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**REPRESENTATIONS OF POST-2000 DISPLACEMENT IN
ZIMBABWEAN WOMEN'S LITERATURE**

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SHTIVY001

A minor dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the degree of Master of Arts in Language, Literature and Modernity.



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DECLARATION

This work has not been previously submitted in whole, or in part, for the award of any degree. It is my own work. Each significant contribution to, and quotation in, this dissertation from the work, or works, of other people has been attributed, and has been cited and referenced.

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ABSTRACT

This study examines literature by Zimbabwean women that explores evictions and migrations of people from 2000 to 2009 when the crisis subsided with the enactment of the Global Political Agreement (GPA). It examines women's fiction on the impact of the land reform and Operation Murambatsvina with regard to the displacements and the consequent pain and trauma these programmes brought about. I examine stories by both black and white Zimbabwean female writers and argue that these stories show that the programmes caused physical, emotional, social and economic displacement. In short, the literary representation of this displacement is the subject of this thesis. For my analysis on the effects of the land reform programme, I use Catherine Buckle's (2005) "Full Circle" and Vivienne Ndlovu's (2005) "Kurima". These stories involve displacements in rural areas and farming resettlements. With regard to Operation Murambatsvina, I examine Valerie Tagwira's (2006) novel *The uncertainty of hope* and Diana Charsley's (2006) short story "Forgiveness" which focus mainly on the forced removals in urban areas. The ways in which these women depict the characters in their works reveal displacement in its various forms. The stories' textual constructions reveal that people suffered not only physical displacement but were also affected socially, emotionally and economically. Because of the events in Zimbabwe women had to assume roles, which were traditionally male dominated, that include migrating into the diaspora. The movement of women into the diaspora affected mostly the children who remained in Zimbabwe. For that reason, in the last section of the thesis, I analyse stories about displacements into the diaspora namely Sabina Mutangadura's (2008) "Chemusana" and Blessing Musariri's (2008) "Counting down the hours". These short stories depict the negative impact on children who suffer emotional displacement. The writing, however, affirms the agency of women and dismisses the myth that women were only victims.

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
AU	African Union
ESAP	Economic Structural Adjustment Programme
EU	European Union
GNU	Government of National Unity
GPA	Global Political Agreement
IDP	Internally Displaced People
JAG	Justice for Agriculture
MDC	Movement for Democratic Change
NAMA	National Arts Merit Award
SADC	Southern African Development Community
ZANU	Zimbabwe African National Union
ZANU-PF	Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front
ZWW	Zimbabwe Women Writers

DEFINITION OF TERMS

<i>Ambuya</i>	grandmother or mother-in-law. The term can also be used respectfully to address an elderly woman.
<i>Chef</i>	respectful term used to address someone holding a position of authority.
<i>Chimurenga</i>	liberation war or struggle for freedom.
<i>Gogo</i>	grandmother.
<i>Gomo</i>	mountain.
<i>Humwe</i>	a communal work party.
<i>Hondo</i>	war.
<i>Jambanja</i>	chaos or actions conducted in a disorderly manner also associated with confusion.
<i>Kukiya-kiya</i>	getting by to find means of survival or doing everything and anything possible as a survival strategy.
<i>Kurima</i>	farming or generally agriculture.
<i>Mai</i>	mother.
<i>Malaitsha</i>	transporters of groceries and other goods from the diaspora especially South Africa to relatives and friends in Zimbabwe. The transporters also traffic undocumented migrants.
<i>Mama</i>	mother.
<i>Mukoma</i>	brother or respectful address to a male.
<i>Murambatsvina</i>	removal of filth/dirt.
<i>Murungu</i>	white person but in postcolonial Zimbabwe the term is used to refer to an employer particularly a rich black person who own businesses.
<i>Mwanangu</i>	my child.
<i>Sadza</i>	thick porridge made of maize meal and is a staple food for indigenous Zimbabweans.
<i>Sahwira</i>	friend or someone to confide in and to depend on in times of need.
<i>Sisi</i>	sister or can be used to refer to an elderly female. The term is also used to address maids.
<i>vaGudo</i>	Mr Gudo.
<i>vaHondo</i>	Mr Hondo.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

This chapter introduces and gives the background to this study. In this study, I analyse Zimbabwean women's writing between 2000 and 2009, which focuses on the government-induced programmes, namely the Land Reform Programme and Operation Murambatsvina and the consequences of their implementation. Land Reform and Operation Murambatsvina were programmes that coincided with the emergence of the major opposition party, the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) and the defeat of Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front's (ZANU-PF) position in a constitutional referendum of 2000. Land reform was the takeover of white owned commercial farms for redistribution to landless black Zimbabweans whilst Murambatsvina was a programme that involved the cleaning up of urban settlements including the removal of squatters and illegal vendors. I argue that these programmes affected the general Zimbabwean population in various ways, displacement being the most prominent outcome. I therefore also analyse stories about individuals who migrated out of Zimbabwe leaving their families behind. The study focuses specifically on selected fiction by both black and white women writers in Zimbabwe.

I use the year 2000 as a starting point because it was the beginning of a new era in the history of Zimbabwe. An era characterised by displacement and socio-economic and political crisis. The crisis subsided in 2009 following the signing of the Global Political Agreement (GPA) September in 2008 in which the major political players later acceded to the formation of a Government of National Unity (GNU). In the study, I take into account the fact that everyone has his or her own interpretation or version of what transpired in Zimbabwe during the period under study. However, I focus on the women writers who through fiction commented on these programmes. In their stories, they reflect on issues of dispossession, displacement, destruction of families, dispersion of communities and resettlement. Thus, one can say women's contribution to these issues through the medium of literature has been significant.

The aim of the study is to examine women's writing in Zimbabwe to demonstrate that, though marginalised within the literary space, women have written about contentious issues affecting society. The writing under study demonstrates that the implementation of the Zimbabwe government-sponsored programmes such as the Land Reform popularly known as

the Third Chimurenga in 2000 and Operation Restore Order also known as Operation Murambatsvina in 2005 negatively affected the lives of Zimbabweans and resulted in displacements and in some instances deaths. The living conditions of ordinary Zimbabweans deteriorated dramatically during this decade reaching crisis proportions. Vambe (2010) describes the period as that of 'the Zimbabwean crisis' whilst Primorac (2006) views Zimbabwe as 'a place of tears'. Although the literature shows that each of these events affected the people of Zimbabwe differently, in this study, I analyse the various forms of displacement that emerged. The widespread displacements resulted in socio-economic problems that affected the poorer section of the Zimbabwean population. Further displacements also occurred when people opted to migrate into neighbouring countries and even farther abroad.

There are several reasons for selecting women's literature for this study. Besides my interest in women's writing, I also argue that the government-induced programmes had an impact on women in particular ways. Firstly, colonialism displaced women from their roles as storytellers (Musiyiwa 2009) and secondly, when schools were established, girls did not have the same opportunities as boys. This again meant that women did not have the same opportunities to enter the literary scene as men had, leading to a further marginalisation of the female literary voice. Despite this late entry, women have managed to 'retell their stories in the public sphere' (Lara 1998, 6) and continue to write their own stories.

Zimbabwe is regarded as a patriarchal society in which men tend to have more privileges than women (Gordon 1998). Most publishing houses in Zimbabwe were male dominated until 1990 (Veit-Wild 1992). As women had limited opportunities to express themselves through writing this led to the establishment of organisations such as the Zimbabwe Women Writers (ZWW). This organisation was formed in 1990 in an effort to empower women through publishing their works. ZWW is one of the first women's organisations in Zimbabwe and in Southern Africa to address gender imbalances through writing and publishing (Tandon 2007). However, a few female writers such as Yvonne Vera, Tsitsi Dangarembga and Petina Gappah have attained international recognition in recent years despite earlier difficulties in getting their works published. Women in Zimbabwe are thus gradually moving away from the entrapment that Dangarembga (1988) demonstrates in *Nervous Conditions*, the first popular novel in English to be published by a black female writer in Zimbabwe. Dangarembga (1988) portrays the characters Lucia, Maiguru, Mai Tambu, Nyasha and

Tambudzai in the novel as women entrapped by both patriarchy and colonialism. However, by writing about controversial issues such as farm invasions and urban evictions, women writers demonstrate that they are now able to express their discontent.

Zimbabwean women have managed to 'reclaim their voices' through writing, a skill which the colonial ideology had previously denied them (Magosvongwe 2006, 63). In the decade since 2000 women writers have tackled the most controversial issues involving the government by using stories as a discursive space for voicing their experiences while expressing their fears, anxieties, hopes and concerns about the dislocations and relocations. Women bring 'not only their points of view but lived experiences as women to their writing' (Nfah-Abbenyi 1997, 6). Stories written by women present experiences of being mothers, grandmothers, aunts, mothers-in-law, sisters and wives as they respond to issues affecting the general population (Metcalf 1989). Women therefore contribute to literature, offering alternative perspectives on issues affecting society.

In this study, I analyse how women writers depict problems in a society dominated by male writers who often write stories on behalf of women. I regard it as imperative to examine narratives by women to avoid what Metcalf (1989, 21) calls 'blind spots' in African literature. For example, some male writers might have 'blind spots' in their exposure of female oppression. This includes male writers being unable to express or to give first-hand information on women's feelings and actions in challenging situations such as the issues involving displacement. I therefore argue that women are better able to articulate problems affecting them in society with their female perspective. Metcalf (1989, 21) aptly notes that both male and female writers in modern African literature have played a part in exposing female oppression, but 'female writers excel' in their expression of 'the first-hand experience of the oppression' women face. Analysing women's stories affords women a chance to be recognised through the power of words thereby revealing their concerns in the public sphere (Lara 1998). It is my view that intimate revelations are made by female writers about their situations through fiction. While some of the narratives analysed may not be written by professional writers they nevertheless provide real insights into the consequences of Zimbabwe's near decade of dislocations and relocations.

The Zimbabwean situation between 2000 and 2009 led to the international community in describing Zimbabwe as a failed nation. Different reasons attribute to the crisis including the

farm invasions initiated in 2000 followed by urban evictions in 2005 and then the withdrawal of international credit lines leading to the general economic implosion. Direct and indirect displacement has been one of the major effects of the 2000 to 2009 crisis. The displacements drew worldwide attention particularly from the international community and media, which were followed by condemnation of the Zimbabwean government. The European Union and the United States subsequently imposed sanctions targeted at the government leadership in Zimbabwe. Most western donors withdrew their support to Zimbabwe except for humanitarian aid.

Thus, not only did the economy collapse but the country also went into political turmoil. Following a disputed election and post-electoral violence in 2008, the African Union (AU) and the Southern African Development Community (SADC) intervened coercing the feuding parties to accept a Global Political Agreement (GPA). This intervention led to the formation of an inclusive Government of National Unity (GNU) in February 2009 comprising the three major political parties in Zimbabwe namely, ZANU-PF and the two MDC formations. Since then the Zimbabwean government has suspended the Zimbabwean dollar adopting a multiple currency regime dominated by the United States dollar and the South African Rand as legal tenders, a measure that stabilised the economy. Against this background, displacement took place in various forms for the people of Zimbabwe.

It might be important to provide my own definition of displacement as illustrated by the stories under study. Displacement is commonly understood as the removal of something or someone from a proper place or position meaning 'out of place' (Hammar *et al.* 2010, 266). In this study, displacement is the act of removing people from their usual places. It is connected with dispossession, especially as displaced people are deprived of their right to survive. However in this study, the notion is not only physical but involves economic, emotional and cultural trauma. As illustrated in the stories analysed, in many cases displacement is often accompanied by violence during the planned and unplanned removals. Displacement also entails removing people from positions of responsibility and placing them in a different location resulting in loss of livelihoods and responsibility as it usually covers 'the loss of homes, social relations, work, rights, predictability' and income (Hammar *et al.* 2010, 268).

In the stories, individuals are forcibly removed from their 'homes' to start a new life under unfamiliar and usually hostile circumstances. The characters not only experience physical displacement but they also suffer psychologically and socially. Social displacement often means individuals are removed from a particular place and consequently have difficulty in associating and relating in the same way due to the new geographical space where they are surrounded by unfamiliar environments. This can develop into a sense of insecurity and uncertainty because of the social disconnection. In some cases, people are uncomfortable under the new conditions and are eventually forced to relocate again, some even out of the country. Those who find themselves in these situations not only lose a sense of home but are often moved away from their sources of income which results in economic displacement. People who are displaced within their own country become known as Internally Displaced People (IDP). Displacement also occurs regionally and internationally where people assume new identities such as refugee and migrant (Hammar, *et al* 2010, 266).

Displacements are not a new phenomenon in Zimbabwe as they occurred before the colonial era when tribes fought and displaced each other. Displacements continued on a larger scale during colonialism in the late nineteenth century when the majority of the African population was forced out of fertile lands to occupy marginal land – 'reserves' and later Tribal Trust Lands. Displacements further occurred during the war of liberation from the early 1970s to 1980. However, what is of interest about this period between – 2000 and 2009 – is that the displacements were happening twenty years after a war of liberation – the Second Chimurenga – a war fought to end the displacements of the black people that had been going on since the colonial era. The Third Chimurenga was supposed to end displacement and the experience and outcome was supposed to be beneficial to the previously victimised indigenous blacks. It is therefore ironic that the result was opposite to the intended outcome.

It is important to note that although I am focusing on fictional writing, these stories are embedded in actual events so the background and a social perspective of how the events unfolded become necessary. I argue that women become insiders in their writing especially when the 'fiction is informed by historical actuality' (Nfah-Abbenyi 1997, 150). As the content and structure of the stories are influenced by the historical context and the situation that prevailed in the country, I review literature according to the chronological order of events.

Review of the Literature on the Land Reform

The first episode of the events under study was the government-initiated Fast Track Land Reform Programme in 2000. Land has been a thorny issue in Zimbabwe dating back to the colonial era in 1890. During colonial times black people were moved from their usual places to make way for developments and activities of the colonists such as farming, mining, roads and railway lines construction. In *Nervous Conditions* (Dangarembga 1988, 18), Tambudzai's grandmother explains that the black people were forced out of their fertile lands and resettled on 'sandy, stony and barren land', which the colonialists found to be of little economic value. She further explains that the indigenous people were also forced to work on the colonialists' farms (Dangarembga 1988, 18). The indigenous people resisted the land occupations and other developments such as hut taxes imposed by the colonial government. This late nineteenth century resistance is referred to as the First Chimurenga while the liberation struggle of the 1970s is referred to as the Second Chimurenga. The term Chimurenga is a derivative from the name Murenga meaning 'Murenga's war' (Chigwedere 1991, 3). Murenga was a great high Spirit medium of the Shona religion who 'precipitated, inspired and directed' the war against the European colonisers during 1896-7 liberation war (Chigwedere 1991, 3). Chimurenga in Zimbabwe is a term used to refer to war or struggle for freedom.

Several names such as Fast Track Land Reform Programme, *jambanja* and Third Chimurenga have been used to refer to the land reform programme, which began in 2000. *Jambanja* is a Shona word meaning chaos or actions that are conducted in a disorderly manner. The terms, Fast Track, Third Chimurenga and *jambanja* explain the implementation of the land reform programme. The process of the land reform varied from political protests 'violent intimidation, beatings and killings' which later transformed to *jambanja* (Cliffe *et al.* 2011, 913). Violence was also used by the colonists when the indigenous people were moved from fertile lands during the colonial era. Given this view of violence during the colonial era, violence of the land reform programme is thus considered by some commentators as a form of justifiable revenge or restitution for a historical injustice.

The white settlers still controlled the economy after 1980 when Zimbabwe attained majority rule. Hence the Third Chimurenga is considered a continuation of the two earlier Chimurengas and is characterised as the third and final chapter of the earlier Chimurengas

(Primorac and Muponde 2005). The 2000 land redistribution process was guided by the slogan 'the land is the economy and the economy is the land'. Cliffe *et al.* (2011) sum up the arguments, reiterating that with a few exceptions, those who engage in writing or political rhetoric about the land reform programme have tended to take positions on one or other end of the spectrum in what has been a highly polarised debate regarding the ways of achieving a reversal of the racial distribution of land, which was a colonial creation and remains part of Zimbabwe's history.

Although the present land reform seems justified, some contest the appropriateness and the manner in which the land reform programme was implemented (Sachikonye 2011). Those who condemn the land reform process do so mainly because of the violence that characterised the programme. Moyo (2006, 149) notes that 'The Zimbabwe police took no action to prevent the farm occupations, claiming that they lacked the capacity to repel the squatters or that these conflicts had to be resolved at the political level'. However, even some of the beneficiaries of the land reform were later evicted without warning as the women's stories demonstrate.

The Land reform programme affected mostly people who were on the commercial farms including both the farm owners and workers. Cliffe *et al.* (2011) allege the land reform was encouraged by the ZANU-PF government after being faced with a major opposition political party, MDC. The land occupations were allegedly 'a means of mobilising rural support and punishing its political foes, the white farmers, 'their' workers and other supporters of MDC' (Cliffe *et al.* 2011, 914). The powers over the land reform spread from the war veterans, ZANU-PF party operatives, government leaders to traditional authorities such as chiefs and headmen (Cliffe *et al.* 2011).

Women were also among those affected as they took advantage of the programme to be resettled. In Zimbabwe, women typically access land through men, especially their husbands (Potts 2008). The Zimbabwean women's exclusion from owning land in the rural communal areas is attributed to a combination of colonial laws and patriarchal traditions – single women often find it difficult to own land in the rural areas. Women's 'social links in the rural areas become dysfunctional' in terms of land in the absence of a male figure (Potts 2008, 57). Therefore, at the launch of the land reform programme, women also took part in the exercise to empower themselves through the ownership of land.

The land imbalances between white commercial farmers and the black people of Zimbabwe have been reflected in the literature by Nyamfukudza (1980) in *The non-believers journey*, Charles Mungoshi (1975) in *Waiting for the rain* and Chenjerai Hove (1988) in *Bones*. The land reform programme affected Zimbabweans differently. It displaced white commercial farmers, the farm labour force, the newly resettled farmers and ordinary Zimbabweans in general. However, beneficiaries of the programme are convinced that compulsory land acquisition is the last instalment of the Second Chimurenga and the attainment of independence in real material terms as land is a tangible fruit of liberation. Besides fighting against a racist system to free the majority from minority rule, the Second Chimurenga was also a war to repossess land.

Although the displacements were part of the postcolonial developments in Zimbabwe, more attention was given to the displaced white commercial farmers and their employees. Little recognition was given to the displacements of newly resettled farmers. From the women's stories, another dimension emerges about the newly resettled farmers who are continuously moved from one place to another.

During the land invasions people who originated from neighbouring countries such as Malawi, Zambia and Mozambique were stranded because they did not own any homes in the rural areas. The farm workers who were of foreign descent were excluded from the programme. As citizens of foreign origin, they lost their jobs as farm workers and most of them ended up in towns and mainly in the informal settlements and informal businesses, which later became targets of Operation Murambatsvina (Potts 2008).

The land reform also brought another dimension in the transformation from the 'traditional, customary or communal land tenure system', which was the colonial style of the rural society in Zimbabwe to commercial farming systems (Cliffe *et al.* 2011, 909). Some argue that certain politicians and war veterans used force to evict the beneficiaries of land (Cliffe *et al.* 2011, 915). Therefore, the land redistribution continues resulting in the displacement of beneficiaries of the land reform in favour of people who are politically connected. Most commercial farmers who were evicted did not inherit land from their ancestors but bought the farms using their hard-earned money and later developed the land (Wakatama 2002, 2). These farmers include black farmers who were also affected by the land reform programme.

Scoones *et al.* (2010) give a review of what happened after the land reform programme in the Masvingo district. They argue that some of the beneficiaries of the land reform programme are better off since they took over land from the white commercial farmers. Scoones *et al.* (2010) go further to provide statistics that sixty percent of beneficiaries in the Masvingo district are mostly poor rural people genuinely in need of land. The remaining forty percent covers the other beneficiaries such as civil servants, war veterans, business people and armed forces such as the military and the police. However, these researchers also note that whilst most landless black people have benefited from the land reform, some elites such as 'politicians and those from the security services took advantage of the situation to grab land often holding multiple farms under different names' (Scoones *et al.* 2010, 3) and they suggest a 'transparent land audit to redress these imbalances' (Scoones *et al.* 2010, 241).

The government has been accused of supporting lawlessness during the farm invasions (Marongwe 2003, 156). Moyo (2006, 149) echoes the same sentiments that the 'police took no action to prevent the farm occupations claiming that they lacked the capability' to restrain those who took part in the evictions. The lack of transparency in the whole exercise confirms that the occupations were politically affiliated. Marongwe (2003, 175) sums it up as,

The occupations were championed by war veterans, most, if not all, of whom belonged to the ruling party. Further, the occupations could hardly be divorced from Zanu (PF)'s 2000 parliamentary election campaign. ... The chanting of pro-Zanu (PF) and anti-MDC slogans by the occupiers of farms is a further indication that the occupation of farms followed a political agenda.

Furthermore, Marongwe (2003, 175) asserts that people were required to produce ZANU-PF party cards in order to be allocated land. However, Scoones *et al.* (2010, 8) after examining field data collected from Masvingo province attempt to challenge five of the most common myths about the land reform in Zimbabwe. The myths are: Zimbabwean land reform has been a total failure; the beneficiaries of Zimbabwean land reform have been largely political 'cronies'; there is no investment in the new resettlement; agriculture is in complete ruins, creating chronic food insecurity; and the rural economy has collapsed.

Scoones *et al.* (2010, 7) declare the above as 'myths' that have gained the status of being the 'truth'. The main problem with the land reform at present is rather the lack of tenure for the newly resettled farmers. Scoones *et al.* (2010, 239) point out that while substantial damage

has occurred on the farms and despite the newly resettled farmers not being tenured, they have made 'impressive developments' on the properties such as clearing the land, building houses, buying new equipment and investing in livestock. The investment is estimated to be about US\$2000 per household (Scoones *et al.* 2010, 239).

Review of the Literature on the Urban Evictions

Operation Restore Order or Operation Murambatsvina was initiated by the government in May 2005. Murambatsvina means 'the dislike of dirt', in Shona which translates to the removal of filth. The government's preferred meaning or usage of the word Murambatsvina is to 'restore order'. Murambatsvina is also referred to as the 'Zimbabwean Tsunami'. Zimbabweans equate the destruction that took place during Operation Murambatsvina to the 2004 Asian Tsunami 'in reference to the speed, vengeance and the use of force, which was similar to the devastation that was caused by the Indian Ocean earthquake' (Nyamanhindi 2008, 118; Tibaijuka 2005).

The *tsunami* was meant to clean up the cities of squatters and illegal dealings. It was characterised by the destruction of homes and businesses thus undermining the livelihoods and security of the most marginalised people in Zimbabwe. Some scholars (Bratton and Masunungure 2006; Potts 2008, 53; Hammar *et al.* 2010) argue that its aim was to displace urban residents back to their rural areas. The Operation targeted mainly informal traders and people in informal settlements including vendors, flea markets and illegally built housing structures, mostly backyard houses and shacks. The Operation was carried out indiscriminately without due respect to any political affiliations. Most people were stranded as their homes and businesses were demolished during Murambatsvina. The government's statistics indicated that 569,685 people or 133,534 households were subject to such displacement (Tibaijuka 2005, 32).

Unlike the land reform programme that affected the farming community and people in the rural areas, Murambatsvina affected almost everyone in the cities causing strained relationships among families and relatives (Potts 2008). Similar to the land reform displacements, Murambatsvina drew worldwide attention prompting the then United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan to send a special envoy to look into the matter in June 2005. The United Nations inspection resulted in a report condemning the Zimbabwean government

and most urban authorities of breaching both national and international human rights laws guiding evictions (Tibaijuka 2005; Bratton and Masunungure 2006, 22; Mhiripiri 2008, 149).

The United Nations report by Anna Kajumulo Tibaijuka (2005) is one of the most popular reports referred to in academic writing on Murambatsvina. As such, the report has afforded readers the opportunity to make their own judgments about these events. The Tibaijuka Report became a major critique of the Operation, especially in respect of the manner in which the operation was conducted. According to the report, some 650,000 to 700,000 people lost either their livelihoods or their homes or both (Tibaijuka 2005, 33). Other people were also indirectly affected such as vegetable growers and transporters. Tibaijuka report (2005) estimates that a total of 2.1 million people, which represents about one fifth of the Zimbabwean population, were adversely affected directly or indirectly or both (Potts 2010, 15). However, Mahoso (2008, 160) condemns the Tibaijuka report by raising questions as to why the event was turned into a 'global incident' or made to qualify for UN Security Council's attention. The Zimbabwe government viewed the operation as justified as it was meant to reduce levels of criminality in the country. The government's desire was stated in the press,

to stop economic crimes, especially illegal black market transactions and countering economic sabotage, reorganize small-to-medium enterprises (SMEs), reduce the high criminal rate, arrest such social ills as prostitution, stop the hoarding of consumer commodities and reverse environmental damage and threats to water sources.

The Herald 17 August 2005.

As discussed earlier, most of the victims of the land reform programme were farm workers whose livelihoods were disturbed. These people found themselves seeking alternatives by moving into neighbouring cities and venturing into any type of business in order to sustain themselves and their families. Their businesses ranged from buying and selling goods on the black market to establishing backyard shops and setting up backyard shacks. Informal houses or shacks were erected to accommodate people mostly in the informal trade. The informal businesses were termed as *kukiya-kiya*, which later became targets of Murambatsvina. Jones (2010, 286) defines *kukiya-kiya* as a term associated with 'getting by'. The term refers to doing anything and everything possible in order to survive. In Zimbabwe during that period, individuals were involved in that way of doing business in order to sustain their livelihoods. Jones (2010, 285) further describes *kukiya-kiya* as 'a new logic of economic action in post-

2000 Zimbabwe'. *Kukiya-kiya* was particularly common in Zimbabwe at that time as salaries were no longer capable of sustaining families because of the hyperinflationary environment.

The women's stories illustrate how nearly everyone opted for *kukiya-kiya* as a means of survival. Jones (2010) points out that because of the situation in Zimbabwe during the year 2005, the country had turned into a *kukiya-kiya* economy due to the speculative activities that were similar to gambling. This *kukiya-kiya* ranged from prostitution, vending, illegal foreign currency dealings, buying and selling fuel on the black market and selling other goods that were no longer readily available or on supermarket shelves such as sugar, soap and cooking oil. Vambe (2008, 76) echoes the same sentiment that informal trading 'had by Zimbabwean standards become 'formal' trade especially to black women who became breadwinners overnight'. Prior to 2000, women were normally involved in the *kukiya-kiya* business because it was something that was looked down upon but later became the standard situation, which proved necessary under the circumstances. The economic situation became worse from the 1990s when the government introduced the Economic Structural Adjustment Programme (ESAP). Because of ESAP, there were retrenchments which led to the deterioration of ordinary Zimbabweans' standards of living and people sought other businesses such as vending to sustain their lives. When Murambatsvina struck in 2005 *kukiya-kiya* was flourishing everywhere even in the rural areas especially at growth points. Murambatsvina sought among other objectives to eradicate *kukiya-kiya*.

The people mostly affected were those who lived in backyard shacks. There were many controversies given about the destruction and that seventy percent of people in Zimbabwe's urban areas worked in the informal sector and lived in various informal housing (Musoni 2010, 308). When Murambatsvina was launched, people were asked to destroy their own homes. Potts (2010, 216) asserts that, 'once it became clear that the authorities really were going to destroy all shacks, the owners and occupiers hastened to deconstruct them on their own, as urged by the Council and police, so that they could preserve belongings and any possible building materials' for later use or for resale. After Murambatsvina, options were limited to most people as the available formal accommodation was difficult to access. The costs for formal accommodation were exorbitant and only a few could afford it. As a result, thousands of people were stranded and were forced to live in the open with their families. Most of the displaced were later placed in camps such as Caledonia Farm on the outskirts of Harare and Porta Farm near the small town of Norton (Potts 2010).

People who ended up in camps were those who had limited social capital or lacked urban relatives who could accommodate them. These people found it difficult to remain in the urban areas. Some people opted to send some members of their families to the rural areas which caused separation of such families. Murambatsvina therefore affected nearly everyone in Zimbabwe including those who had decent accommodation as they ended up having to accommodate displaced relatives and friends. Those who rented formal houses either had to pay high rentals or were given notice to vacate, as homeowners opted to accommodate relatives or friends. The situation was worse for some people who were displaced as they could not afford bus fares to go to their respective rural homes because transport costs rose to unaffordable levels. After the two programmes, many displaced nationals decided to migrate to other countries. Thereafter, the term diaspora emerged in Zimbabwe as a viable option of escaping from the claws of an aggressive regime and a rapidly declining economy.

Review of Literature on the diaspora

The 2000 to 2009 turmoil led to the physical displacement of people into other countries on a large scale as migration became one of the innovative strategies of survival that marked the period. The impact of the programmes influenced individuals to become refugees within the region and overseas. According to Hammar *et al.* (2010, 265), the exodus of Zimbabweans from their country coincided with the use of the term 'diaspora' into Zimbabwean popular discourse'. Braziel (2008, 24) simply defines diaspora as denoting 'the scattering of people from their homelands into new communities across the globe'. There are many connotations and explanations about the Zimbabwean diaspora as postulated by McGregor (2010). Given the Zimbabwean situation since 2000, the term diaspora 'has often been taken up and applied much more selectively' (McGregor 2010, 11). However, in the study I view diaspora in the general sense as referring to Zimbabweans living beyond the country's borders and to countries outside Zimbabwe.

Many displaced nationals decided to join the diaspora for varied reasons which include to seek new livelihoods or to 'seek goods and jobs that were no longer available in their country' (Hammar *et al.* 2010, 264). The diaspora is associated with the destruction of families and the loss of cultural relations. Tevera and Crush (2010, 112) argue that,

Tens of thousands of Zimbabwean doctors, nurses, pharmacists, teachers and other professionals have left the country to secure jobs in Britain and in neighbouring countries such as South Africa, Botswana, Swaziland and Namibia. Most seriously affected is the health sector where, according to one estimate, 60 percent of state-registered nurses and about half of the medical doctors have left the country since 1999.

In addition, a sizeable number of unskilled workers also crossed Zimbabwean borders in order to provide for their families. In some cases, one parent per family has moved into the diaspora thereby leaving children in the care of a sole parent or in the care of maids or other relatives. The reasons for leaving Zimbabwe vary from 'dissatisfaction with social and economic conditions which include shortages of consumer goods to high cost of living' (Tevera and Crush 2010, 113). Tevera and Crush (2010, 113) assert that about 57 percent of immigrants were unsure of their own safety and that of their family members. Women also took advantage of the female occupations such as nursing and social care to form a sizeable number of immigrants into neighbouring countries and even farther abroad (McGregor 2010, 124). The women brought economic benefits to their families who remained in Zimbabwe.

The diaspora has come with a number of implications to the Zimbabwean population both disempowering and empowering. In countries like South Africa, some people have been victims of xenophobic attacks. For instance, in mid-May 2008 xenophobic violence erupted in South Africa where more than sixty people were murdered and over one hundred thousand foreign nationals displaced (Hammar *et al.* 2010, 265; Sichone 2008). The reasons for these attacks include foreigners being perceived as adding to problems of unemployment, crime and lack of housing services for ordinary South Africans (Sichone 2008, 256; Hammar *et al.* 2010, 264).

In many ways and in many forms, literature has highlighted the plight of dislocated people. The literature under study depicts the displaced people and the effects of such relocations. Writing – especially from the diaspora – has also indicated how diasporic life has proved to be difficult (Chikwava 2009). Writers have tried to explain the phenomenon of the displacements and the effects on individuals and their social relations. The writing under study also demonstrates that women have gone into the diaspora leaving their husbands and children behind. Muchemwa and Muponde (2007, xviii) argue that 'the reverse is true in instances of women leaving men at home as they become international migrant labourers'. By this, Muchemwa and Muponde (2007) seem to suggest that given the situation in Zimbabwe

‘the men are manning the nation’. As demonstrated in the literature under study, children suffer because of these displacements.

Social scientists have taken different positions on the above debates to explain what has been happening in Zimbabwe between 2000 and 2009 – some providing empirical evidence or giving statistics – on the effects of the government-induced programmes. Fictional writing however gives the texture of human life through the characters in the stories. Since the land reform and urban evictions began, several Zimbabwean writers have written novels and short stories about this phenomenon. While acknowledging the contributions of sociological and political approaches, this thesis focuses on the literary aspects of women’s writing as ‘there are always interactive possibilities between literature and the social sciences’ (Mangena 2011, 205). Therefore, in this study, I focus on the human characters affected by these events exploring the human dimension of their experiences as represented in fiction by women.

While this chapter introduces the study by stating the objectives, giving the background on how the events unfolded, and reviewing the literature in three thematic areas, chapter two analyses stories on the land reform programme namely, Catherine Buckle’s (2005) “Full Circle” and Vivienne Ndlovu’s (2005) “Kurima”. These stories involve displacement in rural areas and farming resettlements. Chapter three analyses a novel and a short story associated with Operation Murambatsvina. Here, I examine Valerie Tagwira’s (2006) *The uncertainty of hope* based on the experiences of the people of Mbare. In addition, I analyse Diana Charsley’s (2006) “Forgiveness” which focuses mainly on women during the forced removals in urban areas. Chapter four focuses on short stories about the diaspora, namely Sabina Mutangadura’s (2008) “Chemusana” and Blessing Musariri’s (2008) “Counting down the hours”. These stories focus on the implications of relocations on families living apart, specifically pointing out the negative impact on children. Chapter five concludes the study, arguing that despite being faced with economic and political crises, women in Zimbabwe have managed to find ways of articulating their own stories showing different forms of displacements.

Since I am examining the representation of the impact on people, my analysis of the texts primarily focuses on this theme and therefore the characters become the site of my exploration. I have selected two writers to represent each of the programmes. Although the aim is to draw attention to both black and white Zimbabwean women writers’ portrayal of the

programmes, it is a coincidence that white female writers represent the land reform while black female writers represent migrations into the diaspora. However, as Muchemwa (2005, 202) puts it female writers 'although emerging from traditions that differ in style, address the same historical experience'. The language used in the textual construction of the stories reveal different aspects of displacement, which are physical, social, economic and emotional displacement.

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CHAPTER TWO

RURAL AND FARM DISPLACEMENTS IN CATHERINE BUCKLE'S "FULL CIRCLE" AND VIVIENNE NDLOVU'S "KURIMA"

This chapter focuses on stories about the land reform programme as depicted in short stories by two white Zimbabwean women. I analyse "Full Circle" (2005) by Catherine Buckle and "Kurima" (2005) by Vivienne Ndlovu paying attention to their representation of various characters and the characters' experiences of the evictions and relocations associated with the Third Chimurenga. Both writers' textual constructions demonstrate the negative effects of the land redistribution that include economic, cultural and emotional displacement.

Since Buckle and Ndlovu are relatively unknown as compared to the older, more established Zimbabwean writers, a brief biographical background of these authors may be useful. Catherine Buckle is a white woman born and educated in Zimbabwe. She lives in Marondera, Mashonaland East Province of Zimbabwe. Buckle used to write a regular column in a local paper, the *Daily News* until its closure in 2003 (Morris 2005, 111). She also writes weekly email letters concerning the conditions in Zimbabwe, which are published online on the Justice for Agriculture (JAG) website. Buckle has since established her own website, www.cathybuckle.com in which she posts information on the conditions of Zimbabwe (Cairnie 2007, 175). Buckle and her husband 'purchased Stow Farm in 1990' (Cairnie 2007, 174). Before her divorce, Buckle and her husband were involuntarily removed from their farm in Marondera in 2000 soon after the launch of the land reform programme hence the story, "Full Circle" has a personal dimension. For example, Buckle's circumstances are similar to Shirley's, the character in "Full Circle". It can be said that Buckle uses her own experiences of the land reform evictions to write the story thereby avoiding 'blind spots' as postulated by Metcalf (1989, 21). Her personal experiences about the land reform programme has been published in two memoirs namely, *African tears* (2001) and its sequel *Beyond tears* (2002).

Unlike Buckle who was born and raised in Zimbabwe, Vivienne Ndlovu the author of "Kurima" (2005) was born and raised in Northern Ireland (Staunton 2005, xv). She then moved to

Zimbabwe where she married her husband Teddie Ndlovu. She is one of the founding members of the Zimbabwe Women Writers and works as a freelance editor in Zimbabwe (Staunton 2005, xv). Her short story “Kurima” was published in Zimbabwe in a collection of short stories entitled *Writing now: More stories from Zimbabwe* (2005) edited by Irene Staunton. Ndlovu is of the view that ‘writing provides a means to order and manage one’s responses’ (Staunton 2008, ix).

In Buckle and Ndlovu’s stories, specific characters are chosen to illustrate the impact of the evictions. Through the stories, the writers demonstrate what they intend to reveal or conceal about the land reform programme in Zimbabwe. In my analysis, I use short extracts from the stories to interpret these intentions. I will begin by analysing Catherine Buckle’s (2005) “Full Circle” which is set on Barrymore Farm in the Mashonaland Province of Zimbabwe.

The story’s theme is found in the title “Full Circle” in which several displacements occur on the same farm where individuals are continuously moved from one place to another. In the story, two women Blessing and Shirley are victims of displacement on Barrymore farm. Shirley the white farmer is the first to be forcibly driven away from the land by war veterans in October 2000 when the land invasions began. Later in the same story, Blessing, a black woman and a beneficiary of the land reform programme is also violently removed from Barrymore farm in October 2004 after occupying the farm for four years. Blessing is displaced by people whom she could not clearly identify but is ‘certain that they carried guns’ (Buckle 2005, 45).

Buckle (2005, 42) points out that Shirley had lived on the farm ‘all her adult life’ before the land reform programme. The reader also learns that Shirley experiences months of agonising harassment and intimidation from the people who were ‘determined to chase her off the land and out of her home’ (Buckle 2005, 43). Finally, Shirley is violently, physically displaced from her farm, which she had called ‘home’ for many years.

Buckle (2005, 42) narrates that, ‘It was in the first week of October 2000 when Shirley was finally forced out of her home on Barrymore’. The word, ‘finally’ is employed to make the reader aware of several previous attempts to enforce the eviction. The statement, ‘no seed had been planted in the land. No food would be grown this year’ (Buckle 2005, 42) describes the

results of the land reform programme. In the story, the invisible narrator reveals not only what happens but also what the characters think. For example, Buckle conveys Shirley's thoughts on the evictions;

that hundreds of people had gone through similarly traumatic evictions from their homes, but no words could prepare you. Nothing could be said that would adequately equip you for the intensity of emotions that you would have to go through: pain, grief, despair, anger, frustration, rage' (Buckle 2005, 43).

Shirley's thoughts indicate also that she is not the only one faced with the situation but knows that other people are also being evicted. The statement shows Shirley's uncertainty about what is going on around her. The dominance of words that refer to emotion such as, 'pain, grief, despair, anger, frustration, rage' clearly expresses Shirley's emotional displacement. Over and over again Shirley relived that 'terrifying night' marked by violence;

...the incessant shouting and whistling; the clattering and thumps of sticks and stones being thrown onto the roof; the banging of rocks against the burglar bars and the drunken laughter and repetitive drumming of the men who had camped out on her lawn. She could still smell the smoke that had curled in under doors and through ventilation blocks when the men had lit fires against the walls of the farmhouse to scare her out. She could still see the broken glass that had littered her floors and furniture when the mob had begun smashing the windows (Buckle 2005, 42).

The above statement is embedded with words that suggest that the eviction was a non-negotiable event and the description tends to rely on Shirley's interpretation of her experience.

Buckle (2005) employs flashbacks to portray Shirley's nostalgia after her removal from the farm. Before the eviction, Shirley had always regarded the farm as her home with 'other special places on Barrymore too that held far more personal memories' (Buckle 2005, 42). The story reveals that Shirley had no other place to call home and every part of the farm held a memory for her. She had made it home by making an effort to plant 'eucalyptus trees where she had hung the beehives' (Buckle 2005, 42). During the happy moments, Shirley had picnicked and made barbecue meals on the farm with friends and neighbours and sadly for her it is also a place where she buried her three dogs to which she had a special attachment. Such nostalgia shows that the farm held happy and sad personal memories for her.

The second part of the story recounts the events from the perspective of Blessing who like Shirley becomes a victim. Blessing's story begins with almost identical phrases made in the opening of Shirley's story, 'It was in the first week of October 2004 when Blessing was forced out of her home on Barrymore' (Buckle 2005, 43). Moreover, Buckle repeats the two earlier cited sentences from Shirley's story that, 'No seed had been planted in the land. No food would be grown this year' to describe what happened in Blessing's circumstances. These repetitions allow Buckle to lay emphasis on the parallels rather than differences between the two women's experiences. Through the story, Buckle reveals that the land reform was characterised by violence towards the white farmers as well as to the newly resettled farmers. Therefore, the story "Full Circle" is situated in the postcolonial moment when land reform is supposed to correct the earlier situation.

Buckle's story relates that while Shirley the white farmer is violently evicted in 2000, Blessing is also violently removed from her newly allocated plot in 2004. Manase (2011, 32) suggests that blackness seems to signify 'an "authentic" Zimbabwean identity and an entitlement to the land' but the stories emphasise that even the black newly resettled farmers have no guarantee of tenure. This is also reiterated by Orner and Holmes (2010) in *Hope deferred: Narratives of Zimbabwean lives* during an interview with Tsitsi, a black Zimbabwean woman who tells her story to correct the assumption that all the commercial farmers who lost their land were white farmers. She argues, 'My name is Tsitsi Murimi. I was born in Zimbabwe and I am very black – using that logic, I thought I would hold on to that piece of land, my only source of livelihood' (Orner and Holmes 2010, 177). Tsitsi disputes that the main purpose of the programme was to empower blacks by explaining, 'I thought I was black enough' (Orner and Holmes 2010, 169).

Although Buckle (2005, 44) relates that Blessing was involved when Shirley the white farmer was evicted she writes that Blessing is 'not proud of her involvement' on the last night when the *murungu*¹ was forcibly removed from the farm (Buckle 2005, 44). In the story, Blessing is presented as a victim who is forced by circumstances to occupy the farm. She does not want to risk being the odd one in the group but in the end, she is affected emotionally. Blessing

¹ *Murungu* in Shona means white people but these days the term is also being used to refer to a person who has become rich especially business people.

remembers with shame how they had ‘shouted and banged drums and thrown things on the roof to scare the *murungu* away’ in order to enforce the eviction (Buckle 2005, 44).

Buckle (2005, 43) employs the pronoun ‘they’ to indicate how Blessing is tempted to join the land reform programme;

They talked of everyone having their own land. They talked of dams so big that you needed a boat to cross from one side to another... They talked of electricity and boreholes, of irrigation and tractors. They talked of great prosperity and said all the people had to do was go and take the farms. (Buckle 2005, 43).

It is noticeable that these sentences above are clearly marked by repetitions of the verb ‘talked’ but the actor is only presented by ‘they’ suggesting that narrator does not want to mention the names of the participants. The people who caused the action are only presented as ‘they’ without any further elaboration. The repetition of the verb ‘talked’ also emphasises that there were continuous promises as a way of drawing people into the land reform programme.

Besides being persuaded to regard it as an opportunity not to be missed, Blessing does not want to risk being the odd one in the group. She would be ‘a fool and a sell-out’ if she does not participate in the farm invasions (Buckle 2005, 44). During the liberation struggle, being a ‘sell-out’ was an unpardonable and punishable offence as portrayed in Shimmer Chinodya’s (1990) *Harvest of thorns*. Buckle (2005) suggests that Blessing and other people in the village were lured into invading the farms when she writes, ‘The Big Men’ made her believe that she would not have to carry water in a bucket on her head because she was promised piped water. She is shown to be inspired and deceived by these promises made by ‘The Big Men’.

Blessing eventually gives in and leaves her home in the village to occupy Barrymore farm. She is inspired not only by these promises but also because, as a woman, having her own piece of land is empowering. As Mutopo (2011, 1026) puts it, ‘in Zimbabwe women do farm their husbands’ land but do not have any form of title deed or customary acknowledgment to that land’. However, in the end, Blessing becomes a victim of physical displacement.

Buckle (2005) also employs words denoting thoughts and feelings when Blessing moves to the new farm to demonstrate Blessing's nostalgia as a victim of physical displacement just like Shirley, the white farmer. Buckle (2005, 44) relates that;

The shack was not as good as her house in the village and she missed many things about her real home. She longed for her girlfriends, for the laughter and stories they had shared as they fetched wood and carried water together.

From this extract, it is clear that since Blessing moved from her village to occupy the new plot she experiences cultural loss, including that of her home and other social support systems. A home is more than just a physical dwelling, 'it encompasses cultural norms and individual fantasies' (Ndlovu 2010, 119). Therefore, Blessing suffers emotionally after the allocation of a plot on Barrymore farm that is 'dry and covered in bush' (Buckle 2005, 44). She is disappointed and becomes a victim of unfulfilled promises, particularly because the water is far away and there are no water pipes running through her plot. She must still use a bucket to carry water just as she used to do in the village. Blessing's sense of loss and isolation in doing everything alone makes her feel deceived. The irony emerges when Shirley longs for the 'home' which is the farm occupied by Blessing who also longs for 'home' in the village but neither can return to their former homes.

Despite feeling lonely and nostalgic, Blessing worked hard for four years on the new plot. She built a small house 'using poles and mud and covered the roof with thatching grass' (Buckle 2005, 44). She also 'built a small shower room and dug a toilet pit. She grew green vegetables and tomatoes for sale, but this was limited by how much water she could carry on her head everyday' (Buckle 2005, 45). This description emphasises Blessing's commitment to make success of her farming activities on the new plot. The writer's evaluation 'worked tirelessly' confirms such a commitment. However, the story develops by revealing another type of loss when Blessing is evicted from the allocated land.

Buckle's (2005) depiction of Blessing's eviction from her newly acquired plot makes her a victim of both physical and emotional displacement through the portrayal of the eviction, 'the men came in the night she did not know for sure if they were police or army but they carried guns and they meant business' (Buckle 2005, 45). Again the people that caused the destruction

are not specified but called 'the men' but the aim to evict Blessing is clearly described. Blessing's uncertainty is foregrounded with the words 'she did not know for sure' (Buckle 2005, 45).

The reason for Blessing's eviction is that she had settled herself on Barrymore farm 'illegally'. There are however no clear definitions of being legally or illegally resettled. When Blessing tries to protest that she had an offer letter written in her name to confirm the allocation of the plot, the men who evicted her would not listen. Instead they allege the 'offer letter was forged; it was not really from the people who allocated land' (Buckle 2005, 45) and carried on with the violent eviction. This eviction scene demonstrates the lawlessness associated with the farm invasions. Buckle's statement that 'no one would stop them, the police would not interfere' (Buckle 2005, 44) also shows that there was no rule of law during the farm invasions which led to insecurity and lack of protection. The lack of transparency is also reiterated that the 'offer letter' was not from the right authorities.

In the story, the men burnt Blessing's hut and she is informed that it is no longer her plot. She could not even manage to move any of her property that she had worked so hard to acquire. Blessing loses everything when she is evicted, and this includes 'her home, her heart and her belongings' (Buckle 2005, 45). She is ordered to 'go back where she came from and not to return to Barrymore' (Buckle 2005, 45). Blessing could not resist as the men were extremely violent (Buckle 2005, 45). Blessing's loss results in emotional displacement as she endures trauma, and pain. She also becomes a victim of economic displacement, as 'everything is lost' (Buckle 2005, 45).

In "Full Circle", Buckle shows a dismissal of the land reform and claims it as a total failure in a number of ways; the fruit trees on Barrymore Farm were no longer being maintained after Shirley the white farmer is evicted. Buckle (2005, 44) writes:-

The 'Veterans' also grabbed the land with the plum trees and every year Blessing watched as they got smaller and smaller harvests from the trees, because they did not give them fertilizer or enough water. At Christmas time, when the trees were covered in plum, the beetles came too – thousands of yellow and orange beetles. The 'Veterans' did not spray the trees so the beetles ate the plums faster than the men could pick them.

The above description suggests that some beneficiaries of the land reform were ill-equipped or did not know how to make the farms productive. Another dimension that is portrayed is that the farms were taken from white competent commercial farmers and given to the black people who had no farming experience. Yet another implication is that the beneficiaries only wanted to take advantage of the programme but had no farming interests. Manase (2011, 30) commenting on Buckle's memoirs concludes that it 'seems as if Buckle's criticism of the invaders is located in settler colonial perceptions that define Africans as lacking scientific knowledge of agricultural practices and indifferent to the landscape'. Scoones *et al.* (2010) dismiss the total failure of the land reform programme as a myth that may not be true in all cases and overlooks other good values emanating from the programme.

Buckle ends the story with the statement, 'The place where no seed had been planted, no food would be grown again' (Buckle 2005, 45). The same statement is repeated suggesting that the evictions disturbed the continuous farming activities on the farms during the land reform programme. The sentence also contains a verb and an object but the actor who is the doer is missing. The agency in the clause is implicit with the removal of the word 'by' as Buckle does not specify by whom.

The forced removals portrayed in the story result in a feeling of uncertainty for the newly resettled farmers like Blessing as 'the people on all the plots around her were also being evicted' (Buckle 2005, 45). In this way, the story demonstrates a continuous process of acquisition and loss regardless of whether they were white farmers, newly resettled farmers or farm workers. Manase (2011, 31) confirms Buckle's description by explaining that the land reform was 'interlinked with the chaos' affecting even the newly resettled farmers.

However, Buckle's story, "Full Circle" does not account for other people on farms such as farm workers who are bound to be on a farm. These farm labourers worked hard on the farmlands as depicted by Hove (1988) in *Bones*. However, Harrison (2008) in the novel *Jambanja* brings up the issue of the farm labourers by arguing that the white farmer is doing the farm workers a favour, as they have nowhere to go and have known no other home other than the farm. Farm workers were already living on the margins of the society as argued by Rutherford (2001) and

Tirivangani (2004). In addition, the farm workers felt a sense of hopelessness as they were sidelined during the land reform.

The second story covered in this chapter “Kurima” (2005) is set in the Mashonaland West Province of Zimbabwe in which Vivienne Ndlovu presents problems of displacement similar to Catherine Buckle’s “Full Circle”. *Kurima* is a Shona word that means farming but the ‘*Kurima*’ in the title can also be interpreted as a celebration of the farming process where land is perceived as ‘the economy and the economy is the land’. Yet another meaning of ‘*Kurima*’ also refers to questioning the whole farming process. In the story, *kurima* suggests a satirical commentary on the land reform programme in which multiple displacements occur.

Ndlovu (2005) raises some questions regarding the effects of the land reform programme on farming. The events leading to the displacement that occurred before and during the liberation struggle (the Second Chimurenga) are described in the story. Further displacements occasioned by the post-independence land reform programme, which is the subject matter, are also described. Martin, the main character in the story moves from one place to another in search of the farming opportunities, which the land reform programme provided. Martin’s story includes a brief biography of how he grew up. We are told about his physical displacement during the colonial era whereby he moved from Mhondoro, his rural home to work in sugar plantations in Chiredzi. The reason Martin leaves his village is to seek employment so that he can assist his family in paying hut and dipping taxes to the colonial government.

Further displacements occur at Martin’s rural home while he is in Chiredzi working in the sugar plantations. The whole village is forced to move into a ‘*keep*’ (Ndlovu 2005, 263). A *keep* was a central place where people from a number of villages were moved during the Second Chimurenga. The government of Ian Smith introduced *keeps* as ‘protected’ villages to monitor and control the movement of people during the liberation struggle. The purpose of the *keep* was to isolate the freedom fighters, whom the Smith regime viewed as ‘guerrillas’, from the villagers by putting a fence around specific locations of the villages so that no one would enter or leave the area without the authorities’ permission. Because of these ‘protected’ villages, men visiting the villages were regarded with suspicion and subject to searches and interrogations. Martin

therefore only managed to visit his rural home twice in six years during the Second Chimurenga (Ndlovu 2005, 264). What is of interest is that after suffering deprivations during the liberation struggle, Martin is displaced after independence resulting in further physical, emotional and economic suffering for him.

In “Kurima”, Ndlovu (2005) comments on the system of inclusion and exclusion during the land reform as the programme is portrayed as a process used to reward comradeship and not all-landless black Zimbabweans benefited from it. This is revealed when Martin moves from Chiredzi back to his village in Mhondoro after independence in 1980. He becomes interested in farming, trains and qualifies for a Master Farmer certificate. Martin is involved in the party administration and later becomes the party secretary for his ward after independence (Ndlovu 2005, 264). When the Third Chimurenga is launched, he registers for resettlement on land being appropriated by government from white farm owners and being given to black Zimbabweans. He receives an offer letter stating the allocated plot within six months of his application for the new farms that are being offered. Offer letters were given to those people who applied for land when the land reform programme was launched. The portrayal suggests that Martin qualifies to be allocated land not only because of his interest in farming but also because of his strong involvement in the party.

Practices of inclusion and exclusion are also demonstrated when Martin goes to inspect the newly acquired land by the statement, ‘The first thing Comrade Danger asked for was his party card’ (Ndlovu 2005, 266). Martin is also asked ‘about his involvement in the party’ (Ndlovu 2005, 266). This particular incident in the story indicates that the land reform gave preference to those who were loyal to a particular political party and excluded members of other parties. Before the allocation, Martin is asked to prove his role during the liberation struggle before being shown the piece of land, suggesting that the programme also favoured those who had contributed to the liberation struggle. Therefore, Ndlovu’s portrayal of the land reform programme indicates the alleged exclusion of some people.

Ndlovu (2005) also exposes the war veterans’ incompetence in allocating land during the programme. Negative qualities are presented as a revelation of Comrade Danger’s behaviour

when Martin finds him at the liquor store. Comrade Danger is in charge of allocating the new plots and Ndlovu (2005) employs some humour to expose the inefficiency of the allocation process. His name 'Danger' is the writer's strategy for commenting on the danger of farming during the land reform programme and serves as a commentary of the danger to the entire process of the Third Chimurenga. In addition, 'danger' seems to refer to how the land reform was hazardous to the fundamental aspects of farming. In this way, varying degrees of uncertainty are expressed in the story. This sentiment is supported by Martin's thoughts and feelings that 'this whole enterprise was doomed to failure' (Ndlovu 2005, 273).

The land allocated to Martin stretches from *gomo* (mountain) down to the river-bed but he is asked 'nothing about his farming experience' (Ndlovu 2005, 266). From a Shona perspective, if someone is in charge or has been allocated a piece of land that stretches from 'gomo to the river-bed' it is considered a very big piece of land which is a strategy to emphasise the size of the land. Comrade Danger's incompetence is exposed further during the inspection of the plot as they find a wetland on Martin's new land. Comrade Danger views the wetland as an advantage and suggests, 'You have a wetland there. You should be able to grow wheat' (Ndlovu 2005, 267). Comrade Danger ignores Martin's response that, 'But I know nothing of growing wheat... and anyway, I have neither inputs nor money to buy them' (Ndlovu 2005, 270).

Ndlovu (2005) further demonstrates a sense of the programme's inherent corruption as Comrade Danger directs Martin to go and see a friend at the Ministry of Resettlement so that he can be assisted with farming inputs (Ndlovu 2006, 270). When the land reform programme was introduced, it was implied that the farming implements were available to all resettled farmers. Comrade Danger also indicates to Martin, 'You must report to me about your activities. If I am not around, you can always find me at Magwira beer-hall' (Ndlovu 2005, 268). The phrase 'must report' demonstrates that Comrade Danger is more committed to the fact that he is in charge while his incompetence is portrayed with the words, 'you can always find me at Magwira beer-hall' instead of being in the fields assisting the newly resettled farmers.

The narration of this incident further demonstrates that there was insecurity even for the newly resettled farmers as there is no guarantee of tenure. This is revealed when Martin explains to

Comrade Danger that he is merely viewing the plot and would consult with his wife Chido ‘on how they should proceed’ Ndlovu (2005, 267). Comrade Danger views Martin as a speculative settler and threatens, ‘There is no time for playing with this thing. You must occupy the land you’ve been allocated or it will be given to someone else...I am the chief security officer in this area and I will be monitoring your activities’ (Ndlovu 2005, 267). ‘You must occupy’ is a directive in which there are consequences for failure to comply. The statement also informs a particular interpretation that Comrade Danger had the power to allocate and reallocate the land.

Insecurity and lack of tenure is again stressed during another conversation between Comrade Danger and Martin. Martin expresses his concern that people are building temporary shelters not proper houses. Comrade Danger retorts, ‘The government has instructed that people should not build themselves proper houses yet’ (Ndlovu 2005, 266). We learn that Comrade Danger’s remarks cause Martin to feel ‘a sense of unease about the party’s latest programme’ (Ndlovu 2005, 266). The conversation raises a fundamental question of permanency as temporary shelters suggest a temporary usage of the land. Martin senses that there is no guarantee of ownership and he expresses his opinion to Comrade Danger that it is expensive to first build a temporary shelter and then build a proper house at a later stage. Martin senses that not all is well with the land reform programme and he rightly suspects sinister plans as Comrade Danger emphasises that it is a matter of occupying the land or else one might lose the land.

Even though Martin is allocated land under the new programme, he is not guaranteed tenure. As Martin and his wife, Chido take up the offered plot they work hard. After the first harvest, they send the produce to the Grain Marketing Board (GMB). The idea of selling their produce to the GMB suggests that Martin and Chido are settling well on the new land. Although in the story, it is not stated whether they get anything from the sale but in the end, they are evicted without notice. This is revealed when Martin goes back to his village to check on his children. When he returns to the new plot from the village in September of the same year, he is surprised to discover that someone has planted wheat on his plot. Unexpectedly, he finds out that another person had been allocated his newly acquired land. The person explains to Martin, ‘Ah, my son. You’re the one Comrade Danger told us about. The one who built this house and dug the well....Here is my

letter. This plot has been reallocated to me. You did not want to cultivate, they said, so they have given it to me' (Ndlovu 2005, 271).

As in "Full Circle", Martin is reduced to an object that is affected, whilst the agent responsible for the action is only referred to as 'they', which is a feature of the message construction in the writing when any responsibility of the action is left unspecified. The story reveals that Martin is physically evicted and the eviction shows the uncertainty and lack of assurance of owning the newly allocated land. When Martin is emotionally and physically displaced he realises that 'it was too good to be true' (Ndlovu 2005, 272). When Martin queries the decision, Comrade Danger produces another offer letter in which Martin is allocated another plot but this time 'not too far away from' his rural home (Ndlovu 2005, 272). This incident makes it clear to Martin that he is not in control of what is happening to him and his sense of insecurity and betrayal of the promises made earlier about owning land are confirmed as the land has been taken away without notice. Martin is also portrayed as a reasonable person who does not engage in open verbal conflict with Comrade Danger or the man he finds on his plot.

The story is also dominated by interpretations of felt experiences. Martin decides to check on the second plot that he has been allocated and upon inspection he finds that, 'it was virgin bush, but with no water running through it' (Ndlovu 2005, 272). Therefore, he has to begin by clearing the land all over again. He tries to clear the plot together with his wife Chido but they are just not emotionally prepared for it and they particularly feel that the land will not produce anything. Although the new plot is a shorter distance from their village, it is still expensive to travel back and forth from the village since prices of everything – especially of basic goods and transport were rising 'faster than you could imagine' (Ndlovu 2005, 273). Given their earlier experiences of the disruption of farming activities on the previously allocated land Martin and Chido feel insecure. This depiction reveals that an offer letter does not guarantee land tenure. Therefore, the land reform is portrayed as a deceptive enterprise in which grand promises are made that do not materialise. In addition, the family loses the main productive source of their income, which is farming as Martin spends most of his productive time being moved from one farm to the other.

Martin's wife, Chido is equally affected by Martin's relocations. She loses a sense of home, which is more than a place to live, but is also home in the cultural sense. Martin and Chido experience cultural loss of having to clear the land alone, a job for which they would have used *humwe*² back in the village. The new plot proves to be far from the usual family and community support systems. Martin also suffers the loss of his home, as he does not enjoy the cultural home that allows one to share farm implements. The statement, 'they worked from morning till night, cutting trees and clearing the bush' (Ndlovu 2005, 269) is similar to Blessings' story in "Full Circle". Martin is also lonely doing all the farming chores by himself. Despite being a beneficiary of the land reform programme, he is not given a chance to make the new land his real home.

The story shows that the land reform programme led to the disintegration of families as separations occurred due to the allocations of new land. Martin is allocated land where no schools are nearby and unfortunately the school that 'had been on the farm had been closed and the building looted for window frames and everything else moveable' (Ndlovu 2005, 270). Therefore, Martin's children had to remain in the village with their grandparents since they were of school going age. The separation disintegrates the family in which Martin and Chido had to manage two homes. This proves to be difficult as the couple had to commute from time to time from the new plot to the village to check on the children. The separation particularly affects Chido as she missed being with her children (Ndlovu 2005, 270).

More corruption accompanying the land reform process is revealed when Martin, on his way back to the village, to check on the children he observes, 'what looks like a refugee camp. There were old women cooking *sadza* and dirty children playing in the grass' (Ndlovu 2005, 273). It is alleged that the people had been there for several weeks and with concern, Martin asks one ancient *ambuya*³ about this situation. The fact that the writer switches to the *ambuya* implies that even the elderly were not immune to the evictions as the *ambuya* explains, 'Ah, my son. Now we don't know what to do. They say a chef has been allocated our land. That it was a mistake to put us here. They say these are commercial farms and we must go elsewhere, so we are waiting

² *humwe* a communal work party.

³ *Ambuya* means grandmother in Shona and can be used respectfully to address any elderly woman.

to be given our new places' (Ndlovu 2005, 273). The *ambuya* expresses another uncertainty while at the same time revealing that the land reform programme is a continuous process of relocations. Since the evicted people were promised another allocation of land they opted to live in the open while waiting for the new farming places. The story highlights that those who were already living on the margins of the society such as the *ambuya* suffered during the land reform programme as they had to sleep in the open for land.

In "Kurima", Ndlovu (2005) suggests that the programme is also associated with nepotism. On the bus back to his rural home, Martin notices a Mercedes with tinted windows overtaking the bus. The bus conductor is portrayed as the source of information and says, 'That's the new owner of the farm. His brother is a permanent secretary in the ministry'. 'And is he a farmer?' asks Martin. 'Oh no. Nothing like that. He is a businessman' (Ndlovu 2005, 274). The statement by the bus conductor implies the allocation of land through nepotism to people who have little or no farming skills. During the conversation, the bus conductor affirms his version of land reform programme which leads to the end of the story that Martin vows 'to stay in Mhondoro' his rural home 'and do his best with what he had, lest he too find himself evicted and on the roadside' Ndlovu (2005, 274). Martin's evaluation conveys his discontent and criticism of the programme.

This chapter has related the depiction of displacements associated with the land reform programme through the characters in the two stories. Both stories reveal that there is a sense of loss, insecurity and violence associated with the forced removals even for the newly resettled farmers. The depictions suggest that the land redistribution procedures were marked with corruption and dishonesty. The writers also reveal nepotism and lack of transparency in the allocation and reallocation of the land. There are no guarantees of ownership and it is a continuous process of acquisition and loss. The offer letters given during the land reform programme do not confirm tenure to the new farmers while allocation procedures are undertaken haphazardly as in the case of Martin and Blessing.

Buckle and Ndlovu expose the lack of guarantee for the ownership of the land. The evictions hampered the fundamental aspects of farming during the land reform programme. The supposed benefits of the programme are undermined by the loss to individuals whose depictions in the two

stories demonstrate that the new farmers are traumatised and the uncertainties regarding tenure torment them emotionally. The stories suggest that land reform programme displaced ordinary Zimbabweans physically, socially and economically. The writers articulate individual experiences in fiction for the audience to appreciate the human dimension of the stories, which might be ignored in the rhetoric of the discourse on the land reform programme. Their writing also suggests that during the land reform programme those who were well connected politically were given preference at the expense of ordinary landless people such as Martin and Blessing whose farming interests were denied.

The importance of these stories is that they describe displacement caused by the Third Chimurenga in its various forms taking a step further to highlight displacement involving the beneficiaries of the land reform. The stories reveal that some of the resettled farmers were subjected to violence and were stranded after losing their property without compensation because little consideration was shown for their protection or enjoyment of occupation. This makes the reader appreciate how the beneficiaries were susceptible to forced removals regardless of being the first to move into the farms after the eviction of white commercial farmers as in Blessing's case.

The stories suggest an incriminating stance on the perpetrators during the land reform programme. Both Buckle's (2005) and Ndlovu's (2005) depictions show that nothing positive was brought about to the lives of ordinary people of Zimbabwe as they suffer various forms of displacement due the unfulfilled promises especially to women such as Blessing. Men such as Martin suffer economically by moving from one place to another, which is not good for farming.

These writers make it impossible for readers to appreciate the good causes of the land reform programme as Blessing's and Martin's hopes of acquiring land from the white commercial farmers are shattered when they are displaced physically, economically and emotionally without compensation for their lost time and property. The writers' views are thus different from Scoones *et al.* (2010) who point out that the beneficiaries of the land reform have managed to utilise the land satisfactorily. These writers appear to be portraying the myths that Scoones *et al.* (2010) dismiss. Manase (2011, 34) argues, 'white Zimbabweans such as Buckle, have now added their

voices' to the body of literary works that define who should have access to land. However, not all white people in Zimbabwe portray the land reform negatively. Joshua Kurt Sacco a Zimbabwean white singer encourages through his songs 'the desire by Africans to repossess their ancestral lands lost to white settlers during colonization' (Vambe 2010, 104). Critics who view the land reform as a failed historical project tend to overlook other good values emanating from the programme.

This chapter has analysed two short stories on the land reform programme. After the programme, most of the affected people moved into urban areas, which then became the target of Operation Murambatsvina. Therefore, the next chapter examines the impact of urban evictions on several characters in the novel, *The uncertainty of hope* by Valerie Tagwira (2006) and the short story "Forgiveness" by Diana Charsley (2006).

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CHAPTER THREE

DISPLACEMENT IN VALERIE TAGWIRA'S *THE UNCERTAINTY OF HOPE* AND DIANA CHARLESLEY'S "FORGIVENESS"

In this chapter, I focus on the effects of Operation Murambatsvina as illustrated in Valerie Tagwira's novel *The uncertainty of hope* (2006) and Diana Charsley's short story "Forgiveness" (2006). Women's writing, as I have argued, presents the plight of individual characters affected directly and indirectly by the removals and the consequences of physical, emotional and economic displacement. Tagwira and Charsley show how Operation Murambatsvina caused the loss of ordinary Zimbabweans' homes and businesses.

I will start by giving a brief biographical background of the writers before moving on to my analysis. Diana Charsley is a white woman who grew up on a farm in Zimbabwe's Mashonaland Province (Morris 2006, 144). She attained a degree through UNISA at the age of fifty and enjoys writing short stories. She works for the Bulawayo Network (Morris 2006, 144).

Valerie Tagwira is a black woman who graduated from the University of Zimbabwe as a medical doctor and works in London. *The uncertainty of hope* is her first novel, and it won the National Art Merits Award (NAMA) in 2008. Her interest lies in health related and developmental issues that affect women (Tagwira 2006). In the introduction of the novel, Tagwira states;

It began as an exploration in creativity, something that one doesn't practise in the medical field. Then, it became an opportunity for me to explore issues close to my heart... the challenges that women face in their day-to-day lives, and the obstacles that they encounter in trying to make life better for their families (Tagwira 2006, v).

The novel describes the living conditions and experiences of forced removals in Mbare, Harare's oldest low-income suburb. Tagwira discusses the extent to which Operation Murambatsvina affected the characters in the novel as she captures how the tension manifests before, during and after the operation. As Wermter (2007) rightly notes, the characters in the novel may be fictional but the novel is a factual account of what happened in Mbare during Operation Murambatsvina. The circumstances of homelessness, unemployment, poverty, the decline of the hospitals, the

prevalence of HIV and AIDS are highlighted in the novel. My analysis will focus on the effects of displacement associated with Operation Murambatsvina as it appears in the novel.

In order to make sense of the displacements, I describe the characters and their situation before Operation Murambatsvina. Onai Moyo the main character in *The uncertainty of hope*, is married to Gari Moyo and the couple have three children, Ruva (16), Rita (15) and Fari (10). Onai gets minimal financial support from Gari, who neglects the family and cannot meet the basic necessities such as clothing, food, education and health for his family. Onai struggles to survive while her husband spends money on other women. Despite the social and economic decline, life seems to be normal for Onai as she finds alternative means to support the family. She ventures into vending – selling vegetables in order to support the family. Onai's loyalty and love for her family are clearly described in the novel (Wermter 2007). She is portrayed as having excellent qualities such as kindness not only to her family but also to the local beggar, Mawaya, who frequently knocks on her door asking for food.

Gari not only neglects his duties as a husband and father but also assaults Onai to the point that she is admitted into hospital for treatment. Despite being in an abusive relationship, Onai feels culturally obliged to remain in the marriage as she was raised to believe that '... marriage was not something that one could just walk away from. Once you get in, you stay... no matter how hard it gets. Always remember that a woman cannot raise a good family without a man by her side' (Tagwira 2006, 7). Onai confesses she does not remember anyone from her family who walked out of marriage. Her mother, MaMusara is an example of the commitment to an abusive relationship. Situations such as being in an abusive relationship, having a promiscuous husband or not getting financial support from the husband are not reasons for divorce; as long as Onai can support the family through buying and selling vegetables at the biggest market in the country, Mbare Msika, she can survive.

Onai is drawn into *kukiya-kiya* in the low-income residential suburb of Mbare. Besides its centrality and influx of people who move from other townships to buy goods, Mbare bus terminus is also the largest market in Zimbabwe. It connects commuters to most of Harare's townships to other cities, rural areas and even across borders to countries such as South Africa,

Zambia, the Democratic Republic of Congo and Malawi. For the residents of Mbare, vending or *kukiya-kiya* is a way of creating jobs for themselves as it is better than stealing (Tagwira 2006). For Onai ‘the need to make a living for her children...’ drives her to sell vegetables at the market (Tagwira 2006, 127).

Life is portrayed as normal before Operation Murambatsvina in Mbare where female characters Onai, Katy, Maya, Hannah, and Rhoda survive by selling vegetables. The women buy vegetables from vaGudo at a wholesale price to sell to their customers. VaGudo a male character is also involved in *kukiya-kiya* as he uses his vehicle to deliver vegetables to the market at a cheaper price. VaGudo employs three male assistants to help him in the business (Tagwira 2006, 74).

Katy’s husband John Nguni is a long distance cross border haulage truck driver. He is also involved in *kukiya-kiya* for survival as he smuggles girls and women into South Africa. He also brings in foreign currency from trips to South Africa and exchanges the foreign currency for Zimbabwean dollars. In addition, John smuggles groceries from South Africa for resale in Zimbabwe. Both John and Katy are driven into the foreign currency business mainly by their need to pay university fees for their daughter, Faith. They also need to pay off their stand in a more affluent suburban area of Mabelreign in order to move out of the low-income residential area of Mbare, which is marked by poverty.

Besides buying and selling vegetables at the market, Katy is seen from time to time going in and out of the market toilet exchanging the local currency to foreign currency. Katy and John’s main customer is Assistant Commissioner Nzou who is a government official. Assistant Commissioner Nzou is depicted as the closest representative of the government involved in *kukiya-kiya*. Tagwira’s portrayal of Nzou illustrates that *kukiya-kiya* spread to involve government officials. Nzou’s foreign currency dealings involve large sums of money and are usually conducted at night while in disguise.

Through Assistant Commissioner Nzou, Tagwira demonstrates how the government officials and law enforcers are involved in *kukiya-kiya* as he uses the government vehicle to transport the smuggled goods. He also uses a government employee to do his private business with

government resources such as fuel. Even the unscrupulous Tsikamutanda (a witch hunter) takes advantage of the economic situation, as he demands payment for his services in foreign currency. Assistant Commissioner Nzou is lured into getting a charm from Tsikamutanda, which he placed around his waist every day. The charm is supposedly to help him get a promotion in the civil service. Tagwira demonstrates through these characters that the dire economic situation forces individuals to seek the assistance of Tsikamutanda, risking being conned large sums of money.

Hondo, an ex-freedom fighter in the novel is also involved in *kukiya-kiya*. He has extended his house adding other rooms and rents out the extra rooms to tenants in order to supplement his income – ‘anything to raise a bit of money’ (Tagwira 2006, 85). He also imports products from South Africa for resale. Hondo’s real name is Ngozo but everyone in the community calls him Hondo because of his participation in the liberation struggle, the Second Chimurenga (Tagwira 2006, 85). Hondo means war in Shona. As a war veteran Hondo had earned respect from the people of Mbare.

Melody, Faith’s friend who is a university student is also involved in another type of *kukiya-kiya* as a means of survival. She is drawn into a love affair with Chanda, a married man whose wife is working in England. Chanda provides Melody with economic security as he pays Melody’s university fees and promises to continue paying until she graduates. He also buys clothes, groceries and provides Melody with money for her upkeep. Melody is convinced that Chanda is the solution to her survival and is satisfied that she no longer scrounges for food. In addition she no longer worries about which relatives to bother for fees as before her relationship with Chanda she had approached relatives, who in turn had lectured her about how they were also struggling to survive (Tagwira 2006, 80).

Tagwira’s depiction suggests that Melody is an innocent victim responding to the economic situation. Melody does not consider what she is doing to be prostitution and tells Faith, ‘I would.... or rather... I have thought of prostitution. If you knew anything about real poverty, you wouldn’t blame me. If you want to blame something, blame the economy for forcing me into a corner’ (Tagwira 2006, 80). Instead, Melody blames the economy for limiting her survival

options. Faith feels sorry for Melody as she is ‘trading her innocence for university fees and groceries’ (Tagwira 2006, 82).

Similarly, this type of *kukiya-kiya* also applies to Sheila who is now suffering from AIDS. Sheila explains her views to Onai;

You know what, Mai Moyo? When I was a prostitute, I didn’t care about catching HIV. I thought I would die from hunger, anyway. *Kusiri kufa ndekupi?* As a prostitute, I could at least die with a full stomach. Now that I know I will die of AIDS, I think dying of hunger is far much better. If I could have another chance... (Tagwira 2006, 62).

By the statement, ‘*kusiri kufa ndekupi*’ Sheila meant that she ‘will die anyway’ because of hunger and poverty, either way she would suffer. Melody and Sheila are convinced that prostitution is their only means of survival. Melody explains that she is not blessed with rich parents like Faith’s who are foreign currency dealers. Faith feels that nobody deserves this kind of suffering and asks the question, ‘But what about choices? Did the economy really dictate individual choices to this extent?’ (Tagwira 2006, 81).

Tom Sibanda, Faith’s boyfriend besides being a successful businessperson and a new farmer is also involved in *kukiya-kiya*. He gets foreign currency from the black market in order to buy fuel. He explains to Faith, that he cannot survive without the black market (Tagwira 2006, 21). Tom is involved in another type of *kukiya-kiya* in which he arranges with Simba, his friend and shop owner, to get drinks that are no longer available on the market. Even the workers in Simba’s shop are involved in *kukiya-kiya*. One of the shopkeepers tries to sell sugar and cooking oil to Faith at inflated prices (Tagwira 2006, 100).

In the second story by Diana Charsley (2006) “Forgiveness”, the setting shows that the characters MaSibanda, MaNyathi and MaMoyo live in an informal settlement and are involved in informal trading. These women live in a squatter camp where they had built their own houses. MaMoyo and MaSibanda ‘had to walk a long way to find poles for their homes’ (Charsley 2006, 79). The homes ‘had cost them nothing’ except for their labour but ‘these were their homes, snug and filled with memories of struggles, small triumphs and laughter’ (Charsley 2006, 79). MaMoyo and MaSibanda had used grass for thatching and mud for the walls. They could not

find formal employment and therefore they could not afford formal housing. Charsley's portrayal of the characters reveals that they were already living on the margins of society.

As in Tagwira's the novel, *The uncertainty of hope*, MaMoyo, MaSibanda and MaNyathi are also vendors and are involved in *kukiya-kiya* by buying vegetables from the market for resale. The women are single mothers who 'had pooled their resources and survived, getting up early each day to buy produce from the market' (Charsley 2006, 79). In addition, MaNyathi sells groceries, which are no longer available from her house. MaMoyo, MaSibanda and MaNyathi have no other means of sustaining their lives except vending. They also managed to build their own market stalls where they had regular customers. Vending was the norm for most people in Zimbabwe during that period before Murambatsvina. The women used the money they realised from vending to send 'their children to school and even provided occasional treats' (Charsley 2006, 79).

From the above, I have tried to contextualise the characters and their situation as portrayed in the novel, and the short story under study. These two authors' works demonstrate that informal trading also provided another aspect of social life enjoyed by the women. MaSibanda and MaMoyo strengthened their friendship through vending. They consoled and encouraged one another during the difficult times. Onai on the other hand, has something to look forward to every morning as she finds and cultivates friendships out of vending. In a way, vending proves to be a source and a form of social capital. In this way, Tagwira (2006) demonstrates that vending provides social security for women such as Onai who is abused by her husband.

As the situation was already unbearable for the characters in the novel, it is revealed that 'in between serving the customers, the vendors shared gossip about where to find certain groceries' that were no longer available in the shops such as 'maize meal, flour, cooking oil, bread, sugar and soap' (Tagwira 2006, 75). The vendors also 'shared valuable wisdom about how to stock up on foodstuffs and make them last as long as possible' (Tagwira 2006, 75). The story shows that vending has a networking system that in turn provides business to a number of people. For example, vaGudo employs three assistants to help him in the business, which also provides a sense of community and belonging for the people. Musoni (2010, 308) argues that 70 percent of

people in Zimbabwe prior to Murambatsvina worked in the informal sector and lived in informal housing which was the target of Murambatsvina. After Murambatsvina, their businesses were destroyed.

Tagwira (2006) clearly shows that Murambatsvina caught people by surprise. The inadequate warning caused great emotional pain to the people of Mbare. It is depicted that people did get warnings through rumours but characters such as Katy did not take the issue seriously because Assistant Commissioner Nzou had denied saying, 'That must be the most fictitious thing I have heard in years! *Manyepo chaiwo!*' (Tagwira 2006, 72). Nzou misleads Katy and advises her that nothing like that would happen. However, Nzou knew deep down that, 'certainly there would be demolitions to clean up the towns and drive out criminals, including some unscrupulous foreign currency dealers who were running the country's economy aground' (Tagwira 2006, 72). The information about the demolitions seemed to be top secret that even Nzou is surprised how 'this shanty-town woman' could know such information (Tagwira 2006, 72).

We read that even though the announcements were made a day before the demolitions, most people did not hear them. People heard the message in bits and pieces as they continued with their daily business (Tagwira 2006, 119). Those who heard the announcements were convinced that it would not happen since 'the township was the bedrock of the informal employment sector, the largest in the whole country. It was also home to thousands' therefore they would not be affected (Tagwira 2006, 119). Katy and Maya were among those who did not hear the announcements as they were visiting their relatives. It is ironic that on the day of the announcements, Onai was busy celebrating with her children the procurement of basic commodities therefore; they did not hear the warning. The family had managed to get two litres of cooking oil, four loaves of bread and two kilograms of sugar. Onai and her family had spent months without the commodities and their procurement was a cause for celebration.

Tagwira describes the process of economic displacement and gives evidence that the evictions were conducted violently and in the process, goods were confiscated and never recovered from the police. The objective of the operation was to restore the city to its 'sunshine city status' (Tagwira 2006, 135). The women at the market were directed to vacate the premises, as the 'area

is not properly designated for your business' and were asked to visit 'the municipal offices to obtain' proper licences and be allocated 'a proper, hygienic place to conduct your business' (Tagwira 2006, 130-131). The question Onai asks is how they will survive until they were able to resume trading because, for the majority, the market was their sole source of livelihood.

Violence erupted during the operation as residents and traders tried to resist by throwing fruits, vegetables, rocks and other objects at the police (Tagwira 2006). Residents and traders barricaded roads and the police reacted by throwing tear-gas canisters into the air to disperse the crowds and then beat the protestors with baton sticks. Tagwira's portrayal in *The uncertainty of hope*, describes that the market was like a battleground and those who resisted police instructions were arrested.

The novel also portrays that during the operation the majority of shacks were destroyed. Officials demanded approved plans for extensions to the main house or any other buildings in order to verify whether the extensions were legal. Katy's three shacks are destroyed luckily she manages to produce a plan for the extensions to the main house. Signs of emotional displacement are portrayed as Katy's lodgers stood beside their belongings after their shacks were destroyed. Katy wonders where her lodgers will go. However, one police officer answers, 'They can go wherever they came from... I really don't know. Maybe they will be resettled' (Tagwira 2006, 138). This implies there was no plan to cater for displaced individuals.

Maya, another female character, also has her shacks destroyed. Onai's shack, where Sheila used to live is also destroyed. Bulldozers were used to destroy the unapproved structures. However, the bulldozer could not get into Onai's yard because the gate was too small. Onai had two options, either the shack would be burnt down or she could destroy the shack by dismantling it. The last option was the most favourable as it had the advantage of giving her the opportunity of re-using the materials or even selling them. Onai opted to destroy the shack on her own using Gari's axe. The extension of two rooms on the main house was spared because she managed to produce an approved plan for the extensions and was thankful that her in-laws had thought of regularising the extensions.

Onai, Katy and Maya as informal traders were affected economically without adequate warning and any other means of supporting their families. Onai finds that informal trading is suddenly 'illegal' to the extent that it is an offence for which one can be arrested. Although Operation Murambatsvina does not destroy Onai's home, she is deprived of daily income and allowance. Onai reveals she could not even afford a day's loss and the situation would be worse if the market remains closed. Although the government pronounces vending as illegal, Tagwira proves that it was a means of survival for Onai and other families in Mbare. The ordinary people were exposed to poverty after the operation. Even Mawaya, the beggar in the neighbourhood, who seems to represent the wretched of the earth, is affected by the event as he is no longer able to access food from the community especially from Onai his usual reliable source of food.

Sheila is affected physically and emotionally by the destruction of her home, which is suddenly labelled an 'illegal structure' and demolished. She finds herself sleeping in an open space at Tsiga grounds, a place where those people who had their homes destroyed camped temporarily until they were given alternative places to live. For Sheila, Tsiga grounds are worse than the shack at Mai Ruva's house as she is forced to sleep in the open with her baby, which is unfavourable given her HIV status. Tsiga ground proves to be a health hazard, as there is no clean water and toilets.

Hondo, who represents the liberation struggle, is negatively affected emotionally and this leads to his tragic death. His house is destroyed and when the demolition team got to Hondo's house, he was not amused by the situation. Hondo views the police as being disrespectful of people like him who had fought to liberate the country from the British colonisers (Tagwira 2006, 151). Hondo's war veteran status does not grant him immunity to the demolitions. For Hondo, the operation is against the objectives of the liberation struggle as apart from invading his privacy, the demolition team destroys his property and source of income. Hondo could not cope with the double loss of his home and income. We read that when the demolition team gets to Hondo's house,

The officer gave a second, impatient signal for the demolition process to begin. Concrete blocks and asbestos sheets fell with a resounding crash. The noise seemed to jolt the rebellious Hondo back to reality. He acknowledged defeat and leapt off the roof. He looked stunned as he watched the house, which had embodied his dreams, falling down.

There was no way to save any of the furniture in the two rooms that were being reduced to rubble (Tagwira 2006, 151).

Hondo's house was a source of income and supplemented the low income that most people were getting and compensated for the high prices of food during that period. His dream of future freedom is shattered. Hondo's distress affects him psychologically to the tragic point where he commits suicide by throwing himself into an oncoming train. He could not stand the fact that,

When the work was completed, the remaining rooms stood in the early morning sun looking crooked, casting an irregular, unhappy shadow over the ground. ... Shadows had no capacity to feel or show human pain. The demolition team left for the next house in the line without a backward glance (Tagwira 2006, 151).

Hondo is unable to face the aftermath of the bulldozer demolitions, as he experiences the pain of loss and public humiliation. Through Hondo, the operation is portrayed as indiscriminate. Hondo's affiliation to ZANU-PF as a war veteran does not work in his favour. Vambe (2008, 3) admits that Murambatsvina targeted people in 'both rural and urban areas, ZANU-PF supporters, MDC supporters and the non-aligned'. Hondo's death greatly affects his wife as she loses both a husband and sources of income.

To demonstrate further emotional aspects of the displacement, in the novel we read that in addition to Hondo's death, there were other deaths in 'Joburg lines' a section of Mbare Township (Tagwira 2006, 155). Two toddlers were killed instantly when the demolition team erroneously moved in without checking whether there were people inside the targeted shack. The operation renders the parents both homeless and childless leaving them grieving from the double tragedy. Another woman's body is found floating in a ditch with raw sewerage. Although it is not certain how she died, people in the community believe that she committed suicide because of grief. Another woman committed suicide by taking rat poison when both her shack and tuck-shop were destroyed within a space of few hours. With no home and no means of supporting her six children, life ceased to make sense for the woman (Tagwira 2006, 155). Tagwira's depiction of the suicide incidents demonstrates the extreme effects of the Operation.

During the demolitions, everyone was busy with their own problems. For example, Katy spent the rest of the morning assisting her lodgers and neighbours to move their possessions to Tsiga

grounds where the displaced families were being temporarily put up. We read that the demolitions continued everywhere in a similar manner but 'Mbare was the worst affected, by virtue of its levels of overcrowding and social deprivation' (Tagwira 2006, 154). Faith engages in an argument with Tom, her boyfriend, on the legality of the operation and she declares the operation illegal and '...it's a gross abuse of humanity' (Tagwira 2006, 158). She goes on to explain, 'people are now homeless and destitute. Just over a week ago, they all had roofs over their heads. They were earning a living from self-employment. They had dignity, they had self-respect' (Tagwira 2006, 158).

Tom is surprised by Faith's remarks as he views the operation to be a good gesture, as it is supposed to make the city clean and free from vendors. Faith differs and is convinced the process was marked by injustice especially to the people of Mbare whom she could identify with. Tom provides a voice that is in agreement with the objectives of Operation Murambatsvina that of 'restoring order'. Although Faith acknowledges that the streets are cleaner and the city is more beautiful after the operation she is concerned with different issues affecting the society. She wants the authorities to deal with the 'real issues' such as potholes, 'broken street lights and broken street signs, ...neglected buildings' and uncollected rubbish (Tagwira 2006, 159). Tom adopts an official voice and maintains that he enjoys being in town without street kids and street vendors. Tom seems to agree with the government's official response to the Tibaijuka Report (2005) when he says that '...those shacks in Mbare weren't fit for human habitation. I'm sure you know that houses are going to be built for all the people who were displaced. And those will be so much better than the shacks they were living in before' (Tagwira 2006, 160). According to the Tibaijuka Report, the government violated the victims' basic rights. Through Tagwira's novel, the reader is forced to question the state's vision.

Soon after the operation, the government defended Murambatsvina by launching another Operation Garikai/Hlalani Kuhle as a corrective measure to assist those who were affected by Operation Murambatsvina. However, as portrayed in the novel not every victim makes it on the waiting list for Garikai/Hlalani Kuhle let alone benefiting from it. Even the people who were on the waiting list were asked to pay large sums of money as deposit. Onai – despite being on the

waiting list – could not afford the required ‘fourteen million dollars’ deposit, an amount that was beyond the reach of many Zimbabweans during that period (Tagwira 2006, 346).

Tagwira explains that Onai could not cope without vending after Murambatsvina. She finds a way to get around the system and continues to sell vegetables and other products in the city after the operation, specialising in selling fruits and *maputi*⁴ to people who spent nights in petrol queues. Onai also draws in her children to continue vending even though it has been declared illegal, thereby risking arrest. The reason being she has no other means for survival or livelihood besides vending. Musoni (2010, 301) argues that soon after the government had demolished the vegetable stalls and had evicted traders and vendors in the cities, people were back at their trading sites. Survival is the key word for Onai and this is demonstrated when she is confronted by Katy her friend and *sahwira* about letting the children continue with vending which had been declared illegal. Katy warns Onai that she could be arrested. Onai replies,

I know that people are being arrested. I saw Maya yesterday... Do you think I would risk sending my children out, if there was any other way? I think of myself as a good mother. I am a good mother. But we have to survive, Katy. The money that my children have made from their sales has enabled me to pay a deposit towards Ruva’s O’Level exam fees. Where else could that money have come from? What better choices do you see for us?
(Tagwira (2006, 188).

To emphasise the point that most people did not completely stop vending, Musoni’s (2010) case study that focused on Makomva Business Centre in Harare’s Glen View Township confirms that business for the vendors continued soon after Murambatsvina. Musoni (2010, 301) asserts that ‘street vendors devised more subtle forms of resistance’ for them to survive.

Tagwira shows that families were disrupted after Operation Murambatsvina. Onai stayed in the city with Ruva whilst Rita and Fari had to go to the rural areas to stay with their maternal grandmother. They had to attend a school that was far from their grandmother’s village because the nearby school could not accommodate both of them after admitting most children displaced from the urban areas. John and Katy could not live together. John could not come back to Zimbabwe because he was now facing several criminal charges for his smuggling activities.

⁴ roasted maize

Although the programme negatively affected most characters in *The uncertainty of hope*, Onai is fortunate as her suffering is cut short and ends up in a better position as she manages to escape from the poverty in Mbare. She is employed as a dressmaker by Tapiwa Jongwe (rehabilitated Mawaya) and is offered accommodation. Onai is able to bring back her children from the rural areas to reside with her in the affluent suburb of Borrowdale.

In “Forgiveness” Charsley portrays similar effects of Murambatsvina on the characters. Unlike in *The uncertainty of hope* where people were given insufficient notice in “Forgiveness” the people were warned about the evictions but several days passed without any action. They thought ‘maybe the police had forgotten or were busy with something else’ (Charsley 2006, 82). We read that they were told, ‘The Police, again. We must take everything out of our houses...We are living here illegally, they said’ (Charsley 2006, 81). The eviction as illegal squatters also came as a surprise because MaNyathi was born and grew up in the area and ‘the council even delivered beer’ to the mining settlement which was a sign of legality and permanence (Charsley 2006, 81).

Similar to the events portrayed in *The uncertainty of hope*, some of the characters in “Forgiveness” removed roofs of their houses before the Operation to preserve the materials. Some removed their valuable property such as wardrobes from their houses, ‘now piles of possessions could be seen clearly’ (Charsley 2006, 82). As in the novel, in “Forgiveness” there was violence on the day of the Operation as people ‘heard running and voices and a smell’ of burning property (Charsley 2006, 83). Since MaMoyo did not join others who had started demolishing their houses before, the police became aggressive and she was not given the privilege of saving her wardrobe. As in Tagwira’s novel, there was no one to help, ‘each household had its problems’ (Charsley 2006, 83). Charsley portrays that the police had no respect for the elderly, their argument being that ‘You were warned’ (Charsley 2006, 83).

During the Operation, MaMoyo, MaNyathi and MaSibanda’s livelihoods were destroyed. We read, ‘Police had swooped from nowhere. Smashing stands, they called them bad names and kicked them into lorries along with the evidence: tomatoes, bruised and bleeding like themselves’ (Charsley 2006, 79). MaMoyo and MaSibanda’s unnamed friend had a vending licence but the police tore it up into pieces. These women were displaced both economically and

physically. The squatter camp they lived in is also destroyed including their vending stalls. To make matters worse, they had built the houses themselves and their destruction caused emotional displacement.

MaMoyo is depressed as she watches her wardrobe burnt into flames and she is affected emotionally because during the eviction she could not rescue all her property. We read that 'she dragged out her mattress and piled on top of it pots and plates; bedding and clothing hurriedly stuffed onto an ancient suitcase; a stool, a small table and a chair; a plastic drum; the photograph of Forgiveness, her most precious possession' (Charsley 2006, 83). However she could not save her wardrobe.

The women were subjected to violence and humiliation. The situation is made worse for MaMoyo as Operation Murambatsvina is not the first violation that she had encountered. Her body was violated when a soldier raped her. We read that, 'MaMoyo wanted nothing to do with this issue of violence' (Charsley 2006, 80). She was traumatised as she relates the violence of Murambatsvina to the violence on her body when she was raped and bore a son named Forgiveness. MaMoyo once again experiences violence as her property is destroyed and is evicted. She is tormented and thinks, 'I was born for trouble' (Charsley 2006, 81). The women lose their security dignity and felt emotionally displaced realising that their homes, property and livelihoods had been destroyed.

In "Forgiveness", the children stopped going to school after the Operation. On the day of the removals, most children did not attend school. Their parents feared that they could be separated from their children during the evictions so they opted to keep the children at home where they could keep an eye on them. Fundisi also assisted the displaced families by offering them shelter at the church. Most children went to the church for shelter but adults remained behind to guard their property. It had taken most of the people a lifetime to acquire the property and could not just leave it unattended. MaMoyo and MaSibanda being friends opted to move their property together for comfort and protection.

Murambatsvina is portrayed in the story as being carried out with great insensitivity to the rights and needs of most of the characters. The groceries MaNyathi sold from her house and the food that had been donated by the Fundisi were taken during Operation Murambatsvina. MaMoyo is affected emotionally when a police officer attacked her because her son “Forgiveness” is also a police officer. We read that MaMoyo would get nightmares thinking about her son.

Charsley portrays further violence as the police officers burnt MaSibanda and MaMoyo’s home. MaMoyo is kicked repeatedly in the ribs leaving her unable to move. ‘Tears spread across her withered cheeks’ (Charsley 2006, 79). MaMoyo’s words, ‘Uh-uh, this is not a country’ seem to reveal her discontent (Charsley 2006, 83). Besides being disgruntled, she is mocking the authorities for making people to suffer because of Operation Murambatsvina. MaMoyo’s remarks confirms what Vambe (2008, 4) suggests that ‘the phenomenon of Operation Murambatsvina has largely remained hidden’ from the victims. Charsley portrays that the rapid results of the Operation did not prepare people psychologically to deal with the effects, which tormented them afterwards.

This chapter has demonstrated – through the analysis of two women’s writing – that the government-induced Operation Murambatsvina had negative consequences on the marginalised population of Zimbabwe causing various forms of displacement. The writing demonstrates the physical displacement marked with violence that occurred during Murambatsvina, which also caused economic displacement. The characters were affected emotionally as their properties and sources of livelihoods were destroyed.

My analysis has revealed the government voice and the voices of ordinary people in the writing. Tagwira depicts individuals who adopted the government’s official line that Murambatsvina only implied cleaning up the city of illegal dealings such as *kukiya-kiya*. Tagwira’s writing challenges the government’s line by exposing the violence that caused the deaths of individuals including innocent children. The writing exposes the reality that despite various explanations by the government, the fact remains that Operation Murambatsvina victimised and brutalised those who were already surviving on the margins of society.

The government-induced programmes caused many people to decide on the exit option. After these operations most people moved out of Zimbabwe into other countries. Therefore, in the next chapter, I examine the impact of the migrations on children who remained in Zimbabwe.

CHAPTER FOUR

MIGRATIONS, THE DIASPORA AND THE FATE OF CHILDREN

In this chapter, I focus on stories about migration and the diaspora. After the two programmes, land reform and Operation Murambatsvina, some individuals opted to move out of the country to neighbouring countries and even overseas. Mangena (2011, 214) argues, ‘when things go wrong in any society children are the most affected citizens’. Therefore, I analyse the emotional effects on children by examining Sabina Mutangadura’s (2008) “Chemusana” and Blessing Musariri’s (2008) “Counting down the hours”. These short stories by black female writers depict the repercussions for those families living apart, especially on children.

Although the diaspora may have both empowering and disempowering effects on families, this chapter will focus mainly on children left behind in Zimbabwe. I will consider how the migrations affected these households, especially the most vulnerable as Zimbabweans struggle to survive. I also take into consideration that the diaspora has provided income to the family members who have remained in Zimbabwe.

I begin with a brief background of the female writers dealt with in this chapter. Sabina Mutangadura is a black woman who grew up in Bulawayo, Zimbabwe (Staunton 2008, viii). She studied Journalism at Rhodes University, worked in public relations and gained experience in communication. Mutangadura lives in Zimbabwe and spends her time writing and counselling children in Harare (Staunton 2008, viii). Another writer whose work is examined in this chapter is Blessing Musariri, a black woman with experience in children’s writing. She is an award-winning children’s author (Staunton 2008, viii). She also resides in Zimbabwe and has an MA in Diplomatic Studies from the University of Westminster (Staunton 2008, viii).

I will firstly analyse Musariri’s “Counting down the hours” and then move on to Mutangadura’s “Chemusana”. “Counting down the hours” is told through Rumbidzai the main character in the story. The story is a narrative where actions and events are relayed through Rumbidzai the first-person participating narrator. The theme of the story is found from the title “Counting down the

hours". Rumbidzai's first person narration allows a direct insight into her mind. She is a young girl who is left alone at home by her parents. Her mother is in the diaspora in Namibia. Rumbidzai's father is in the country but manages the family farm elsewhere and cannot frequently visit home. Rumbidzai's sister, Marita, is in the United Kingdom (UK) working as a nurse. Tawona, her brother lives in the United States. Rumbidzai is left in the care of *Mukoma Givie*, the gardener and *Sisi Marian*, the maid who is also Rumbidzai's distant cousin.

Rumbidzai's loneliness is revealed in her description of the everyday life in the house. Rumbidzai claims '*Sisi Marian* dies every night when she lays her head on her pillow and closes her eyes. Nothing wakes her until it is time for her to un-die' (Musariri 2008, 101). The statement reveals that although *Sisi Marian* is there during the night, she is unable to attend to Rumbidzai as she never wakes up at night. Rumbidzai being lonely wonders around the house at night. She is so lonely during the night that she often hears their dog Buster barking. Buster is also neglected as *Sisi Marian* often forgets to feed the dog. Rumbidzai complains about her responsibilities of supervising *Mukoma Givie* and *Sisi Marian* who seem to show a lack of interest towards her and the dog.

The story is dominated by interpretations of felt experiences by Rumbidzai. Rumbidzai feels she is too young for all the responsibilities that she is faced with. The irony is that *Mukoma Givie* and *Sisi Marian* are supposed to be looking after Rumbidzai but it is now the other way around. Rumbidzai is tired of living in an empty house 'that swallows me up with its silences' (Musariri 2008, 99). She misses her family, which leads her to accept an invitation to accompany Vuso during one of his frequent trips to South Africa. Rumbidzai finds comfort and company in Vuso and displaces herself from the family home. She then decides to abandon the family home completely to stay with Vuso who is married to Virginia her mother's friend. Rumbidzai claims she can no longer cope with the loneliness that surrounds the family home.

The writing depicts that children being innocent and most vulnerable need parental support and guidance. Rumbidzai is still a child and needs parental protection against men such as Vuso who exploit children by asking for sexual favours. She confesses, 'I'm just a girl pretending to be a woman. How come he doesn't see that?' (Musariri 2008, 104). Rumbidzai reveals that although

Vuso is much older than she is, he is able to comfort her during the long lonely nights. Musariri shows how children depend on adults for social, financial and emotional support (Mangena 2011). Vuso is willing to spend large amounts of money on Rumbidzai. She confirms that Vuso 'spends his money almost as fast as he makes it – on stupid things' (Musariri 2008, 102). On the other hand, Rumbidzai's behaviour is presented in such a way as to suggest that loneliness causes immoral behaviour. Rumbidzai does not only miss her parents who are away but also her siblings who are in the diaspora. Rumbidzai's brother Tawona who is in the diaspora also feels a sense of displacement especially the loss of his mother language Shona. The loss leads Tawona to give himself a name 'Z3' as way of claiming his country's name (Musariri 2008, 98).

In "Counting down the hours", Musariri portrays that several people from the same family are in the diaspora. They left without Rumbidzai's knowledge and she is not consulted on decisions that affect her. Rumbidzai realises that the marriage between her parents is slowly fading away. She comments, 'I think Mama and *Baba* really believe that they're still married. They share children and property – where neither of them resides' (Musariri 2008, 105). Although Rumbidzai believes that her parents love her, she is convinced that they have abandoned her. She explains, 'If their love for me were a tree or a plant, it would be a branchless, leafless, flowerless stem that is still alive only because the root hasn't died' (Musariri 2008, 105).

Rumbidzai feels that she is justified to abandon the family home although her friend Violet is openly critical of the behaviour pointing out, 'do you realise you're putting yourself at risk of AIDS and other horrible diseases? And what will you do when his wife comes back?' (Musariri 2008, 102). Rumbidzai ignores the advice from her friend justifying her behaviour by saying that it is just a temporary situation. Rumbidzai is adamant even when she is reminded about morals and her 'body being God's temple and self-worth' (Musariri 2008, 102).

Vuso provides comfort, which is cut short when Virginia comes back and finds Rumbidzai in her bed with Vuso. Virginia only realises later that it is Rumbidzai, her friend's daughter, who shared the same bed with her husband during her absence. The question posed by Virginia that 'Rumbidzai?... Is that you?' (Musariri 2008, 108) provides the ending of the story. The question has a meaning and function in the story in that it is a question beyond seeking information about

the truth. The story ends with Virginia fighting Rumbidzai which leaves the child emotionally and morally affected.

The second short story by Mutangadura “Chemusana” (2008) is set in Zimbabwe and is related by a non-participating narrator. Chemusana, also known as Chemu is a child whose mother leaves the family to work in the diaspora. Chemu is left in the care of Estelle a maid and is affected by the fact that his mother goes without a proper farewell to him. His parents leave to attend a graduation ceremony for Chemu’s father. It turns out that only Chemu’s father returns as the mother decides to stay in England. Chemu only discovers through Estelle that his mother is not coming back. Chemu being a child is caught in between and is not involved in the decisions that are made although they concern him. As in “Counting down the hours”, Mutangadura depicts the plight of children being ignored as decisions are made without their consent or opinions.

Chemu misses his mother although Estelle is seen covering the gap that was left by his mother. Chemu also feels lonely especially at night. His loneliness causes him to have bad dreams. He longs for his mother and screams during the night. Estelle is there to comfort Chemu at night, which is different from Rumbidzai’s experiences. Chemu’s father is hardly available for him as he comes home late at night and leaves early in the morning. The portrayal suggests that Chemu’s father has no time for his son. On the other hand, Chemu’s father could also be lonely as he resorts to drinking beer and coming home drunk.

The sense of loss affects Chemu’s identity in different ways. We get a sense of this loss through his nostalgia as he relates the experiences they had before Bruce, Estelle’s boyfriend left for South Africa. They seemed to have a normal life during the days before Bruce’s departure as Estelle would fetch Chemu from school and they would pass through Bruce’s workplace. Bruce would then escort Chemu and Estelle back home during his lunch hour and they would normally have lunch together. The description of these events establishes that life is not the same because Bruce has left. The implication is that this is no longer the pattern, which also affects Estelle to the point of daydreaming and Chemu confirms this saying, Bruce was responsible for most of ‘the damage to clothes and pots around the house that had occurred since he left’ (Mutangadura

2008, 76). Estelle also wants to join her boyfriend in South Africa although Bruce sends groceries and clothes to her with *Malaitsha*⁵. Estelle realises that her relationship is more important than the goods and decides to join Bruce in the diaspora. Chemu's father on the other hand, does not understand the reason why Estelle wants to join Bruce although his wife is in England yet he finds it difficult to understand Estelle's vision.

When Estelle finally leaves for the diaspora with *Malaitsha*, Chemu's father is stranded as he regards looking after children the responsibility of women. He decides to take Chemu to his maternal grandmother and as a result, Chemu is displaced from his home and usual environments. Chemu is taken to a completely new place to stay with Gogo. The story shows that being uprooted from a familiar place and familiar people is extremely disruptive even if one is relocated to stay with relatives such as a grandmother.

Before Estelle's departure to the diaspora, she covered the gap left by Chemu's mother in a number of ways. Besides being available to pick Chemu from school, Estelle also assisted Chemu with homework, especially in subjects such as Ndebele in which Estelle is good. However, the assistance proves not enough for Chemu who longs for his mother. Chemu suffers further dislocation when Estelle decides to join Bruce in the diaspora. Chemu's removal from home to stay with his grandmother further disrupts the daily routines that he was used to and this affects his personal identity.

The double loss of his mother and Estelle not only affects Chemu's schoolwork but also disrupts his relationship with friends at school. During the day, Chemu would spend most of his time playing a computer game that his mother bought for him. There are visible effects on Chemu as his schoolwork deteriorates to a point where his father is called to the school to discuss the matter. There is also general disagreement in the family when Estelle leaves for South Africa. Chemu's father quarrels with his sister Tete Mary because she feels that Chemu's mother has deserted the family. Instead, Chemu's father takes his wife's side arguing that Chemu's mother has to fend for the family saying, 'If I'd been able to provide better, maybe she wouldn't have stayed in the UK so as to try and raise money for us all' (Mutangadura 2008, 82). In this way

⁵ *Malaitsha* are transporters of groceries and other goods from the diaspora community, especially in South Africa, to relatives and friends in Zimbabwe.

Mutangadura reveals that Chemu's father failed in his role as a provider which makes him weak as he feels his fatherhood is compromised by his failure to provide for the family. However, he admits to this failure and sympathises with his wife's absence.

Mutangadura (2008) constructs the position of how motherhood is important in a family. Tete Mary also brings forward the idea that looking after children is the responsibility of women and strongly advises her brother to marry another wife to take care of Chemu. These events in the story reveal how the family is confronted with a problem concerning the diaspora. Chemu witnesses quarrels in the family, which then affects him emotionally. There is also a conflict between Gogo and Chemu's father. Gogo is also affected by the situation and seeks comfort from the women from her church who come to pray for her. The trauma of the disruption of a stable and normal life affects Chemu. Mutangadura also reveals that the problem the family is confronted with brings about Tete Mary's distance from her sister-in-law which presents generally a bad relationship between the two. Chemu's mother's absence is presented as a threat to family relations, which further causes conflicts and disagreements in the family.

Later in the story, Estelle decides to return to Zimbabwe when she finds out that Bruce is in love with another woman in South Africa. When she returns, life seems to be normal for Chemu and for a moment, he forgets about his mother. We read that,

They headed towards their own house and not gogo's, and when they got to the gate, his dad hooted. Out came a familiar figure in a nurse's uniform. Chemu couldn't believe it. He looked at his dad with a question in his eyes....He paused as the familiar figure obstructed his way to the kitchen ... Estelle smiled and the dimple in her cheek deepened. He looked up at her and couldn't help it – he smiled. He let her take hold of his hand as they walked towards the kitchen. She took his satchel from him.

(Mutangadura 2008, 84-85).

With Estelle's return, Chemu's father is relieved that things are back to normal. We read that 'Chemu's dad looked out the window and smiled as he watched the two running around the garden. Things were just as they should be – at long last' (Mutangadura 2008, 85).

The short stories analysed in this chapter illustrate the effects of migration on families. In both stories, several people have moved into the diaspora. Hammar *et al.* (2010, 267) note that displacement is characterised by mobility and confinement. The children in both stories are confined to the country while their mothers move out of the country. These stories demonstrate

that displacement affects the children emotionally and socially. In Rumbidzai's case, the depiction reveals that displacement can lead to children's sexual abuse. Musariri (2008) shows that internally displaced children fall prey to sexual violence since they do not have protection from their parents. Rumbidzai is still a child and needs parental protection against men like Vuso who exploit children by asking for sexual favours. Cultural loss is also demonstrated by Rumbidzai's immoral behaviour. Mutangadura in "Chemusana" also exposes how children are affected emotionally as in the case of Chemu who lost focus on his schoolwork, which consequently deteriorates.

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CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION

Using texts by female writers, this mini-thesis set out to show how the government-induced programmes affected the people of Zimbabwe. In this study, my assertion is that despite being faced with economic and political issues women writers in Zimbabwe have managed to find ways of articulating their own stories. The women's representations of the post-2000 society's perceptions of the government-induced programmes have shed some light on some of the highly controversial issues. The writers have become witnesses to the experiences that took place on the ground through the characters in the fictional writing. I have tempted to let 'these women's words speak eloquently for themselves' (Nfah-Abbenyi 1997, xi). The chronological order in which the chapters are arranged deals with the consequences of these historical events as they unfolded. The study shows that through writing, women have managed to expose the effects of the land reform and Operation Murambatsvina. The major theme identified is physical displacement, while other forms of displacement are emotional, economic and cultural dislocations. The main cause is the land reform process that occurred in 2000 forcing some people to move from the rural and farming areas into the informal sector in urban areas. When Operation Murambatsvina struck in 2005, some people had limited coping strategies except to escape into the diaspora.

The study has shed some light on the experiences of displacement from a fictional point of view represented by the black and white female voices in Zimbabwe. These authors have demonstrated that the programmes were marked by violence that occurred during the land reform and Operation Murambatsvina. The writing exposes the psychological effects of these displacements, which in some instances, led to the deaths of individuals for example, as portrayed in Valerie Tagwira's *The uncertainty of hope*. The uncertainty led individuals to migrate to neighbouring countries and even overseas causing further disruptions of families.

Although the land reform was meant to correct the land imbalances between whites and blacks created during colonialism, the writers demonstrate that the programmes affected ordinary Zimbabweans negatively. Operation Murambatsvina was meant to end illegal dealings such as

kukiya-kiya but displaced people physically and economically causing psychological effects. The implications are demonstrated through the individual characters in the narratives.

The land reform programme was supposed to bring new opportunities for ordinary people in Zimbabwe. Women such as Blessing in “Full Circle” took advantage of the programme to be resettled. Blessing feels empowered after being allocated a piece of land in a patriarchal society. Blessing – believing the promises – thinks that she would overcome poverty through farming on her allocated land. However, she encounters the painful experience of being evicted after occupying the piece of land for four years. She becomes a victim of unfulfilled promises. There was hope of acquiring land from the white commercial farmers but for characters such as Blessing, the programme did not yield anything good. Blessing’s dreams are shattered as she is violently removed from her newly acquired piece of land. She receives no compensation for her lost property.

Martin in “Kurima,” proves to be a good farmer when he is allocated a piece of land through the programme. He is however not assured of tenure. The piece of land that Martin is allocated is later given to another person without his knowledge. Martin is then allocated another piece of land, which is virgin land that needs clearing and faces difficulties in setting up a new home. Martin is displaced economically and emotionally as he spends most of his productive years moving from one farm to the other. Martin’s displacement results in the disruption of the family, which affects his wife Chido and their children.

Martin later realises the uncertainties of the land reform as he notices other people who have been evicted after being allocated land. Martin views the land reform as being marked by corruption, nepotism and favouritism. His dreams of being a productive farmer are shattered when he fails to settle down, as he wanted to when he took advantage of the land reform programme.

The works by women writers have shown that although land reform was meant for a good cause, individuals were displaced and most of them violently and repeatedly. Their fictional writing expose that even the newly resettled farmers were displaced as shown in the case of Martin in

“Kurima” and Blessing in “Full Circle”. The losses suffered by the newly resettled farmers caused depressing experiences for them.

The writers studied make it impossible for the readers to appreciate the intentions of the land reform. They confirm the myths dismissed by Scoones *et al.* (2010) firstly, that Zimbabwean land reform has been a total failure and secondly, that the beneficiaries of Zimbabwean land reform have been largely political ‘cronies’ and lastly, that there is no investment in the new resettlements. Instead the short stories demonstrated that the land reform programme lacked transparency in that those who thought they had benefited were later evicted without warning.

Blessing’s participation in the eviction of the white farmer does not guarantee tenure as she is side-lined in the ownership of land. On the other hand, Martin is portrayed as lacking in wisdom to notice that the land reform is not a good venture. He only realises that the land reform is not yielding any good results after spending years moving from one farm to another resulting in the loss of income. Martin’s movements affect his wife Chido emotionally.

The writing on land reform shows lack of security even to the people who were given letters confirming the ownership of the land. The newly resettled farmers are forcibly evicted despite being in possession of documentary proof. The benefits of the land reform programme are undermined by the loss to individuals. The evictions show the negative effects on the fundamental issues of the land reform programme which is farming. The women’s writing has shown that the land reform was accompanied by disorderliness and corruption. This lawlessness and lack of respect for private property that characterised the land reform programme in 2000 led many people to occupy areas on the fringes of the cities and engage in informal and illegal commercial activities all in the spirit of *jambanja*. The people were later involved in *kukiya-kiya*. The authorities decided to solve the problem of *kukiya-kiya* by launching Operation Murambatsvina.

On Murambatsvina, the white and black writers’ depictions show that women characters were more vulnerable than the male characters. In “Forgiveness”, MaMoyo, MaNyathi and MaSibanda were already living on the margins of society and their situation worsens when their

only source of livelihood is destroyed let alone their homes. Similarly, in *The uncertainty of hope* the women's only source of livelihood is also destroyed. Katy's foreign currency dealings and vegetable vending is destroyed and she suffers the disintegration of family because her husband John is forced to stay in South Africa, as he is facing criminal charges for illegal dealings. Hondo's wife suffers emotionally when she lost her husband and sources of income.

In my analysis of Operation Murambatsvina, I have been able to bring out the voices of those who were affected by the operation and the government voice. Tagwira's work shows that some individuals adopted the government's line of cleaning-up the city as a way of ending *kukiya-kiya*. However, in the process of ending *kukiya-kiya*, Murambatsvina displaced individuals who were already marginalised.

Tagwira challenges the government by exposing the violent deaths during Murambatsvina including innocent children. Although the novel ends on a positive note for characters such as Onai, the other characters in the novel suffered economically and emotionally which led to desperate situations. In "Forgiveness," the women were stranded with nowhere to go after losing their property. The situation was worse because MaMoyo and MaSibanda were staying in an informal settlement and were involved in informal trading. The women lose both their homes and livelihoods. The negative side of Murambatsvina is clearly depicted as the women encounter violence causing emotional displacement. The writing deliberately portrays women as doing everything in their power to sustain their lives but in the end, they become victims of the situation.

The fiction portrays how the government forces who are supposed to protect the country's citizens use violence as the instruments of displacement. Hence, the police and the military are portrayed negatively and the authorities are accused of not being sympathetic to the people.

In the stories about the diaspora, the black female writers give accounts of women taking reversal roles as they assume the usually male responsibilities of providing for the family. They portray that women do not have to depend on their husbands and have emigrated from Zimbabwe to seek new livelihoods in order to support their families. Whilst in the diaspora,

these women have compromised the lives of their children. Rumbidzai, as a minor, is forced to engage in immoral behaviour as she seeks the comfort of a married man. On the other hand, Chemu suffers emotional displacement as he recognises how his mother is important to him. Chemu does not understand what is going on in the family and blames himself as the cause of the disagreements within the family. In both stories, “Counting down the hours” and “Chemusana” children are not consulted on the decisions that affect them. The children become victims because their mothers are away in the diaspora. Another dimension about the importance of motherhood in children’s lives is suggested by these writers as the rights of children are violated by the absence of their mothers.

The value of fictional literature by these female writers lies primarily in these representations of individual lives in a period of crisis in Zimbabwean society. These writers give a name and a face to these tribulations through the characters in the stories and provide the human dimension of suffering caused by the programmes. This study focused on individual characters in the stories in order for the readers to appreciate the challenges that the ordinary citizens faced. Through women’s writing studied, different themes associated with displacement emerged such as violence, corruption, loss of income, insecurity, loss of home, the disruption of families, emotional and cultural displacement.

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