

RE-IMAGINING ZIMBABWEAN NATIONHOOD THROUGH FESTIVAL THEATRE: *ALLEGATIONS* (2009) IN CONTEXT

Patience Fadzai Maforo¹ and Nkululeko Sibanda²

Abstract

This paper interrogates Harare International Festival of the Arts (HIFA) as a temporal centre of identity construction which helps in re-envisioning indices of the Zimbabwean nationhood in post-independence. The paper argues that HIFA, as a cultural contact zone, facilitates identity construction and assists in re-envisioning Zimbabwean imagined identities (Anderson, 1991). It also argues that HIFA presents a platform that opens, negotiates and resists normative identity narratives of 'Zimbabweanness' through affording the production of plays that challenge the racial binaries and exclusive definitions of those who belong within and/or without the boundaries of Zimbabwe. Through the analytic frames of post-nationalistic concepts of multiculturalism and globalisation, this paper questions these major indices used to frame Zimbabwean nationhood, using texts of intervention at HIFA. In this light, the paper is interested in exploring how the boundaries of Zimbabweanness are constructed and explored at HIFA through Patience Tawengwa's play, *Allegations* (2009).

Keywords: HIFA, identity, *Allegations*, nationhood

1. Introduction

Festival theatre has become a common phenomenon in the cultural industries and theatre practice the world over. Ranging from the indigenous ceremonial and ritual carnivals to the development-oriented community participatory gatherings to highly complex and business-modelled intercultural festivals, festivals operate as instruments that open up and/or disrupt the restricted imagination of the nation. In this paper, festival theatre refers to theatre productions and/or performances that are created, developed and performed solely for and at festivals. It is a kind of site-specific theatre performance which largely revolves around festivals. In most instances, festival theatre productions are usually commissioned works that are targeted at a certain goal or objective set by the festival management.

Muwonwa (2011) observes that in a global cultural economy, festival theatre occurs within a nation space that has been conceptualised through narrow and selective perspectives with regards to issues of citizenship and rights. The conceptualisation of citizenship (for the audiences who attend the festival) is modelled on the festival's objectives and goals. This paper makes use of the Harare International Festival of Arts (HIFA) as the festival case

¹ Department of Theatre Arts, University of Zimbabwe, Harare, Zimbabwe. Email: patiemanzira@gmail.com

² Department of Languages and Communication, Lupane State University, Lupane, Zimbabwe. Email: sibandankululeko@yahoo.com

study, with Patience Tawengwa's *Allegations*, a play she produced in 2009, as the festival theatre text.

In this paper, we argue that HIFA and the festival theatre text expose the nationhood challenges faced by Zimbabweans in a globalised and multicultural world. *Allegations* (2009), a play about Spud, a white farmer who loses his farm and father to farm invaders and who abhors the black 'other', but later on realises that his 'other' black counterparts are suffering the same fate, explores the challenges of nationhood creation from a racialised dislocation perspective. *Allegations* is a text that destabilises the norm in a period when black people were being favoured by the systems and even the programmes that appeared in most, if not all, media which exalted black people while discrediting white folk.

This paper has three analytical sections that are guided by the following questions: To what extent do the festival theatre texts challenge (and/or confirm) normative indices of belonging to the Zimbabwean nation space? What are the possible challenges, tensions, and complexities that may erupt from 'textual visions' which attempt to celebrate diversity, tolerance, recognition and respect? What possible benefits can emanate from the textual vision(s) provided through HIFA festival theatre within Zimbabwean multicultural spaces?

2. Theoretical Framework

Theoretically, this paper is guided by the theories of multiculturalism and globalisation (Balme, 1999; Fischer-Litche, 2009; Hauptfleisch, 1997; Held, McGrew, Goldblatt and Perraton, 1999). Multiculturalism refers to a contemporary belief system that requires individuals to value and respect distinctions between in- and out-group members while at the same time keeping a common superordinate identity in mind (Park and Judd, 2005). In this paper, multiculturalism is deployed as a strategy for coping with cultural and social diversity in society (Inglis, 1996). The major characteristics of multiculturalism are diversity, recognition and respect (Rosado, 2009) which are achieved through complex processes of translation, negotiation and enunciation (Stevenson, 1999). Multiculturalism is positioned in this article to examine how the HIFA festival through the aforementioned text tackles racial challenges in developing a multicultural festival.

HIFA operates in a global network of festivals which link North, East, and Southern Africa. This network creates a borderless world (Ohmae, 1990) of cultural activity which influences social, political and economic activities across political frontiers (Held et al., 1999). Globalisation acknowledges the fluidity and dissolution of boundaries (Stohl, 2005), and it resonates well with the concept of multiculturalism as it supports, tolerates, respects and recognises diversity within a pluralistic HIFA society that is located within the 'dual' nation of Zimbabwe. The theory of globalisation is used in this paper to understand the nation of Zimbabwe as a penetrable boundary whose indices of land and racial imagination can be transformed through HIFA's networks

that enable the development of texts of intervention.

Nationhood derives its fundamental characteristics from the concept of the nation. Nation has been defined by Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin (2006) as a shared community, a narrative (Bhabha, 1990), a soul, spiritual principle (Renan, 1990), imagined community (Anderson, 1991) and an invented community (Chatterjee, 1996). Since nations are constructed through socialisation and conquest, nationhood is, therefore, a product of multiculturalism and globalisation. Globalisation in this context must be viewed from a very simplistic manner of ideas that are transmitted and affect neighbouring areas. From this perspective, multiculturalism and globalisation are crucial in our attempt to understand the reconstruction of a heterogeneous nation whose indices of nationhood are not only stringent but are flexible enough to accommodate everyone residing within the Zimbabwean nation through performance.

3. Pitfalls of Zimbabwean Nationhood

Although in Zimbabwe socialist integration programmes have been preached since independence in 1980, there has been a lot of scepticism and ambivalence towards their implementation due to a lack of political will and structural mechanisms. Gukurahundi (1982-87), land reform (1999-2008) and Murambatsvina (2008)³ stand as dark periods in the history of Zimbabwe that taint the nation's progress towards social inclusion. In post-independence Zimbabwe, Zimbabwe African National Unity Patriotic Front (ZANU PF)'s political and ideological narrative is 'considered' synonymous with the history of the nation. Other versions that acknowledge other players such as ZAPU are suppressed (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2007; Ravengai, 2010). Thus, the nation has remained closed in various ways that continue to spark controversy.

The history of Zimbabwe has always been defined along ethnic and racial lines. During the pre-colonial era, Zimbabwe was divided into states defined by language dialects and ethnicity. Throughout the colonial era, Rhodesia was largely divided into two: Mashonaland (for Shona people) and Matabeleland (for Ndebele people). This complexity has been carried forward into the independent Zimbabwean nation birthed after a long bloody liberation struggle. The colonial and post-colonial periods have also been characterised by racial binaries. Certain spaces have been reserved for the 'superior' races and so has been the cultural fraternity which has led to the production and consumption of performances for only a specific race or class. While this article analyses the period from 1999 onwards as the basis for the desire to 'open up' the nation, the history of nationhood before 1999 is important because it provides a referential background against which the analysis is done. The period 1999 onwards is chosen specifically because it is

³ Gukurahundi, land reform and Murambatsvina are dark periods which Zimbabwe went through. Gukurahundi saw ethnic massacre of the Ndebele people. Land reform saw whites 'losing' their land in a redistribution process. Murambatsvina was a clean-up campaign which dispossessed a number of urban residents.

when HIFA was in operation.

Since the genesis of Zimbabwean nationhood is political, the re-dress mechanisms and strategies have adopted a political nurture with support from the government. The period starting 1999 onwards marked the beginning of the Third Chimurenga (Ranger, 2004). The Third Chimurenga was characterised by an extensive repossession of land by the majority local indigenes from the white minority community. Also, the period marked the beginning of a constitutional review and writing process which had false starts and referendum rejections until the Constitutional Parliamentary Select Committee (COPAC) 2013 draft was accepted and signed into law. The same year coincided with the formation of the opposition party Movement for Democratic Change (MDC), a coalescence of trade unions and civil rights groups that came in to challenge the ruling regime (Jeater, 2012).

Significant to note is that when the government lost the constitutional referendum in February 2000 to a broad coalition of opposition and civic society movements (Muwonwa, 2011), a new narrative and understanding of nationhood begun to emerge. Citizens began to question the status quo and challenge it to respect the rights of minority groups. From the cultural scene, musicians and thespians created work that was critical of the Administration and its policies. Legendary musician Thomas Mapfumo produced his critical album *Chimurenga Explosion* in 2000 with songs such as *Disaster* aimed at ZANU-PF. At Theatre-in-the-Park, in 2003, Davies Guzha produced *Super Patriots and Morons* which was disrupted and banned. To counter the alternative narratives of nationhood emerging from the communities, the government labelled opposition politicians, civic activists and academics sell-outs. We consider this act of labelling and 'othering' (Said, 1978) people with divergent views of nationhood exclusionary.

Land is considered the authentic signifier of national identity (Mupondi, 2012). However, in Zimbabwe, land has been a contested signifier of the identity of a Zimbabwean. First, the colonial era injustices that created reserves for indigenes and allocated large tracts of fertile and productive land to the settler community created disequilibrium in land ownership and use (Muchemwa, Ngwerume and Hove, 2011). During this period, race determined access to land. At the turn of the millennium, the ZANU-PF led government enacted the Land Redistribution Act to give arable land back to the black Zimbabwean masses (Mhako, 2014). Land was reposessed from white farmers through government gazettes and parcelled to ZANU-PF card-carrying black people.

From these two land reform programmes, land was used to include/exclude the other from the national narrative. In colonial Zimbabwe, indigeneness/localness was the basis for exclusion from citizenship while after independence, foreignness and minority status became the basis for exclusion from the citizenship of the new Zimbabwe. The contradiction and contradistinction with the social inclusion narrative of early independence highlights Zimbabwe's challenges of defining its identity and nationhood.

Although Zimbabwe is a multi-cultural, multi-racial and heterogeneous nation, race and ethnicity have continued to be conflict-generating phenomena (Gatsheni-Ndlovu, 2011). The barriers between Black and White races are rigid (Kanneh, 2002) in Zimbabwe. The major ethnic groups, the Shona and the Ndebele have been treated unequally with perceptions, both real and imagined, about marginalisation (Muzondidya and Gatsheni-Ndlovu, 2011). There are hardly instances where both benefit. Yet, it is hardly feasible for Zimbabwe to remain with such a parochial closed appreciation of nationhood in this globalised society. It is against this backdrop that the HIFA festival comes in as strategy to open up this 'segregated' community.

4. Alternative Narratives of Nationhood at HIFA

Whilst purists and nationalists sought to replace a hegemonic colonial residual theatre strand with an essentialist African theatre paradigm grounded on indigenous performance narrative (Chifunyise and Kavanagh, 1988), HIFA emerged and disrupted extant ideologies in Zimbabwean performance. In the Zimbabwean festival circuit, HIFA came in as the 'missing link' connecting the indigenous and the global, and dissecting all cultures and promoting cross-cultural fertilisation (Yankah, 2012). Thus, the HIFA theatre programme became, since its inception in 1999, a diversity tool championing the creation of a number of Zimbabwean narratives and identities.

HIFA is an internationally acclaimed multi-disciplinary and multicultural festival founded in 1999 by Manuel Bagorro. As a home for showcasing miscellaneous artistic disciplines such as theatre, fine art, poetry, music and dance (The Herald, 14 March 2014), HIFA has become globally recognised. It has managed to weather the nation's stormy decade of farm invasions, hyperinflation and political bloodshed to gain repute as the Glaustonbury of Southern Africa (The Guardian, 9 May 2013). In Zimbabwe, it is our view that HIFA is the most popular and most attended contemporary arts festival. While socio-economic and political challenges facing the nation have consistently challenged and frustrated the preparation and organisation of the festival, HIFA has steadily grown into one of Zimbabwe's biggest cultural events that offer artists increased local and international exposure. We, therefore, view HIFA, in this paper, as strategically positioned to act as a mediator between nationhood and identity boundaries in a multicultural and globalising world.

HIFA's international acclaim enables the festival to reach the widest range of audiences and offer a platform for interaction (Marti, n.d.). Just as globalisation advocates the blurring of boundaries (Stohl, 2005), HIFA as a global festival, opens borders for performers and audiences from outside the Zimbabwean borders to either come and perform or witness the festival. As a result, the HIFA theatre programme is a fusion of local and visiting talent (HIFAlutin, 1 May 2013). Additionally, HIFA's belief in collaborative practice affords artists from different countries the opportunity to work together. An example is *Catching the Cold* (2012), a performance with Norwegian

and Zimbabwean actors/dancers) This has enabled HIFA to continuously challenge rigid national boundaries (Kanneh, 2002).

Although the collaborative practice has its own intentions and tensions, it has facilitated the creation of multiple multicultural spaces where artists of different cultural and political backgrounds interact and share ideas and best practices. In creating the multicultural pockets of spaces, HIFA becomes a 'third space' (Bhabha, 1994) where new nationhood and identity narratives are explored. In the context of this paper, 'third space' refers to the space of hybridity itself, the space in which cultural meanings and identities always contain the traces of other meanings and identities (Ashcroft, Tiffin and Griffith, 1998). Thus, HIFA is situated as a place where new Zimbabwean identities are created.

Beyond being a multicultural theatre festival in terms of artistic products, HIFA creates and provides employment and promotes sustainability for the artists (Nyakuwanikwa, 2012). HIFA hires cosmopolitan, multi-racial and multi-ethnic administration and technical personnel. Thus, our argument that HIFA is a platform for meeting, contact and exchange of ideas, talents and cultures whose syncretisation produces an alternative narrative of Zimbabwean nationhood and identity is strengthened. It is our view that HIFA is crucial as a festival that promotes the creation of Zimbabwe as a multicultural society where most, if not all, of those differences can be acknowledged, tolerated and respected.

The Zimbabwean community envisioned by HIFA is different from the 'closed' one discussed above. It is a Zimbabwe that acknowledges and recognises disparate individuals and groups of people. As a contact zone for this multicultural society, HIFA stages are a major player in the negotiation process, development and consolidation of alternative narratives of nationhood and identity in post-independence Zimbabwe.

5. Unsettling the *Allegations of Land, Racial and Identity 'Crises' in Zimbabwe*

In our desire to show the rigidity of the Zimbabwean socio-political and cultural environment in which HIFA operates and the possibility of softening local, national and regional boundaries, this article discusses the land and identity crisis in Zimbabwe from the local to the global scenario. Therefore, in this section, we interrogate *Allegations*, a play which exudes local racial complexities.

We revisit the importance of land as an authentic signifier of national identity (Mpondi, 2012) through *Allegations*, a play that subverts the indices of land and racial identity in Zimbabwe. As mentioned earlier, in *Allegations* (2009), Spud the white farmer who has lost his farm and father to farm invaders realises that the black 'other' whom he detests so much has gone through the same tragedy. This realisation and recognition of the shared experiences and situations between the white and black Zimbabweans on the global HIFA stage presents the festival as meant for everyone.

As has been discussed before, in colonial Zimbabwe indigeneness/localness was the basis for exclusion from citizenship while after independence, foreignness and minority status became the basis of exclusion from citizenship (Mpondi, 2012). Belonging to a minority group has been used as a benchmark for the denial of citizenship and basic rights in Zimbabwe (Mpondi, 2012). Minority groups, especially those of Malawian and Zambian descent, formerly from Nyasaland and Northern Rhodesia, are branded aliens. As aliens, which is confirmed by their National Identification documents, these minority groups have no right to land, to vote and to other basic necessities awarded to the 'true' Zimbabwean citizen. In other words, inclusive citizenship is still a struggle.

The deregulation of dual citizenship in 2001 put Zimbabweans and foreigners in a difficult position. They had to regularise their citizenship by means of denouncing or renouncing their Zimbabwean citizenship. Those who chose to denounce their Zimbabwean citizenship literally stripped themselves of their land rights and other rights attached to Zimbabwean citizenship. In this instance, race became a determinant of being Zimbabwean with ZANU-PF's drive of 'Africa for Africans' (Gatsheni-Ndlovu, 2008) playing a major role in helping white Zimbabweans decide to denounce their citizenship.

Allegations, as a text, destabilises this racial norm, especially so in a period when black people were being favoured by the systems and media programmes that appeared to assume that Zimbabwe was for black people only. While most black-authored local plays written in the post 2000 period exclude whites in the Zimbabwean national space (Muwonwa, 2011), *Allegations* comes in as the unexpected, unconventional 'missing link'. *Allegations* steps in to correct this anomaly by breaking these politically-constructed boundaries and readmitting the white folk into the Zimbabwean national space. This play gives voice to the 'white enemy' whose views have mostly been thwarted in black representative media.

When most land eviction stories lacked the white man's voice (Muwonwa, 2011), *Allegations* emerges as that voice. It is a play that bravely deals with the displacement of white farmers and the political disturbances in rural areas which also affected black peasant workers aligned to the whites. The play successfully breaks the binaries of race and race relations instituted by the political contact zone. By placing the two racially different characters (Spud - who is white and Reason - who is black) in the same space, the play envisions new social relations and challenges the bigotry and narrow-mindedness of both races in relation to each other. Spud blames Reason for taking his land, destroying his property and killing his father on the assumption that because he is black, he participated in the violent farm invasions. And Reason accuses Spud of colonising his country Zimbabwe and of being a white puppet that funds and supports regime change agendas. Yet, when Spud and Reason finally converse and release their bottled tensions on each other, they realise that they have common problems. Chief among them was how to define a Zimbabwean.

Adding to the ongoing discussion, Sachikonye (2003) observes that the Zimbabwean land reform spoke mainly to the viewpoint of oppressed black indigenous people and, thus, sought to redress historical land distribution imbalances. Land has been a metaphor of colonial subjugation and conflict, which has lent itself easily to a particular nationalist narrative which is not inclusive (Hammar and Raftopoulos, 2003). This narrative, in the Zimbabwean context, reflects 'Mugabeism' (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2009). Mugabeism is an ideology that appreciates that the only way to allow Africa to surpass its former glory is to undergo the three stages of any true African revolution: political, agrarian and economic (Chengu, 2014). As such, black people are given preference and platforms to express themselves concerning the 'Occident' (Said, 1978) white Zimbabwean. The fact that white people had been dispossessed of land through the Fast Track Land Reform Programme is an indication that they were no longer part of the Zimbabwean terrain.

In Zimbabwe, whiteness has always been associated with authority and superiority or with the role of colonizer and employer (Zenenga, 2012) while blackness has been related to victimhood (Kochalumchuvattil, 2010). Since the colonisation of Africa, white people had gotten used to being in power and enjoying the best of everything in the countries they had colonised while black people's bitterness and resentment towards their white counterparts continued to build-up. In *Allegations*, this is captured through the sour relationship between white people and black people. White people are called 'vauyi' (outsiders who came from somewhere) who should go back to where they came from (Muwonwa, 2011).

This conceptualisation of whiteness shows that historical and political grudges continue to engulf and define different racial Zimbabwean citizens. However, in a multicultural postcolony such as Zimbabwe, the play *Allegations* represents a liminal space of contestation and change, at the edges of the presumed monolithic, but never completely 'beyond' (Bhabha, 1994) citizenship. The play takes the risk of putting the bitter black character and the recently offended white character in the same space. The wounded former colonised black people and their former colonisers are given the chance to make up in an unusual scenario which subverts the norms and expectations of race relations.

Whereas the nation has for a long time been constructed as a purely black African community that has white people as its perennial enemies who seek to destroy or destabilise it (Muwonwa, 2011), this liminal space institutes new relationships in a new, 'open' and 'imagined' Zimbabwe. The white (Spud) and black (Reason) characters' interaction represents an important staging of diversity that has been limited, denied or discouraged in other socio-economic and political cultural contact zones. The play allows the 'enemies' who had been eliminated slowly to find their way into the Zimbabwean territory and express their concerns, fears, anger and expectations. Thus, in its attempt to 'open' the closed Zimbabwean nation, *Allegations* imagines a nation that appreciates, respects, recognises and tolerates all its individuals despite their race.

6. The Unbearable Whiteness of Being in the Zimbabwean Land Question

As a strategy for creating identities of otherness, *Allegations* is testimony to the supposed 'insensitivity' of the black majority who are heartless enough to dispossess and 'kill, steal and destroy' property that belongs to the white 'other'. Being white in Zimbabwe is agonising; it characterises the condition which Raftopoulos (2008) calls the unbearable whiteness of being. Zimbabwean history and current events show overt discrimination, oppression and violence based on race or ethnocentric perspectives (Goodpaster, 2009). This history shows that whites like Spud and 'black skin white masks' (Fanon, 1952) like Reason end up on the losing end because they are regarded as representing white people who are the 'enemies of the state'. Reason's homestead is destroyed by nationalist hardliners because he is considered a 'white man in a black skin' for spending time and living like a white man. Thus, *Allegations* exposes how Zimbabwean national constructions utilise racial consciousness to institute some and/or displace the 'other'.

Allegations challenges the ruling party conceptualised nationhood and citizenship narrative based on patriotism and sovereignty. In Zimbabwe, the National Heroes Acre shrine is viewed as a sacred final resting place for liberation heroes and distinguished citizens who have contributed to the development of Zimbabwean citizenry and country. However, the narrow, focused and discriminating process of choosing these 'true sons of the soil' is evidence of exclusion. Phrased differently, this narrow-minded and segregationist characterisation of 'Zimbabweanness' based on the frames of patriotism is hugely an exclusionary strategy against minority groups.

Allegations constructs the Zimbabwean space as potentially dangerous and unsafe. Even though Spud's house is always protected with security guards and his father's favourite guard dogs Billy and Simba, the violent black land grabbers force their way in, kill the potential threats (the two guard-dogs plus Spud's father) and take over Spud's family farm. This retaliatory and retributive violent land grabbing is synonymous with the colonisation process of Zimbabwe where the indigenes were violently removed from their land. Land, thus, becomes a denominator in the definition of citizen power and identity as the one with control over the land dictates and defines what it means to be Zimbabwean.

It should be noted that while *Allegations* attempts to create a heterogeneous nation where whites and black skin white masks are reinstated into the Zimbabwean cultural and political terrain, it ends up 'othering' the majority black. In fact, it underrepresents the black majority. The performance text creates the impression that Zimbabweans are violent and racist people because it does not provide enough motivation behind the violence and insolence. The text presents misleading images that portray the whites as innocent on-lookers and victims of circumstance, yet in actual fact they were complicit in the whole process (Muchemwa, Ngwerume and Hove

2011).

Allegations paints a horrible picture of the brutality that citizens see and feel on a daily basis when caught on the wrong side of the system. The violent marches, denigrating words and symbolic images of loss of life, such as the burning of Spud's dogs, appear unmotivated and senseless. What the play is silent on is the fact that white people in the country constitute one of the minority groups who had been economically privileged due to their race. While Mamdani (2008) contends that contrary to Western perspectives, the repossession of land in Zimbabwe is a giant step towards democracy, *Allegations* presents the land redistribution issue as handled in a retributive manner fraught with historical inconsistencies and injustices.

7. The Global HIFA and Notions of Zimbabwean Nationhood

Since diversity is a crucial concept in the formation and negotiation of difference and the in-between spaces, *Allegations* allows black people and white people to meet and confront their differences. Even though this is happening on the metaphoric stage, in reality HIFA is this 'liminal' (Turner, 1982) space for negotiating race relations. As already indicated, HIFA has a multi-racial and multi-national audience who meet, share space and interact in a manner they would not do in any ordinary day. The global festival space enables white audiences to watch black township theatre and vice-versa. This is important in the development of the cultural and political maturity of Zimbabweans especially considering the National Theatre Organisation (NTO)-Zimbabwe Association of Community Theatre Groups (ZACT) fraught relations.

The NTO was a colonial relic organisation that attended to the cultural needs of the supremacist and racist Rhodesians while ZACT was a government-sponsored counter-strategy to limit the influence of the NTO. ZACT was created under the ZIMFEP programme as part of a move towards the consolidation of the socialist ideology: 'Africanisation and Zimbabweanisation' (McLaren, 1993) of the masses. In bringing these two organisations (NTO and ZACT) with binary ideologies and performance styles into one space, HIFA develops a concept of nation-building in which all races are acknowledged and included. While ZACT and NTO are now defunct, the racial and ideological continuum is still evident in the theatre industry.

In opening up the traditionally conservative Zimbabwean community through inter-cultural and multi-cultural performance, HIFA challenges Zimbabweans to appreciate and understand each other. The notion of Zimbabwe as a country for and/or of black people is, thus, challenged. In the same manner, *Allegations* exposes that the challenges the black people are facing are similar to the ones faced by the white people. This way HIFA proposes a multi-racial and accommodative Zimbabwean nationhood.

HIFA becomes an island nation within a nation. It imagines an ideal nation which destabilises racial, ethnic and regional hegemonic ideologies

by redefining identity and nationhood. In the same manner in which Reason mimics and imitates whiteness, HIFA's target is to become a global festival operating with international standards. In other terms, HIFA mimics other international festivals. The mimicry of the post-colonial subject is, therefore, always potentially destabilise colonial discourse, and locates an area of considerable political and cultural uncertainty in the structure of imperial dominance. In the case of HIFA, the mimicry of global and international festivals destabilises the monolithic nationhood and Zimbabwean identity created and sponsored by ZANU-PF.

Yet HIFA is a threat to itself, as it stands out as an elitist space. HIFA tickets are very expensive and, therefore, are not affordable by an ordinary citizen. As such, HIFA is viewed by the majority poor Zimbabwean as a colonialist space which perpetuates the colonial separatist ideology. The standardisation of plays, especially from the rural, peri-urban and townships through adherence to a HIFA production process suppresses local performance styles. The end result is an 'internationally' mimicked performance that disregards local cultural frames for global performance standards. Therefore, any idea of nationhood and identity generated from such a space and performance is 'fake' and inauthentic.

The branding of places of performance used by HIFA plays a fundamental role in our understanding of the role played by the festival in creating and building nationhood identities. Zimbabwe is a conservative country that does not overtly support capitalist policies. However, HIFA has partnership with international capitalist concerns that brand its stages. There is the Standard Theatre sponsored by the Standard Newspaper, Old Mutual Stage sponsored by Old Mutual and the ION stage sponsored by the insurance company ION. HIFA's association with these big business companies has been viewed by the government with contempt. In a failing economy such as Zimbabwe's, where private business always posts losses every year, HIFA always manages to get partners who brand its stages. This characterises HIFA as a business space where capitalists maximise on advertising and getting new customers.

However, HIFA's strength is in creating a multi-cultural space although the space is laden with political and economic undertones, for Zimbabweans to experience performances of an international standard. HIFA's ability to bring to Zimbabwe plays with universal themes and stories exposes the audience members to the perspectives of universal suffrage. In the same manner that *Allegations* seeks to create a space where white people and black people can live in the same space and share experiences, HIFA exposes Zimbabweans to alternative narratives of nationhood and identity.

Additionally, Harare is the capital city of Zimbabwe. In contrast to South Africa which has three capitals, Harare is the central administration capital. As such, the geographic location of HIFA in Harare positions the festival as a major contributor to cultural and racial integration. While racial relations outside the festival are complicated owing to historical imbalances and political differences, HIFA presents a safe zone/space where

race, ethnicity and nationhood can be explored, discussed and debated through performance. The play *Allegations* provides such an opportunity for Zimbabweans to reflect and interrogate alternative narratives of nationhood and identity.

8. Conclusion

Nation-building in a global and multi-cultural world is a complex process which demands an understanding of the economic, cultural and political realities of specific nations. In this paper, we locate HIFA as a space through which alternative narratives of Zimbabwean nationhood and identities can be explored. Through *Allegations*, a play written and produced for HIFA, we interrogated how the indices of race and land are used to frame and develop a Zimbabwean nationhood and identity narratives on the HIFA stage.

Works Cited

- Anderson, B. (1991). *Imagined communities*. London: Verso Publications.
- Ashcroft, B., Tiffin, H., and Griffiths, G. (1998). *Key concepts in post-colonial studies*. London and New York: Routledge.
- Ashcroft, B., Tiffin, H., and Griffiths, G. (Eds.). (2006). *The post-colonial studies reader* (2nd ed.). London: Routledge.
- Balme, C. (1999). *Decolonising the stage: Theatrical syncretism and postcolonial drama* Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Bhabha, H. (Ed.). (1990). *Nation and narration*. London: Routledge.
- Bhabha, H. (1994). *The location of culture*. London: Routledge.
- Chatterjee, P. (1996). Whose imagined community? *Millennium: Journal of International Studies*, 20 (3), 214- 225.
- Chengu, G. (2014). Mugabeism: A model of African liberation. *The Herald online*. Retrieved 20 February, from <http://www.google.com/amp/s/www.herald.co.zw/mugabeism-a-model-for-african-liberation/amp/>.
- Chifunyise, S. and Kavanagh, R. M. (Eds.). (1988). *Zimbabwe theatre report, no.1*. Harare: University of Zimbabwe Publications.
- Fanon, F. (1952). *Black skin, white masks*. New York: Grove Press.
- Fischer-Lichte, E. (2009). Interweaving cultures in performance: Different states of being in between. *National Theatre Quarterly*, XXV (4), 391-400.
- Goodpaster, K. (2009). *Conscience and corporate culture*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Hauptfleisch, T. (1997). *Theatre and society: Reflections through a fractured mirror*. Pretoria: JL Van Schaik.
- Held, D., McGrew, A., Goldblatt, D. and Perraton, J. (1999). *Global transformations: Politics, economics, and culture*. California: Stanford University Press.
- Inglis, C. (1996). *Multiculturalism: New policy responses to diversity paper #4*. Vietnam: MOST/Statistical Publishing House.

- Jeater, D. (2012). Chimeras and chameleons: Legacies of physical and epistemic violence in Zimbabwe. Paper presented at the Genealogies of Colonial Violence Conference, 1st-2nd June, University of Cambridge: Centre for South Asian Studies and Centre for African Studies.
- Kanneh, K. (2002). *African identities: Race, nation and culture in ethnography, pan-Africanism and black literatures*. London: Routledge
- Kochalumchuvattil, T. (2010). The crisis of identity in Africa: A call for subjectivity. *Kritike*, 4 (1), 108-122.
- Mamdani, M. (2008). Lessons from Zimbabwe. *London Review of Books*, 30 (23), 17–21.
- Marti, J. (n.d.). When traditional festivals are dissonant with social integration. Barcelona: CSIC.
- McLaren, R. (1993). Developing drama at the University of Zimbabwe. *Zambezia*, XX (1), 35-52.
- Mhako, D. (2014). *Identities of women in Zimbabwean Protest Theatre*. MPhil thesis, University of Zimbabwe.
- Mupondi, D. (2012). The struggle for nationhood and citizenship in Zimbabwe. In D. Kaulemu (Ed.), *Imagining Citizenship in Zimbabwe* (pp. 50-58). Harare: The Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung.
- Muchemwa, C., Ngwerume, T. and Hove, M. (2011). Misleading images: Propaganda and racism in the politics of land in post-colonial Zimbabwe. *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science*, 1 (19), 221-228.
- Muwonwa, N. (2011). Representation of nation in post-independence Zimbabwe Television (ZTV) drama and documentaries (2000-2009). Unpublished MPhil Thesis, University of Zimbabwe.
- Muzondidya, J. and Gatsheni-Ndlovu, S. J. (2011). Echoing silences: Ethnicity in post-colonial Zimbabwe, 1980-2007. *African Journal on Conflict Resolution*, 7 (2), 275-297.
- Ndlovu-Gatsheni, S. (2007). Fatherhood and nationhood: Joshua Nkomo and the re-imagination of the Zimbabwean nation. In K. Muchemwa and R. Muponde (Eds.), *Manning the Nation* (pp. 73-87). Harare: Weaver Press.
- Ndlovu-Gatsheni, S. (2008). Nation building in Zimbabwe and the challenges of Ndebele particularism. *African Journal on Conflict Resolution*, 8 (3), 27-56.
- Ndlovu-Gatsheni, S. (2009). Making sense of Mugabeism in local and global politics: “So Blair, keep your England and let me keep my Zimbabwe”. *Third World Quarterly*, 30 (6), 139-158.
- Ndlovu-Gatsheni, S. (2011). *The Zimbabwean nation-state project: A historical diagnosis of identity and power-based conflicts in a postcolonial state*. Uppsala: Nordiska Afrikainstitutet.

- Nyakuwanikwa, P. (2012). *Exploring the impact of arts festivals on Harare society: A case study of HIFA*. Honours dissertation, University of Zimbabwe.
- Ohmae, K. (1990). *The borderless world: Power and strategy in the interlinked*. New York: HarperCollins.
- Park, B. and Judd, C. M. (2005). Rethinking the link between categorization and prejudice within the social cognition perspective. *Personality and Social Psychology Review*, 9 (2), 108–130.
- Raftopoulos, B. (2008). The crisis in Zimbabwe 1998–2008. In B. Raftopoulos (Ed.), *Becoming Zimbabwe: A History from the Pre-colonial Period to 2008*. Harare: Weaver Press.
- Ranger, T. (2004). Nationalists historiography, patriotic history and the history of the nation: Struggle over the past in Zimbabwe. *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 30 (2), 215–234.
- Ravengai, S. (2010). Political theatre: National identity and political control: The case of Zimbabwe. *African Identities*, 8 (2), 163–173.
- Renan, E. (1990). What is a Nation? In H. Bhabha (Ed.), *Nation and Narration*, (pp. 277–310). London: Routledge.
- Rosado, C. (1997). *Towards a definition of multiculturalism*. California: Northwestern Publishers.
- Sachikonye, L. M. (2003). The situation of commercial farm workers after land reform in Zimbabwe. Report prepared for the Farm Community Trust of Zimbabwe. Harare.
- Said, E. (1978). *Orientalism*. London: Penguin Books.
- Smith, D. (2013). *The Guardian* 9 May
- Stohl, C. (2005). Globalisation theory. In S. May and D. K. Mumby (Eds.), *Engaging Organizational Communication Theory and Research: Multiple Perspectives* (pp. 223–261). California: SAGE Publishers Limited.
- Turner, V. (1982). Liminal to liminoid, in play, flow, ritual: An essay in comparative symbology. In V. Turner (Ed.), *From Ritual to Theatre: The Human Seriousness of Play* (pp. 20–60). New York: Performing Arts Journal Publications.
- Yankah V. K. (2012). The pan-African historical theatre festival (PANAFEST) in Ghana, 1992–2010: The vision and reality. In J. Gibbs (Ed.), *African Theatre11 Festivals* (pp. 45–55). Suffolk: James Currey.
- Zenenga, P. (2012). Visualizing politics in African sport: Political and cultural constructions in Zimbabwean soccer. *Soccer and Society*, 13 (2), 250–263.