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REVIEW ARTICLE

ZIMBABWEAN DIAMONDS

Terence Ranger

JOSIAH BROWNELL, *The Collapse of Rhodesia: population demographics and the politics of race*. London: I. B.Tauris (hb £59.50 – 978 1 84885 475 8). 2010, 256 pp.

JONATHAN CRUSH and DANIEL TEVERA (eds), *Zimbabwe's Exodus: crisis, migration, survival*. Cape Town: South African Migration Programme (SAMP) (pb $35 – 978 1 92040 922 7). 2010, 432 pp.

DAVID MCDERMOTT HUGHES, *Whiteness in Zimbabwe: race, landscape, and the problem of belonging*. New York NY: Palgrave Macmillan (hb £55 – 978 0 23062 142 8). 2010, 224 pp.

JOANN MCGREGOR, *Crossing the Zambezi: the politics of landscape on a Central African frontier*. Oxford: James Currey (hb £50 – 978 1 84701 402 3). 2009, 256 pp.

JOANN MCGREGOR and RANKA PRIMORAC (eds), *Zimbabwe's New Diaspora: displacement and the cultural politics of survival*. Oxford: Berghahn (hb £47 – 978 1 84546 658 0). 2010, 268 pp.

SABELO J. NDLOVU-GATSHENI, *Do 'Zimbabweans' Exist? Trajectories of nationalism, national identity formation and crisis in a postcolonial state*. Bern: Peter Lang (hb £45 – 978 3 03911 941 7). 2009, 426 pp.

DEBORAH POTTS, *Circular Migration in Zimbabwe and Contemporary Sub-Saharan Africa*. Woodbridge: James Currey (hb £50 – 978 1 84701 023 0). 2010, 312 pp.

TERENCE RANGER, *Bulawayo Burning: the social history of a Southern African city, 1893–1960*. Woodbridge: James Currey (hb £45 – 978 1 84701 020 9). 2010, 272 pp.

ZVAKANYORWA WILBERT SADOMBA, *War Veterans in Zimbabwe's Revolution: challenging neo-colonialism and settler and*

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international capital. Woodbridge: James Currey (hb £40 – 978 1 84701 025 4). 2011, 256 pp.

TIMOTHY SCARNECCHIA, *The Urban Roots of Democracy and Political Violence in Zimbabwe: Harare and Highfield, 1940–1964*. Rochester NY: University of Rochester Press (hb £45 – 978 1 58046 281 5). 2008, 240 pp.

IAN SCOONES, NELSON MARONGWE, BLASIO MAVEDZENGE, JACOB MAHENEHENE, FELIX MURIMBARIMBA and CHRISPEN SUKUME, *Zimbabwe's Land Reform: myths and realities*. Woodbridge: James Currey (978 1 84701 024 7). 2010, 304 pp.

BLESSING-MILES TENDI, *Making History in Mugabe's Zimbabwe: politics, intellectuals and the media*. Bern: Peter Lang (pb £37 – 978 3 03911 989 9). 2010, 286 pp.

KATJA UUSIHAKALA, *Memory Meanders: place, home and commemoration in an ex-Rhodesian diasporic community*. Helsinki: University of Helsinki (978 9 52194 476 2). 2008, 264 pp.

Of the making of books about Zimbabwe there seems to be no end. I am commenting on thirteen of them in this review. It could easily have been twice that number if I had included all the journalist quick fixes, the inexplicably popular white Zimbabwean memoirs, and the necessary but short-lived accounts of the brutal violence of 2008. These will not be read for long but all the books I am reviewing are likely to have a long shelf-life. Indeed they are diamonds which need no international licence to be traded and consumed.

They fall neatly into clusters and taken together address all the dominant issues in Zimbabwe. Two of them – Ian Scoones's edited collection and Wilbert Sadomba's book about the occupation of land in the Mazowe Valley – deal with the process and results of fast-track land re-settlement. Two of them – Timothy Scarnecchia's book about the politics of the Salisbury African townships between 1940 and 1964, and Deborah Potts's book about the fragility of African livelihoods in contemporary Harare – deal with the problem of the towns. (I shall invoke for comparative purposes but of course cannot review my own recent book on Bulawayo and its townships, 1893 to 1960.) Potts's book interacts with a cluster about migration into and out of Zimbabwe – Josiah Brownell's study of the demographic collapse of Rhodesia, Jonathan Crush and Daniel Tevera's collection on the Zimbabwean diaspora, and JoAnn McGregor's collection on Zimbabwean expatriates. Then there is a looser cluster about white identities and landscapes – a good deal in Brownell; David Hughes's study of white Rhodesian identification with the land; Katja Uusihakala's study of the continued significance of Rhodesian landscapes in the white expatriate South African community; and JoAnn

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McGregor's book about the politics of landscape in the Zambezi Valley. And if this cluster brings out all the uncertainties of Rhodesian identity, the final pairing does this for black Zimbabweans. Sabelo Ndlovu-Gatsheni even questions their very existence; Miles Tendi examines their struggle for a national history.

LAND

Among all these, the book which has been launched with the greatest fanfare is undoubtedly *Zimbabwe's Land Reforms: myths and realities* by Ian Scoones *et al.* It has been serialized in *The Zimbabwean* newspaper; taken up by the BBC Africa Service; blessed by the Royal Africa Society. Scoones has challenged all comers to a debate based on fact rather than legend. And there is no doubt that this is a very good book.

After an excellent review of land reform since 1980 it deals with *jambanja* land resettlement in Masvingo Province. Drawing on some 120 interviews it looks in turn at who the new settlers are; at their levels of investment; at their development of agricultural and livestock production; at their use of labour; at the emergence of new markets; at off-farm income and migration; and at 'territory, authority and social dynamics'. (Discussion of chiefs, headmen and spirit mediums is more or less confined to this chapter.) Patterns emerge but the book pays admirable attention to variation and variety. Nevertheless the by now famous conclusions that are reached are presented as factual corrections to prevailing myths.

Contrary to myth, Zimbabwe's land reform has not been a total failure. 'Around half of the households in the sample are on an upwards livelihood trajectory. Through a combination of agricultural production and off-farm activities, there is a strong dynamic of accumulation from below. A new agrarian structure is fast emerging.' The beneficiaries of land reform have *not* been mainly 'cronies' – nearly 70 per cent of those surveyed are 'ordinary' people. There *has* been investment 'generated through local accumulation from below'. Agriculture is *not* in complete ruins – the output of export crops has crashed but most households are self-sufficient in maize and 'some crops, such as edible beans, have boomed'. The rural economy has *not* collapsed though it has been transformed. 'The informal rural economy has been adapting fast, even while the formal economy has been in dire straits . . . new players are involved, benefits are being more widely distributed and economic linkages are more embedded in the local economy' (pp. 238–40). All this has been achieved despite drought and the absence of inputs.

Obviously these are important findings and very gratifying to someone like myself who has always advocated small-holder agriculture. But the book cannot be as important as it has been proclaimed as being. (It begins with no less than 15 glowing recommendations from leading scholars in the field.) This is because Masvingo is just one province. Hendrick Oliver, Director of the Zimbabwe Commercial Farmers' Union, has a point when

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he welcomes discussion of these findings but adds: 'Most of Masvingo Province is very dry and it's a cattle and wildlife area and not all cronies fancy that at all. They like land that is close to the city centres.' And they like land in the rich soil zones. Scoones seeks to deal with this objection in his book – yes, it will be a different picture on the rich soils. But most of Zimbabwe is on less good soils and those areas will turn out to be like Masvingo.

Yet I doubt this. The many district studies made by historians, ethnographers and political scientists in the 1980s and 1990s – to which no reference is made in this book or in any of the other recent literature on the peasantry – revealed extraordinary variety. For Manicaland Province alone those district studies – Jocelyn Alexander on Chimanimani, Norma Kriger on Mutoko, David Maxwell on Katerere, Donald Moore on Gaerezi, Terence Ranger on Makoni, Heike Schmidt on the Honde Valley – described a remarkable range of distinct environments, political systems, relations with commercial farmers, and possibilities of 'the peasant option'. Things may have been transformed in the last decade in these areas as well as in Masvingo, but it is hard to believe that all these past differences will have been dissolved into 'a Masvingo solution'. In short, this book is not the end but very much the beginning of a discussion. We need many more like it for other parts of Zimbabwe, and one hopes for some surveys whose 'longitudinal study' (p. 6) goes back before 1980 and makes a connection with the earlier literature.

This is the importance of Wilbert Sadomba's book. On-the-ground academic research would have been almost impossible during the last ten years in the rich and contested Mazowe Valley. But Sadomba is an academic who has been a guerrilla; who participated in the land occupations in Mazowe as a veteran; and who transmuted his experiences into first a thesis and now a book. Though born in the Honde Valley he chose Mazowe as his area of participation and study because he was deployed there during the guerrilla war. War veterans barely figure in Scoones *et al.*, who do not concentrate on how the land was seized but on who is on it now and what they do with it. For Sadomba veterans are crucial. He offers a long history of the war and of veteran organizations and their relations with the Mugabe regime since 1980. He even makes reference to some of the earlier district studies, though he does so in order to document instances of peasant radicalism. He believes that radical peasants and spirit mediums, rallied by the leadership of war veterans, initiated and carried through the land occupations. These he divides into the earlier occupations, between 1998 and 2000, which were genuinely powered by the people, and the later occupations, from 2000 onwards, which became the business of the state. His is a story of betrayal of radical peasants and spirit mediums and guerrillas by bureaucrats and cronies.

In Mazowe several women mediums of the great spirit, Nehanda, moved with their people on to land associated with Nehanda's 1896 medium, Charwe. Peasants spilt out into the white farms. Sadomba and other veterans obtained a large area which they began to develop as an experimental farm, specializing particularly in cattle. And then the state moved in. The Nehanda mediums were driven out by armed police.

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Sadomba's farm was given to cronies. A genuine popular revolution was aborted.

TOWNS

Both Scoones *et al.* and Sadomba relate the land occupations to changes in the relationship of the Zimbabwean countryside and the towns. Scoones says that 'the classic pattern of rural–urban migration has changed and new migration pathways have emerged .... There has been a substantial shift in economic relationships between town and countryside.' While in the past luxury crops were sent to urban markets, in the past decade basic food crops have been sent from resettled areas to feed the urban poor. Sadomba reinterprets the *Murambatsvina* demolitions of 2005, seeing them not as an attack on disloyal townsmen but as punishment for war veterans and others involved in popular land seizure. The worst affected areas, he says, were peri-urban squatter camps set up by veterans. The demolitions coincided with violence against radical peasants. In his eyes they were the work of state elites determined to break the challenge from the poor.

Tim Scarnecchia's book is about the black townships of Salisbury in the earlier period of the 1940s and 1950s, when they were the home of all urban Africans – with no bureaucrats and professionals living in the low density areas of the city, and before the development of the liberation war. He describes years in which black township politics were about urban rather than national citizenship, and in which Africans were proud of their role in developing an urban culture despite poverty and overcrowding. His hero is Charles Mzingeli, leader of the Reformed Industrial and Commercial Workers Union, whom he sees not as a proto-nationalist nor, indeed, as a trade unionist, but as a coordinator of township interest groups, notably those strongly supported by women. He contrasts Mzingeli's inclusive populism with the exclusive rhetoric of black nationalists from the late 1950s onwards, which led not only to Mzingeli's own downfall but also to violent clashes between the youth leagues of the rival nationalist parties. Given the large contrasts between Salisbury and Bulawayo, his picture is not all that different from my own in my social history of Bulawayo up to 1960. My hero is Sipambaniso Manyoba Khumalo, who brought together in his own person most of the interests of Bulawayo's resident black population. I too see the coherence of township politics destroyed in the riots of 1960, from which a more radical nationalism emerged. Both Scarnecchia and I see township culture as something to be proud of and worth defending.

Our books contrast sharply with Deborah Potts's portrayal of Harare fifty years later. As her back jacket puts it, 'The political and economic changes in Zimbabwe since the 1980s transformed Harare from one of the best African cities to live in over this period to one of the worst. Harare's citizens' livelihoods exemplify, in microcosm, the central theme of the book: the re-invention throughout sub-Saharan Africa of circulation and

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rural–urban links in response to economic change.' Potts could find hardly anybody who was proud of Harare and of their part in making it. Instead she found large numbers of citizens determined to leave the capital. This fits with her conclusions from a review of towns in sub-Saharan Africa. On the whole these have not continued to grow through a process of flight from the countryside. Indeed she finds 'counter-urbanization' in Zambia and Mozambique as well as in Harare.

Turning to a detailed examination of Harare, Potts claims that in the 1980s the city 'worked in various senses of this word. The majority of household heads in both rich and poor parts of the city had formal employment .... They could also send their children to school which was basically free and get access to free or cheap health facilities .... Water and electricity were nearly always working and were maintained' (p. 84). 'At the end of the decade Zimbabwe's urban population was probably less poor and generally more economically and socially secure than any other sub-Saharan African urban population' (p. 86). But urban poverty increased with structural adjustment in the 1990s. 'The country de-industrialized quite rapidly.' Services collapsed or became expensive. By 1995 surveys were finding that 'the proportion of the "very poor" was highest in the towns' (p. 88). And then from 1997 Zimbabwe's economic collapse began. Urban livelihoods were in free fall.

For Potts *Murambatsvina* in 2005 was clearly 'a terrible anti-urban campaign. It destroyed virtually all informal houses in every town and undermined informal jobs. This greatly exacerbated the already very serious urban poverty and poor housing conditions in all the towns' (p. 91). Harare, 'from being a pole of attraction was now shedding population' (p. 98).

Potts's last survey of urban attitudes dates from 2001 and so shows little effect of land seizure and resettlement. She does emphasize, however, both the importance of access to land for decisions on whether and when to leave Harare and the foreclosing of this option for many urban residents if formal title to land is established. Her concluding summary runs: 'The decline in Zimbabwe's urban livelihoods probably reached its nadir in 2008 to early 2009 and the emergence of the Government of National Unity allowed some stabilization and improvement. However, general levels of urban poverty and livelihood vulnerability were still exceedingly serious .... The highly ambiguous and often outright negative attitudes towards the city revealed by the later surveys described in this book ... are unlikely to have improved' (p. 253).

There has been something of a renaissance of Zimbabwean urban studies. What we need now is a social history of Harare which will link Scarnecchia's book with Potts's and a social history of Bulawayo which will carry on my history of that city from 1960 to the present.

EMIGRATION AND IMMIGRATION

I have focused on Potts's discussion of Harare but her book is really a study of 'circular migration'. Scoones *et al.* also emphasize new

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trans-border migration routes. And in one way and another the topic comes up in many of the other books under review.

A very long column in the *Herald* of 11 December 2010 by Nathaniel Manheru – who is thought to be Mugabe's press secretary, Charamba – maintains that 'throughout history Zimbabweans have been a footloose people .... We are an immigrant nation .... We have travelled vast distances .... We are a people of hot feet, a people afflicted by a wandering curse.' Zimbabweans became tied to a territory only when other migrants – the whites – conquered them. And even then Zimbabweans remained 'an itinerant people .... We trekked down south' for work and for skills. 'We have moved. Yes, we did so in the context of a hard war, the war of liberation. We went to Botswana .... We went to Zambia .... We were in Tanzania .... We roamed the world looking for our lost freedom.'

Josiah Brownell's excellent book reminds us how 'footloose' Rhodesian whites were as well. It deals with the Rhodesian regime's failure to increase white numbers or to limit black ones. The regime only wanted some sorts of white and many of the whites who did arrive in Rhodesia moved on. 'At no time in its ninety year history could the settler state ever attain a sizeable or stable white population.' Rhodesians were 'a transient white population with only shallow national loyalties'. Brownell notes that 'high rates of white emigration were a longstanding phenomenon in Rhodesia' but that 'white immigration numbers normally masked the outflow such that an illusion of population continuity remained'. However, in the early 1960s there was a 'precipitous drop in immigration numbers' and the effects of continued emigration became ominously obvious (p. 23). In response Ian Smith relaxed the old criteria for white immigrants. 'There were marked differences between those who left and those who came to replace them.' In Smith's war to preserve an essential Rhodesia an increasing number of Rhodesians had no sense of a Rhodesian historical heritage.

Towards the end of his book Brownell asks who UDI was for. 'If Rhodesia's white population, in whose name the rebellion was declared, was at best mildly committed to Rhodesia, then what forces were committed to the act of rebellion and the resultant war?' He answers that there was 'a small core of whites within Rhodesia whose commitment to Rhodesia was deeper than the large transient population'. This core was 'more rural and more rooted'; a large percentage had been born in South Africa. Only 14 percent of them had been born in Rhodesia itself (p. 175). 'White Rhodesia was perhaps, in the final analysis, a state in desperate search of a nation' (p. 177).

Back, though, to Nathaniel Manheru and his footloose Africans. As we have seen he is prepared to accept many wanderers as Zimbabwean. But what about the 'the fraction we can't name' – the Zimbabwean diaspora in Britain and South Africa. (There is, of course, a Rhodesian disapora too, about whom we shall hear more later in this review.) 'The diaspora are hard done by, virtually turned into stateless people.' 'Those in the diaspora are Zimbabwe's floating population which, kite-like, can be blown towards any cause.' 'The empire now poses as saviour' and

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Zimbabwe is incapable of challenging this because 'we have not ourselves situated our other fraction that lives in foreign lands. We cannot describe those who have left the country. Are they good for the country, or are they bad? Are they lost, or have they escaped? And what do we call the Zimbabwe they have left behind? ... Those who have gone, can they still be patriots? We behave as if all the experience of movement – our movement – has not given us the idiom, the vocabulary, for describing our expanding situations and horizons in a globalized world. Yet we have wandered before .... We have gone places but we have also come back .... creaking under the weight of new and novel acquisitions.'

A new academic industry is arising with answers to some of these questions. Of the two books under review here Crush and Tevera's *Zimbabwe's Exodus* deals mainly with the diaspora in South Africa, the topic of seven of its seventeen chapters. McGregor and Primorac's *Zimbabwe's New Diaspora* devotes four of its twelve chapters to South Africa; the rest relate to the diaspora in Britain. There is some overlap. Crush and Tevera include chapters by Deborah Potts and JoAnn McGregor. *Zimbabwe's Exodus* is another myth-breaking book. A brief foreword by Lauchlan Munro remarks that 'stories about migration are full of stereotypes and over-simplification .... A grain of truth is most often enveloped and overpowered by myths, exaggerations and selective use of evidence. Both pro- and anti-migration orthodoxies suffer from these faults.' *Zimbabwe's Exodus*, he says, is both easy and challenging to read. 'It is challenging precisely for the reasons that make it a successful and important book because it dissects myths, analyses stereotypes, and reveals the complexities and ambiguities of the very difficult questions it addressed' (p. ix).

One of the myths it addresses is that of the recency of Zimbabwean migration, and in particular the notion that it has been primarily powered by the land seizures. The editors comment on the rich classic literature on migration in Southern Africa, and, unlike Scoones *et al.*, make an immediate connection with it in an excellent chapter by Alois Mlambo – 'A history of Zimbabwean migration to 1990'. Nevertheless, of course, the rate of migration has increased greatly since 1990. Crush and Tevera offer a chronology very similar to that of Deborah Potts. 'Zimbabwe made major social and economic gains in the 1980s. After 1990, however, the accelerating social, political and economic unravelling of the country led to a rush for the exits. An economy in free fall, soaring inflation and unemployment, the collapse of public services, political oppression and deepening poverty proved to be powerful, virtually irresistible, push factors for many Zimbabweans.' For them Zimbabwe's is a 'crisis-driven' migration (p. 1).

But they argue that one ought not to overstate the size of the diaspora. They write of 'hundreds of thousands' rather than of millions. They emphasize that 'although large numbers have left, the majority remain'. Perhaps the most important question is not why so many Zimbabweans have left but why – and how – so many have stayed. And here is a paradox. Zimbabwean migration is not like the leakage of whites which Brownell has shown wounded Smith's Rhodesia so fatally. Those whites

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just left; Zimbabwean migrants send back remittances. The scale of the migration means a loss of skills and services but it also enables very many in Zimbabwe to survive. For this is a real diaspora and not just a dispersal. The very great majority of Zimbabweans in South Africa and in Britain maintain very close contacts with families, churches, and old school associations, and profess their intention to return. 'Every Zimbabwean working in South Africa supports an average of five people at home. But for migration there would be a great deal more migration than there has been' (p. 3).

The historical connections with the 'footloose' past are important but nevertheless there are important differences. Zimbabwe used to be a country of in-migration and out-migration, with in-migration predominating. Now there is no in-migration. As Josephine Nhongo Simbanagevi has shown, there have always been women migrants to South Africa. But 'traditionally, in Southern Africa, outbound migration streams were dominated by young, single, unskilled males'. Now in South Africa 'there are almost as many [Zimbabwean] women migrants as men; there are migrants of all ages; they are from all rungs of the occupational and socio-economic ladder; they are highly-read and illiterate, professionals and paupers, doctors and ditch-diggers' (p. 9). (The composition of the Zimbabwean diaspora in Britain is, of course, much less variegated.)

This is a rich collection of uniformly high standard and interspersed with very revealing interviews with migrants. Everyone will have their own favourite chapters. Mine are Dominic Pasura's 'Regendering the Zimbabwean disapora in Britain' and Kate Lefko-Everett's 'The voices of migrant Zimbabwean women in South Africa'. Lefko-Everett quotes from many very frank and moving oral testimonies from women migrants. They reveal a complex balance of profit and loss. On the one hand, the women have to survive the violence of the brigands and smugglers who infest the Zimbabwean side of the frontier and the sexual demands of South African immigration officials. On the other hand women who get through find themselves with some economic independence. It is something of the same story in Pasura's Britain. Immigration officials at Gatwick and Heathrow don't make sexual demands, though there are plenty of other humiliations to endure – including, sometimes, detention with one's children. But Pasura's subject is the tensions that arise between Zimbabwean husbands and wives when the wife becomes the main breadwinner. Zimbabwean men find themselves child- and house-minding, and filling roles regarded as unmanly in Zimbabwe. Where the marriage survives, the men assume that things will revert to 'normal' when they return to Zimbabwe. The women have other ideas. Zimbabwean gender relations in Britain are very fraught.

McGregor and Primorac's collection is equally path-breaking and equally rich. It is hailed by Professor Pnina Werbner as 'a diverse and complex picture of this new African diaspora's dispersal within Southern Africa and the West. The book dispels the view that modern diasporas are no longer sites of suffering, exclusion and discrimination, or that their members no longer yearn for a lost homeland.' It differs from Crush and Tevera in the greater attention it pays to Britain and in its emphasis on

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culture. Four chapters – including another excellent one by Pasura – deal with 'The cultural politics of survival in Britain'; four chapters deal with 'Diasporic identities and transnational media'. Dr Clayton Peel discusses 'Exile and the Internet', taking an optimistic view of the often intemperate language of Ndebele, Coloured and other minority websites. Ranka Primorac introduces a diasporic Zimbabwean novelist, Brian Chikwava. And she also has a chapter called 'Rhodesians never die? The Zimbabwe crisis and the revival of Rhodesian discourse'.

WHITE IDENTITIES AND LANDSCAPE

And herein lies a dilemma. If Brownell is right about the shallowness of Rhodesian identity why should there be such a persistent 'virtual' Rhodesia on the web? Two recent books explore this question of white Rhodesian identity. One is David Hughes's *Whiteness in Zimbabwe*. Hughes lays emphasis on 'landscape and the problem of belonging'.

Until the publication of this book there was a sharp divide between South African and Zimbabwean discourse on landscape. The South African literature emphasizes 'landscape' as a vision imposed – and often created – by whites from above. The Zimbabwean literature balances white perceptions with black readings of the environment. The iconic book for South Africa is Jeremy Foster's *Washed with Sun: landscape and the making of white South Africa* (University of Pittsburgh Press, 2008). The iconic book for Zimbabwe is JoAnn McGregor's marvellous 2009 book, *Crossing the Zambezi: the politics of landscape on a Central African frontier.* Hughes includes both in his bibliography but his is a book in the Foster rather than the McGregor tradition, even though he overlaps with McGregor in his treatment of the Kariba dam.

McGregor's book, focusing as it does on a river, is watery. And Hughes very much emphasizes water – or the lack of it – in his account of white perceptions of the Rhodesian landscape. What the bush lacked to make it a landscape in the European sense was lakes. So white Rhodesians, though finding it much easier to relate to the land than to its African occupiers, longed for bodies of standing water. Though Hughes does not mention it, one of Cecil Rhodes's first actions in the 1890s on his extensive estates outside Bulawayo was to build a dam. Hughes focuses on the Kariba Dam, which certainly was an intervention on the South African scale. Of course, it was not constructed as landscape and its first impact on nature was disastrous – a much publicized threat to wild animals and a much less publicized threat to the Tonga. What Hughes is concerned with is how this arbitrary and raw construction became not only landscape but wilderness in the minds of white Rhodesians. His account of Kariba suffers badly by contrast with McGregor's nuanced and humane discussion.

Much more original is the second half of his book, which deals with dam building by white farmers after Zimbabwean independence in 1980. (When Julius Nyerere made a state visit to the newly independent state he

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was taken on a flight by Nathan Shamuyarira, then Minister of Information. Shamuyarira was anxious to point out the disparity between barren Tribal Trust Lands and lush commercial farms, but what caught Nyerere's eye was the abundance of dams.) We know that hardly any of Hughes's informants are still on their farms and this robs this part of the book of the triumphalism which sometimes disfigures a South African approach to landscape.

Hughes includes in his bibliography an early article by the Finnish anthropologist, Katja Uusihakala, on her work in Kenya. But oddly he does not include her delightful 2008 book about the landscape perceptions of white Rhodesian exiles in South Africa, *Memory Meanders*. Hughes has a passage where he contrasts his shabby, vernacular appearance as a researcher among African peasants for his earlier work with his re-presentation as white man for his work among farmers. Uusihakala too worked and lived with her Rhodesian informants, establishing relations of friendship and even love. This gives her book a wonderful empathy. As well as an insightful discussion of the landscape literature, her book is full of interviews with white Rhodesians about the land they have lost. Land remembered, she says, takes on a spiritual quality. She shows how ex-Rhodesians can drive through the South African bush unseeing but so soon as they cross the Limpopo every shrub becomes meaningful. Brownell's rural minority Rhodesian identity seems to have become generalized.

The climax of her book is a reconstruction of the northern Transvaal bush resort at Tshipise as 'Rhodesianaland' to mark the hundredth anniversary of the arrival of the Pioneer Column at Fort Salisbury in 1890. Participants were issued with Rhodesianaland passports as they went through 'Immigration and Customs'; a newspaper *Rhodesianaland Herald* was published every morning; and Janet and Ian Smith arrived for a Victorian dinner. 'We were now into country that reminded us', wrote one participant, 'with great nostalgia of the Rhodesian countryside – with Mopani trees in their winter colours, hornbills and monkeys' (p. 190). Uusikahala describes the re-enactment of the 1890 flag-raising ceremony – 'led by the Column commanders the men strode through the dry white grass . . . and took their positions in front of the flagstaff made of a *mopane* tree (because, unfortunately, the *msasas* do not grow south of the Limpopo River)' (p. 195).

There was not a dam or a lake in sight – but there was that great symbol of Rhodesia: a whites-only swimming pool.

ZIMBABWEAN IDENTITIES

The black Zimbabwean diaspora does not seem to be nostalgic for particular events or landscapes. (Though in Zimbabwe itself I have come across grandiose plans for landscape reconstruction on a South African scale – a new black landowner in Nyanga aiming to uproot all the pines planted by the whites and replace them with vernacular trees.) Nor has

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there been a consolidation of a single Zimbabwean identity. The minority interests expressed on Clayton Peel's websites are too strong for that. The two books by Zimbabwean scholars with which I conclude this review are both about the uncertainty of Zimbabwean identity and of Zimbabwe's historical legacy.

A territorial nation was not an obvious aim of anti-colonial protest. In the 1940s, for instance, Reverend Thompson Samkange, though he was President of the Southern Rhodesia Bantu National Congress, wanted an alliance of Congresses which could produce a black nation state that combined South and Central Africa – and he even, for a time, persuaded Dr Banda of this pan-Bantu ideal. It was political necessity rather than a strong sense of historical identity that resulted in movements restricted to the boundaries of the colonial territories. Sabelo Ndlovu-Gatsheni does not consider this shrinking of Africanist aspiration, though he does emphasize that very few Zimbabweans have any idea where the name 'Zimbabwe' comes from, some believing that it was the name of a pre-colonial empire and others that it was given to the people by the medium of the great Nehanda spirit who was executed by the whites in 1897.

His main focus is on the confusion of nationalism and ethnicity which resulted in movements produced by one Zimbabwean language group being conflated with anti-colonial revolt as a whole. He sees the development of a 'Zimbabwean' nationalism not as a narrowing down but as a widening out. It could only be achieved by an authoritarianism that subordinated all other interests and identities – as Scarnecchia has argued for the Salisbury townships. Ndlovu-Gatsheni combines a discussion of 'empiricist' historical work on Zimbabwean nationalism with a wide theoretical debate. He is particularly concerned with the national project after independence in 1980. He argues that consensus for a Zimbabwean nation could not be achieved by violent repression – as in Matabeleland in the 1980s – nor by the invention of 'patriotic history', with its emphasis on the continuity of revolution and its division of Zimbabweans into heroes and sell-outs. (Perhaps Manheru's picture of the constant movement of a 'footloose' people, only bottled into their present territory by colonial conquest, suggests a different history, in which there have been 'Zimbabweans' but not 'Zimbabwe'.)

Ndlovu-Gatsheni concludes with a call for pluralism: 'One fundamental condition for African renewal of the national project', he writes, 'is to first of all place it in the hands of a committed and visionary leadership with the ability to articulate the African development issues without falling into an emotional neurosis of victimhood. Africans can only manage to choose such a capable leadership if there is competitive political space . . . . This is currently not the case, particularly in Zimbabwe' (p. 365).

Blessing-Miles Tendi's book is a detailed analysis of 'the role of politicians and public intellectuals in media, civil society and the academy in producing and disseminating a politically usable historical narrative concerning ideas about patriotism, race, land, human rights and sovereignty'. He insists that the Zimbabwe crisis is 'a struggle over ideas'. Tendi has talked with a very wide range of public intellectuals and he takes discussion of 'patriotic history' far beyond my own initial

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definition and description of it. There is a large contrast here between Zimbabwe and Rhodesia. Rhodesia was not a country of intellectuals or ideas. Zimbabwe is.

Much to his own chagrin, Tendi's book has been taken up and praised by the state press in Zimbabwe. This is because it is critical of the inability of the MDC to offer any sort of effective alternative historical vision. (The fact that it is even more critical of the regime's hegemonic historiography has been conveniently elided.) Nor has the diaspora made much of a contribution except for websites which offer a glorification of Ndebele kingship and call on Britain to renounce the concessions made by Lobengula so as to 'restore sovereignty'. Tendi sets out the questions which need to be answered. It is up to what Ndlovu-Gatsheni calls 'an active citizenry' to answer them.

CONCLUSION

As a Zimbabweanist I rejoice in this abundance of books and hope it will continue. As a historian I hope there will be more books which make a deep connection between the present and the past. I think the time has come for Zimbabwean scholars to move from historiography to history, even if it is sometimes 'empiricist'. Meanwhile we can look forward in the next two years to Jocelyn Alexander's study of imprisonment and restriction in Rhodesia and Zimbabwe; to Joost Fontein's monograph on the Africanization of a European landscape at Lake Kyle; to a revision of Gerald Mazarire's masterly doctoral thesis on the imagined landscape of Chisanga, which is a landmark in pre-colonial history; to Busani Mpofu's history of Bulawayo from 1960 to the present; probably to several works by the prolific Ndlovu-Gatsheni; to Wendy Urban Mead's history of the quietist Brethren in Christ church in Matabeleland; to Ken Wilson *et al.*'s combination of agrarian, social and religious history. There are many more diamonds to be found in the scholarly soil of Zimbabwe.

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