessing's case, it is not only the land and the African atmosphere that are described as dry and suffocating but the inhabitants (especially white settlers) as well.”

Moreover, the environment is repulsive. Mary could see

“First the rats ...she could hear them at night on the roof. And then the insects would follow and settle in the holes on the brick. The rain would beat down endlessly, grass would grow through the floor and the branches of the trees would push through the broken windows (Hopkins and Potter 1992:55).”

Nature seems to be warning the Turners that the native land is not the place they belong; within no time it will overtake them. Gyuris (2012:190) opines that “the Turners share the suffering of all African farmers but since they belong to the “poor whites” they are forced to feel it more profoundly.” These poor whites are therefore more vulnerable than the native black who is colonized. This is because the native black fits well into his community of the

colonized, yet the poor white cannot fit into this native community for the South African law of whites says, “you must not let any whites sink below a certain point because if you do the niggers will think they are just as good.” (Gyuris, 2012:190). They cannot fit into the white settler community because their poverty taints the image of the settler community. Lessing thus suggests that even prior to independence white settlers suffered from double consciousness.

Lessing's description of the Turners' dwelling place reveals that it is not a comely environment. It is hostile to the settler in general for violence and death are just natural to it. Lessing (1989:19) observes that “anger, violence and death seemed natural to this vast, harsh country.” The fact that the country is harsh, because violence and death seem natural, indicates that the land which is the source of one's identity denies them any bonding. It denies them this identity hence they have an identity crisis which results in the deterioration of their (Mary and Dick) mental states (madness).

Through the Turners, Lessing questions Zeus (2002:33) observation that “whiteness is the attempt to homogenize diverse white ethnics into a single category for the sake of domination.” Lessing presents a white community that is fragmented in *The Grass is Singing* (1950). Each member of the community strives to establish their own form of dominance. Hopkins and Potter (1992:2) in their edition observe that “white farmers lived at great distances from each other and met occasionally.” Failure to establish strong ties, cemented through constant visits, shows the lack of unity that characterized the settler community.

This fragmentation is so evident to the extent that Hopkins and Potter (1992:8) observe that “nobody liked the Turners, although a few of their neighbors had ever met them. They kept themselves to themselves, never attended any social events, and lived in that awful little box.” The physical distance between them symbolizes the distance of separation in terms of

psychological and social connection. Each settler lives their own lives hence they live to themselves. The Turners do not belong to the extent that other settlers despise their physical home. The narrator reflects their feelings in the following quotation:

He looked up at the bare crackling tin of the roof, that was warped with the sun, at the faded gimcrack furniture, at the dusty brick floors covered with ragged animal skins, and wondered how those two, Mary and Dick Turner, could have borne to live in such a place, year in year out, for so long. Why did they go on without even so much as putting in ceilings? It was enough to drive anyone mad, the heat in this place. (28).

Although there exists a strong bonding between the white population to which Mary and Dick seem not to belong, they live in basic conditions such that they are despised by the rest of the community due to the fact that they were not familiar with the need for esprit de corps. This attitude is prevalent throughout the text.

Finally, in Tony Martson, Lessing presents a white whose veil has been lifted. He is aware of the possible flexibility of whiteness. Though Tony's dream that brings him to South Africa is to make money and become rich, he fails, which disqualifies the misconception that whiteness means wealth, prosperity and success. Through observing the contrast between Dick and Charlie, Tony is aware of the two possibilities, success or failure.

Through Tony, one recalls Zeus (2002:32) idea that whiteness is built on nothing less than violence and corruption. The examination of Mary's murder captures the pretense of the white community. To live with the color bar in all its tinges and insinuations means deliberate indifference to many things, if one is to continue an acknowledged affiliate of society. Tony fails to reconcile the ideals of the white culture that all people are equal, that he has been taught in Europe. Since his arrival, a conflict of two warring ideals exists in him. The narrator captures this conflict when he says:

“When old settlers say “one had to understand the country,” what they mean, “You have to get used to our ideas about the native.” They are saying, in effect “learn our ideas, or otherwise get out: we don't want you.” Most of these young men were brought up with vague ideas about equality. They were shocked, for the first week or so, by the way natives were treated (11).”

Tony is confused by the way natives should be treated since he has been taught that all men are equal. However, since failure to comply result in expulsion from the colony Dick has to follow suit. He witnesses the growing attraction between Mary Turner and Moses. Due to the confusion that he finds himself in, he cannot rebuke Mary for her behavior. The fact that he is angry because Charlie Slatter and Sergeant Denham deny him an opportunity to tell his side of the story concerning the murder, one gets to know that Tony hates the settler system. Finally the fact that he decides to leave, shows that he is able to define what he wants.

2.3 Conclusion

It can be noted therefore, that Lessing's novel does not only discuss the evils of colonialism and the evils of patriarchal societies. It also agrees with Du Bois' argument that whiteness is a social construct that should be contested. It supports the idea that double consciousness is not peculiar to African Americans but it can be encountered by anyone who is secluded and discriminated against. Even in societies where the dominant race prescribes the identities for the dominated, the dominant race should be aware of how their subjects define them.

3.0 Chapter Three: Whiteness as a paradox in Eppel's *Absent: The English Teacher*

3.1 Introduction

The previous chapter focused on the literary depiction of whites who were failures in the Rhodesian community or pre-independent Zimbabwe. These have been deliberately left out in the proliferation of memoirs and autobiographical literature by white Zimbabweans post 2000. It paid particular attention on Lessing's *The Grass is Singing* (1950) which presents the tragic story of Mary Turner who marries Dick Turner a poor white farmer. These represent the poor whites who find themselves with double consciousness because they have to define themselves through the eyes of their white counterparts, those of the black community as well as their own definitions of whom they are. The chapter made it clear that seclusion and alienation can cause one to have dual identities no matter their location or race.

This chapter focuses on the representation of whites in post independent Zimbabwe through a reading of; John Eppel's *Absent: The English Teacher* (2009). As highlighted in the first chapter, after Zimbabwe attained independence, whites who decided to stay because of the president's invitation or other reasons maintained their privileged status to varying degrees till the year 2000 when the agrarian reform began. The reform inaugurated a discourse in which whites were evicted from their farms and were told that their place was not in Zimbabwe but in Britain where they came from. They did not only lose their land but their social status and identity. This change has brought about a reverse of racial roles in which blacks occupied the dominant position while the whites occupied the subservient position. This is in conflict with Pilosof's (2010: 155) observation of pre-independent relations whereby "the white farmer [...] worked to control the natives and distil awe in them [...] again; African subservience is stressed, as is the ability of the white man to control the African."

Eppel's text dwells on the reversal of roles by presenting a white man who becomes a servant to a black woman. The protagonist George J. George is an English teacher who is put in police custody for erecting Ian Smith's portrait in a classroom when the Deputy Secretary for Education and Urban Beauty Pageants visits the school. After release, on his way home he is involved in a car accident with Beauticious Nyamayakanuna, one of the Minister of Child Welfare, Sweets and Biscuits' numerous mistresses. This lands George in an out-of-court agreement in which he loses his house and all his property such that he becomes her servant. Eppel's text reveals that the black elite work to control the whites and instill awe in them. In the text white subservience is stressed as is the wish of the African to control the white man.

Eppel's class of literature differs from the vast literature by other white writers such as Buckle, Fuller and Godwin among others who seem to be writing for a European audience, both in Africa and beyond (Pilosof 2010:175). In an interview with Drew Shaw, Eppel argues that "his text is intended for a Zimbabwean audience since he still lives in Zimbabwe".

Gaylard's (2011) observation that *Absent: The English Teacher* is an oblique self-portrait is very relevant for this discussion for he further argues that "it is a novel of obsolescence [that] features a white male protagonist George J. George, who struggles with his seeming irrelevance in Mugabe's Zimbabwe." This assertion is pivotal in this chapter's discussion because if one is viewed as irrelevant, it means they are being defined through this group of people's stereotypes, they are just second class citizens.

Muponde (2009:1) also notes that "the novel is a satire of the dramatic paradoxes that characterize the life of an ever-diminishing white people and bitches of the new black elite."

Thus the chapter discusses how the diminishing white people, symbolized by George, view themselves in light of such developments. Since they have assumed the subservient role they have the dilemma of defining themselves through the eyes of their black masters, their white counterparts at home and abroad and through their own definitions. The chapter therefore seeks to situate the paradox that dominates in the text in the context of double consciousness.

3.2 *Absent: The English Teacher* within the framework of Double Consciousness.

Black (2007) explains double consciousness as the experience of being forced to view oneself through the eyes of another while maintaining a sense self-definition. He realizes that these two definitions of self, lead one to have an identity crisis for he observes that, “having two antagonistic identities means that a lot of time is spent negotiating and enduring the conflicts between [what] one is as a person and how one struggles with the misrepresentations of the outside world” (Black 2007:324).

The discussion that follows seeks to unravel that Eppel's *Absent : The English Teacher* presents a white man who is struggling to merge his own definitions of self with those of the white and black community, his outside world. It also seeks to contextualize Homi Bhabha (1994)'s argument that when two cultures interact, the end result is a cultural hybrid. The chapter therefore argues that the protagonist George J. George, a white man who grapples with his two identities such that he feels alienated from both and fails to be integrated, typifies the post-2000 white Zimbabwean community.

The opening chapters of the novel reveal that George fails to belong in the Zimbabwean community dominated by blacks. As a white English teacher he fails to belong in a private school whose majority students are blacks though the headmaster is white. This is illustrated

by the fact that as a teacher George fails to do what is expected, that is, control his students. Often his class lectures are depicted as full of confusion, unrest, noise, and students interrupt him while he is delivering important information, vital for them to pass. This is illustrated in the explanations given by the narrator as shown in the quotation below: “[amid chorus of voices:] ... [banging of desks in sympathy with this profound question ...]. [Rapidly silence ascends into murmur, noise, roar, pandemonium.]” (7).

The above descriptions reveal George's lectures are all characterized by confusion. One realizes that he fails to control his students as a teacher who embodies authority. This suggests that the protagonist's self-esteem or morale has been destroyed such that he feels no need to put extra effort in exercising his authority. Probably the society has already degraded him such that even children who should respect their elders fail to recognize the need to respect him. Thus one can argue that George's lack of authority shows that he is alienated from the society in which he lives. Those around him define him as irrelevant such that he finds no recognition in their lives.

Furthermore, George, a Zimbabwean citizen by birth, fails to belong in the country of his birth. As a citizen like all other black citizens, he expects the law to protect him and his rights to be respected and not violated. However, in the text George's rights are violated and he is not protected. Instead, he is made a victim of the law. George is arrested for no specific crime. He is forced to admit that he is guilty of a crime that is not explicitly stated and he is not given time to defend himself. The protagonist is arrested after “a comic debacle of switched portraits” (Eppel 2009:xiii) yet he is accused of treason, causing alarm and despondency among the people of Zimbabwe. This is revealed in the quotation below:

FIRST INTEROGATOR: First, you insult our sovereign state by what is tantamount

to treason: Replacing Our Excellency's portrait with one of the monster who murdered and raped millions of black people-men, women and children. Second, you have the effrontery to call my colleague a kaffirman. Third, er...you are causing alarm and despondency among the aboriginal peoples of Zimbabwe. (16).

It is of interest to note that George does not deliberately mix up the portraits but a student mischievously does so. Secondly, George has not been involved in politics. He even makes it clear that he is not allowed to vote. Thus no formal interrogation is made such that George realizes he is being told indirectly that he does not belong in the country of his birth.

George further realizes that he does not belong, when he converses with the black prisoners who are his cell mates. They tell him that, he is segregated because of his skin colour. This is illustrated in the prisoner's words, "they hate you because you are white..." (22). It has dawned on George that the black community is not sincere in claiming to accept him as an equal citizen. This he highlights when he relates his encounter with the Chief Inspector to the other prisoners. He informs them "the Chief Inspector was extremely pleasant to me [pause] – but I don't think he was sincere" (22).

George has ambivalent feelings for the black Zimbabweans because he suspects that their polite deeds are not from the heart. This resonates with the way Bigger Thomas feels about whites in Wright's *Native Son* (1987). When Bigger meets Jan, Mary Dalton's boyfriend who stretches out his hand to greet him, he doubts the sincerity of his kindness. This is illustrated in the quotation that follows, "Bigger Thomas' right hand gripped the steering wheel and he wondered if he ought to shake hands with this white man". (395). Commenting on this incident, Black (2007: 395) argues that "Bigger sees Jan's condescending friendliness as alien and mocking." This is the same way George feels, he has to struggle to understand how

the police officers see him but they do not care to understand how he feels.

Furthermore, George's two obscure arrests awaken a suspicion in the reader that he is not being arrested for wrongs he has committed but for those committed by his ancestors. In both instances George realizes that though he is a Zimbabwean citizen by birth, he is not loved in his own homeland. In the introduction, Eppel (2009:ix) captures this idea when he notes that "The recognition of the other begins when George is arrested, after a comic debacle of switched portraits and comes face to face with prisoners of a rogue regime. A second arrest ensures that this recognition is maintained."

This is illustrated by the fact that George is arrested for crimes that are not explicitly stated and in both instances the Chief Inspector has him arrested because he wants free English lessons. To show his discontent, the narrator comments, "Bastard wants another free lesson" (89). The Chief Inspector also tells him that he will be released after he has finished this task. He says, "As soon as you've given me some assistance with this damn assignment I'll let you go. You won't even have to sign an admission of guilt form" (91). George therefore realizes that he is not welcome in his home but viewed as an object, a second class citizen who should be used, exploited and ill-treated. Thus he defines himself through his own eyes and of those who prescribe his identity.

Black (2007:394) argues that "having one's own sense of self and also having imposed contempt for an ascribed self, having two-ness is what Dubois calls double consciousness". George has this same feeling towards his own identity. He realizes the connotations of his skin colour, for he is constantly blamed for the economic meltdown in the country. He becomes the scapegoat on which all wrong is casted upon such that he feels he is irrelevant in

this society. His mistress speaks to him in kitchen kaffir or fanagalo because that is how she remembers whites speaking to her when she was a kid. The chief inspector reminds him that all the property the whites own was stolen from the blacks. This is clearly evidenced in the dialogue carried out between George and Beauticious:

“No ZESA, no fuel, no food. Who is responsible Joji?”... “We are Madam: the British, The Europeans , the Americans.” “You have raped our country barren, Joji, first our women and girls, next our motherland” (46).

It is sad to note that though George is blamed for the errors made by his kith and kin in England and America, he knows little about them and cannot even trace his roots there. The narrator says of his ancestors, “... what little he knew of them originated somewhere in Eastern Europe, possibly Lithuania, possibly Estonia...” (46).

George shows that he cannot link himself to his European roots. However he actually knows Zimbabwe better because it is the country of his birth. He knows this land better because it is the place where he was born and raised; it is the place where he can relate his family tree. He makes it clear that his grandmother is buried in Zimbabwe and narrates vividly how they settled in Zimbabwe with other whites. The narrator says: “at the western end of the Matopos, was his grandmother's birthplace: Old Mangwe Fort.” (108).

Consistent with Black (2007)’s observation about double consciousness, George has to understand and live the black world in order to thrive. He must grapple with the painful double consciousness that may result [in Dubois’ words], “A morbid sense of personality and a moral hesitancy which is fatal to self- confidence.” (86). Thus one realizes that George fails to fit into the white society in which he belongs. He actually hates meeting his old white friends because they will probably mock his downfall such that he avoids all paths that allow

their collision. The narrator reveals that “he was always fearful of being seen by one of his erstwhile colleagues, to hear one of them crow 'how are the mighty fallen' ... or 'here comes Johnny head-in-air'.” (67). George feels he can no longer fit in this society. Making himself available for their company makes him a laughing stock which is detrimental to his confidence.

Furthermore, though George feels so attached to the extent of having “an abiding concern for the environment” (Eppel 2009), it betrays him. He plants his first orchard which perishes because of drought. Secondly he tries to plant indigenous trees as a way of validating that he is also an indigenous native Zimbabwean but Beauticious uproots them all leaving only two exotic trees. This is highlighted in the quotation below. The reader is informed that:

George had planted that tree from a slip of good fifteen years before, shortly after the previous tree had succumbed to a punishing drought. That year he had lost nearly all his fruit trees. Only a lemon and the guavas had survived. [...] When Beauticious moved in she kept only the mulberry, the lemon and the largest guava. The rest were designated as weeds and had to make way for mealies (64).

Nature seems to concur with the native black community that the white Zimbabwean does not belong. Beauticious' dogs eat George's two pets that comprise his family. George's planting of indigenous trees can be read as a claim that he is also native or indigenous to this land he inhabits but nature and the black woman seem to be saying, “no that is not true, maintain your alien identity” hence they keep only exotic trees. This is why Muchemwa (2009) argues that “the suburban garden is a symbol of change” in the country's history.

The first chapter highlighted that double consciousness can be a result of seclusion from power. When one is secluded from power what follows is emasculation. When native

Zimbabweans were displaced from their land and secluded from power what followed was emasculation. The men who had been brave hunters became houseboys always under the supervision of the white master. Their manhood was lost. In the text George's manhood has been emasculated. As highlighted earlier, he is a houseboy to a woman, Beauticious.

Furthermore, his condition is even worse than the colonized black man because he can no longer perform sexually. When he unconsciously recalls his love for Wilhelmine, he reveals that it was her who solicited for sex. When she has done everything and is prepared for the act, George fails to get an erection. This is revealed in the quotation below:

Then she lay on the mattress, opened her legs and waited. George hesitated because he realized that, unspeakable desire notwithstanding, he didn't have an erection. He hated his body for betraying him, and the more he hated it the more it refused to co-operate. [...]"You white men." said Wilhelmine with contempt, "You are all castrated." (97).

Sex is a symbol of power and failure to exercise it means failure to control and dominate. Because he has failed to dominate he becomes dominated. Wilhelmine despises George for being such a failure; this is why she teams up with black men in calling him a racist. She does not acknowledge him as a white person like her because the white race has powerful men. George therefore realizes his other self which he also despises and finds that it is a problem to his own white community. Though he tries so much to cling to Wilhelmine, he cannot because he does not meet her standard. Thus George defines himself as a synecdoche, meaning he represents the whole white Zimbabwean community which was emasculated by the agrarian reform.

More so, just like the blacks who are defined by white stereotypes as; barbaric, savages, potential rapists and murderers whom the white race should be protected from; George is regarded by the black society through similar stereotypes. This becomes clear to George the

day before his departure for Empandeni mission while he is serving his master's family breakfast. George loses consciousness such that he drops the tray he is holding while he also falls to the ground. The minister forbids the children from helping George: "Be careful! He's wicked ... with the people of colour." (115).

Here the minister treats George as a monster whose only intention is to do evil. This is the same thing Bigger Thomas encounters when he mistakenly kills Mary Dalton. He knew the white society regarded people of colour as rapists and therefore out of fear he suffocates her to death. He knows the white society is not concerned about inquiring the true course of events but will only arrest him which is why he surrenders to the police. It becomes imperative that George or the white community is not only prescribed by the black society but the whites end up perceiving themselves through such negative definitions hence the double consciousness.

George finally realizes that he cannot identify himself as a Zimbabwean nor as a European (white). His failure to identify with the native Zimbabwean community culminates into the destruction of all his particulars or documents that carried his identity. The narrator informs the reader that:

[George] dug around in his box table and withdrew a large manila envelope. It contained the papers that gave him his identity: his birth certificate, his academic and professional qualifications, his redundant will, his expired passport, his vehicle license, and his National Registration card. ... He turned to the fire, placed the envelope on the rosy Mopani wood, waited for it to burst into flames (121).

George's action can be taken to mean that he has realized the futility of clinging to his Zimbabwean identity. It vanished long ago so this is just an outward proclamation since he

will embark on a journey the following morning in search of his true identity. Though the protagonist journeys to Fort Mangwe where his grandmother is buried, to search for his true identity, he arrives at the spot seriously ill and dies. The narrator reveals that:

By the time he arrived at Fort Mangwe he was literally crawling on his bloodied hands and knees. The ruin was surrounded by whispering grass. He managed to climb over the low stone wall into what remained of the enclosure where his grandmother had been born, and there he died. (144-145).

It becomes clear therefore, that George's efforts to identify with his roots are not possible in this life but in the grave. He can no longer be white or European anymore, denying his black identity means his destruction. Thus one can say that George is denied integration into both the Zimbabwean and European cultures.

What therefore remains of George is a compound or complex structure illustrated by the use of paradox throughout the text. As an English teacher, his life has been devoted to teaching English literature. It can be observed that in all the texts that he has taught the dominant theme is appearance versus reality or good versus evil which is a paradox. George opines that a paradox results when two opposites merge. He says, "What happens, my dear, when opposites merge? You get a paradox (oh no!), a third force, which transcends the two opposites ..." (130).

Eppel seems to be suggesting that the combination of Fascist Rhodesia and Marxist Zimbabwe is a paradox. He brings to light that since George has spent twenty-eight years as a Rhodesian and twenty-eight years as a Zimbabwean, he is a fusion of the two. It becomes clear that George and the rest of the white community was exposed to both the Rhodesian culture and the Zimbabwean culture, and these two make up their identity such that Homi

Bhabha 1994) refers to such a scenario as Cultural hybridity. George realizes he cannot deny his Rhodesian identity for the Zimbabwean one nor can he deny the Zimbabwean one for the former one. His only option is to merge the two.

However, George admits that this is a painful experience, a difficult condition that makes life complex. This is because “paradoxes are notoriously unstable; they keep slipping back into their opposite components, then merging again slipping back and so on. So the transcend experience is evanescent, passing ... as it comes it goes, like twilight.” (130). Du Bois (1903:9) explains this condition when he says of the African- American “one ever feels his two-ness and [there are] two warring ideals ... whose dogged strength alone keeps [him] from being torn asunder.” If paradoxes are unstable and keep slipping back, it means one is ever struggling to suppress identities when they get into their opposite component. Though George might be struggling with his identity, it is interesting to note that his condition is a gift because he is aware of the cultures that comprise his being. One can say his veil has been lifted.

Furthermore, throughout the text, George makes it clear that the veil that separates him from the rest of the Zimbabwean community has been lifted up. This is illustrated by his use of both English and Ndebele languages and his merging of European literature with African literature. George loves the writings of both William Shakespeare and Ngugi Wa Thiongo, and he observes that both writers are equally good. Since language is a carrier of culture and literature imitates reality, Eppel seems to suggest that he is a fusion of the African (Zimbabwean) culture and the European culture. He should be given his place among the Zimbabwean people because it is a place he also belongs to.

3.3 Conclusion

It can thus be noted that Eppel's text reveals the dilemma white Zimbabweans face due to their colour. Though some of them have been born in Zimbabwe and cannot trace their roots to Europe, they find that after the agrarian reform they do not belong in the land of their birth. The society shuns them and blames them for all its failures such that their emotional burden is unbearable. They are therefore forced to define themselves through the eyes of their white counterparts, black Zimbabweans, and through their own eyes hence they suffer from double consciousness.

4.0 Chapter Four: Eames's *The Cry of the Go-Away Bird* and the question of white belonging

4.1 Introduction

The previous chapter focused on the representation of whites in post-independent Zimbabwe through a reading of; John Eppel's *Absent The English Teacher* (2009). Eppel's text dwells on the reversal of roles by presenting a white man who becomes a servant to a black woman. The chapter illustrated how the reversal of roles has affected white Zimbabwean identity such that the white Zimbabwean community has an identity crisis discussed within the parameters of double consciousness.

This chapter focuses on the depiction of whites who claim Zimbabwean citizenship but fail to fit in the vast majority of the Zimbabwean community. It focuses on Andreas Eames' text; *The Cry of the Go-Away Bird* (2011), which presents the story of Elise, a white farm girl who is displaced from her home due to the farm invasions instituted by the agrarian reform. The prologue (introduction) and epilogue (conclusion) of the story reveals Elise's unending attempt to understand the Shona culture and identify with the black community. She is denied full understanding and comprehension of the Shona cultural system which deprives her compatibility and full integration into the African society. The rest of the novel unveils the protagonist's struggle to belong in an environment and society that denies her recognition as a true and equal Zimbabwean citizen.

This chapter therefore seeks to contextualize black stereotypes and racist attitudes towards the white community. It seeks to unravel the effect of these stereotypes and attitudes on the white community's perception of their identity. White Zimbabweans feel they are equal

citizens because they were born on this land yet their colour separates them from the rest of the Zimbabwean community. In Zimbabwe, official whiteness is reconfigured as oppressive, exploitative and violent. While reconciliation sought to rehabilitate whites into a multicultural community, its aftermath witnessed a movement from a reconciliation discourse to a more polarized discourse of white marginalization (Fisher 2010). Through commemorations of the past such as Heroes Day, whites are reminded of the colonial injustices that they perpetrated against Africans. This chapter therefore seeks to show that white Zimbabweans end up defining themselves through the eyes of the black Zimbabweans and through their own eyes. They fail to belong as Zimbabwean citizens and cannot identify themselves as European and/or British because they have never been elsewhere except Zimbabwe. Indeed, one is compelled to agree with Coetzee's (1988) characterization of white writing in South Africa as deriving from "the concerns of people no longer European, not yet African" (11). The only home and life style familiar to whites in Zimbabwe seems to be largely Zimbabwean. This chapter therefore focuses on this ambiguity of identity by employing Du Bois' (1903) concept of double consciousness.

4.2 *The Cry of Go- Away Bird* within the framework of Double Consciousness.

Du Bois (1903) uses the term double consciousness to refer to the African American's experience, the presence of two identities which cause them to have a crisis of identity. The Negro has two thoughts and two souls because he is an embodiment of two cultures; African and American. These constitute his being, but he has been denied the right to fully comprehend them. Thus, Du Bois (1903) depicts that alienation and acculturation can lead one to have a paradox of identity.

The following discussion seeks to contextualize Eames's text within Du Bois' framework of

double consciousness and reveal that white Zimbabweans have been denied inclusion as true Zimbabwean citizens. They have been told to go back to where they came from. However, they cannot go there, because they feel alien to Europe, the land of their roots. They are attached to the Zimbabwean landscape, it defines their identity. In reality they are caught in between, they have a conflict of identity. This is especially true of the later generation of whites, some of whom were born after independence, whose ties to the Rhodesian and European heritages are flimsy. The discussion that follows seeks to unravel that *The Cry of the Go-Away Bird* (2011), presents a young white farm girl who grapples with her two identities such that she feels alienated from both and fails to be integrated, typifying the post-2000 white Zimbabwean community.

Eames' novel is dominated by the protagonist's desire to be accepted as a full Zimbabwean citizen like any other Zimbabwean regardless of her skin color. The novel begins by an introductory description of Beauty, a black woman whom she seems to admire. Elise is raised by two women, her biological mother and Beauty, a black nanny, who helps to construct her identity. Elise's identity at this point is therefore inter-subjectively Zimbabwean. Her Zimbabweanness is an experience shared with someone who is "fully" Zimbabwean. She spends most of her time with Beauty, her nanny who socializes her into the African culture such that she embraces it as her own. Elise testifies:

My mother, however, was someone I saw in the mornings and at night, and for some parts of the weekends. It was Beauty who made me breakfast [...] walked with me to school every day. [...] Beauty heard all my stories about teachers and other kids. Beauty ... came to live with us when my dad died, which was before I can remember (11).

Elise spends most of her time with Beauty, who represents African culture. She identifies her

as her “real mother” (36). Elise’s strong bond with Beauty entails the fact that she feels drawn toward the African culture. It has come to occupy her life. In as much as Beauty accommodates her, she feels the African society is more accommodative than her white society since she is distanced from her biological mother who represents this white identity and culture. The protagonist fails to identify with her biological identity because she has little or no time to learn this white culture. It suffices to say she is estranged from the white culture.

When Elise sits with Beauty and other black women, she realizes that her skin colour separates her from them. She confesses, “I was the whitest of whites, with freckles and pale eyes that blinked and burned in the sun but I did not feel white.” (8). Elise confesses that though her skin is white, defining her as a white person, her knowledge system is not whiteness but African culture hence she does not feel white. She realizes that her personality is a paradox, “the Elise who sat quietly and did her homework in the white house [...] was different from the Elise who played with the workers’ children”. This duality of identity is what Du Bois refers to as double consciousness.

Furthermore, it is Elise who struggles to be accepted by blacks whilst the later make no effort at all. Elise loves Beauty and she feels they have a strong bond such that she feels cheated and betrayed that her mum has decided that they move to Harare leaving Beauty behind. She thinks Beauty will not be happy with this decision. However Beauty is okay with the separation, she does not struggle or grieve as Elise does which suggests that Beauty does not value this bond the same way as Elise. To her, she is dispensable.

Moreover, Elise feels Cephas their guard is her friend who would be there all the time,

someone who valued her equally such that he cared not to hurt her feelings. However, Cephas disappears and does not care to give her a warning that he is going for good. Elise is strongly convinced that “he wouldn’t leave without saying goodbye” (198) and she begins an earnest search for him. Sadly, when she finally finds him in the bush camp, he gives her a cold shoulder. He does not recognize her and his speech reveals a strong hatred that contrasts the fascinating impression he has given her before. He refers to her as a “bloody white kid who thinks she can do whatever she wants.” (201).

Though Elise follows him as a sign of commitment and concern what she receives is “a spat yellow glob of saliva that lands on her feet” (202) and is chased away: “Bugger off.” (202). It becomes clear therefore, that though the protagonist tries to fit into the black society she is denied integration. She struggles to understand blacks and is committed to them but they are not sincere, they pretend to like her when in reality they despise her.

Elise therefore represents the white community’s feelings. Whites assume they know the Africans yet are out of touch with reality. They do not know how Africans actually feel about them. This is reinforced by Elise’s certainty that Mr Cooper’s farm will not be invaded because he is loved by the workers. However, it turns out to be an illusion and naturally, when he is killed she is disillusioned. Whites therefore, feel betrayed because, no matter how sincere they are in establishing relations with their fellow black Zimbabwean citizens, they are treated with contempt.

More so, Eames uses the school as a platform that paves way for Elise’s realization of the other as well as the binary division that lies between blacks and whites. It dawns on her that she does not belong in either the black nor white world. On her first day at the school she

realizes that though her teacher is white she does not like her. She confesses that, “As soon as I arrived at school I knew she did not like me.”(80). It becomes clear to her that she can never be part of the white community because she realizes she can never be friends with white girls whom the teacher appreciates because probably they represent true whiteness. Elise also fails to identify with the white girls from the magazines sent by her grandmother. This further shows her estrangement from European culture. She fails to identify with the whites from Europe. The school makes her realize the visibility or difference of her two worlds. She says,

I had never been so aware of blacks and whites at school before. I did not know if it was just because I was older or because things were different in Harare, but there was a very clear division between us. And, after Shumba had called me a racist, I was unwelcome in both camps. (80).

Elise realizes that she has been alienated from both the white (European) world and Black (African) world. She does not belong in any of the two and she is aware of her seclusion hence she has double consciousness.

Due to this alienation, Elise realizes she is vulnerable, weak, fragile, lonely, dependent and indefinite. This paves way for her recognition of Kurai who is her direct opposite; strong, bold, confident, independent, has a definite sense of belonging and a purpose in life, and as Elise puts it, “a natural defender of the weak.”(83). After a series of attacks from the black boys who torment her, Kurai comes to her rescue and encourages her to be strong and stand on her feet. Elise begins to admire this girl and she becomes her friend who helps her establish a sense of belonging. Elise’s white world has never offered her role models but through Kurai she begins to emulate popular artists such as Oliver Mtukudzi. She confesses, “I had started wearing an Oliver Mtukudzi vest and wooden jewellery, listening to the music

Kurai listened to.” (130). One therefore observes that Elise finds the African identity more meaningful. She feels she is Zimbabwean like Kurai or any black citizen.

However, despite Elise’s identification with the black world or African identity, she fails to be integrated. After visiting Kurai’s home she has ambivalent feelings revealed in the following quotation: “Her house was exotic, smelling of strange cooking and a body odor different to my own. [...] They found me exotic too, Kurai’s white friend with the fair hair, who sat quietly at their table being small and pale.” [...] (87). Elise finds Kurai’s home alien to her while Kurai’s family feels she is also alien to them. This implies that though Elise tries to identify with Kurai, her skin color stands as a barrier to their full conception of each other’s worlds.

Furthermore, Elise fails to understand Kurai’s culture; it is kind of meaningless to her. She confesses,

Even though she told me long stories about what this cousin said to that cousin, what the witch doctor said to her aunt [...] she knew I could never understand. [...] I never knew how to deal with the air of black magic and tribal secrets that hung about her visits to the country. (87).

Elise feels alien to Kurai’s cultural beliefs and fails to find her place in them. She is so distanced from Kurai during these moments, for she can’t understand her stories. Elise’s ambiguous feelings evidences that she is alienated from the black world hence she fails to belong.

Elise’s identity is built around her home on their farm in Chinhoyi. It is the place that holds her identity because that is where she was born and socialized to view to the world as a

Zimbabwean. However, her displacement from Chinhoyi destroys her sense of belonging. She fails to belong in her new home at the Cooper's farm. In her description of the Cooper farm she concludes, "The new farm smelled all wrong. [...] the sweet nicotine scent of tobacco and something else that I could not identify, but which was clearly Not Home." (51). Chinhoyi is the only place Elise identifies with because it carries the memory of Beauty her 'real mother' who taught her how to conceptualize the world. This is why she loves Shona lessons that all other students hate while their families support them that it is a stumbling block in their learning. She loves Shona because "It reminded me of the farm, and of Chinhoyi."(88)

This indicates that Elise cannot identify with Harare, her new home, her new school, because it is dominated by the white society. She is naturally drawn towards the black community but finds that her skin colour distinguishes her from them. This leads her to examine herself closely:

In reality, no one was really white (white like blank paper, or clean washing); People were pink, sun burnt red, sallow or brown. White was being shunted hurriedly to the front of a queue, watched by a hundred resentful eyes. White was money, swimming pools, two cars. It was glow -in- the- dark, marking you at once on a black street. All those poems we learned at school about skin fair as snow, fair as petals or cream, did not take into account the other side of it – the lack of pigment the sickly, greenish tinge that white skin could have, the way it made us ghosts in a vivid country (128).

Eames, through the character Elise, deconstructs the beliefs that whiteness is "rational, virtuous, mature, normal, superior and privileged." (Said; 1977:41). The writer suggests that whiteness is nothing but false. Eames agrees with Du Bois (1995) as quoted by Rebaka (2007:5), that "whites were 'super-man' and 'world-mastering demi-gods' with 'feet of

clay’.” Elise despises her white identity because she realizes it is a lie. It is a mental state that does not apply to the reality of one’s being, their colour, and a heart throbbing question. Whiteness thus becomes irrational, depraved; inadequate for it makes her invisible when confronted with the black identity which is visible. She therefore argues that, whiteness makes them ghosts in a vivid country. Thus it can be observed that the white society fails to belong because white ideologies fail to answer their questions of belonging and provide their needs.

Since the protagonist finds white identity meaningless, she identifies with the African culture, particularly the Shona culture because she finds it more meaningful. It enhances her realization of the other world strengthening her awareness of the two worlds which define her. She confesses, “Learning Shona for the first time, I saw that everything had two names, an English name and a Shona one, side by side. This had not occurred to me before.” (89) The two names represent the two identities that constitute her identity. It is the Shona language that unveils this complexity to her such that she comes to understand that she has two identities at once. The Shona language helps her perceive the world better than she did with her English language. She therefore, admires the Shona culture hence she “likes the Shona way of naming a child after a particular meaning.” (93) It thus becomes evident that the protagonist has double consciousness because she realizes that her identity is made up of two streams of consciousness which she has to understand though she is denied full comprehension of them.

4.3 Incidences That Awaken the Protagonist’s Sense of Non-Belonging

Elise’s visit to Jonah’s place awakens her sense of non- belonging in her own home. When Elise visits Mr Cooper with her mother, Mr Cooper permits her to go and play with Jane and

Susan, his gardener's daughters, as the owner of the farm, but Jonah chases her away. He says she should go home because she should not be in his house. "She later realizes that she argued that, he did not technically, own the house. Mr Cooper did. And she was allowed to play anywhere she liked. But Jonah's staring eyes scared her."(69). Elise feels she cannot defend herself against Jonah though her presence in his house is justified. Eames is probably suggesting that the white Zimbabwean community fails to belong in Zimbabwe because they feel powerless before the black society though they feel their existence on this Zimbabwean landscape is justified. Their experience becomes painful because they are denied acceptance in a place they feel they rightful belong.

Furthermore, the protagonist's involvement in a bike accident in which she almost hit a black girl makes her aware of the black society's rejection of the white community. Though Elise apologizes for her mistake, the girl's father does not care to listen or understand her. The man is already in a furious rage:

'Sorry!' I said, but the father had already started shaking his fist. 'You bluddy white kids, you think you own this place!'... You think you can do whatever you want, but this our country! Go back to Britain!' I felt like I should stay there and debate this with him. Convince him that I was real Zimbabwean, despite my skin, and that I was not going to run away to a country that was not truly mine. Instead, I jumped back on the bike and pedalled as fast as I could. (137).

Elise realizes that this black man is not angry because of what she has just done but because of the fact that she is white. The man is clear that whites are not welcome in Zimbabwe but should go to Britain, implying that whites can never be accepted as Zimbabwean citizens. Eames, here suggest that the black community clearly denies the white community integration as true Zimbabweans. They are aliens in their own country who are expected to go

back to where they presumably came from. Though Elise and other whites feel they are equal citizens who should be treated fairly, they cannot sustain their argument because their skin colour stands as a barrier between them and the black world. They are left therefore, with this burden of telling their double fold tale which no one dares to listen to, hence they do not belong.

The invasion of white farms by war veterans is a clear indication that whites are not included as true Zimbabweans though they are citizens. The text is dominated by the brutal eviction of various white farmers from their land though they make significant efforts to prove they belong to this land. Regardless of uncle Pieter's deep attachment with land he is evicted. The narrator reveals that;

My uncle was rooted in the soil like a baobab tree. There was dirt under his fingernails that no amount of scrubbing would clean; every crease in his palms was a thin brown line. His skin had been burnt forty African summers to the consistency of horse-hide. He spoke Shona more readily than he spoke English...
(242)

Similarly, the narrator describes Mr Cooper as a "bluddy Zimbabwean, just like the blacks." (187). She cannot imagine him anywhere except on his farm and to her he is part of the landscape. However, despite the white farmers' identification with the landscape they are eliminated. Uncle Pieter is told to leave after the war vets invade the farm. Mr Cooper is killed despite the fact that he had renounced his British and South African citizenship. The author can be read as implying that the white Zimbabwean community suffers from double consciousness because they fail to belong. They are chased away and eliminated from the land that defines their identity. They are treated as aliens in the country of their birth and expected to call Britain home, a land they have never inhabited.

The protagonist's family and the rest of the whites in the novel possess two passports implying that they have dual citizenship thus dual identities by default. When the president declares that they have to surrender their passports they find themselves caught in between because they cannot renounce either of the two identities. The narrator presents the white Zimbabweans' dilemma through Steve who struggles to renounce his Zimbabwean citizen. He delays submitting his British passport till the final day of submission. Steve argues, "I'm keeping my Zimbabwean one ... I'm a Zimbabwean, I'm not a bloody Brit. [...] I'd rather give up my British passport than my Zimbabwean one." (221). Steve's dilemma concurs with Du Bois' (1903:9.10) assertion that "the African –American's double-aimed struggle is to make it possible for a man to be both a Negro and an American... In this merging he wishes neither of the older selves to be lost." Eames is thus suggesting that white Zimbabweans want the Zimbabweans community to accept them as they are and not segregate them because they are white.

This idea is further advanced in the text by the fact that the narrator constantly reveals that she is living a double life. When she relates the fear that envelopes her family due to the farm invasions, she says they lived two lives in which they acted as if nothing was happening until they heard it on television in the evening. When Elise ponders upon her life she questions her identity because she always thought she has always thought that she and Beauty are one. However, she realizes that though Beauty has socialized her as black her colour separates her from the black world. As if that is not enough, she realizes she cannot identify with the white world hence she ponders:

I thought I was one of them, almost. I was not a White. Not really. I thought of Beauty all those years ago. How could I possibly grow up with two mothers, one black and

one white, and still be just white?(218).

Eames seems to have been aware of Dubois' concept of double consciousness or Bhabha's (1994) idea of the liminal space. The reader is tempted to take this assumption because of the fact that she agrees with Bhabha (1994) that when two cultures interact, they do not remain the same but they form a third space known as cultural hybridity. Elise echoes these sentiments when she is pondering why the Zimbabwean society expects her to remain with a single identity, whiteness, when she has been socialized into the world by two women from two cultures. She therefore begs the African world to stop viewing the white community with these binaries. Separating these identities makes them “illegal aliens”. It makes them sound like they have two heads, rather than just being white Zimbabweans with British passports. The author is thus suggesting that white Zimbabweans desire to be treated like any other Zimbabwean and be accommodated with their dual identities without being looked upon with contempt.

It is also imperative to note that the black workers passively rebel against the whites. This resistance is largely portrayed through Jonah who no longer obeys his master's command. He is directed to cut the bougainvillea plant but he spends weeks without doing so. The narrator observes that “Mr Cooper's house and garden started to be quietly sabotaged. Tools went missing from the shed. [...] tools vanished and were not replaced. The hedge trimmers, the big spade, even the saw.” (154).

The fact that Jonah makes no effort to search for the tools except to complain that he cannot execute his duties because there are no tools makes one suspect that he is probably the one who is responsible. Jonah is indirectly telling Mr Cooper and the rest of the white community that they are powerless before the black people because they do not have an equal

footage. They do not have power because this land is not theirs therefore they should go away because they cannot work with them anymore. Therefore it can be noted that though white farmers try to establish bonds with the African society, they cannot identify with them because they are not sincere. Though they throw parties and invite them to eat so as to fulfill the shona idiom, “Ukama igasva hunozadziwa nekudya,” the native African does not welcome his hand of friendship, but rather treats him like a stranger.

Furthermore, whites fail to realize the reason why they are denied integration. They are blind to the fact that the white settlers displaced native Africans from their land, therefore, the later quests for land and not being invited for tea. Their little acts of charity therefore, become irrelevant since they do not address the burning issue of land. Whites therefore, live in an ivory tower; implying that, they claim to be part of the African community yet they are distanced from it. The black Zimbabwean community thus clearly tells them that they do not belong to Zimbabwe.

4.4 The Environment’s Contribution in Reinforcing White Zimbabweans’ Sense of Non-Belonging

Right from the beginning, Eames's text projects that nature repels the white Zimbabwean society. Within the opening chapter she confesses, “I knew we were not welcome here, too many things could kill us: snakes, leopards, hippos, hyenas, charging elephants, spiders. Potential death or pain in every step. Even plants were out to get us.” (11) Though Hughes (2010) suggests that the white community clings to the landscape as their source of identity, Eames seems to suggest the opposite. It is telling them that they are exiles on the Zimbabwean land, they belong somewhere else.

The whole story is dominated by the appearance of vicious snakes some of which are out to

destroy the white farmers' animals. Snakes are regarded as bad omen in the Shona culture; therefore the author is trying to suggest that if the whites do not vacate the land something bad will happen, probably death because a snake is a fast killer. All the families troubled by snakes in the text are evicted from their farms: Elise's family, Uncle Pieter as well as Mr Cooper.

Furthermore, the African ancestral spirits that are claimed to own the land come out on an avenging mood, as if to say they no longer want the white man on their land. Elise begins to see and hear strange things that seem like ghosts. These strange experiences spread on to the whole farm and everyone begins to complain about 'tokoloshes'. She further reports that, "every white on the farm was on edge. None of them admitted to believing in spirits, but all of them did. It felt like the farm did not want us here." (144). Although ancestral spirits are regarded as protectors of the land, they do not protect the whites, suggesting that they too do not recognize them as children of the soil. The 'N'anga' tells them that the 'vadzimu' are definitely in Elise's home but are not happy because they have not been invited into the home since the death of many Africans who died for their land. The narrator thus observes that,

the fabric between the old world and the new one started to tear. Shapes moved in the night, a whisper of a darker black. Older Gods than ours had woken up, and they lived by older rules. [...] We were under attack from the world around us, too. Army worms infested our gardens. (134).

It can be observed that, though white Zimbabweans cling to the African landscape as a definite signifier of their identity, it denies them such entitlement. The land does not recognize them as her children and their ancestors are nowhere to protect them and they realize their religion cannot protect them either. The black Zimbabwean community and nature seem to agree that whites do not belong in Zimbabwe; they are aliens hence they

should leave the country and seek for their true identity.

4.5 Conclusion

In a nutshell, Andreas Eames' text presents a young woman who struggles to merge two identities into one so that the world can appreciate her as one of them. Even though she is white biologically, that is by birth, she has been socialized into an African culture such that she feels she is black or African like any other Zimbabwean. However, her physical appearance separates her from the rest of the African community such that when she is among them she feels the difference. On the other hand, she cannot identify herself with the rest of the white community because she is not accustomed to their culture. Their way of life is not what she embraces as the way to live, she has been denied knowledge of it hence she feels she is not part of it. Eames thus uses her text to represent the feelings that cloud the white Zimbabwean community such that they are burdened with an ambivalence of identity which whites find difficult to resolve.

5.0 Chapter Five: Conclusion

Double consciousness is a term that Du Bois (1903) coined in an attempt to describe the African American experience. His definition highlighted that double consciousness is a condition in which one has two identities existing in them at once. This duality of identity results from alienation, seclusion, acculturation and displacement. Bhabha (1994) refers to the same condition as cultural hybridity, a complex identity that result when two cultures interact. Most scholars who have studied identity within the parameters of double consciousness have focused mainly on blacks in the various parts of the world outside Africa.

This research attempted to apply the concept on the white race. It sought to reveal that double consciousness is not peculiar to African Americans but is also evident among whites or any other race. To validate this assertion the research focused on white Zimbabwean writing and its treatment of double consciousness. It focused on: *The Grass Is Singing* (1950), *Absent: The English Teacher* (2009), and *The Cry of the Go- Away Bird* (2011).

The first chapter introduced the research, expanding on the research's purpose, why it has to be conducted and what it seeks to achieve. It related white Zimbabwean history, from their first established settlement on the Zimbabwean plateau in 1890 up to the present. It validated the assertion that white Zimbabweans have an ambivalence of identity. This was achieved when the researcher revealed that white Zimbabweans fail to belong in the rest of the white world because they tried to establish their own little England in Rhodesia hence they cut ties with their roots. Furthermore, they fail to belong in the native African (Zimbabwean) society because they deliberately distanced themselves and did not make an effort to establish ties with the black community. Hughes (2010) asserts that they propagated their sense of belonging through clinging to the landscape because it produced what they wanted, wealth

and prosperity.

However, when they are displaced from this land their sense of belonging is threatened. They cannot identify with the European world because they are no longer attached to it. They cannot identify with the black world because they did not establish ties with the native Africans. More so, their different skin colour stands as a barrier between them and the Africans. The African society cannot accept them as equal citizens because whiteness reminds them of oppression, exploitation, displacement, deprivation and all that disadvantaged the African. The other chapters therefore, draw examples from the cited texts, so as to prove and testify that white Zimbabweans suffer from double consciousness.

The second chapter focused on Lessing's *The Grass Is Singing* (1950) which depicts that some whites are also secluded by other whites because they lack monetary value. Mary Turner fails to belong in the white world because she is poor and does not meet the standards of white expectation. This is clearly illustrated in the incident where she flees back to the city and is rejected because of her deteriorated state. She fails to fit into the native African society because she despises the blacks. She ill-treats them so much that they end up hating her too. A gap is created between them such that Mary fears natives and feels powerless before them. Lessing uses Mary to represent the rest of the white Zimbabweans' dilemma. They suffer from double consciousness because they fail to belong in both the white society and black society. They cannot identify themselves as either European or African hence they have double consciousness.

The third chapter centered on *Absent: The English Teacher* (2009) which focuses on a white man George J George who feels alienated from both the white and black world. After George

loses all his possessions to Beautiful Nyamayakanuna, and becomes a houseboy, he becomes rated among the poor whites. He cannot fit into the white community because whiteness means superiority, privileges and domination yet he is now inferior, dominated and vulnerable. He is a laughing stock among his former white friends hence he feels alienated from them. On the other hand, he cannot fit into the black Zimbabwean community because his white identity reminds them of exploitation, segregation and displacement they suffered under white rule. To them whiteness signifies cruelty, pain, abuse and economic meltdown such that they find it hard to forgive and forget these crimes so as to embrace him as one of their own. George realizes he does not belong in both societies thus he burns all the papers that bear his identity. Through George, Eppel is suggesting that white Zimbabweans fail to belong due to displacement instituted by the agrarian reform. They lost all that signifies whiteness, yet the African community cannot accept them as equal citizens hence they suffer from double consciousness.

Finally, the fourth chapter dwelled on *The Cry of the Go-Away Bird* which presents a child narrator, Elise who is quite aware of the two streams of consciousness that comprise her identity. Though she tries to identify herself as African (Shona), she is denied integration because she is white. The black community despises her because of her skin color which they associate with colonization, exploitation, displacement, and ill-treatment. Though as a child she is innocent, the African world blames her for the wrongs committed by her ancestors. On the other hand, she is distanced from the white world because she finds whiteness a lie. It is not tangible; it is a mental construction that is not visible and satisfying as the black culture. Eames therefore suggests that the white Zimbabwean is a cultural hybrid. Though their physical appearance is associated with whiteness, their knowledge has been shaped the African way. Therefore they cannot be purely white but a mixture of both

identities thus having double consciousness.

This research therefore managed to explore Du Bois' concept of double consciousness and contextualize it to Africa. It revealed that seclusion, discrimination, alienation and displacement are critical factors that lead one to suffer from inferiority complex. This resultantly leads one to define themselves through the eyes of the other world that prescribes their identity. This experience can be felt by anyone despite their race or location. Whiteness which is often considered a stable signifier has also been proven to suffer from this ambivalence of identity. Therefore, identities are not stable but ever under construction.

6.0 References

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