Midlands State University

Faculty of Arts

Department of English and Communication

'Remaining a man…' **Representations of the constructions of men and masculinities in contemporary Zimbabwean literature: An analysis of Tagwira's** *The Uncertainty of Hope* **(2006); Chikwava's** *Harare North* **(2009) and Nyota** *et al's Hunting in Foreign Lands* **(2010).**

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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 Master of Arts in African and Diasporan Literature.

Supervisor: Mr. A. Mutekwa

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APPROVAL FORM

The undersigned certifies that he has supervised and recommends to the Midlands State University for acceptance a dissertation titled: *'Remaining a man…'* Representations of the constructions of men and masculinities in contemporary Zimbabwean literature: An analysis of Tagwira's *The Uncertainty of Hope* (2006); Chikwava's *Harare North* (2009) and Nyota *et al's Hunting in Foreign Lands* (2010), submitted by student number R00656L in partial fulfilment of a Master of Arts in African and Diasporan Literature.

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STUDENT NAME · **R00656L**

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DECLARATION

I, Sikhululekile Mkandla, Registration number R00656L, hereby declare that this dissertation is my own original work, has not been submitted for any degree or examination at any other university, and that the sources I have used have been fully acknowledged by complete references. It is submitted in partial fulfilment of the Master of Arts in African and Diasporan Literature in the Department of English and Communication at the Midlands State University, Gweru, Zimbabwe.

Signature.....................................Date.............................

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DEDICATION

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Abstract

 This study focuses on the crisis of masculinity during Zimbabwe's post year 2000 socio-economic and political degeneration. Through a masculinist re-reading of Tagwira's *The Uncertainty of Hope* (2006), Chikwava's *Harare North* (2010) and Nyota *et al's Hunting in Foreign Lands* (2010) I seek to show the difficulties men face in sustaining the normative masculine roles as   providers and protectors of families, communities and the nation within a context of political insecurity, job uncertainty, high unemployment, hyper-inflation, paralysis of basic services and scarcity of basic commodities. These crises undermined the legitimacy of patriarchal power by eroding men's capacity as providers, a factor upon which their dominance of women has traditionally been premised. Already empowered by the global movement for their emancipation, women resolutely rose to fill the provider gap in ways that displaced men from an ages-old   authority that hinged on women's dependent status. I argue therefore that with this marked emergence of feminine masculinities, the crisis experiences inevitably fostered a new gender order within which it proved difficult to "…*remain a man*" within the confines of normative masculinity. The study is theoretically grounded in post-colonial theory and social constructionism, both theories which enable the tracing of the changes that have affected the homogenizing authority of patriarchal ideology upon which male supremacy is based. It is evident that not all men benefit from the assumed patriarchal privilege as they are unequally positioned on the patriarchal hierarchy. The post-colonial lens also enables an analysis of the entwinement between national and masculine identity to show how national instability disrupts men's ability to meet their normative masculinity roles as providers and protectors while by drawing from social constructionism I also show how both national and male identity are not cast in stone but are unstable and subject to societal shifts and contingent imbalances. There is evidence in the selected texts of the entangled relationship between man and nation with both being in an   unhealthy state of crisis, with their grand narratives subject to question and necessitating the re-envisioning of new orders. Through this study I have depicted that masculinity as identity is not as simple and linear as patriarchal ideology often conditions us to believe.

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KEY TERMS

Masculinities; Crisis; Representations; Construction; Contemporary; Zimbabwean

Chapter One

Introduction

1.0 Background to the study

Through a focus on Tagwira's *The Uncertainty of Hope* (2006)*,* Chikwava's *Harare North* (2009) and Nyota et al's *Hunting in Foreign lands* (2010), this study adds a voice to the discourse on the 'crisis of masculinity '. These post 2000 Zimbabwean novels' experiences are entrenched within immense socio-political and economic changes that alter gender relations and particularly male identity in complex ways. The discourse on the "crisis of masculinity" has become all permeating with its varied and even competing strands advanced by the likes of Mosse (1996), Butler (1999),Beynon (2002), Connell and Messerschmidt(2005) and Connell (2005), among numerous other scholars. Connell (2005:85) observes that "Power relations show the most visible evidence of crisis tendencies: a historic collapse of the legitimacy of patriarchal power, and a global movement for the emancipation of women." Simply defined therefore, this is a discourse under which traditional forms of gender and particularly masculinity have been placed under scrutiny given the effect of post-modernity's rapid economic and social changes and their effect on male identity.

Through the selected novels I particularly focus on the radical socio-political and economic changes of the post year 2000 period in Zimbabwe and the challenges, opportunities and the shifting ideals of masculinities amid the quest to '*remain a man'*. Remaining a man here implies a desperate attempt to uphold the normative masculine ideals when the socio-economic

structural supports for this ideal are weakening. Further to this, there are, during this period, pressures to assume certain forms of masculinity that depart from normative expectations as men pursue both self-actualization and survival. I look at men's varied negotiations of male identity in shifting contexts as political players as well as fathers and husbands with responsibilities as procreators, providers, protectors, disciplinarians and controllers of families, communities and nations in crisis times.

The post 2000 dispensation marks a period of immense socio-political and economic upheaval in Zimbabwe. Noted by Gatsheni-Ndlovu (2002:99-100) then, Zimbabwe was experiencing '…one of its worst crises since the attainment of independence in 1980…This crisis has given birth to political, economic, social, ideological, and humanitarian problems in the country.' As Gatsheni-Ndlovu rightly observes, this crisis manifested itself in multifaceted ways. Politically for example, the pre-2000 social agitations and the subsequent emergence of the Movement for Democratic Change as a significant opposition player on Zimbabwe's political terrain manifested in the launch of the Third *Chimurenga*/Liberation War by the ruling ZANU PF aligned elite. This entailed a heightened sense of militant nationalism, exclusionary political rhetoric and, most of all, the repossession of white owned farmlands by the historically marginalized black majority. At the centre of the execution of all this was macho masculinity expressed through aggressive desires to defend 'the fatherland' from presumed internal and external enemies.

The threat from this opposition player compelled the twenty year post-independent ZANU PF led government to review its strategies to ensure its regime's security. The period leading up to the year 2000 general elections and the 2002 Presidential elections saw increased militarization of the Zimbabwean socio-political environment, marked by, among other drastic

changes, the increasing visibility and interference in political processes by War Veterans and the Youth Militias, also known as the *Green Bombers*. This militarized context was premised on an excess of masculinity at whose centre mainly was the male body to be manipulated in service to the quest for regime security. As Muchemwa and Muponde (2007: xviii) observe 'There are pressures to discipline, militarize, and transform the male body into an instrument of surveillance and violence. Macho masculinity…may be understood as a phenomenon unique to the distempers of the Third Chimurenga…'

McGregor and Primorac (2010:7) further shed light on this context represented in the selected literary texts, a context shaped by the violence that accompanied the Third Chimurenga and the year 2005's Operation Murambatsvina amid political repression and economic contraction, in which "…life expectancy plummeted…basic services ceased to function, HIV/AIDS and later cholera took their toll, and remittances became crucial in the struggle to survive."

The nation's economic and social plunge had already been compromised by the 1992 drought and the Economic Structural Adjustment Programme (ESAP).Cornwall (2003:231) describes the period 1992 to 1994 as 'a time when structural adjustment, political instability, and economic decline had left many men vulnerable in ways they could not have imagined a few years before.' Almost a decade later, the post 2000 Zimbabwean dispensation would be marked by increasing poverty due to the heightening unemployment levels and the continued erosion of citizens' previously potentially stable and sustainable means of livelihoods. Hammar *et al* (2010:263-268) concur to this, adding that this crisis has seen Zimbabwean people being displaced within and beyond its borders. They also bring to light the concept of 'dislodging,

which unlike displacement which implies physical, spatial movement, dislodging is about 'profound changes *in situ'*:

> …in contexts of crisis and grief when people were existentially dislodged from ideas about the future…periods of profound economic crisis shake expectations of modernity: What imagined future trajectory can there be when essentials are suddenly lacking and there is no petrol, no water, no electricity and when parents are unable to take their sick children to hospital?

These transformations inevitably transformed gender relations in ways that I believe presented a challenge in men's ability to uphold the normative masculine ideal of man as an honourable, courageous, rational and self-motivated provider, protector, and controller of his women and children in the face of turbulence. The contextual shifts brought on by post-modernity have inevitably led to ever shifting cultural ideals and altered social identities and relations, particularly gender identities and relations of masculinity and femininity in complex ways.

Men's vulnerability in this period is further compounded by the emergence of stronger and newer woman hoods and femininities, as women rose to the challenge for survival. As observed by Mosse's (1996:102) analysis in his contributions to the discourse of masculinity in crisis:

> Woman in her own sphere was considered the equal of man. However ,when woman left the place assigned to her in the division between the sexes, she became an outsider as well and presented one of the most serious and difficult challenges to modern masculinity.

 The economic crisis period therefore marks the emergence of resolute woman hoods that meant that men felt and even became disempowered in a society where the hegemonic, patriarchal concept of masculinity, for example that of men as provider was now open to scrutiny and hence contestation. Increased unemployment implied increasing poverty and erosion of men's capacity to provide for themselves and their families. The emergence of women as equal and even stronger partners meant both patriarchy as an ideology and normative hegemonic masculinity as

a cultural ideal were undergoing a painful transformation. One big question begged an answer; 'How does one *remain a man* when they can no longer provide?'

Apart from the foregoing socio-political and economic changes, HIV and AIDS inevitably placed the male body and its image under examination. Attree (2007:58) argues that the male body has ever been kept at a safe distance as part of preserving the hegemony of male power. She asserts that illness and disease have destabilized all this, subjecting the male body to a scrutiny that questions hegemony of male power when the figure is '…absent, ill or dying.' Political instability, economic uncertainty and vulnerability to disease have all conspired against the normative masculine ideal and I argue therefore that *'being, becoming and remaining a man'* has become an overwhelming undertaking in the ever-changing post-modern era.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

The meta-narrative of the post 2000 Zimbabwean crisis has largely focused on women's vulnerability in the face of politically motivated violence, rapid and multifaceted economic decline, high unemployment, food insecurity and their susceptibility to disease and death. It has often overlooked men's quotidian aspects of survival and their individual struggles to uphold the normative cultural ideals of masculinity. Most studies have remained essentialist in their homogenizing slant often focused on the vulnerability of women in a seemingly unyielding patriarchal society where men presumably remain powerful and privileged. It is necessary to focus on how the male gender has been disempowered by poverty, political turmoil and disease.

In this study I want to demonstrate the precarious positioning of men within the patriarchal ideology and their struggles to conform to its archetypal hegemonic masculine ideals when the structures that support that ideal are compromised by political turmoil, poverty, disease

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and displacement. The literary representations in the selected texts to a certain extent question the fate of patriarchy and male dominance in a post-modern era. The study seeks to unravel the intricate ways in which masculinities have been and continue to be reconfigured in a changing context. 'How does one *remain a man* when they can no longer provide?' What are the implications for patriarchy and particularly for masculinity when masculinities are evident in other genders and to what extent does the body remain central to the definition and performance of masculinity?

I argue that *'remaining a man'* has become an overwhelming pursuit where the social structures that enable the hegemony of male power are compromised by poverty, political turmoil and disease. Simply put, the male gender is disempowered in the post-modern society, particularly in moments of crisis. This gender study does not undermine women's victimhood or vulnerability in times of crisis but deliberately moves the cursor to focus on men's vulnerability and their coping strategies in a changing socio-political, economic and gender order.

Given these shifts this study will explore how the normative ideals, myths and stereotypes of masculinity are maintained, buttressed, questioned and ultimately reviewed in literary representations. It is important to note here that, representation as a process of meaning making through language is in itself a political process. It is a value laden process which may essentialize, affirm, pervade, ostracize or redefine conceptions of masculinity. This study will therefore analyze the ways in which the selected representations in Zimbabwe's crisis novel point to a deeper etching or adjustment of the normative masculine ideal.

1.2 Significance of the Study

Masculinity still defines the Zimbabwean nation in spite of the various milestones post independent Zimbabwe has attained towards elevating women from a status subordinate to that of men. I further argue that this remains the case in spite of how economic decline has evidently weakened men and elevated women to positions of 'de facto men, husbands, fathers and sons', a status that is strongly affirmed by women's breadwinning role. While this study acknowledges the vulnerability of women, it is not a feminist but a gender focused study. The challenges men face in living up to the normative masculine ideal in the midst of crisis are significant as a pointer to the roots of some of the problems women encounter in everyday life. A masculinist approach to the stresses that manifest themselves sometimes in the form of alcohol abuse and gender based violation of women, especially in times of crisis may draw us closer to an appreciation of men's struggles for survival within a structural system that can no longer support them. If comprehensive gender parity is to be attained there is need for an understanding of the lived experiences of both genders that goes beyond the long held notions of binary oppositions of man as oppressor versus woman as oppressed. This study also acknowledges that since the advent of the feminist movement women's experiences have enjoyed the monopoly of scholarly and even policy reform attention. Ouzgane and Morrel (2005:7) observe that masculinities as a field of study has suffered neglect hence a study of men and masculinities is imperative:

> To the extent that men have been overlooked, taken for granted, or treated as a unified, homogenous category…Across time and space, it is obvious that the shape of masculinities changes and that the ways in which these masculinities are positioned in relation to other men (younger, older, of different ethnic or racial origin, for example) and women vary.

There are imbalances that have been created in the understanding of gender due to the overlooking of men and masculinities as a field of study. Silberschmidt (2001) in Ouzgane and Morrel also observes that most studies on gender have focused on the powerlessness and

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vulnerability of women in times of crisis. She notes however that significant economic changes have occurred that have destabilized the hegemonic position of men. Musanga and Mutekwa (2013:3-4) point to the imperative of studying masculinities when they assert that the field of masculinities has been instrumental in promoting non essentialist conceptions of gender that speak to the reality of its dynamic nature. The study of masculinities therefore draws us to the realization that men are not a homogenous group and not all of them are privileged in patriarchal contexts.

This study examines how the Zimbabwean crisis as a post-modern phenomenon has reconfigured gender relations and particularly disempowered men in a society that, I argue, is still predominantly patriarchal, with male identity influenced by hegemonic masculinity or the essentialist masculine stereotype. The study argues that these cannot hold given that women have emerged to effectively assume masculine gender social roles as breadwinners, providers, and even protectors and hence attaining own social and economic independence. Connell (2005:77) states that:

> When conditions for the defence of patriarchy change, the bases for the dominance of a particular masculinity are eroded. New groups may challenge old solutions and construct a new hegemony.

I argue through this study that while Zimbabwe ideologically remains patriarchal, it is a nation which in practice has evolved newer femininities and masculinities, with the men's position undermined by changes in the labour market. A masculinist lens may help to ascertain if these could be pointers towards newer forms of masculinities and hence new hegemonies. Literary representations not only point to the emergence of empowered women and disempowered men, but reconsiderations that destabilize the patriarchal agenda as men are negotiating new masculinities that in some instances are moving away from male dominion and women subordination towards a state of gender parity. Literary representations also point to

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intergenerational contestations of referents of negotiating or asserting masculinity between and amongst younger and older men. These contestations are also evident between the educated and non-educated as well as the materially privileged and the poor. The representations of masculinity in Zimbabwe's crisis novel confirm the opacity and contingency of manhood as an identity whose existence can no longer be limited to inhabiting a male body.

1.3 Aims of the study

i) To trace the representations of the changing constructions of manhood and masculinities in the face of the socio-political and economic transformations in post-2000 Zimbabwean writings

ii) To trace men's coping or adaptation strategies in the context of shifting cultural ideals of masculinity and what implications these have for the culturally sanctioned masculine stereotype.

iii) To propose broader conceptions of masculinity realizing that its attributes are not limited to the male body.

iv) To analyze the implications for patriarchy as an ideology due to these changing cultural ideals of masculinity and femininity.

1.4 Objectives of the study

By the end of this study I anticipate that:

i) Masculinity is defined and its various representations are interrogated.

ii) Men's coping strategies in turbulent times are examined.

iii) Masculinities that proliferate in other genders are examined

iv) Broader conceptions of masculinity are explored and implications for patriarchy are discussed.

1.5 Theoretical and conceptual framework

This study will be premised upon postcolonial theory and social constructionism. Although this study does not interest itself with masculinities within the colonial context per se, it departs from post-colonial theory which advances alternative ways of seeing the world and will enable an interrogation of patriarchy, masculinity and femininity as grand narratives in a post-colonial context. It is also interested in masculinities that proliferate in migrant spaces shaped by the colonial encounter. Since this is a study predominantly interested in men's subordinated position within a violent patriarchy, post-colonial theory will be used in this case to advance the subaltern male voice cause. This study will also draw insights from Burr's (1995) concept of social constructionism which is also pertinent to this study due to its clarion call for a move from essentialist notions of understanding the world. These two theories will be helpful in understanding the changing position of men and masculinities in a seemingly unyielding patriarchy and I further explore them in the next sections.

1.5.1 Post-Colonial Theory

Post-colonial theory offers an apt lens for the interrogation of masculinities due to its varied angles of analyses. From a postcolonial theory point of view there is need to recognize more than one type of masculinity hence this study's approach that seeks to unpack men and masculinities in turbulent times. Firstly, insights from Said's (1994) concept of *othering* will particularly be helpful in analyzing gender relations among men and the victimhood of men in their quest to conform to the hegemonic, archetypal model of masculinity. This concept of othering will be pivotal in interrogating representations of masculinity in nation making and the exercise of power as well as in migrant spaces. Importantly, I will hinge on post-colonial theory

as I seek to show how men disempowered within the grand narratives of nationalism and the racial stereotyping in exiled spaces not only negotiate but deliberately subvert the powers that oppress them.

1.5.2 Social Constructionism

One of the reasons social constructionism is relevant to the study of masculinities is it's complementarity to post-colonial theory in its shared call for alternative, non-essentialist ways of perceiving the world. It advances a critical stance on our often 'taken-for-granted' insights of the world for example such as the belief that all women are victims and all men are privileged in patriarchal contexts. Masculinities as a field of gender studies already departs from the acknowledgement of the plurality of men's experiences and shuns conventional strategies that tend to view men and their experiences through a homogenous lens. In addition to this, Burr (1995) brings to light for example that gender is not two static categories but rather a set of socially constructed relationships which are historically and culturally specific. Masculinity and femininity therefore, according to social constructionism are context and time specific realities and each epoch constructs its own realities. In using social constructionism as a lens of analysis in this study I will attempt to show how masculine attributes often perceived as static are, through literary representations destabilized and subverted especially in contexts of the turbulence brought about by poverty, disease and violent conflict.

1.6 Research Design and Methodology

This will be a textual analysis qualitative study that will also make use of secondary literature in the analysis of the aforementioned selected primary text(s).These texts have been

selected because they constitute the Zimbabwean crisis novel and explore the various ways in which men and women negotiate gender relations and identities in a changing age. This changing age is characterized by structural transformations in cultural ideals of femininity and masculinity that put to interrogation long held stereotypes.

The secondary texts will be drawn from various fields of relevance such as Sociology, History, Gender studies, Masculinity studies, and Political Science and Cultural studies among others. These texts, covering a wide array of issues such as masculinity, femininity, identity and sexuality will provide the theoretical context for analyzing the selected novels.

1.7 Review of Literature

The foregoing section, among other things has sought to entrench this study within the Zimbabwean Socio-Political and economic context. The review examines the conception and construction of the broader subject of men and masculinities and will in its course explore other related attributes of gender, manhood, fatherhood, husband hood, femininity and sexuality.

1.7.1 The study of masculinities as a post-modern development

The structured study of masculinity as a gendered category can safely be viewed as a post-modern phenomenon. Burr (1995:9) observes that 'Postmodernism…rejects the idea that the world can be understood in terms of grand narratives, and emphasizes instead the coexistence of a multiplicity and variety of situation-dependent ways of life(sometimes referred to as pluralism)…'As already noted in the foregoing, the post year 2000 Zimbabwean socio-political and economic dispensation has led to a crisis of masculinity that necessitated quests for survival locally and beyond the country's boarders that brought essentialist notions of the gendered

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identities of masculinities and femininities into question. These transformations confirm the social constructedness of masculinities and femininities. Lindsay and Miescher (2003:4) further substantiate this when they point out that "ideologies of masculinity-like those of femininity-are culturally and historically constructed, their meanings continually contested and always in the process of being renegotiated in the context of existing power relations."

Given this observation masculinity therefore, as an identity is unstable and cannot be homogenized as its normative definition has so often implied. Gerda's(1986:217) assertion that 'The system of patriarchy can function only with the cooperation of women.', points to that patriarchy and masculinity in particular are products of a consenting or persuaded femininity whose existence is threatened by women's breaking away from traditional realms of the private space to which they have been confined. The post-modern society's demands for survival have necessitated that women emerge from the shadows. Feminism as a product of modernity for example has enabled women to challenge gender indoctrination, have better access to education and knowledge of their history and increased access to economic resources and political power.

These changes only serve to confirm that masculinity and femininity are social constructs that transform from one context to another. The selected fictional representations point to inevitable transformations that have seen men and women constantly re-envisioning their gendered identities in new spaces. Connell and Messerschmidt's (2005:836) observations confirm that:

> Masculinity is not a fixed entity embedded in the body or personality traits of individuals. Masculinities are configurations of practice that are accomplished in social action and, therefore, can differ according to the gender relations in a particular social setting.

As already noted the Zimbabwean social setting can be defined as a patriarchal one as men still, to a greater extent govern clans and families and constitute the majority in key decision making positions. However, the fictional representations of masculinities in the selected texts challenge narrowly conceived and essentialist ideals of patriarchy and masculinities when their very fabric is corroded daily by physical and moral disease and death, absence and economic uncertainties. Silberschmidt in Ouzgane and Morrel (2005:195) argues that:

> Although the main axis of patriarchal power is still the overall subordination of women and dominance of men, the deteriorating material conditions have seriously undermined the normative order of patriarchy… While men do have a relative freedom, compared to women, particularly in sexual and reproductive behaviors, lack of access to income earning opportunities has made men's role as heads of household and breadwinners precarious. With a majority of men reduced to "figureheads" of households, men's authority has come under threat and so has their identity and self-esteem. Patriarchy does not mean that men have only privileges. A patriarch has also many responsibilities. The irony of the patriarchal system resides precisely in the fact that male authority has a material base while male responsibility is normatively constituted... This has made men's roles and identities confusing and contradictory, and many men express feelings of helplessness, inadequacy, and lack of self-esteem.

This disillusionment is further compounded not only by the pro-active ascendency of women to the roles of provider and protector, enabled by their ability to make or earn an income as shall be explored in the selected texts, but a deliberately calculated, manipulative approach to their relationships with men at various levels of their life. This challenges the grand narrative of women as victims of patriarchy.

1.7.2 Men and Masculinities: Conceptual underpinnings

In order to clearly conceptualize masculinity it is necessary to draw a distinction between manhood and masculinity. While manhood is rooted in the physiological attributes of a man's body, masculinity is rooted in social expectations. In spite of this difference, manhood is the

starting point for the definition of masculinity. This is in the sense that the phallus determines the referent status of being called a boy or a man hence the adult man role of biological siring that leads to biological fathering. I emphasize here the role of biological fathering because fathering takes both a biological and a social role, which is what is of particular interest to this study as a definer of masculinity. In other words fatherhood is rooted in both manhood as a physical aspect and a definer of masculinity in a social sense although the transition from the physical act of siring to the social responsibility of fathering is not a given. The social role of fathering within the normative or hegemonic masculine ideal entails responsibilities of being a provider, protector, discipliner and even controller.

Directly related to fatherhood and premised on manhood are the roles and responsibilities of husband, brother, son and uncle which also straddle both the physical and the social line. However, the body remains central to both the definition of manhood and masculinity much as it is central to the definition of womanhood and femininity, with masculinity and femininity being the starting point of the marking of gender. Muchemwa and Muponde (2007: xvii) emphasize this when they affirm that "Gender at its most intimate and visible finds the body as one of its most important sites."

I move here to the definition of masculinity. Lindsay and Miescher (2003:4) use the term *masculinity* to refer to what they call a "cluster of norms, values and behavioral patterns expressing …how men should act and represent themselves to others. " Muchemwa and Muponde (2007: xvi) depart from a pluralistic definition of masculinities as "sets of ideas that can oppress, repress or liberate, depending on historical and political imperatives." In both critiques both sets of scholars underscore the importance of interrogating African masculinities

and acknowledging masculinity as a gendered category that is worthy of focused study. Ouzgane and Morrell (2005) concur and emphasize on the infinity of the variations of African masculinities.

All sets of scholars resonate on the need for a departure from scholarship where men and masculinities have been given little or no recognition, with men often perceived as a homogenous group. Both also acknowledge that, like femininity, it is context and history dependent, being influenced by the broader socio-economic and cultural changes. As already noted, Muchemwa and Muponde (ibid) make pertinent observations on the centrality of the body when it comes to gender but are quick to point out that masculinities as a gendered category are not restricted to the male body per se but are evident in other genders.

1.7.3 The masculinity hierarchy

Connell (2005:76) notes that men amongst themselves are positioned differently on the patriarchal societal rung and he gives four levels of masculine privilege which are hegemonic, complicitous, subordinated and marginalized. This is further substantiated by Lindsay and Miescher's (2003:6) assertion that '…masculinity can take varying forms.' Ouzgane and Morrell (2005:7) also point out that their conception of African men departs from a position of diversity. Muchemwa and Muponde (2007: xvi) come in to challenge the dominant approaches that tend to standardize Zimbabwean masculinities. From all these scholars what echoes are notable developments in the study of gender and of masculinities in particular. One of these developments is a departure from an approach to gender studies where men seldom formed the focus of discussion.

Lindsay and Miescher (2003:1) observe that the focus of gender studies in Africa has often been on women with an assumed presence of a male subject "…serving as a backdrop in the examination of women's experiences." Another notable development even across the racial divide is the acknowledgement of men's diversity where they have often been perceived as homogenous and all privileged. This development implies that an understanding of masculinities can no longer be limited to the relations between men and women but extends to the social relations amongst men themselves as individuals and collectives and those amongst women as individuals and as collectives and how they affect men's experiences and definition of themselves.

In advancing the case for interrogating gender relations among men, Connell (2005:76) brings to light four categories of masculine hierarchy. These are hegemonic, complicitous, marginalized and subordinated masculinities. His categorizations bring in a pertinent paradigm that recognizes that although patriarchy is premised on man's subordination of women, individual men within the male collective benefit differently from its dividends. Men occupy different positions along the patriarchal rung whose zenith is habited by hegemonic masculinity. He defines hegemonic masculinity as the culturally exalted masculinity in a given place and time. A key observation concerning hegemonic masculinity is that it "is not a fixed character type, always and everywhere the same. It is, rather, the masculinity that occupies the hegemonic position in a given pattern of gender relations, a position always contestable." Of note however is that hegemony is concerned with cultural dominance in society as a whole, for example the heterosexual masculinities dominance. This implies that a form of masculinity that may be perceived as culturally exalted in one context may be disdained in another. This observation by Connell is validated in Harries (1994) study of homosexuality, termed *bukhontxana* amongst

migrant laborers in Mozambique and South Africa. I will venture into this in detail   in the next section in my personal critique of Connell's model. Meanwhile I conclude this section with a look at the three other levels of masculine hierarchy.

Complicitous masculinities refer to men who benefit from the patriarchal dividend without necessarily practicing hegemonic masculinity in its entirety. Marginalised masculinities are excluded from a greater part of the patriarchal dividends although here and there they may benefit from the patriarchal dividend. Marginalized masculinities are evident at points for example where gender intersects with race. Black men for example are marginalized on the basis of their skin colour within white masculinity hegemony yet may still benefit from the general privileges that accrue to men within the broader patriarchal realm. Located at the bottom of the masculinities hierarchy are   subordinated masculinities whose gender practices espouse all that is abhorred by hegemonic masculinities for example homosexual practices.

1.7.4 Connell's hierarchy and the crisis of masculinity

Connell's (2005:76) hierarchy of masculinities confirms that masculinity has always been in crisis, with the changes brought about by post-modernity only serving to deepen this crisis and placing it under scrutiny. My premise begins from the basic fact that patriarchal ideology has operated on a principle of homogenizing men who after all are positioned to benefit differently from its dividends. Connell makes a pertinent contribution in terms of deconstructing the grand narrative of the uniformity, permanence and invincibility of patriarchy as an ideology solely premised on women subordination and masculine privilege. Connell (2005:76) defines hegemonic masculinity as:

> the culturally exalted masculinity in a given place and time…not a fixed character type, always and everywhere the same. It is, rather, the masculinity that occupies the hegemonic position in a given pattern of gender relations, a position always contestable.

This definition reveals how even the normative masculine ideal male subject position is unstable and a function of the broader cultural practices from one context to another. Connell's observations become more intriguing when read in conversation with Harries' (1994) studies of homosexuality amongst migrant laborers in Mozambique and South Africa where Harries aptly exemplifies and validates the contestability of any given hegemonic masculine ideal.

Harries (1994:200) reveals, through the cultural microcosm of the mining community that homosexuality occupied a hegemonic position in spite of the reality of its subordinated and marginalized status within the broader heterosexual communities from which the laborers came from. Harries, in his analysis of sex and gender points out that *ubukhontxana, homosexuality* or mine marriages seem to have developed amongst Mozambican workers in the early twentieth century. These were intergenerational, impermanent sexual relationships amongst older mine workers and young boys who worked in the mines. Within the mining community these homosexual relations occupied a hegemonic positions judging from Harries' observations that they were readily accepted and engaged in by the majority of miners, simply spoken of with laughter as 'a way of life on the mines…a mine activity.' Whether homosexuality was a product of enforced celibacy within the mines or merely a symptom of brutalized existence or ties of affection, Harries' studies bring in the important paradigm that there is nothing natural or universal about male superiority versus subordinated women subjectivities. It emphasizes that masculinities are socially constructed and negotiated identities and not given or cast in stone as patriarchal ideology has had us believe since time immemorial.

Harries (ibid: 204) notes that *bukhontxana* was primarily a gendered performance of power and whose relations were structured along the lines of gender relations back home. Within

the mine, the *nkhontxana* as the subordinated homosexual partner played a role similar to that of women as he:

> would also wash and iron the clothes of his *nuna* (husband), clean his shoes, prepare his tea and make his bunk. They sometimes wore women's cosmetic oils, greeted their husbands by clapping hands in the manner of women, and, at feasts, were presented with the soft meat generally saved for women.

By occupying positions reserved for women within the heterosexual patriarchal stage, they symbolically buttressed their female role in these gender relationships yet at the same time this position was, within the mine, "a channel for the acquisition of status and power."(ibid: 206) So this homosexuality was not only a kind of rite of passage within the mines but also a negotiation of power and privilege for the boys who participated in it, albeit from a subordinated subject position. Homosexuality within these mining communities was the hegemonic masculine ideal and apparently 'those who did not practice it were likely to remain lashers, shovelling ore all their lives.' (ibid: 205)

Masculinity therefore as a form of identity is fluid as evidenced by the fact that the powerless, subordinated and marginalized *nkhontxana* easily negotiated the divide to emerge as the powerful heterosexual husband back home where he took a wife with whom he could openly engage in sexual relations. I argue that these 'homosexual men' negotiated a bi-sexual existence that confirms a very fine line between Connell's levels of hierarchy, especially between the hegemonic and subordinated/marginalized masculinities. It also points to the intricate ways in which subordinated or marginalized masculinities still espouse hegemonic masculinities.

Connell believes that homosexuality's symbolic blurring with femininity is what has led to homosexuality's violent subordination on which I would like to differ. I believe the violent subordination of homosexuality is mainly rooted in the fact that homosexuality and not women's empowerment as has been assumed, presents the greatest threat to patriarchy and hetero-

masculinity. It essentially destabilizes the core of patriarchy as an ideology driven by men's subordination of women as men now occupy that space that has ever been reserved for the woman hence justifying her subordinated role. Homosexuality takes the subjective physiological woman out of the matrix as physiological men adopt and play the social role of women as wives or girlfriends as Harries has shown, setting patriarchy into confusion. Even in modern day homosexuality some of these "women in men's bodies" evidently depict effeminate attributes like speaking with a feminine tone, manicuring their nails, walking with a womanly gait and some even adorn themselves and dress like women. Some of these "women" in these relationships, upon marriage even go on to change from their maiden to their "husband's" names as often happens in heterosexual marriages. Homosexuality may be perceived as a scenario where men commit themselves to a subordinate position that patriarchy has reserved for women. Overall, Connell's model provides a useful lens for interrogating the multiplicity of male subjectivities and resonates with postcolonial theory when it comes to Bhabha's (2005) observations on hybridity. I believe it is within these interstices that the most intricate, often overlooked attributes of masculinities play out, some of them even resulting from "unconscious social relations of dominance that are intertwined with sexuality" (Harries pg. 205)

It is even more helpful in analyzing masculinities in migrant spaces where masculinities are shaped by cross-cultural life experiences such as revealed in Chikwava's *Harare North* (2009). The normative African men displaced by economic instabilities move from spaces where, it is assumed he has enjoyed a monopoly of hegemony, subordinating other masculinities, to othered spaces where they become the *other* as gender and race intersect to their marginalization. Connell's model therefore is helpful in understanding the unique ways in which

migrant men negotiate the masculine hierarchy in new spaces with conflicting cultural expectations of masculinity.

In conclusion, I would reduce Connell's model to two categorizations within a majority of African patriarchal contexts i.e. the hegemonic and the rest fall within the subordinated category. I believe within rigid African patriarchies anything that does not fall within the hegemonic normative masculine ideal is subordinated and therefore marginalized. It's either one is a man who espouses the normative ideal or they are not. Some of the distinctions Connell makes pale into insignificance within rigid African patriarchies.

1.8 Chapter Delineation

This dissertation is divided into five chapters, ordered as follows:

1.8.1 Chapter One: Introduction

This chapter has entrenched the study of masculinities within the Zimbabwean contextual background and in the process given the parameters of the study in terms of its significance and theoretical framework. Importantly it has reviewed pertinent literature to the study of masculinities in which men's diversity of experiences have been explored. I go on here to outline the forthcoming chapter demarcations.

1.8.2 Chapter Two: "*If this is a man*": Masculinities in contexts of degeneration. The case of Valerie Tagwira's *The Uncertainty of Hope* (2006)

This chapter will look at how a) increasing poverty and deprivation has compromised the positive masculinity stereotype ideal and how b) HIV and AIDS have deconstructed the macho imagining of the male body. It will also examine masculine roles of responsibility that

characterize the roles of fathers, husbands, sons and brothers among others through the lens of everyday existence-e.g. representations of fatherhood or constructions of masculinity through the daily meal on the table and the whole essence of provision for the family.

1.8.3 Chapter Three: Women's rise and the aggravation of the masculinity crisis in Nyota *et al's Hunting in foreign lands* (2010).

This chapter, which seeks to show that masculinities are performances beyond the male body, focuses on the representations of masculinities in women's bodies, also termed feminine masculinities. It deliberately focuses on those women who rise up to fulfil normative masculine expectations and boldly engage in risky pursuits as they seek to provide for families and how this displaces men from authority.

1.8.4 Chapter Four: Masculinities in nationalist and migration turbulence in Brian Chikwava's *Harare North* (2009).

This chapter will look at the construction of masculinities within the violent patriarchy of Zimbabwe's post-independence nationalism of the 3rd Chimurenga. In the process the menacing national level masculinities and their bearing on individual men and their anxieties under state terror and exile shall be interrogated. The chapter will specifically analyze nationalism as mobilization of masculine attributes, men in flight and their negotiations of masculinity from exiled spaces, and the feminization of migrant labour and men's precarious positioning.

1.8.5 Chapter Five: Conclusion

Drawing from the texts under study, this chapter contemplates the prospects of a new gender order characterized by newer masculine hegemonies and shifts in patriarchal ideology.

1.9 Conclusion

This chapter has provided a comprehensive introduction of the study by locating it within the Zimbabwean socio-political context, outlining the statement of the problem, the significance of the study, its aims and objectives as well as the study design and methodology. The theoretical and conceptual framework covered the relevance of postcolonial theory as well as social constructionism. Importantly, this chapter reviewed related literature which began by conceptualizing representation and, among key scholars on masculinity drew from key local proponents for the study of masculinity such as Muchemwa and Muponde. I also interrogated Connell's (2005) concept of the hierarchy of masculinities in conversation with other scholars such as Harries (1994) and ended by delineating the forthcoming chapters. In the forthcoming chapters I engage in the interrogation of the fictional representations of the constructions of masculinities.

Chapter Two

"*If this is a man"*: Masculinities in contexts of dis-ease and degeneration in Valerie Tagwira's *The Uncertainty of Hope* (2006).

2.0 Introduction

This chapter interrogates the representation of masculinities in crisis in Tagwira's *The Uncertainty of Hope*(2006).Framed within the lens of dis-ease and degeneration, I look at how Zimbabwe's post year 2000 socio-economic and political upheavals, characterized by, among other developments, hyperinflation, basic commodities scarcity on the local markets and hustling as a means of livelihood redefine what it means to be a man. This is also a period in which state onslaught against citizens took varied forms, with Operation Murambatsvina being one of the major destabilizing exercises which resulted in the overnight destruction of people's sources of their livelihoods and homes. High unemployment also resulted in the fragmentation of the family due to an increase in out-migration as both men and women sought alternative survival strategies in secure economies beyond Zimbabwe's borders. All these developments and their accompanying pressures destabilized the perceivably "settled" nature of male identity by disrupting men's traditional roles and self-constitution as household heads, providers and protectors hence necessitating a brutal review of their essentialist conceptions of themselves.

Already trapped within the marginality of the vicious cycle of urban poverty and violence characteristic of inner cities or Ghettos, the broader Harare and particularly Mbare setting of the novel enables Tagwira to vividly apprehend the suffering of the urban and ghetto poor. The ghetto poor are an already vulnerable and marginalized strata of urban society often subject to prejudice and discrimination, lacking in skills and qualifications and subjected to lowly paid jobs, without job security and often unemployed.

As this discussion will reveal, some men like Gari withdraw and abandon all effort to conform to normative masculinity expectations. Gari and Comrade Hondo for example break because they fail to "bend" in the face of unmet hopes amid circumstances beyond their control that have dislodged them from the ability to control their families and their destiny. Their physical death exhibits a weakened immunity and hence failure to re-imagine alternative ideals of being a man in a changing world.

However, through men   like John and Mr. Nzou who engage in risky, criminal and corrupt activities just to get by, even to their detriment, Tagwira calls for   men with agency; the proactive risk-takers in the midst of the crisis who confirm that masculinity is a tactical game of negotiation within which individuals have to take risks and adapt by possessing a masculinity model for every situation.

It is these varied strands of masculinity and its diseased state that I focus on here. I begin by briefly looking at the entwined relationship between man and nation, and then move the cursor to   the fragmentation, insecurity and paranoia that constitute the portrait of a struggling father and husband. The third aspect of this discussion analyses the war veteran strand of masculinity and its instability more than twenty years after the attainment of independence. Lastly I entrench my analysis within Javangwe's (2013) innovative conceptualizations where I look at crime, corruption and HIV and AIDS as reflections of diseased masculinities and a diseased nation.

2.1   Man and nation in crisis

As a post-colonial novel, Tagwira's *The Uncertainty of Hope* (2006) emerges more than two decades after the attainment of Zimbabwe's independence to place, among others, the

dominant discourse of normative masculinity under examination, revealing how men have been destabilized by socio-economic and political changes. Tiffin (1987: 95-96) notes that post-colonial literature is driven by a focus beyond essentialist boundaries and that it gives counter-discourses that "expose and erode those of the dominant discourse…".Tagwira explores the entangled relationship between man and nation as being in an   unhealthy state of crisis, with their grand narratives subject to question within a deteriorating socio-economic and political context. Tagwira's Harare and Mbare settings of the novel are a microcosm of a diseased nation and masculinity battling with unmet promises of both the liberation struggle and normative masculine ideals, yet unwilling and sometimes unable to urgently recant and reconstruct them in order to retain their potency in the long term. Tagwira subjects the male body to visuality and scrutiny and intensely shows how an obsession with fragile and empty ideals of nationalism and normative masculinity become individual men's and the postcolonial nation's undoing.

In the same way that the nation has failed to deliver on the promises of the liberation struggle as already hinted in the introductory chapter, individual men find themselves in uncertain circumstances that constrain them from fulfilling their normative responsibilities. Tagwira shows how each brand of masculinity is a response to social circumstances and while all men are assumed to benefit from patriarchal privilege, some occupy marginal positions hence the plural negotiation strategies. Connell (2005:71) notes that "Essentialist definitions usually pick a feature that defines the core of the masculine, and hand an account of man's lives on that." yet reality projects a very different picture. In the same vein, Burr (2006:100) argues in her analysis on positions and subjectivity   that "Some subject positions are more temporary or even fleeting, and thus "'who we are' is constantly in flux, always dependent upon the changing flow of positions we negotiate within social interaction."

Tagwira represents wide-ranging models of masculinities that confirm men's unequal positioning under the hierarchical shadow of the "Big Man" masculinity of the nation, metaphorically represented by social structures, institutions and power relations. She also reveals the ambivalence and instability of the male identity. Individual masculine subjects occupy in-between-spaces within which they espouse hybrid identities that they tactfully deploy as they go. It is evident that like all identities, masculinities are, as observed by Hall (1996:4):

> … never unified and, in late modern times, increasingly fragmented and fractured; never but multiply constructed across different, often intersecting and antagonistic discourses, practices and positions. They are subject to a radical historicization and are constantly in the process of change and transformation.

These changes and transformations are a product of men's conscious review of previously held, homogenizing and hegemonic notions of masculinity.

Men's precarious and unequal positioning on the patriarchal hierarchy confirms their victimhood, so often overlooked, but also the plurality of their experiences in their individual efforts to affirm their male identity and quest for self, family and community survival. Tagwira's diverse ideals of masculine identity reveal the fluidity and fragmentation of masculinity as much as they reveal the fragmentations within the national imaginary. In the next section I focus on masculine fragmentation, insecurity and paranoia as Tagwira represents it through Gari and Comrade Hondo.

2. 1.1 A Portrait of the burden of manhood: Fragmentation, insecurity and paranoia

Upon Gari's body and psyche Tagwira inscribes the difficulties of the Zimbabwean men at the height of the Zimbabwean crisis. Gari's efforts and failures reveal how the materiality of the male identity, particularly that of father and husband, places even greater pressure upon men in times of danger, deepening poverty and deprivation. Tagwira reveals how, because fatherhood and husband-hood go beyond the definition of masculinity as mere virility, men become the most vulnerable as their identity status is directly tied to their occupational and social roles which are themselves dependent on the stability of the macro-economic politics of community and nation. Fatherhood and husband hood are synonymous with a regulatory presence, a job, finances, a house/home and food among other aspects of provision for the family. There is a forfeiture of these authorizing roles in the face of absence, homelessness, increasing crime, unemployment, job insecurity, low wages and retrenchments that are heightened during the crisis.

Gari is a physically and emotionally absent husband who spells only terror for his family. Muchemwa and Muponde (2010: xviii) observe that "Absence, literally and figuratively, is about the forced retreat of the male body from various sites of visuality and authority" The novel opens with his wife Onai swearing in frustration at his physical absence from the family home that leaves them defenceless in the advent of an attack by robbers:

> As she became more alert, she thought again with a sinking feeling that her husband had not yet come home. The absence of loud snores and a pleasant freedom from the stench of alcohol infused breath told their own story. But still she strained her sleep heavy eyes in the gloom and reached a tentative arm across the bed. She made contact with nothing, which confirmed her anxiety Where was he? (Page 1)

Absent from the role of protecting the family, Gari's authority as husband and father is placed under the spotlight and questioned audibly by Ruva,the daughter who further questions the mother "*Amai,*where is *Baba*? Look at the time. Its three o'clock, *Amai!* He should have been here to protect us .Why isn't he here?" (Page 4) Upon arrival, Gari evades accounting for his absence through redirecting the blame for the burglary to his wife and physically violating her. From Ruva's searing questioning of her father's absence to Katy and Onai's psycho-analysis of Gari's violence, Tagwira draws our empathy by showing how burdening instead of empowering the role of provider is for the majority of men.

However, in spite of his depiction as a failure, Gari does fulfil some of society's expectations of normative masculinity. He is married, has started a family, has a job and, as he claims, ensures provision of accommodation for his family. Although, as Katy argues, Gari has always been violent for years, through Onai Tagwira makes an empathetic plea on behalf of multitudes of men who, already disempowered by inner city poverty, are dislodged and therefore transformed or reconstructed by the socio economic crisis and are internally battling an uncertain future. Onai reveals for example, that Gari is battling with job insecurity as his company faces closure. Gari lives up to the ideal of normative masculinity by putting up a façade of masculine strength and control. He speaks forcefully to his workmate Silas "Cheer up Silas! *Tirivarume,* we are men. We must not panic like a bunch of women. We will face the problems when they come. No use worrying now..." (Page 36-37).However his interior monologues as he shifts the focus of their conversation reveal otherwise:

> He'd lost interest in both the conversation and in his half-smoked cigarette, which he snubbed out fiercely and placed back in the packet. This kind of talk was too depressing. The whole thing was an outright threat to his manhood. What would happen to him if he stopped earning a regular salary? (Page 37)

Like all men, Gari's role and authority as a father, husband and provider are intricately tied to his employment status and it is to be understood why job insecurity destabilizes him. The violence that characterizes the relationship with his wife is partly rooted in compensatory behavior for his failure to openly acknowledge his struggles. As a man he lacks courage and willpower and proves irrational in the face of the turbulence brought about by the complicated national socio-economic set up of female providers and dependent husbands. Openly acknowledging that he is struggling may free Gari's conscience and improve his relationship with his loving and empathetic wife who remains committed to their life together in spite of his evident dispensability. He is evidently dispensable as husband and provider as Onai is starved of conjugal intimacy and is after all   the principal provider of the family. Tagwira privileges the reader into the troubled conscience and desperate survival strategies of a guilty man who has not provided mealie-meal in a whole year, and yet has, each day, arrived home to not only demand but find a meal on his table:

> On his arrival, his children immediately fled from the sitting room and disappeared into the kitchen. He did not mind. The less he saw of them, the better. Every time he looked into their eyes, he sensed accusation. He hated the feeling, because he was not doing anything wrong. He had grown up with a father who was hardly home, but he had turned out alright.So why did they give him such accusing glances. (147-148)

Gari here represents the peak of masculine paranoia, its rigidity in the face of change and failure. He engenders fear as evidenced by his children's flight from his presence. His children avoid him and their lives are separated by a huge emotional gap. Gari occupies an ambiguous space where normative masculinity has socialized him and other men not to confront their emotions or to acknowledge their struggles and failures. He attempts, in vain, to uphold an authoritative posture within a family he has failed to provide for and hence constantly evades demands from his wife Onai by retorting   violently "Do you ever listen to what I say? I've told you many times

that our duties are clear-cut. I provide accommodation and you do the rest. Now stop bothering me. I'm going out for beer." (Page176).However in spite of his acknowledgement that he only caters for accommodation, he still unreasonably goes on to complain when his wife gives the vagrant Mawaya some food:

> Shut up! What do you know about him being harmless? Is he your boyfriend, then? Feeding beggars with my food! Am I Father Christmas? You complain about groceries, yet you give away my food to beggars! How dare you? He raised his arm again (page 90)

As already revealed, in order not to confront his crisis in masculinity he attempts to evade this visibility and scrutiny by resorting to violence, sinking in alcoholism and smoking, engaging in reckless sexual behavior, playing truant, all to his detriment. His paranoia with accusing his wife of an imagined infidelity, an infidelity he is very well aware exists only as a figment of his imagination, is evidence of his struggle to accept himself as a man due to a fear of his inadequacy as a man, husband and father.

Subtly he acknowledges that his wife and children deserve a worthier man who will treat them with the respect they deserve. Given this fragmentation within Gari and his painful realization that he is not worthy of her, it is no wonder he is irrational to a point where he perceives every man as a potential suitor for Onai. From the burglars who steal their television set in his absence to the phony vagrant Mawaya who comes begging for food, all Gari sees are men threatening to unseat him from his position as Onai's husband. Gari proves beyond doubt that the very quest to remain a man becomes men's greatest burden, a threat to their mental stability. Masculinity is shown to be an ambiguous adventure, where the source of its power is the very source of its disempowerment.

In the next section I look at Tagwira's representations of the "liberation war veteran" masculinity and its ambiguous positioning in post-independence Zimbabwe.

2.1.2 Handcuffs, baton sticks, teargas canisters and black boots: The post-colonial masculinity crisis

Chapter 4 of this study advances that nationalisms are in essence the mobilization of masculine attributes and as McClintock (1996), quoting Enloe notes, have been conceived from masculine memory, hopes and humiliations. Saved by the liberation struggle from the oppressive, hegemonic masculinity of white supremacy, the citizens find themselves haunted, humiliated and brutalized by an equally menacing fellow black masculinity post attainment of independence. Tagwira apprehends this irony in her representations of Operation Murambatsvina, a systematic, violent campaign yet again made possible through mobilization of masculine attributes, only this time not for citizen liberation. She brings to light the overbearing presence of the Big Man, powered by clients who themselves are feminized, and while seemingly powerful in one context, in reality they are disempowered and operate within unstable levels of power and powerlessness. The riot police represent this brand of masculinity as they administer operation Murambatsvina. Tagwira states that one of them:

> …swung a pair of handcuffs as if to emphasize the point. A few other riot policemen in semi-military attire, armed with baton sticks and teargas canisters, preened and paraded their weaponry before the traders. Their shining black boots gleamed menacingly in the wintry sun. Handcuffs dangled carelessly from their waists, overt symbols of their supremacy. Their whole demeanor hinted at restrained savagery. (Page 131)

In spite of their powerful demeanor, the riot police like all other coercive arms of the state are in reality a disempowered feminized lot that constitutes the clients of the Big Man. Their behavior, as I observe in chapter four, is a mark of successfully disciplining and transforming the male

body to effectively function as an instrument of surveillance and violence as aptly observed by Muchemwa and Muponde (2007:xviii). Through this riot, an extension of the arm of liberation fighters now in power, Tagwira represents vividly the post-colonial masculinity crisis as it plays out more than two decades after the attainment of independence. She focalizes the impact of this emasculating experience, not on an ordinary citizen but a liberation war veteran in the form of Comrade Hondo. This is significant, affording the reader to place this strand of masculinity under examination in order to show how brutal the post colony has become upon its own. The reader first encounters Comrade Hondo through Onai:

> The man's real name was Mr. Ngozo but everyone called him Hondo because he had fought in the same war of liberation. His war-veteran status had earned him respect in their community, and his warm personality had endeared him to many. A big muscular man, Hondo was pushing a cart full of luggage; his small wife had an outsized satchel on her back. (Page 85)

Comrade Hondo represents the cracks within the national imaginary as he stands as the sorry symbol of those men who have been emasculated by their fellow colleagues with whom they fought as comrades in arms to liberate their country. After fighting for the liberation of his country Comrade Hondo lives a life on the margins as a petty trader. Tagwira however affords him a voice from that marginality in order to hit out at the conscience of a nation whose power dynamics have shifted, resulting in a hierarchy of heroism upon whose lowest tier Comrade Hondo struggles to remain relevant. Cde. Hondo's experiences espouse the disillusionment of many citizens who have become disenchanted with the failures of nationalism to deliver material transformation for them. When the riot police, likely constituted of a majority of male youths who have come to be known as the "born-free generation" descend upon his home during their Operation Murambatsvina rounds, Comrade Hondo learns the hard way that the national cliché

of having "…fought in the war to liberate the country from the British" (page 149) cannot save him and his dwelling:

> You don't understand what I'm saying, do you? I said, I fought for this country. I said, I risked my life for this country. Is this the reward that I get? Who are you to come here and destroy my home? My house has been standing like this for more than ten years. I built it with my war veteran pay-out. Why do you want to see the plan now? You can go to hell… (Page 150)

His shacks are torched and his house extension bulldozed despite his desperate masculine risk action of going up the roof of his house and performance of the liberation war military masculinity through popular dance and war song about the blood that was spilt to save the country. His threats to shoot while swearing by the graves of his dead comrades and accusing the riot police of being British puppets all confirm how his once powerful masculinity as a liberation fighter can no longer be sustained by this empty rhetoric. Empty nationalist rhetoric cannot sustain hungry and jobless citizens the same way empty masculine rhetoric cannot place food on the family table. It is the disenchantment that led to the 1998 food riots as much as it leads to Gari's daughter Ruva's subtle rebellion against her father's supposed authority in the midst of his apparent failures.

In spite of Comrade Hondo's senior masculine status by virtue of his age and being a war veteran, he is feminized by an even more senior national level masculinity represented through the riot police, at whose core, as I note in Chapter Four is sexual violence and domination of women and in this case, of other men. I note in Chapter Four how the rifle for example as a tool of the nationalist struggle is, according to Muchemwa and Muponde (2014:13) "an extension of the penis or a prosthetic phallus" and it is, yet again used to feminize Comrade Hondo and beat him into submission. Like a woman he is reduced to "loud, heart rending howls"

and publicly emasculated and due to the humiliation he commits suicide. His mangled body is discovered the next morning on the railway tracks by children walking to school, sliced across his torso and abdomen by train wheels (Page 152). Suicide marks the peak of individual disempowerment and in this case reveals the zenith of male helplessness. Chikwava's 's *Harare North*(2009) also makes reference to how suicide becomes an escape route when some men feel helpless when his fugitive narrator echoes "I don't want Shingi to end up becoming one of them people we read about in the papers being found floating with broken umbrellas and dead ducks in River Thames"(page 77)

Although Cde Hondo' end is tragic, Tagwira leaves it to the reader's imagination to lampoon or empathize with the fate of former liberation fighters like Comrade Hondo who now inhabit an ambivalent space and represent a near obsolete masculinity. She also shows the destabilization of the binaries that drove the liberation war rhetoric as reclamation of African masculinities of the oppressed black versus white oppressor, and how it is now a fragile empty shell in the midst of an economic crisis and black on black violence. Comrade Hondo's experience is a plea for space for alternative voices in the post colony, voices of those now disenchanted with a nationalism that has failed to deliver a stable economy, jobs and material transformation for its citizens.

In the next section I expand on the concept of degeneration by analyzing   the failure of both national and male identity within the framework of disease in both its literal and metaphorical sense.

2.2 Diseased masculinities and the nation: Crime, corruption and HIV and AIDS

"Even the most honest of men may turn to crime when his children are continually crying of hunger" **Dr. Eric Bloch 2006**

In *The Uncertainty of Hope* (2006) Tagwira represents a diseased society. My discussion in this section is premised upon Javangwe's (2013:186) innovative analysis and observations of how the metaphor of disease plays out in subtle ways and at varying levels. He notes, among other key observations, that "…the society that is driven by patriarchal values is sick at the very core to the extent where it prejudices the weak and vulnerable amidst it." Analyzed in this context, Tagwira represents a diseased society whose exercise of masculinity proves selfish and predatory, bent on preying upon the society's weak and vulnerable. The gang of burglars preys upon families in the thick of the night. The government reduces human life to "dirt" and through its security forces kills instead of secure the livelihoods and needs of its poor and vulnerable citizens. Tagwira gives a glimpse of the inhumane treatment suffered by vendors during Operation Murambatsvina:

> Youthful officers nicknamed the 'Bike Brigade' were the most feared .Stories were told of how aggressively they cycled after vending mothers, especially those with produce on their heads and crying babies strapped to their backs. The enthusiastic officers had obviously no patience with such brazen disregard for the law. (Page 180)

This is in spite of the disregard for the rule of law that has become institutionalized among high ranking police officials as this discussion will reveal. In addition to this, HIV and AIDS also take their toll on citizens who have no access to sufficient and timely medication and treatment. The citizens themselves vacillate between states of predator and victim as they utilize whatever available opportunity to prey upon each other in pursuit of self-interests.

Simply put, a society driven by individual gratification and not the community good for all is a diseased and degenerating one. It is within this degeneration that the paradoxes of masculinity best emerge. I will employ both the literal and metaphorical meanings of disease in my analysis of Tagwira's representations of masculinities in which she reveals how male identity enmeshes with that of the nation in a morbid state of insecurity, contamination and degeneration. Disease in this discussion therefore is used in reference to any state of denial, inhumanity, lack of empathy and generosity of spirit, un-easiness, fear, uncertainty, insecurity, contamination, infection, deprivation, feminization and physical weakness or ill-health and death.

2.2.1 Masculinity paradox: Denial, Crime and Corruption

Firstly, Tagwira brings to light that the patriarchal society's greatest and most fatal disease is its continued existence in denial mode. Normative or hegemonic masculinity's greatest paradox is how it thrives on denial, especially of its fallibility. Gari has failed as a husband and father yet still wants to enjoy the fruits of its authority. The government is in denial that after more than two decades in power it has failed its citizens whose bellies cannot be filled by the now barren liberation rhetoric. Like normative masculinity which relies on violence in a bid to sustain itself, the Big Man masculinity of the ruling elite relies on military coercion of citizens through green bombers as revealed in Chikwava's *Harare North* (2009) in order to continue pushing this grand narrative down the citizens' throats. It is driven by a schizophrenic masculinity that continues to blame the British and white imperialist forces even for the harm that it inflicts upon its very own citizens.

This state of dis/ease, conspicuous at various levels plays out in various ways through risky masculine behavior that shapes the   burglary and thefts, the domestic and political, national level violence, institutionalized corruption and reckless sexual behavior and HIV and AIDS among other issues.

As already noted earlier, Tagwira begins the novel by introducing the reader to a family that is in a state of unease and insecurity as the father and supposed protector is absent when burglars strike. However through the daughter the reader learns that his presence does not make a difference as he would have been too drunk to protect the family. This family's state of uneasiness is a microcosm of the uneasiness within the nation. Like Gari's family, the nation's citizens are vulnerable to a leadership or National Fatherhood that is obsessed with regime security and has failed to offer solutions for the declining economy. When Onai's market stall is destroyed and vending deemed illegal in the advent of Operation Murambatsvina, the children are compelled to take the risk and go vending. Gari's failure as a father is manifest in Onai's lamentations "And why couldn't Gari be a responsible husband and father? It wasn't right that her children had to go out peddling on the streets like orphans, when they had a father who should have been looking after them."(Page 198)

 In the same way that Gari's children are compelled to go vending and fending for the family, children in the Zimbabwean national household are pushed beyond their boarders as explored in chapter three and four of this study, when they have to seek work in cities like Johannesburg and London. Tagwira points to this as well when she notes through Onai that "Nowadays, the status of most families hinged on who had the greatest number of relatives

abroad, and who received gifts and money from them. '*Tine mudiaspora* in the family 'had become a declaration of well-being" (Page 223)

Onai realizes that when her daughter Rita goes vending her life is opened up to sexual abuse and Onai is sickened by the response from the men when she goes searching for her "No we haven't seen her .But if you find her ,please send her this way, will you? She's a very beautiful girl .I wouldn't mind her keeping me warm tonight. The nights are cold out here…" (Page198) It is a diseased nation of diseased men who only see girls and women as tools for sexual gratification, when the very men should be protecting them from harm. Onai later discovers that the poor girl's breasts were squeezed and fondled. Like the nation's citizens, at a household level children suffer because of a fatherhood that has also been failed and disempowered by the Big Man or the national fatherhood. Like Rita, Zimbabwean citizens are subjected to dehumanizing treatment beyond their boarders and are compelled to engage in crime and corruption as well as sexually reckless behavior as they seek a living. Both at personal and national level presides   a diseased, impotent fatherhood whose presence is marked by brutality through domestic violence and Operation Murambatsvina.

Like Gari's family that lives in fear of the father, the citizens live in fear of their leadership whose policies and their implementation subjects them to further vulnerability. The residents of Mbare, already trapped in poverty are further made vulnerable through operation Murambatsvina that destroys their various means of livelihood as their market stalls and home extensions are destroyed in the name of cleansing the urban space. This notion of cleansing reflects an inhuman and un-empathetic diseased national leadership psyche that perceives of

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humans as dirt or trash to be cleansed, a lack of regard for human life. Javangwe's (2013:192)

drawing from Mhiripiri (2008) notes:

> …official insensitivity to the welfare and dignity of the people with reference to how Operation Murambatsvina effectively trashed the urban vulnerable in the name of cleansing the city space and restoring order…

There is a reduction of humans and their existential needs to "dirt" that must be purged even if it

costs lives. This operation's reality masks a denial and punishment of the citizen's protest votes

necessitated by the economic challenges and dissatisfaction with a leadership that has failed to

deliver years after independence. As observed in chapter four, this operation is an othering

process (Said 1979) as the urban populace is homogenized into a collective identity of opposition

party supporters ,what Chikwava(2009) defines as enemies of the state bent on regime change

and therefore deserving of official punishment. While women and children undoubtedly suffer,

men are also shown to suffer even greater vulnerability as their social status as husbands is

eroded together with the decline of the economy when Operation Murambatsvina strikes. Men

here are forced to engage in risky behavior in order to be able to continue providing for their

families. Comrade Hondo's suicide is an indicator of male powerlessness. Due to their roles as

providers men crumble when their ability to provide is eroded.

Moments of crisis challenge the stability of masculine identity. Like an epidemic, crime

and corruption become an all-pervasive definer of masculinities in crisis. John best exemplifies

Dr. Eric Bloch's observation highlighted in the opening of this section when he laments at how

even the most upright of men may be compromised by hardship and the quest to provide for the

family. John, depicted all along as a stable personality and a good and honest man is forced to

fend for his family through illegal and dishonest means, firstly as a foreign currency dealer and

secondly as not only a human but specifically a prostitutes trafficker. John's negative transformation, although a sign of agency in a moment of crisis, is a good example of the social constructionist argument that personality is not stable and is subject to circumstances (Burr 2005). John represents those good men who become victims of economic decline and are pushed by circumstances to crime and corruption. Although he is a loving and responsible husband who, unlike Gari who sacrifices his children, makes a conscious decision to face the risks of provision himself, he negotiates a hybrid identity both as predator and victim in this masculine quest to provide and to particularly raise his daughter Faith's university fees. Like Chikwava's narrator who escapes to London in *Harare North* (2009), John is pushed to embark on a fugitive lifestyle in South Africa, a development which threatens to fragment his family and as Onai reveals, for the first time since she had known them she hears them quarrelling as John explains to Katy why and how he has become entangled in corruption and crime and has to flee:

> Everything I have ever done has been for you and Faith. We needed money for Faith's fees, to pay off the stand, to start building. Do you really think that working as a driver could give me the large sums required for foreign currency dealing? Where did you think I was getting all those dollars from? Or didn't you think at all? (Page 323)

Drawing from Muchemwa and Muponde (2007: xviii), John's experiences show how the country's unstable environment forces the retreat of the male body from the home and national arena,   its sites of visuality and of importance, its site of authority. John's experience confirms the burden of manhood and the dilemma that most men face in living up to the patriarchal expectation to provide against all odds**.**

Further to this, as a senior police officer, Mr. Nzou's plot to arrest John shows the Janus nature of the law of a diseased nation driven by high level, institutionalized corruption. In typical play of masculine obsession and recklessness in the exercise of power, Mr. Nzou engages in

illicit foreign currency deals, a brazen disregard for the law which his office is mandated to police and enforce. He uses his power to prey upon and even extorts desperate foreign currency dealers like John and Katy, very well aware that it is illegal. Tagwira's representations in this scene empower and give voice to the subalterns by ensuring that Mr. Nzou appends his signature upon every transaction. This comes in handy when he attempts to abuse his power by playing clean after plotting John's arrest. While John is relegated to the same disempowered level as his wife after his arrest, it is his wife Katy who exercises masculine boldness when she threatens Mr. Nzou:

> I'll leave you with just one thing to think about. Over the last six months, I have had six transactions with you. I have receipts signed by you, written with your own handwriting. Think about that. You know where to find me. (Page 321)

In a classic case of using the master's tools to bring down the master, Katy here "refuses to reduce herself to an Other" (Min Ha 1991:218) as she shifts   the power bar, appropriates Mr. Nzou's manipulative techniques and threatens him with exposure. She moves the centre of power and Mr. Nzou, now relegated to marginality, gives in and in another act of corruption commands his subordinates for John's immediate release. Katy's agency is significant in a number of ways. Firstly, successfully mediating between two masculine forces characterized by unequal power relations gives the subaltern woman a voice, indeed the subaltern can speak. Secondly she represents those "types of femininity that can negotiate patriarchal masculinities and nest within them rather comfortably" (Muchemwa and Muponde 2007: xvi). This emergence of newer and stronger woman-hoods particularly in moments of crisis is what I focus on in chapter three. Through Katy's actions Tagwira advances a counter discourse that subverts the notion of an all-powerful, invincible Mr. Nzou and other men, hence subversion of patriarchal ideology; police

as a coercive arm of the state and by extension the political leadership. There is a subversion of all these three stratas of power.

Tagwira seems to imply that corruption dons a masculine face. In another incident she reveals the diseased state of a nation in which every individual pursues personal gain at the expense of the weak and vulnerable. When Onai seeks to secure a stand for her family through Operation Garikayi she encounters Mr. Boora who proposes that in order for her to benefit they can come to a small understanding:

> Suddenly, Boora walked round the desk, and bending over her, wrapped his arms tightly around the upper half of her body and clutched her bosom. Onai froze with shock. She felt his hot breathe on her face. He smelt of cigarette smoke; acrid and overpowering, worse than Gari's cigarette's breath. Then his dry lips were crushing hers, his hands groping her lustfully, in places where she had not been touched in a very long time. (Page 292)

Mr. Boora, like Mr. Nzou reflects institutionalized   rot within the nation in which those entrusted with positions of authority abuse their power to exploit desperate citizens.

The masculinity paradox depicted in the foregoing discussion shows that men find themselves stuck within disempowering circumstances within which they sometimes have to harbor contradictory identities. Tagwira reveals how during the crisis even seemingly "good" and educated professionals find themselves compromised by the circumstances and compelled to act against their values by engaging in corrupt criminal undertakings. In other words, some of the men adopt masculinities best suited to the advancement of their interests at each given time as revealed by Mr. Nzou, Mr. Boora and John.

During this crisis period men engage in an equivalent of what Landau and Freemantle (2010:375), in their analysis of migrant identities in Johannesburg have termed tactical cosmopolitanism and describe as follows:

> …distinctive ways of negotiating inclusion and belonging that transcend ethnic, national or transnational paradigms. Confronted with new South African nationalism, a restrictive immigration regime and xenophobia, immigrants have reacted with what we term 'tactical cosmopolitanism' to negotiate partial inclusion in South Africa's transforming society without becoming bounded by it.

Indeed, the masculinity crisis demands that men engage in "tactical masculinity" by breaking and transcending various, sometimes even conflicting masculine identities,habouring them "in their pockets" in order to deploy a relevant one in each context as they go.

In the next section I briefly look at how, in addition to a failing economy HIV and AIDS serves to further dis-empower men.

2.2.2 The male body and the trap of sexual prowess

Although Tagwira does figure women who seemingly exercise a certain level of sexual power and freedom and use this to manipulate the men around them, she shows in various ways how sexual power still remains a predominantly male domain. Onai sacrifices her conjugal rights in fear of contracting sexually transmitted illnesses and contracting HIV from her sexually reckless husband. It is evident that she no longer shares an intimate life with her husband in her encounter of sexual violence with Mr. Boora, during which it is stated that Mr Boora "touched her in areas where she had not been touched in a long time."(Page 292) It remains unclear whether due to this deprivation of her conjugal rights she was almost tempted to "enjoy" this abusive experience. Katy on the other hand, on suspicions of her cross–border driver husband's infidelity takes the bold step of packing condoms for him on one of his trips. Katy's behavior

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confirms how society sanctions, expects and accepts male infidelity and sexual recklessness even when individual men like John make conscious and committed decisions to be sexually responsible and faithful. Katy packs condoms for her husband because of her conviction that since he meets numerous young women in his trips he should be prepared should temptation arise. These women's practical experiences reveal how HIV and AIDS have resulted in a gender crisis that has   rattled the social structure and social values, forcing new and sometimes "irrational rationalizations" such as Katy's .In this section I am interested in how illness and HIV and AIDS disrupt the normative figuring of the male body as one that exudes perpetual strength, ever potent with aggressive energy and self-reliant. In normative masculine terms the real man is one who exudes physical strength, is aggressive, stoic before pain and tribulation and unemotional.

In the fourth chapter of this study I allude to this concept of real men or *dodaism* as advanced by Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2009), which as a definer of manhood is an othering   notion of manhood premised upon the idea of a strong healthy man. Masculine attributes such as virility, sacrifice, audacity, ability to fight, valorization of war, manifestation of anger and preparedness kill all hinge on a strong healthy body. However, the eventual degeneration of the body that so often accompanies the physical dimensions of HIV and AIDS are more threatening than poverty to this hegemonic masculinity ideal that is dependent on male   physical strength and mental agility. Attree in Muchemwa and Muponde(2010:59) argues that "…part of the definition of a father figure relies on the identification of a son or daughter with a 'strong healthy man'…The male body is inextricably bound up with notions of masculinity and physical performance ,sexual or otherwise; the body provides the dominant foundation for the initial separation of the sexes."

HIV and AIDS have emerged to threaten hegemonic masculinity with absence, illness or death, reducing this notion of the strong healthy man to a myth.

What are the possibilities of remaining a real man, a provider and a protector of one's family when one's body becomes too weak to achieve even some of the simplest tasks and is now at the mercy, often of female caregivers? Tagwira, through Gari, toys around with her authorial privilege to reveal the uncertainty of this normative masculinity ideal which, apart from poverty, is disrupted by the advent of HIV and AIDS. She is seemingly deliberate in her projection of HIV and AIDS as some form of punishment not only for promiscuity in general but particularly for adultery and reckless male sexual behavior. It comes as no surprise therefore that she rewards Katy and of interest   Onai with an HIV negative status in spite of her husband's recklessness. The writer advances discursive justice for those perceived as sexually faithful by "tactfully protecting" them from contracting the virus while Gari and Sheila are punished with illness and eventual death. However, reality is not always this fair.

Tagwira, through Gari shows how, while sexual power is a patriarchal preserve for men, it's an ideal that in the post-modern age they pursue at their detriment. With HIV and AIDS as one of its consequences it becomes the root of their disempowerment and eventual death. In true normative masculine fashion, Gari's   life is driven by a reckless exercise of sexual prowess where he engages in a string of extra marital affairs as shown through his relationship with Sheila and Gloria. He poses the risk of sexually transmitted infections as well as the contraction of HIV and AIDS to his wife Onai. Tagwira's representation ensures we first meet Gari as a seemingly strong healthy man with a large frame and a burly physique. When he gets home after the robbery, Onai:

…looked at him incredulously, taking in his crumpled clothes .The front of his shirt was

emblazoned with bright red smudges. Lipstick!...His zip was undone and the edge of his shirt was offensively sticking out of the fly. She did not have to think too hard to imagine what he had been up to. (Page 8)

The writer deliberately foregrounds Gari's eventual degeneration with a focus on his alcoholism and reckless sexual behavior .The once large frame and burly body are reduced to a pitiful site as it is under attack not only from sexually transmitted disease but also from a suspected alcohol-related liver cirrhosis(page 226) .The male body is placed under brutal examination and contrary to the once arrogant, seemingly invincible body depicted above, Tagwira revels in the art of discursive punishment when she reveals that Gari, who had been so stubborn as to even deprive himself of access to his workplace medical aid:

> … looked so frail and vulnerable. His breathing was shallow and rapid. An oxygen mask covered the lower half of his face. He was hooked up to a blood transfusion and a second drip of clear fluid. It was difficult for Onai to believe that he was the same man who'd shown so much aggression less than twelve hours before. (Page 226)

The male body is thrown into an inevitable state of dependency. From aggression to a total state of immobility, no other condition seems to defy the normative definitions of masculinity as illness does. Where man has been socialized to be strong, not to cry or show emotion and to be stoic in the face of pain and tribulation, illness exposes masculine fallibility by placing the previously independent male body at the mercy of caregivers, oftentimes women. Illness overrides the grand narrative of the strong healthy man in ways that are humiliating to the men themselves.

The male vulnerability that Tagwira reveals through Gari manifests itself in multifaceted ways, both at individual and national leadership level. Yet again there emerges a diseased society of vulnerable male individuals who are as disillusioned and as driven by denial as their national leadership is. Through Kate for example we learn that for some men, in spite of the knowledge

on the risks of sexual recklessness, the cost is immaterial and HIV and AIDS to them is something that only happens to other people as they continue to pursue momentary pleasures.

At a national level there is evidence of a diseased fatherhood as the leadership invests in the demolition of dwellings and market stalls of its already vulnerable population instead of channelling resources to ensure access to treatment for its citizens. Sheila not only has to battle an un-empathetic community and employer who threatens to fire her because she has a cough. She has to wrestle with the Big Man masculinity of the health system that forces her to wait for months before she can access ARVS.Like the individual HIV positive man, the nation also exhibits a weak immunity and hence inability to protect its citizens from unnecessary deaths from HIV and AIDS related illnesses as much as it has failed to proffer a solution for the economic crisis. Given this state of disease and degeneration without any solutions in sight, this uncertain hope compels the citizens to look beyond Zimbabwe's borders for survival.

2.3 Conclusion

This section of the study focused on how *The Uncertainty of Hope's* (2006) representation of masculinities goes beyond essentialist notions by challenging traditional perceptions of both masculine and national identity. The novel is packaged as a counter discourse to long held perceptions of male power, privilege and superiority, all of which are subverted in moments of crisis. Tagwira's representations reveal the entwinement between male identity and that of the nation, which inevitably implies that the degeneration of a nation becomes synonymous with that of its men, seeing as nations are founded on masculine hopes, dreams and humiliations. I have drawn from postcolonial theory and social constructionism in order to show that masculinities like all other forms of identity are not static but subject to the social factors around them.

It has emerged that while masculinity is traditionally carved in homogenous terms, in reality it is more complex and plural hence it is more apt to talk of masculinities. *The Uncertainty of Hope* (2006) vividly reflects these complexities as it represents different strands of masculinities through various male characters who occupy varying, sometimes overlapping positions on the patriarchal hierarchy. Each brand of masculinity is a product of its positioning and the social circumstances that surround it. This study began by analyzing the representations of Gari who shows the dilemma that men face in fulfilling their roles as providers and protectors in times of economic uncertainty. Men's disempowerment is evident in the harmful coping strategies that Gari adopts such as violence, alcoholism, smoking and reckless sexual behavior amidst an already vicious ghetto environment of poverty and employment uncertainty.

Through an analysis of the character of Comrade Hondo I have argued that the once revered war veteran strand of masculinity now occupies an ambivalent, near obsolete status in a nation whose citizens are disenchanted with a liberation war rhetoric that has not transformed to their material betterment. Further to that I looked at how other men suffer under the brutality of the "Big Man" masculinity of the former liberators of the nation metaphorically represented through social structures, institutions and power relations. Within this context I also looked at how the degeneration of the nation, marked by denial, crime, corruption and disease necessitate new ways of being a man that not only threaten families' survival but fragment both individual male and collective national identity.

This state of degeneration is compounded by an evident collusion between economic decline and physical bodily deterioration to further disempower men from their ability to provide and protect families and citizens respectively. While it is worth celebrating the emergence of newer and stronger woman-hoods as I explore in the next two chapters, men are further

compromised by this   state of degeneration that pushes Zimbabwe's citizens to contemplate

hunting in foreign lands. The feminization of migrant labour is a characteristic of the great trek

to yonder lands like Harare North that further fragments male identity, families and the nation. In

the next two chapters I look at how these contemplations transform the gender order and man's

normative conceptions of the self both at home and in Harare North.

Chapter 3

Masculinities in women's bodies as depicted in selected short stories in Nyota *et al's* Hunting in Foreign Lands.

3.0 Introduction

In this chapter I analyze how the crisis of masculinity is aggravated by women who break social barriers to effectively perform normative masculine roles as providers and protectors of families, also referred to as feminine masculinities by some scholars. I draw from Nyota et al's short stories compilation, *Hunting in Foreign lands* (2010) and particularly focus on Aaron Mupondi's three short stories: *Conned; Hunting in foreign lands* and *Mountains of Ambition.* This emergence of feminine masculinities does not only reveal the destabilization of the gender order at personal, domestic levels but also, as also advanced in the next chapter, reveals how bodies are caught up in national contestations.

The term "feminine masculinity" is itself ambiguous and unclear as it can refer to men who exhibit feminine tendencies and vice versa. However I depart from some of Zimbabwe's indigenous languages which express it more clearly and reveal that it is not necessarily a phenomenon unique to Zimbabwe's post year 2000 crisis. The ages old affirmative adages of*"indodamfazi "*in Ndebele and *"mukadzi uyu murume chaiye"*in Shona point to these hardworking women providers who even go to the extent of engaging in perceivably risky masculine terrain in pursuit of their goals. Dating back to the early eighties, Zimbabwean women have always engaged in risky cross boarder trading activities in Botswana and South Africa in the quest to provide for their families. Some of them were single mothers and widows with no male provider to rely on yet they effectively fulfilled roles as providers and protectors. Although

Halberstam(1998),one of the scholars to whom the detailed study of feminine masculinities is attributed approaches this subject with emphasis on sexuality, my interest is with the socio-economic and political aspects of female masculinity in which women exhibit or perform traditionally masculine roles for example as providers, protectors and risk takers. Beyond the domestic arena I also look at how this development, at whose centre is the woman's body, intersects with the broader issue of territorial marking, national contestation and belonging to further destabilize normative male identity.

Feminine masculinities point to the fluidity of identity as observed by Burr that (2005:20) as individuals:

> Instead, then, of … having single, unified selves, perhaps we are fragmented, having a multiplicity of potential selves which are not necessarily consistent with each other. The self which is constantly on the move, changing from situation to situation, is contrasted with the traditional view of the stable, unchanging personality. And our view of 'human nature' becomes historically and culturally bound rather than fixed for all time.

The crisis circumstances provoke among these individual women a new consciousness of courage; independence and assertiveness that enables them to occupy the gap created by normative masculine ideals in an era when even the employed men's capacity has been eroded by economic decline. As I discuss in the next section, these women are compelled by circumstances to "step outside patriarchal thought" sometimes in conflict with what they have been socialized to be. They force a review of the patriarchal grand narrative of male dominance as men are reduced to dependents and displaced from authority. However it is important to note that the rise of women does to a certain extent empower men and frees them from the rigidity of normative masculinity.

3.1 "Stepping outside patriarchal thought"

The crisis raises women who, according to Gerder (1986:228) "step outside of patriarchal thought" proving that masculinity need not be equated to inhabiting a male body. In the same vein, Muchemwa and Muponde (2007) observe that masculinities are a function of performance and not necessarily tied down to one's biological sex.It is important to note that since femininity and masculinity are mutually inclusive, the two cannot be analyzed independently of each other. As already noted in the first and second chapters, the socio-economic and political crisis convoluted the gender order in ways that inevitably forced a review of traditionally held assumptions of both femininity and masculinity. Gerder (1986:222) argues that femininity and masculinity are premised on a class struggle which:

> …can be described as a struggle for the control of the symbol systems of a given society. The oppressed group, while it shares in and partakes of the leading symbols controlled by the dominant, also develops its own symbols. These become in time of revolutionary change, important forces in the creation of alternatives…revolutionary ideas can be generated only when the oppressed have an alternative to the symbol and meaning system of those who dominate them.

The post 2000 Zimbabwean crisis was one such time of revolutionary change that necessitated the creation of alternatives which however engendered their own ambivalences. It was beneficial in raising women who complemented their husband's efforts in breadwinning hence stabilizing the family. Women's emancipation therefore does not necessarily translate to men's disempowerment as women's rise to breadwinners freed men from the burden of sole provision for the family. However, this same development of women as breadwinners was also a basis for tension as already noted in the previous chapter where men like Gari have been socialized to undermine women because of their dependent status. Women's emergence as equal players subverted the basis of this patriarchal dominance hence disempowering men, particularly those like Gari who were not willing to accept this drastic change.

Some of these women, in defying patriarchy exhibit both positive and negative masculine attributes as they confidently rise up as providers and protectors while others boldly engage in crime and corruption as well as reckless sexual behavior in typical masculine fashion. I proceed to look at the varied manifestations of female masculinities as they are represented in the selected stories.

3.2Women's masculinity and the aggravation of the masculinity crisis

Aaron Mupondi's short stories concern themselves with the tensions that arise as families struggle with the daily demands of their survival. It takes a post-colonial stance in its concern with the various dimensions of place and displacement both in the literal and metaphorical sense. Of particular interest is how, in endowing women with masculine attributes, Mupondi draws the reader to question the oppressive and anxiety producing traditional expectations of masculinity, which often displace the male upon whose body, as father and husband, the socio economic failures of the family are inscribed. Mupondi also uses these home narratives to raise major questions with regards to the post colony and the failures of its leadership in the national fatherhood role.

Mupondi represents the Zimbabwean masculinity crisis at two levels. Firstly; he proposes alternative masculinities where men have to recant some normative masculine ideals and embrace the reality of empowered women as equal partners in the pursuit of provision and protection of the family. Secondly he also challenges the national fatherhood to proffer alternatives and solutions to the socio-economic crisis. He however retains the moral whip against social ills such as crime, corruption and infidelity as they threaten to contaminate individuals and society at large.

In the story "Conned", Mupondi reveals the instability of the male identity in the face of change. Mediated through Tendai's interior monologues and dreams, Mupondi (2010:3) shows how the pressures and anxieties to provide for the family make men vulnerable. Tendai's struggles resonate with Cornwall's (2003:230) observations that "To be a man is more than a day's work…" as his state of joblessness and the accompanying deprivation psychologically unhinge and therefore emasculate him. Making it to London therefore becomes for him and other men, a recovery of the manhood that has been eroded by the economic crisis:

> He was sick and tired of living from hand to mouth. Once he got a job their debts in furniture shops and in money-lending offices would be things of the past. He would transfer his children from the lowly Chipindura Primary School to the elitist Bindura Primary School or, better still, send them to Amandas Boarding School in Concession. Why not? The power of the pound will do all those things for him. Who would want to live in poverty for the rest of his life?

To be a man in times of crisis is to possess "a passport, visa and work permit" beyond which it is hoped the pound lies. These men, in their pursuit for these documents occupy contested territory and are trapped between two hostile masculine hegemonies of the home country, driven by an obsolete anti-imperialist rhetoric and rampant corruption more than twenty years into self-rule, and of the British High Commission driven by racial resentment. Chikwava (2009:6) sheds more light on this territorial battle that plays itself upon the bodies of individual citizens when he notes that "…the British High Commission don't just give visa to any native who think he can flag down jet plane, jump on it and fly off to Harare North" Trapped within such uncertainty, Tendai shows that rationality, wisdom and shrewdness are not naturally occurring attributes of normative masculinity. Mupondi (2010:3) deconstructs male patriarchal privilege by utilizing this opportunity of male weakness to accord mental stability and rationality to the woman, Rudo,

who skeptically receives Tendai's enthusiasm about a Diva whom he has paid two million dollars for visa processing:

> I'm happy you got the passport my husband. But I'm suspicious about this Diva man you gave your money to…I don't know what makes me feel that this Diva sounds like a conman. I don't like the sound of his name, 'Diva'. It sounds slangish. Maybe things will work out alright but I hear that people wanting to go abroad have fallen prey to conmen and have been cheated out of their hard-earned cash.

True to Rudo's words, Tendai is conned. However unlike Gari in the previous chapter, who turns to violence in the face of his failures, Tendai humbles himself, endures the mockery that this turn of events has bestowed upon his manhood and apologizes for his clearly stupid mistake. By continuing to accord the wife higher moral ground Mupondi advocates for a change in the traditionally rigid nature of hegemonic masculinity hence proffering alternative positive, tolerant more humane masculinities. If being a man is about being sober minded, deliberate, rational, shrewd and discerning, Rudo emerges as the man here. Such changes indeed create ideal conditions for women to deconstruct society's stereotypes of women being the weaker and irrational beings. Muponde suggests that feminist advances may not only benefit women but stand to benefit the individual men and set them free from some of the annihilating patriarchal expectations. For example, instead of struggling as sole breadwinners men can experience relief from joint provision within the household.

In the short story *Hunting in foreign lands* Mupondi (2013:32) yet again empowers the woman with agency as Mai Teclar boldly looks her husband Tigere in the face and states that "Things no longer work, Baba Teclar. Let me go to London…"The story shifts from the traditionally accepted pattern of male migration depicted in the foregoing story; "Conned", to that where women are now the courageous hunters, ready to conquer new territory. Gerda

(1986:229) celebrated this development earlier as a manifestation of the feminist movement noting that "Women at long last are demanding, as men did…, the right to explain, the right to define. Women, in thinking themselves out of patriarchy add transforming insights to the process of redefinition." So in this crisis African women's movement to other territories is groundbreaking. During colonial penetration of Africa the white woman came to Africa merely as an appendage of her husband, as an extension of white patriarchy but the African women embodied in the likes of Mai Teclar is ready to conquer new territory all alone, without the protection of her husband and even of the state. Mai Teclar yet again steps outside patriarchal thought and is shown to be in full control of this decision that she seems to have thought out well. She inverts the gender order and emerges as a courageous, innovative risk taking woman against a seemingly sheepish and timid husband who only sees the negative side of this London trek. Mai Teclar confidently fights her case based on the positive stories of those who left and have gained financial freedom and in a way recovered their manhood as she notes that "*Babamunini* is now a respected person in the whole village. I can go and send you some pounds…We can do our own things…I'm sick and tired of this stinking poverty…" (Page 33)

Mai Teclar shows how the post-modern world is breeding women increasingly in control of their destinies and advancing a new narrative of what it may mean to remain a man when a man is no longer needed in the traditional sense to provide, protect and procreate. She is ready to conquer new territory all alone, proving that she can protect herself, she already envisions herself the provider to a home bound, dependent husband to whom she "will send …some pounds". In this migrant space where women's freedoms are enlarged, the physical male body faces the risk of total obliteration from the gender equation. After all; women can still procreate in a world where the male body can be displaced by the sperm bank. The same cannot be said of men who

will still require the female body in its wholesomeness to provide the womb to incubate the baby for up to nine months.

As I note in the next chapter however, the feminization of migrant labour and the ensuing movement of women from the domestic space is in itself a destabilization of patriarchy and is received with ambivalences. Baba Teclar is reduced to a dependent and stay at home husband and this deprives him of an authoritative male voice. Besides being too distant to control his wife, he now occupies a subordinated position from which he cannot bite the hand that feeds him. He learns to comply. Mai Teclar on the other hand, true to her husband's fears eventually communicates an end to their marriage when she engages in an adulterous affair with a white man. The infidelity and resultant family breakdown are strongly condemnable and unfortunate as they advance a perception that ambitious and innovative women have questionable moral standing and are a threat to social stability. However, this is not always the case.

While this development does reflect a certain strand of reality, the conclusion to this story also brings out the entwinement between masculinity and nation. Firstly it reveals individual male egoism's resistance to women's empowerment and nations' cosmetic policy pronouncements on women's advancement which do not always translate to reality as men remain in control. Muponde reserves the last laugh for Tigere as a deliberate strategy to ensure that the man continues to hold and crack the moral whip, symbolic of an unyielding patriarchy.

3.2.1 Women's bodies and national boundary marking

In the development of the foregoing story Sekai finds herself in London without a work permit and finds herself begging for her husband's forgiveness as she prepares for her deportation. Through representing this uncertainty in Sekai's status of belonging, Mupondi advances the post-colonial struggle to always be wary of the west and its manipulative interests when it comes to Africa. The woman's body here serves as not only contested territory at the personal level but becomes the playing field for the ongoing fierce contestations between Africa and its former colonial master, represented by the white lover. Mupondi cautions us to be wary of neo-colonialism's exploitation of Africa and its resources.

In *Mountains of Ambition* he yet again introduces the reader to Tariro who exercises agency by deciding to go to Botswana to sell potatoes. Tariro plans to engage her husband on this "I will talk to him. I think he should let me try to do what I can. We can't go on like this" However Tariro's plan to depend on another man in this business venture is an indictment on her husband who himself has not perceived of this opportunity. Like Tigere in the first story, Vengai is also representative of the lot of men who do not take it upon themselves to exercise the necessary agency in the face of deepening poverty the same way Zimbabwe's political leadership has not. Vengai, Tariro's husband is quick to raise his fears "I know that the money I get is so little that it can't cater for us adequately. But out there you will be exposed to tough situations that will force you to commit sin and destroy our marriage."(Page 67) He agrees to his wife's proposal but with reservations.

The conversation between Tariro and her husband are also symbolic in their metaphorical representations of the instability within the national imaginary. The crisis necessitates that citizens begin to question the value of a nationalism that has not transformed their material

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condition. In the same way that the women's agency makes a mockery of normative masculinity ideals, there is a mockery of the empty national rhetoric in the face of crisis. Sekai dares the ruling elite to proffer solutions or let its people relocate their bodies in search for livelihoods beyond the borders. Like the emasculated and clueless ruling elite, Vengai argues that "The suffering people of Zimbabwe must unite. Nothing is impossible with unity" something which Sekai outrightly dismisses "I don't see how your ideas can bring sadza to us Baba vaCaro. Time is running out and things are getting worse…"

More than twenty years post attainment of independence; Zimbabwean citizens are not only poorer but dispossessed in the land for which men like Comrade Hondo in the previous chapter sacrificed to liberate. Tariro's dependency on Mr. Nduku and the eventual adulterous relationship symbolically represents how the failure of the postcolonial national fatherhood has kept African nations prisoners to the powerful ,economically empowered first world nations represented by Mr.Nduku and even Sekai's white man. Chikwava (2009) confirms that this trekking of citizens beyond the borders has not been well received by the ruling elite who perceive of all those who leave as sell-outs. Like some of the women represented here, the citizens have to seek viable husband hood and fatherhood from other nations.

3.3 Conclusion

This discussion on female masculinities reveals the fluidity and instability of gender identities. Women's assumption of masculinities denotes ascendancy or assumption of equality with men and sometimes of power over man. However, men's exhibition of feminine attributes is a mark of disempowerment especially in contexts of unyielding patriarchy like Zimbabwe's.

Feminine masculinity becomes more visible during the crisis and results in shifts in migrant labour patterns that result in women boldly taking risks that accompany the exploration of new territories without the guidance or protection of men. It is however men's disempowerment that stands out as, without jobs, men suffer under the demands of normative masculinity yet the socio-economic and political structures can no longer sustain these ideals. The short story *Conned* has revealed that rationality and shrewdness are not attributes that naturally occur to all male bodies, especially in moments of crisis. Tendai is shown, possibly due to desperation, to be an irrational young man who fails to discern Diva's deception from the onset. Even when his wife raises this concern he dismisses it. It takes his return to their agreed meeting point and Diva's failure to turn up as promised for him to finally acknowledge that he has been conned. Through this development Mupondi advances the need for alternative masculinities that acknowledge women's foresight and are human enough to express remorse when they have erred.

In the same way that the colonial master kept the African out of the urban space through media that focused on the hazards and disasters of the African's journey to town, Mupondi plays the apt advocate of the patriarchal agenda as he toys with the politics of representation in the way he concludes *Hunting in Foreign Lands* and *Mountains of ambition*. As a man he is deliberate about ensuring that woman not only remains subordinated but subtly advances a perception that women's empowerment spells doom for the family, community and nation as a whole. However what Mupondi also reveals are male fears of empowered women and how in spite of policy advancements towards women's emancipation, Zimbabwean society remains patriarchal and driven by deep etched opposition to their empowerment.

Overally, the selected stories have aptly captured the essence of innovative women who defy patriarchal limitations and exercise agency as and when the need arises. They not only rise up as providers but are aggressive and bold enough to break new ground and engage in risky pursuits in ways that even some men have not exhibited. Some of the women particularly defy the traditional gender order that has so often sought to confine them to the private space where they are expected to live under perpetual male authority, stunted in individual innovativeness and reduced to dependents who cannot survive without male provision or   protection. True to the post-colonial spirit advanced by Said (1979) patriarchal ideology and particularly hegemonic authority is questioned.

Linking the previous and forthcoming chapter, the foregoing discussion has fore grounded the developments in the Zimbabwean crisis that led to the scattering of Zimbabweans around the world and the fracturing of some families. In the   previous chapter I have already analyzed the various dimensions and devastating impact of Zimbabwe's socio-economic and political crisis that led people to contemplate a life beyond the country's borders. This chapter has taken the reader through a micro-cosm of   conversations that ensued within individuals, between families as well as between husbands and wives that finally drove them to pragmatically review the gender order and endure migrant lives in Botswana, South Africa and London among other destinations. Chikwava's *Harare North* (2009), analyzed in the next chapter, and represents this London experience and particularly how the accompanying feminization of migrant labour empowered women while disempowering men. While celebrating women's agency, Nyota *et al*(2013) still bring the reader back home to show the price that families have paid for this crisis induced re-ordering of society that has destabilized patriarchal and national thought in multifaceted ways.

CHAPTER 4

Masculinities in nationalist and migration turbulence: Brian Chikwava's *Harare North* (2009)

4.0 Introduction

Chikwava's *Harare North* (2009) falls within the realm of postcolonial literature and links with the previous chapters by showing a progression from Tagwira's *The Uncertainty of Hope*(2006) *and* Nyota et al's *Hunting in Foreign lands*(2010)by giving an insight into men's cross cultural transformations during the migration experience. Men face difficulties in upholding normative masculine ideals in times of political instability and unstable contexts of migration. As noted by Mutekwa (2009:726), these normative masculine ideals are constructed around "dominance, authoritativeness, aggression, male honour, competitive behaviour, bravery and rationality", attributes which drove Zimbabwe's nationalist mission of the Third Chimurenga. As already noted, men's bodies were pulled in contradictory directions as they sought individual material survival while also being appropriated, sometimes beyond their will, as tools for upholding the nationalist ideological orientations. *Harare North* (2009) is represented through a fugitive protagonist who has fled the country due to the state terror and violence of the Third Chimurenga as well as the economic decline.

Informed by post-colonial theory, in this chapter I examine the representations of masculinities, firstly in post-independence nationalist pursuits and secondly; in contexts of migration. My focus on nationalist pursuits looks at the simultaneously dual and contradictory role as represented in the construction of masculinities, firstly as a tool for the promotion of a *"deep horizontal comradeship"* (Anderson, 1983:7) and how they then play out to unravel the

cracks within the nationalist imaginary after the independence euphoria wears out, enabling the contestation of the liberation war grand narrative of the nation and hence giving voice to previously subsumed alternative narratives. Secondly I am interested in how traditional notions of masculinity and femininity are reconfigured in the context of migration, intersecting with race and class towards new gender orders and as a mirror of contestations within and between the post-colonial African states and their former colonizers. In the previous chapter I have argued that the crisis moment provokes a revolutionary turn.

I argue that, beyond threatening individual men's capacities to live up to the normative masculine ideal, political and economic destabilizations present an opportunity to re-imagine alternative and progressive masculinities while at the same time enabling a re-imagination of both the national and western grand narratives. As has already been shown in the previous chapters, there is a reconfiguration of the gender order, with not only the nationalist grand narratives being challenged but of importance the white supremacist ideals of stability as Chikwava (2009:10) reveals the instabilities within this 'civilization agent' when he notes through his fugitive narrator that:

> …under every quiet face of every Londoner… the heart of big traitor is beating; very big traitor that is able to rise up against monarch…maybe I write letter to President Mugabe and tell him that his troubles with Tony Blair is not as big as he think because …there is good chance that people of this little island, with they dislike for them dictators, will soon grab they spades and pitchforks and make short work of Tony Blair when the time come. Pub called Prime Minister's Head is more likely in the future.

This revelation is made possible through the inversion of spatial politics that migration has enabled, affording Africa the opportunity to engage in counter-penetration of the Western territory and to come face to face with the fissures along which it's myth of white supremacy, cohesion and civilization are crumbling. Said (1979:42) observes that: "…no Oriental was ever allowed to see a Westerner as he aged and degenerated, just as no Westerner needed ever to see

himself, mirrored in the eyes of the subject race, as anything but a vigorous, rational, ever alert young Raj" The context of migration does, I argue, not only deliver the aging westerner but a degenerating westernization right into the hands of the "subject race", hence demystifying the long held myth of white supremacy. I begin here by locating men and masculinities within Zimbabwe's nationalist struggles in order to bring out how masculinity is central to nation making and the exercise of power.

4.1 Nationalism as mobilization of masculine attributes

In this section I look at masculinities as nation-making and exercise of power. My point of departure here is that nationalism is one of the numerous ways through which masculinity manifests and expresses itself. It entails the strategic mobilization and manipulation of hegemonic masculine attributes, particularly achieved through the control of male bodies, to achieve political ideological orientation. The two texts under study exhibit McClintock's (1993:62) observations, drawn from Cynthia Enloe, that "…nationalisms have typically sprung from 'masculinized memory, masculinized humiliation, and masculinized hope.' " Colonialism was essentially a domineering masculine enterprise that entrenched itself through the subordination and hence feminization of local masculinities. Inevitably therefore, as a product of an already patriarchal society, nationalism as a counter resistance movement emerged as a gendered process driven by the quest for the reclamation of African hegemonic masculinity. It was, therefore, equally domineering and masculine in nature.

Firstly, participation in the frontline of nationalist pursuits is represented as an exclusively masculine enterprise advanced by "boys of the jackal breed" or green bombers, most of whom were male. Chikwava's protagonist, upon being recruited as a green bomber notes that

"…the jackal …is full with them new boy recruits heading for training camp."(Page 18) This resonates even with the 1970s liberation struggle whose forces were affectionately referred to as *"oBhudi"* for ZIPRA and "*vanaMukoma"* for ZANLA. These terms are not only exclusionary of women's participation in the liberation struggle but are, significantly an embodiment of masculinity, denoting a brotherhood analogous to the *"deep horizontal comradeship"* as advanced by Anderson(1983:7). This brotherhood is born of the mobilization of masculine attributes such as bravery, aggression and male honour, strengthening the individual resolve to voluntarily join hands with kinfolk to fiercely fight for an imagined national household, which, under the guidance of the fathers, must be fiercely wrested by the sons, who willingly sacrifice their lives. Anderson (1983:7) argues that the nation:

> …is imagined as a *community,* because, regardless of the actual inequality and exploitation that may prevail in each, the nation is always conceived as a deep, horizontal comradeship. Ultimately it is this fraternity that makes it possible… for so many millions of people, not so much to kill, as willingly to die for such limited imaginings.

The inequality and exploitation is evident in the homogenization of otherwise diverse individuals through guns and uniforms, pointing to a politically vulnerable masculinity that has been domesticated and homogenized to conform to the demands of the nationalist movement. The vulnerability of these men is evident in the fact that military operates on the basis of command structures, and as noted by Muchemwa and Muponde (2007:11):

> Joining the ranks of the guerrilla fighters entailed ceding of one's right to question and think. A recruit relinquished control, ownership, and privacy of bodily and mental processes in the pursuit of efficient and brutal execution of the war. The ostensible patriotic imperative led to the pathological control of the body and mind by the leadership. To achieve optimum ideological manipulation, traditional patriarchy provided the necessary fall–back position.

Masculinity as male identity emerges as a complex phenomenon in which the fighters have to negotiate their masculinities in ambivalent and sometimes conflicting ways. The same fighter who exhibits agency and rationality by volunteering to participate in the liberation struggle has to exercise selective aggression for example when in combat but has to irrationally submit to authority within the same camp.

Mutekwa (2009:737) further examines how masculinity was at the core of Zimbabwean nationalism when he states that:

> Indeed it is interesting to note that the two main political parties that were involved in the fight for independence (ZANU (PF) (Zimbabwe African National Union (Patriotic Front)) and PF-ZAPU (Patriotic Front Zimbabwe African People's Union)) used party symbols that denote masculinity and virility. ZANU(PF) had a rooster as its elections symbol while PF-ZAPU had a bull as its party symbol in the 1980 elections that led to independence, lending credence to Mbembe's claim that 'in the post colony power dons the face of virility'

Embodied within these symbols is the centrality of sexual violence and domination as an attribute of normative senior masculinity. The rifle for example as a tool of the nationalist struggle is, according to Muchemwa and Muponde (2014:13) "an extension of the penis or a prosthetic phallus." In the same way, symbols of a bull and a rooster show how the overriding nationalist narrative is premised on a hegemonic senior masculinity founded on the "memory, humiliation and hopes" of its leadership that is bent on feminization of the rest of the men. There is no room for alternative voices or regions of power just as more than one bull in a kraal or one rooster in a run breeds fierce contestation for space and power. Although age and biology do, to a certain extent determine the senior masculinity status, it is particularly the military credentials linked to participation in the liberation struggle that have been adopted and imposed as the fundamental basis of this power. These symbols of the bull and the rooster symbolize a sexually

domineering patriarchal, political and military leadership where all other men are accorded a junior status equivalent to that of "cows and hens", constantly being pursued and hence feminized. In conforming, they acknowledge the overriding power of this dominant, senior masculine leader at the helm of the movement and in resisting still risk pursuit and hence displacement, all consequences that point to men's disempowerment. Mbembe (2009:13) has noted how:

> During the colonial era and its aftermath, phallic domination has been all the more strategic in power relationships, not only because it is based on a mobilization of the subjective foundations of masculinity and femininity but also because it has direct, close connections with the general economy of sexuality. In fact, the phallus has been the focus of ways of constructing masculinity and power. Male domination derives in large measure from the power and the spectacle of the phallus-not so much from the threat to life during war as from the individual male's ability to demonstrate his virility at the expense of a woman and to obtain its validation from the subjugated woman herself.

It is upon the phallacy that President Mugabe's notion of *"amadoda sibili", dodaism* or real men is conceived, a process of othering that describes those who do not fall within this realm, often perceived in terms of lack or incapacity, hence impotent and relegated to woman subject status and open to sexual subordination by senior, more powerful men. Gatsheni-Ndlovu (2009) notes that "*dodaism"* is an aspect of macho masculinity that, among other attributes is marked by " sacrifice, courage,ability to fight, valorization of war, manifestation of anger, preparedness to shed blood and defiance of the West." Masculinity as it is represented here plays into the trappings of power to effectively exclude those who do not conform to this brand of hegemonic masculinity as inadequate men. Muchemwa and Muponde (2010: xviii) affirm that "Macho masculinity, in both the public and private spheres, may be understood as a phenomenon unique to the distempers of the Third Chimurenga" although its characteristics can be traced back to colonial and pre-colonial times.

Chikwava uses a fugitive narrator to bring out this contestation by centralizing ZANU (PF)'s political, ideological orientation as advanced by President Mugabe and his memory of the liberation struggle in shaping a hegemonic masculinity that not only ensures exclusion but constant persecution, punishment and even banishment of all else perceived as aberrant to its definition. Mbembe (2009:5) further notes that:

> … the state considered itself simultaneously as indistinguishable from society and as the upholder of the law and the keeper of the truth. The state was embodied in a single person: the President. He alone controlled the law and could, on his own, grant or abolish liberties-since these are, after all, malleable. In similar vein, in Cameroon the head of state had declared, 'I brought you to democracy and liberties ... You now have liberty. Make good use of it.

The person of President Mugabe and the ideology of the Third Chimurenga, like a father's influence upon a son, inform Chikwava's protagonist's masculine identity. Ironically, he valorizes the very system that has compelled him to flee the country for London. Chikwava's representations of masculinity employ the filial trope that depicts Zimbabwe as a national family or household, run on macho-masculine ideals and at whose helm is President Mugabe as its Father and Husband and under whom all other men, boys and women either conform or risk marginalization and expulsion. McClintock (1996:64) argues that casting the nations thus is significant because:

> The family offered an indispensable figure for sanctioning social hierarchy within putative organic unity of interests. Since the subordination of woman to man, and child to adult, was deemed a natural fact, other forms of social hierarchy could be depicted in familial terms to guarantee social difference as a category of nature. The family image was thus drawn on to figure hierarchy within unity as an 'organic' of historical progress, and thereby became indispensable for legitimizing exclusion and hierarchy within non familial (affiliative) social formations such as nationalism, liberal individualism and imperialism.

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In this vein, the author metaphorically represents Zimbabwe as a 'national family' within which all other Zimbabwean citizens are relegated to child or wife status and subject to one father, or husband. The construction of masculinity as virility takes centre stage as, through the liberation struggle and the Third Chimurenga, this senior male has simultaneously "sired, conceived, incubated and painfully labored to deliver these sons". From such memory and humiliation springs the prerogative to wantonly mobilize the green bombers, war veterans and all other 'sons' to serve as an extension of his authoritative hand that liberally disciplines errant oppositional sons (marginalized masculinities).In this regard he therefore arrogates the status of national paternity and legitimacy, with all voices of dissent excluded from the national household as they have claimed paternity from foreigners, undermining National parentage and particularly the paternity which he embodies. These men, relegated to a junior status are emasculated, displaced, dislocated and forced to flee. Chikwava's (2009:8) protagonist brings this to light when he echoes that:

> Green Bombers only look for enemies of the state…is there to smoke them enemies of the state out of they corrugated hovels and scatter them across the earth…She don't even know Comrade Mugabe. The President can come out to whip you with the truth. Truth is like snake because it is slippery when it move and make people flee in all directions whenever it slither into crowds. Comrade Mugabe is powerful wind, he can blow snake out of tall grass like it is a piece of paper-lift it up into wide blue sky for everyone to see. Then when he drop it, people's trousers rip as they scatter to they holes.

The narrator's imagination of the power that President Mugabe wields upon the nation is a pointer to how men who do not conform to the hegemonic masculinity as advanced in the grand narrative of both the liberation struggle and the Third Chimurenga have been "othered" and unified into a collective identity of sell-outs, traitors and enemies of the state. I employ here Said's (1979) concept of othering in which he notes a deliberate invention of these collective

identities for large numbers of diverse individuals. Spencer and Wollman (2002:2) buttress this when they echo that:

> …fundamental to all forms of nationalism are processes of categorization that create and reproduce as enemies ,strangers and others those who do not fit inside the nation, just as they also seek to provide a sense of 'deep horizontal comradeship' for those who are included inside the nation.

As the senior male of the nation President Mugabe presides over the transmission of male power and property and it is upon his memory of the liberation struggle and definition of the Third Chimurenga that masculine hegemony is shaped. Chikwava's protagonists' anger manifests when President Mugabe is insulted by his cousin's wife, Sekai and he contemplates burning them and their house down:

> Me I can stand anything that Sekai throw at me if I want but this morning when I remember that only some few days ago she have even say President Mugabe is stubborn old donkey…me I get out of bed…go down to the garage to buy gallon of petrol for them…-I want to soak everything.

Like sons fighting for their fathers' identity and territory, the foregoing reveals how some of the male egos have become intertwined with President Mugabe's ego, memory, humiliation and hopes and these are central to the ideology and emotion of the Third Chimurenga. He who slights President Mugabe slights the nation and slights these individuals (Mayer 2000). Identities of national heroes, war veteran and "green bomber" are in themselves his masculinity personified and shaped by his concept of *'amadoda sibili'* or real men as already alluded to. However, upholding the demands of normative masculinity within economic circumstances that do not enable men to live up to the masculine role of provider and protector render masculinity like nationalism, a hollow ideal. Desperation compels Chikwava's (2009:17) protagonist to sign up "for the boys of the jackal breed."

If you is back home leading rubbish life and ZANU PF party offer you job in they youth movement to give you chance to change your life and put big purpose in your life, you don't just sniff at it and walk away when no one else want to give you graft in the country even if you is prepared to become tea boy.

Risk taking here is not premised on bravery or ideological commitment but is rather an opportunistic move necessitated by desperation due to lack of employment. The young man signs up as a "green bomber" in the hope that he can be able to sustain himself and provide for himself and his family. This remains a pipe dream as he finds himself disillusioned the same way the postcolonial nation's citizens have been disillusioned by the unmet promises of the nationalist movement rendering both normative masculinity and nationalism as desolate grand narratives that can no longer hold.

Given the masculine nature of nationalism as discussed in the foregoing, it is evident that the success of nationalism depended on the homogenization of male identity through appropriation and control of male bodies. As Muchemwa and Muponde (2007:xvii),drawing from Foucault, aptly observe, *The body is directly involved in a political field ,power relations have an immediate hold upon it; they invest it, train,torture it, force it to carry out tasks to perform ceremonies and to emit signs.* In both texts, male and female bodies indiscriminately endure the material wounds of nationalist struggles as they are apprehended into "instruments of surveillance and violence." (ibid: xviii) both before and after independence.

After independence, alternative masculinities emerge and mobilize as resistance to the hegemonic masculinity advanced through the liberation war rhetoric. This is evident when the emergence of the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) raises contestations that begin to shake the very foundation of the national imaginary as it has been advanced by ZANU PF for nearly two decades. Javangwe (2013:9) notes that "The values of nations are contested because

they do not mean the same to different people who are the citizens of that nation." Manifold, incompatible interpretations and interests begin to emerge as individual citizens begin to question the relevance of the founding comradeship in the midst of inequality and exploitation.

The contestations between ZANU PF and MDC as represented by Chikwava are in essence a fierce clash of the competitive masculine attributes, as both are premised on macho masculinity, which is not only oppressive but dictatorial in nature, in spite of MDC's claims to advancing democracy. Chikwava in his representation reveals the myriad fault lines within the nationalist imaginary, previously imagined in unitary terms against the common enemy, the white settler. He shows how the Zimbabwean citizens find themselves caught up in brutal political contestations between the ZANU (PF) and MDC political parties, which, ironically, both seek to liberate the nation in contradictory directions.

Through a letter to Shingi Chikwava shows how the citizens, previously united under the banner of fighting the violence of the white supremacist system as a brotherly fraternity assume different camps and political interests that displace all those who challenge the liberation war hegemony ,categorizing them as enemies of the state and therefore to be crushed:

> Another Letter for Shingi's arrive from MaShingi .She bawl that the government have send bulldozers to demolish people's houses and they new four-room house have been demolished in second wave of operation *Murambatsvina.* Now many people become homeless, Zimbabwe is no more she cry. Me I don't have no sympathy for Zimbabwean people about this because they have spend lot of time throwing they tails all over and trying to vote for opposition party.(page 204)

Given these fissures within the nationalist imaginary, the Third Chimurenga mantras such as "Zimbabwe shall never be a colony again" and "defence of national sovereignty" all question the essence of political independence without economic freedom for a postcolonial state like

Zimbabwe that has turned to a brutalization of its citizens. The authority of normative masculinity and nationalism, both founded on the physical strength of individual men are reduced to an illusion that should be questioned. Both are emaciated ,suffer dysfunction and therefore now too impotent to deliver, confirming Fanon's (1963:98) observation that "Instead of being the coordinated crystallization of the people's innermost aspirations, instead of being the most tangible, immediate product of popular mobilization, national consciousness is nothing but a crude, empty, fragile shell " ,a shell that according to Chikwava begins to fall apart. It is the disenchantment with a nationalism that has failed to secure economic independence and human security for its citizens that leads Zimbabwe's citizens on the great trek beyond their borders as I venture to explore in the next section.

4.2 Men in flight and the negotiations of masculinities from exiled spaces

The foregoing discussion has focused on men's victimhood to national political pursuits. I argue that state terror colluded with economic deprivation to further disempower men, making it even more difficult for them to uphold the normative masculine ideal of provider and protector of the family. Due to the economic meltdown Zimbabwean citizens were compelled to move within and beyond their borders in search of better livelihoods. Although labour migration is not necessarily a phenomenon unique to the crisis period, there were notable changes in the migration patterns within this period that inevitably reorganized the gender order, to men's detriment, in both the homeland and diaspora. As Nyota et al (2010: vii) observe:

> The movement of people from one country to another is not new nor is it unique to Zimbabwe. What has changed are the numbers and distances involved. In the past, Zimbabweans' sojourns were brief and mainly confined to South Africa and were initially undertaken by men going to work in the mines…Now Zimbabweans of both

sexes and all ages are scattered all over the globe, notably South Africa, the United Kingdom, the United States .Australia, New Zealand and Canada.

This section specifically analyses the effects brought about by the feminization of migrant labour, this being one of the most notable aspects of contemporary migration patterns. By focusing on the representations of the constructions of masculinities entrenched within the migrant experiences between Zimbabwe and the United Kingdom, specifically London, it seeks to show how the shifting cultural ideals characteristic of migrant life inevitably alter the gender order in complex ways. This discussion reveals how in the face of migrant turbulence, patriarchal ideology that advances men's rationality, will power, honour and courage as providers, protectors and controllers of their families, particularly women, is placed under scrutiny and subjected to review and even reconstruction

4.2.1 Feminization of migrant labour and men's precarious positioning

One of the major issues that the two texts under study reveal is the feminization of migrant labour. The feminization of migrant labour disempowered men in ways too multifaceted for this discussion to exhaust. In this section I look at the emancipatory potential of migrant labour for women in light of men's disempowerment. I argue here that while most men were displaced and dislocated, most women relocated to gain some form of financial independence and personal freedom. Women's relocation through migration elevated them to providers and challenged the patriarchal perception of men as the sole family breadwinners. It also extracted women from the policing of patriarchy and entrenched new gender orders that placed pressure upon men to recant some of their normative masculine ideals.

To begin with, the high demand for care work in the United Kingdom implied that women could manouvre more easily on arrival compared to their male counterparts unless those men were already engaged in professional or skilled care work, for example as nurses or nurse aids back home. Girls and women's traditional socialization in Zimbabwe often endows them with care skills even without specialist care training that may have been received back in their homeland, hence they   could easily negotiate their way in terms of securing employment on arrival as they already possessed transferrable skills. This factor, coupled with the reality that nursing has higher numbers of women, being generally a femininely inclined profession, the exodus to the United Kingdom was marked by a high number of women migrants. In most cases it was strategic that wives left first with plans for husbands to follow, some of which fell by the wayside in the midst of the wives' newfound freedom.

Mano and Willems (2010:196), in *Zimbabwe's new Diaspora* note how, in UK, nursing, a more dignified form of this care work, is considered a stepping stone and pathway to a successful professional career. Chikwava (2009:22),albeit crudely, also brings out how care work was the guaranteed employment route for desperate migrants as most "…only going to end up becoming one of them BBC's –British Buttock Cleaners-looking after old people that poo they pants every hour." BBC, in addition to other readily available occupations such as cleaning, laundry and cooking all fall within the realm of "women's work", being low paid menial jobs that are humiliatingly   emasculating. This pressure to work and earn an income, and therefore provide for self and the family subjected men to some form of feminization as they were compelled to take up jobs traditionally perceived as women's. Chikwava (2009:89) reveals this through his male characters like the protagonist who notes "Ricardo is doing the frying and don't talk to me much …I spend my time washing things and cleaning floor thorough because

them Health & Safety inspectors have give Tim big warning about cleanliness matters …"This is evidence of the impermanence and changeability of gender identities and roles as men in this case   negotiate and   reconstruct themselves contrary to conventional hegemonic masculine ideals.

Back home women's migration presented challenges to men's definition of themselves and in a larger sense to patriarchal ideology and secondly to the notion of nation and belonging. Remaining behind proved as damaging as following the woman since women's migration simultaneously elevated them to the position of provider, not only displacing the man but domesticating him to a woman's economic dependent as diasporan remissions at some point became the only source of income for some if not most families. Of note as well is how in such developments the diasporan space became akin to the public space while the homeland metaphorically represented a domesticated or private sphere where men who remained behind were inevitably feminized.

Chikwava (2009:12) shows that most men were reduced to figureheads by the hyperinflationary environment, and their jobs no longer translated to their ability to provide for the family as the township men back home are:

> …stuck in they hovels in the township bawling they eyes out because price of everything jump up zillion per cent and they can't even afford food or brew now; all them big stomachs gone, they belts is down to they last holes but them trousers is still falling down, big fat cheeks now gone, they heads in thin and overcrowd with teethies.

This   economic vulnerability of men was further compounded by the emergence of newer, often stronger and sometimes stubborn woman hoods and femininities, as women rose to the challenge for survival. The emergence of these daring woman hoods meant that men felt and even became

disempowered in a society where the hegemonic, patriarchal concept of man as provider was now open to scrutiny and hence contestation. Turned to risk-takers, some of these women's strategies were morally questionable and an undermining of patriarchal authority. Increased unemployment implied increasing poverty and erosion of men's capacity to provide for themselves and their families. The emergence of women as equal and even stronger partners struck at the very foundation of patriarchal ideology and normative hegemonic masculinity and its cultural ideals in a changing era.

The woman's physical relocation from the homeland destabilized men's space to exercise normative masculine roles and exercise control over women. Women's extraction from the patriarchal community released them from patriarchal authority. Among other developments some aspects defining women's femininity, such as their sexuality could no longer be as easily policed as was the case in the homeland. Economic dependency and distance dispossessed husbands of the patriarchal privilege to control their wives. As dependents they could not take the risk of biting the hand that feeds them.

Chikwava's (2009:5) protagonist connects the home and migrant space to show how women's removal from the homeland present cultural shifts that further destabilize men's position. Already destabilized by a brutal immigration system, the narrator is compelled to review the set of cultural attributes that shape his assumptions of gender in his numerous encounters with Sekai, his cousin's wife who begrudgingly comes to receive him at the airport. Without a home, a job, and an income, London towers menacingly over the male migrant as a space of uncertainty where jobs end without warning for the illegal migrant and immorality threatens the very fabric of normative male identity. The narrator is disturbed by the authoritative

way in which Sekai carries herself and her noticeable disdain for him and his possessions. She gives him a rude awakening when she expects him to buy his own train ticket, drawing him to the ugly reality of London as *"an each man for himself world"* that seemingly runs contrary to his assumptions of family and community:

> That's when it sink inside my head that she have turn into lapsed African, Sekai. Me I am guest and there she is, expecting me to buy my own ticket on the first day? And it's not that me I don't want to buy myself ticket…I buy ticket if I had the money…Me I only have Z$ 1,000,000 in my bag, which even if I exchange will come to something like £4.The ticket come to £6.Sekai no longer remember who she is or where she come from, I can tell. I am she husband's cousin…

The narrator is suddenly confronted with the challenge of fitting two worlds informed by contradictory values. He experiences what Ashcroft et al (2004:9) in their analysis of post-colonial literatures term "…alienation of vision and the crisis in self-image" as a result of displacement. Chikwava's representations of homeland assumptions about the control of women's sexuality and definitions of masculinity as virility play out through the protagonist's agony as he attempts to reconcile these cultural differences. He laments at how Sekai would have been better mannered if her husband Paul had domesticated her through motherhood and childrearing to keep her busy. Chikwava depicts Paul, Sekai's husband as a failure in this regard. The narrator's alienation of vision is evident when he, instead of being the custodian of patriarchy by exposing the infidelity between Yakov the Russian Doctor and Sekai his cousin's wife, he uses this as an opportunity to squeeze money out of her. Extortion becomes the route as each pursues their interests from an immoral situation in which Sekai finds a willing accomplice in the narrator to whom, contrary to her attitude on his arrival, she begins to warm up:

> Have you got graft…she start spinning me this number about how she don't want to hear that I have die of starvation yariyariyari. She is now suddenly talking sweet to me like I

am she best friend ever. Me I play along; she is now giving me them bambi eyes like this is our secret …I can sniff them pounds dropping out of she purse.

Further to this, Sekai declares that her husband has no right over her sexuality as she does not police Paul's. Sekai,as a nurse is the more stably employed partner and this facilitates the inversion of the gender order to one in which Sekai exercises an authority as provider normally a male privilege in their home country.

As shown in the foregoing, the feminization of migrant labour placed men in a precarious position of disempowerment that compelled them to consciously review some of the patriarchal ideology's assumptions on masculinity as they adjusted to subordinate positions of dependents, house or stay at home husbands.

4.3 Conclusion

This chapter has analyzed the representations of the construction of masculinities in nationalist and migration turbulence and concludes that male identity is central to nation making and the exercise of power. It began by arguing that nationalism is in essence the mobilization of masculine attributes within which the man finds himself occupying an ambivalent hybrid space. Junior officers within the military, as highlighted find themselves pulled in contradictory directions as they have to strategically exercise both aggression and submission.

The latter part focused on the impact of the feminization of migrant labour to show the impermanence and changeability of normative masculine ideals. The increase in the number of women going beyond the country's boarders in search of employment has not only elevated them to an equal status as that of men as providers but rather disillusioned the men who remain behind or follow on account of the wife.

These men however, are not without agency. Although male egoism resists and persists, the acknowledgement by some, of the inevitable changes and their adapting accordingly becomes their strength. There emerge within their disempowering experiences some calculated moves through which they not only undermine but consciously appropriate to their individual benefit, some of the ideals of the hegemonic structures that oppress and repress them. In the midst of oppression these marginalized masculinities carve out spaces of resistance and hence self and society's progress.

CHAPTER FIVE

5.0 Conclusion: Fostering anew gender order

This study, titled *"...remaining a man…"*and located within Zimbabwe's post year 2000 socio-economic and political degeneration, fulfils its objectives by contributing to the discourse on the crisis of masculinity. I have sought to show the difficulties men face in sustaining the normative masculine roles as providers and protectors of families, communities and the nation in a context of political insecurity, job uncertainty, high unemployment, and hyper-inflation, paralysis of basic services and scarcity of basic commodities. Apart from defining and interrogating the varied strands of masculinities and men's coping strategies in crisis times, the study has also explored the implications for male identity in an era driven by women's empowerment. In line with the aims of the study, a masculinist re-reading of the selected texts has enabled the tracing of the changing constructions of masculinity in a changing age characterized by shifting cultural ideals. These changes in cultural ideals provoke a new gender order that demands broader conceptions of both masculinity and femininity.

These crisis consequences undermined the legitimacy of patriarchal power because men's capacity as providers, a basis for the dominance of women, was eroded. Already empowered by the global movement for their emancipation, women resolutely rose to fill the provider gap in ways that displaced men from an ages old authority that hinged on women's dependent status. I argue therefore that the crisis experiences inevitably fostered a new gender order within which it became difficult to "…*remain a man*" by clinging to normative masculine ideals.

Politically this is   a period in which state onslaught against citizens took varied forms, with Operation Murambatsvina being one of the major destabilizing exercises which resulted in the overnight destruction of people's sources of their livelihoods and homes. High unemployment also resulted in the fragmentation of the family due to an increase in out-migration as both men and women sought alternative survival strategies in secure economies beyond Zimbabwe's borders. All these developments and their accompanying pressures destabilized the perceivably "settled" nature of male identity by disrupting men's traditional roles and self-constitution as household heads, providers and protectors hence forcing a brutal review of essentialist conceptions of themselves.

The study, theoretically grounded in post-colonial theory and social constructionism, traces the changes that have affected the homogenizing authority of patriarchal ideology upon which male supremacy is based. It is evident that not all men benefit from the assumed patriarchal privilege as they are unequally positioned on the patriarchal hierarchy (Connell 2005).Drawing from social constructionism I have shown how male identity is not cast in stone but is unstable and subject to societal shifts and balances.

The analysis began with an interrogation of the representation of masculinities in crisis in Tagwira's *The Uncertainty of Hope* (2006). The analysis looked at the entwinement between national and masculine identity to show how national instability disrupts men's ability to meet their normative masculinity roles as providers and protectors. She explores   the entangled relationship between man and nation as being in an   unhealthy state of crisis, with their grand narratives subject to question within a deteriorating socio-economic and political context. Tagwira's Harare and Mbare settings of the novel are a microcosm of a diseased nation and masculinity battling with unmet promises of both the liberation struggle and normative

masculine ideals, yet unwilling and sometimes unable to urgently recant and reconstruct them in order to retain their potency in the long term.

Tagwira, through Gari shows how men are weighed downed by the materiality of the male identity's roles of father and husband, as fatherhood and husband-hood go beyond the definition of masculinity as mere virility but require legitimation through a regulatory presence, a job, finances, a house/home and food among other aspects of provision for the family. As noted earlier, there is a forfeiture of these authorizing roles in the face of absence, homelessness, increasing crime, unemployment, job insecurity, low wages and retrenchments that are heightened during the crisis.

The war veteran brand of masculinity has been shown to occupy an ambivalent space on the boundary of being revered and being obsolete. The humiliation of Comrade Hondo and his subsequent suicide show the disillusionment in the post-colony as self-rule has not translated to economic freedom for a majority of the citizens. What compounds this disillusionment is the state of denial amongst the national leadership of their complicity in running the economy down. Framed within the allegory of disease, the analysis sought to show how the nation is degenerating from various fronts. The destruction brought onto an already vulnerable citizenry through Operation Murambatsvina depicts a diseased leadership that has departed from its liberation war claims to free the people. In addition to this there is denial when it comes to HIV and AIDS as individual men continue to engage in reckless sexual behavior while national policies further displace an already vulnerable and emaciated populace symbolically represented through Sheila. The deep etched culture of crime and corruption knows no bounds as the vulnerable are compelled to bribe their way through systems mandated to fulfil public welfare in the hope of accessing the most basic of human rights.

The peak of being diseased is also evident in how individual man and nation are trapped by a phallic obsession. Sexual prowess has become the mode of governance and its rampant nature is evident in how Onai and her daughter are subjected to sexual harassment in different unrelated incidents. Simply put, Tagwira depicts a nation eroded by disease where everything is uncertain, with the right to life itself the most threatened. It is this uncertainty that compels men and women alike to contemplate *"hunting in foreign lands"*.

The feminization of migrant labour is one of the major features of this crisis period that further disempowered men. Chapter three and chapter four of this study show how women's ascendency to provider status further aggravated the masculinity crisis as men were reduced to dependents and displaced from exercising authority over women. Women's relocation through migration challenged the patriarchal perception of men as the sole family breadwinners. It also extracted women from the policing of patriarchy and entrenched new gender orders that placed pressure upon men to recant some of their normative masculine ideals.

The centrality of masculine identity in nation making and the exercise of power has been a major point of discussion in this study. Chapter four particularly brought out how men were further subordinated through the appropriation of their bodies into instruments for advancing the third Chimurenga nationalism. (Muchemwa and Muponde 2007).These developments, together with the economic deprivation forced men to flee to migrant spaces where they were further subordinated. However, the migrant space enables the re-imagination of the national and western grand narratives. Chikwava for example shows how there is a reconfiguration of grand narratives such as white supremacist ideals of democracy and political stability as London is shown to be rife with political tensions marked by latent citizen dissatisfaction with its leadership. Even the west has citizen unrest looming.

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The foregoing brings this study to some concluding remarks. Firstly, in spite of the homogenizing nature of patriarchal ideology and its assumption of masculine privilege; normative masculinity has been shown to be a source of anxiety for a majority of men, especially in times of crisis. Some men resort to violence, alcoholism, smoking, reckless sexual behavior and playing truant all in a bid to evade the reality of their failure to fulfil its demands. Secondly, patriarchy functions because of the consent of women. It is destabilized when women begin to rebel against its authorizing narratives and even effectively rise up to perform masculinities.

It is evident from this study that patriarchal ideology and normative masculinity require women's validation to remain sustainable. Women have to be willing to submit, to be present and to forego their dreams and ambitions if men are to continue enjoying the illusion of being powerful. However in the midst of a global call for the emancipation of women, this can no longer be the case hence this study recommends an urgent move on men's part to revisit their traditional perceptions and begin envisioning points of complementarity with their empowered women-folk given these inevitable shifts.

Lastly, it is difficult to conclude on a subject as slippery and unstable and as fiercely contested as masculinities. Just like other categories of identity, masculinities continue to be constructed and reconstructed through the passage of time and   instead of man's fixation with "…*remaining a man…*" there is need for an ongoing envisioning of alternative masculinities.

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