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(RE) COLLECTING THE MEMORY OF BULAWAYO THROUGH NAMING IN SHORT WRITINGS FROM BULAWAYO

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ABSTRACT: *The fundamental concern of this paper is that the process of naming in the short writings from Bulawayo, the ' City of Kings' that includes short stories and poems encodes the ideological envision of Bulawayo as the second largest city in Zimbabwe. The last hundred years' social history of Bulawayo has been sculpted alongside the broader Zimbabwean national history, by particular circumstances of colonial conquest occupation; of colonial capitalism, with its lopsided economy, a system of circulatory labour migration; and of policy controversies and resistance regarding the control of space: physical, social, political, psychological, and historical. This paper presents that these factors are typical of most cities in Southern Africa. What distinguishes Bulawayo an urban centre is not only its distinct socio-historical experience with white settler governments and social change but also its experience with the Zimbabwe African National Union- Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF) government in the post-independence period, which has been characterised by politics of exclusion and attempts to obliterate the experiences of the Ndebele ethnic group in the national cultural symbols. Antroponyms, geographical names, names based on history and brand names, used by authors in short writings from Bulawayo, have a telling effect as they capture the cultural heritage and identity of the City of Bulawayo. The paper draws its examples from an understanding that the postcolonial period, within which Zimbabwe as a country celebrated its independence in 1980, has witnessed a massive drive towards renaming of streets, buildings, places, schools, and other social amenities in order to recapture the identity of Bulawayo and represent its peculiarity to the other cities in Zimbabwe and the whole world in general. Also of note has been the overriding need to preserve the exploits of the liberation war icons from Matabeleland. The continued redefinition of the history of Bulawayo, particularly in the post-2000 period characterised by extensive closure of companies and de-industrialisation, has been a major concern as the short writings have shown an attempt to restore the glamour of Bulawayo and the subaltern representation that has characterised the City as a marginalised entity in comparison to other cities such as Harare. In the final analysis, this paper engages with both the theoretical and literary discourses of regionification, nationhood and representation as forms of identity creation. In this light, the paper uses the socio-historical approach to premise its arguments.*

KEYWORDS: Short Writings, Bulawayo, Ideology, Region, Subaltern

INTRODUCTION

Literature and its various genres could be argued to be one of the vehicles that have been used, alongside history, to preserve the identity and keep in memory, the happenings in any given community over a period of time. It is in this light that the *Short Writings from Bulawayo* have been selected for analysis as a way of establishing the extent to which such writings have used the technique of naming as a way of (re)collecting the memory of Bulawayo, the second largest

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city, after the capital city Harare in Zimbabwe. Because of its historical emergence, the City of Bulawayo has been popularly known as 'the City of Kings'. As Nyathi (2014) argues, it is generally observed that the Bulawayo City Council had a policy of documenting Ndebele history through the naming of townships, streets in the township, and names of beer halls. This strategy of naming and immortalising of history has been adopted by the literary scholars in their creative works from and about Bulawayo.

Justification of the Study

The research paper interrogates the significance of naming in the selected short stories in *Short Writings from Bulawayo*. Located in Matabeleland Region, Bulawayo as the second largest city in Zimbabwe has had an eclipsed identity due to its marginalisation. The emergence of the short writings from Bulawayo anchored in the history of the City has been as a result of the need by the writers as social players to preserve the identity of Bulawayo as a marginalised city and region in the wake of a debilitating socio-economic post-2000 crisis. The regional analysis of short writings from Bulawayo is premised on Lavenghove (2003) theorisation of a region. The concept of 'region', in Lavenghove's terms plays an important role in understanding how the world is geographically, politically and economically organised. The paper argues that reference to Bulawayo's geographical space, economic interaction, institutional or governmental jurisdiction as well as to social or cultural characteristics of Bulawayo; reveal the polysemous concept of regionification of the city in the narratives. Lavenghove (2003) has further described the region as a generator and communicator of meaning and identity. In this regard, he has argued that the final characteristic of regionhood is that a region must express meaning towards other social actors and personal actors as well as possessing a particular identity. The argument is centred on identity notwithstanding the problems presented by catch-all terms like 'identity' that invite endless debates, characterised by excessive generality. In Lavenghove's terms, regional identity has to be related to situations in which- through certain acts- such an identity can be expressed. In this light, the act of narrating and land-marking Bulawayo as a region and city is interpreted as an undertaking to preserve an identity of the region in its socio-economic, political and geographic spheres. The paper, therefore, through the analysis made, creates space for an understanding of Bulawayo as a marginalised and de-industrialised region from a fictional narrative genre. At some level the reader gets to comprehend the identity of a region (Bulawayo) as a social actor (Lavenghove, 2003) not just a fixed geographic entity.

Background to the Understanding of Bulawayo

In the post-independence period in 1980, as the nation began to rebuild and to strive toward growth with equity, Bulawayo lagged behind (Moyo, 2007:111). Indeed, in 1980, nationwide radical policies were made by the new African government to counter the effects of colonialism in most areas of social life, including education, health, and housing, and blatant racism became intolerable (Bond, 1999).

Bulawayo was one of the sites where King Mzilikazi held court and exerted political authority over Ndebele society from the 1830s to 1870. This great chief of the Ndebele had led the migration of the Ndebele people out of Zululand in the early 1820s and settled in Matabeleland, re-establishing his Mhlahlandlela court as the administrative capital of Ndebele society in Bulawayo. After Mzilikazi's death, Bulawayo became Lobengula's administrative capital and hence is known today as the city of kings (Moyo, 2007:93). The analysis adopted in this presentation focuses on the emotions and the politics that have long surrounded Bulawayo and

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the province of Matabeleland, described by Otrude Nontokozo Moyo as a place of "obliterated histories." People's experiences in Bulawayo, situated within Matabeleland, remain hidden within and outside Zimbabwe, because in the equation of power, those expendable and even as they pay dearly with their lives, their experiences are often lost to history and so has the multiethnic peoples of Matabeleland, as the Ndebele (Ibid).

The history of Bulawayo has revealed that individuals and families have had to negotiate and renegotiate their existence for generations in the face of complex socio-economic and political changes, colonial capitalism, political violence, and the collapse of the economy, leading to substantial migration (p.52).

Analysis of Selected Short Writings from Bulawayo

In his short story 'The Little House' cited in *Short Writings from Bulawayo* (2003) Spencer Crewe has used his first-person narrative creative writing prowess to outline the socio-historical experience of Bulawayo from the hindsight of his childhood experience in Thorngrove, one of the early affluent suburbs in Bulawayo. His narrative coincides with his time of birth, 1946 at 4020 Isingagrove, Bulawayo, Southern Rhodesia, which he has used as a reflective moment. Spencer says that, 'The Grove was a pleasant village of thirty-five homes by the time it had reached its limit, enclosed by large factories to the east and west, a river to the south and the Brickfield homesteads to the west'(p.7). The description of the delimiting factors to the Grove (Thorngrove suburb), are reminiscent of the geographical positioning of the suburb that seems to merge with Bulawayo's industrial area and the surrounding old townships such as Mzilikazi, Nguboyenja and Makokoba.

Historically, Spencer shows how Bulawayo was also demarcated along racial lines that discriminated between what he has described as, 'shades of the colour spectrum'. For example, he says, 'In 1944, to this bit of suburbia, well hidden away from the white man, whose sensibilities may have been disturbed if a non-white should live next door, came those who had lived in the servants' quarters of the more endowed.' (p.7). The racial segregation alluded by Spencer has always been part of the wrangles that led to the liberation struggle in Zimbabwe. The narrator further adds that, 'apartheid was alive and kicking when I barged into the world. No street name for our castle, only a dirt track that sinewed the back of Mono Steel (Pvt) Ltd; the rest of the village serviced by the same earthen ways.' (p.7). The hideous description of Thorngrove suburb that the narrator presents weaves into the separatist development that was instigated by the colonial forces in Bulawayo. To deprive a people the privilege of named streets and ways of accessibility to their residence is a clear indication of failure to accord them a human status.

The narrative digs into the degenerate state of accommodation that the rest of the races, serve for whites, had to grapple with. Spencer refers to their home as 'the little castle, situated directly behind the smoke belching factory' (p.8) characterised by insufficient space. Besides the lack of space, 'one's only bit of privacy was the lavatory situated in the south-western extremity of the back yard' (p.8). The state of developments in Bulawayo has been cast from the perspective of the lavatory that Spencer seems to have dreaded so much 'with its unplastered interior, with its rudimentary flushing system operated by a long lever, from which hung a chain ending in the metal stirrup one yanked on to empty the contents of the ceramic bowl.' (p.8). The recurring image about the lavatory refers to how Bulawayo sanitised its suburbs, as Spencer laments lack of the luxury of having an indoor toilet and bathroom, with mule drawn wagons used to collect household refuse and 'in the good old days, these wagons collected raw sewage from toilets,

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which had cast iron pots under the seat that were pulled out by a council worker and dumped noisily in the cart.' (p.10). In the same vein, Spencer gives an insight into issues of labour in Bulawayo, which seemed to follow the tribal lines. For example, he says that, 'Bulawayo City Council imported workers from far off Binga on the Zambezi to perform this task. The Ndebele considered shitty work like this taboo.' (p.10). The celebration of a new sewer reticulation system for the Grove that Spencer alludes to 'with pipes that ran into even bigger canals deep underground, speeding the effluent to the sewage ponds near Umgusa.' (p.10) is reminiscent of the mode of sanitising the city adopted by the Bulawayo City Council.

In the short story 'A Seed of Hope' Masimba Manyonga uses the backdrop of the economic woe to poke at the gravity of the suffering in Bulawayo through the eyes of the omniscient narrator, Nigger X. For example, the narrator says that 'as soon as X hits the city of Bulawayo, he is flabbergasted. Everywhere he looks; his eyes meet with long winding queues snaking through the sanitary lanes. He had never thought the situation could be this bad.' (p.71). The deepening economic crisis also hit hard on the City of Bulawayo, inflicting suffering on both the young and the old. Manyonga has engaged the incorporation of indigenous narratives in Ndebele language to capture the discourse of the various age groups during the crisis period in Bulawayo. For example, '*mamazala*' (mother-in-law); '*mkwenyana*' (son-in-law); *'mfowethu'* (next of kin). These are terms of endearment that are usually used by Ndebele speakers when they intend to show great respect and also express the kinship. In the context of Manyonga's narrative, the terms have been adopted as a way of expressing kinship and solidarity in the suffering that Nigger X, an old woman and an old man are going through. In addition, the narrator alludes to Ndebele slang terms that have been adopted to express various levels of respect in society. For example, when Nigger X notices a young fellow roasting maize cobs by the roadside opposite Coronation Cottages, and approaches him since he is feeling hungry, the young fellow says, '*Ah, mdala, zithini?*' (ah, old man, how are you), a discourse common among youth people. In response to the old man's request for a maize cob, the young fellow says '*Ah, mdala wethu. Uyazi izinto azimanga kuhle ngikutshele*... there is nothing I can do for you, mdala wethu, nothing.' (p.72) (ah, our old man. things are not ok for real...). The use of the phrase name 'mdala wethu' has been attributed to the late Matabeleland's nationalist legendary figure and hero Joshua Mqabuko Nyongolo Nkomo, a former vice president of Zimbabwe who was a revered father figure among the people of Matabeleland and the Zimbabwean nation at large. It is, therefore, judicious that whenever the phrase 'mdala wethu' is used it evokes an iconic leader and a sense of fatherliness amongst many in Zimbabwe.

Bulawayo has been immortalised in Manyonga's story through a conscious geographic mapping of the city's major streets and the historic buildings that have become landmarks for the City. The narrator says that, 'X enters Jason Moyo Street and heads down towards the Gallery. He switches roads and enters Main Street. There are queues everywhere. One by Bakers Inn opposite the Unity Village flea market, one by the Tredgold Building and another one for cars by the BSS. X feels so tired, so worn out. He sits by the Post Office for a rest before proceeding towards Northend where his nephew stays.' (p.71). Main Street has been renamed Joshua Mqabuko Nyongolo Nkomo Street, in honour of the nationalist Joshua Nkomo who has been widely known as Father Zimbabwe, '*umdala wethu*', of which a statue has been erected in the same street to further preserve his history as a revolutionary icon, and his contribution to the well being of Bulawayo, the people of Matabeleland and Zimbabwe at large. The places described by the narrator are close knit and conjure a sense of clustering whose image is compounded by queues at every turn. The multitudes of *Vapostori* women in the streets whom the narrator sees next to Highlanders Sports Club are a common sight in

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Bulawayo's streets. Because of Bulawayo's proximity to South Africa and Botswana, currency exchange has been a lucrative business; when Zimbabwean Reserve Bank's foreign currency reserves ran dry, governmental agents pounced on Bulawayo, calling it the miniature World Bank (Dube cited in Moyo, 2007:114), due to the heavy presence of the Vapostori (a group of women from the religious apostolic sect identifiable in their all-white outfit), the 'black market' foreign currency dealers who are known to have recorded brisk business in the midst of a crisis, particularly in Bulawayo. '*Usiphatheleni*?' or '*Matiunzirei*?' ('What have you brought us?'), was the common form of greeting at the market (Mawowa & Matongo, 2010:327). It has become impossible to talk about the outlook of Bulawayo without a mention of the Vapostori, women in white regalia. As the economic situation deepens in Bulawayo, most women, even those not belonging to the Vapostori sect, have taken to the foreign currency dealing where they record instant profits by selling foreign currency that include, among other currencies, United States Dollar, South African Rand, Botswana Pula and British Pound.

In his short story 'Between Two Men' cited in *Short Writings from Bulawayo II* (2005) Addelis Sibutha have situated the plot of his story in Bulawayo's high density suburb of Luveve, coupled with the economic crisis. The beer hall experiences where songs such as *NomaKanjani* by popular South African songbird, Brenda Fassie, blends well with the understanding of the merry life that one is bound to encounter in social gathering places such as beer halls in Bulawayo where popular opaque beer *Ingwebu* also described in other stories as *amasese*, a brand brewed from Bulawayo based company, *Ingwebu*, is served to patrons. As witnessed in the story, it is in such places as beer halls that those who patron the place take chances to discuss socio-economic and political issues bedevilling the country, while also drowning their sorrows. In the short story 'Hands' the narrator says about Ndlovu and the challenges that he faces in post-independence Bulawayo 'but something was missing, and when he felt the vacuum, the restlessness drove him to the company of comrades at the beer hall, where, through an Ingwebu-Madison haze, they could relive the past, regain a purpose, become alive' (p.37). The narrator in the short story 'Between Two Men' says, 'Ncube's company is not doing very well with the mushrooming of flea markets and *Mpenza Nhamo* second hand clothing sold along Lobengula Street and Sixth Avenue. Allusion to the sprouting of the flea markets coincides with the understanding of the deindustrialisation of Bulawayo whereby most clothing companies retrenched their workers and closed shop due to availability of cheap second hand clothes in the streets. Moyo (2007:113) aver that 'like most of Zimbabwe's cities, Bulawayo is losing most of its manufacturing industries. It is facing general economic decline, with plant closings and the bankruptcy of small and big companies. As a result, a large proportion of the labour force- both skilled and semi-skilled- suffers from high levels of unemployment, loss of income, and a decline in purchasing power.' Sibutha has also borrowed some terms that are popularly used in Bulawayo as a form of address, particularly for women, for example, *MaSiziba, MaNcube,* as a form of respect showing the maiden surname of the woman. This form of address is used because it is considered a sign of disrespect to just call a married woman by her surname without using the prefix '*Ma...*' (Which connote 'mother').

Naming in Mary Ndlovu's short story 'Hands' points at characters such as Ndlovu (the old man who is also Bongani's father), MaNgwenya (Bongani's mother), and Bongani. The narrative has been predicated on Ndlovu's liberation exploits and the way that the so-called war veterans and nationalists have comprehended the issues of post-independence politics in Bulawayo. Ndlovu argues that the youths, represented by his son Bongani, are bent on selling out the country to the former coloniser, the British. He says, 'we faced all the hardships of the bush, risked everything, now you waste it' (p.36); and also says, 'you wanted to live forever

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under Smith and the British! We liberated you, don't ever forget that.' (p.40). Surprisingly, from the description given by the narrator, the liberation credentials have not earned the so-called war veterans anything of note, as if to confirm Shimmer Chinodya's narrative title that the whole liberation undertaking was a 'harvest of thorns'. In a despairing tone, the narrator captures Ndlovu's lament, 'but now? What had he really achieved since demobilisation? Years of confusion, drifting, avoiding arrest in the sweeps by the Fifth Brigade. Then, finally, a mediocre job in a security company, a family, a two-bed roomed house in Nkulumane, a sputtering *skorokoro*, and a small herd at the family homestead that he could not even afford to visit any more. And he was getting old. Was this what he fought for? What about the dreams-of farms, trucks, herds of cattle to match Lobengula's.' (p.37). Nkulumane is one of the high density suburbs in Bulawayo located in south-western direction of the city centre, mostly housing low to middle income earners. Most war veterans bought properties in Nkulumane suburb.

The short story alludes to the changing political terrain where the old, represented by the old man, refuses to accommodate the new, represented by Bongani and the rest of the young people seeking political change in the mist of the suffering they have been made to endure. The old man is aware that his children have been driven out of the country by the suffering instigated by lack of employment 'Bongani [is] the only one around, the others struggling in Johannesburg, denying their pedigree, paying any money to be seen as a South African, not a Zimbabwean.' (p.37). Bongani has been arrested for his involvement in anti-government activities and is incarcerated at Central, Five Street in Bulawayo. The torture that Bongani has to bear is reminiscent of the torment inflicted on members of the opposition Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) party in Bulawayo, a city deemed as the haven for the opposition. Most youths from Bulawayo have resorted to crossing the border, illegally, to neighbouring South Africa, in search for employment opportunities. Unfortunately, when they get there the narrator reveals through Bongani that they live on the streets. The discourse pervading the short story reveals the political terrain of Bulawayo and inherent suffering.

The poem 'Ode to Departed Writers' by Albert Nyathi cited in *Short Writings from Bulawayo III*, is one of the mode that has been adopted to (re) collect the identity of Bulawayo and her departed writers who have contributed in preserving the culture of Bulawayo and its environs thought their various creative works. For example, in his poem, Albert Nyathi, one of the eloquent and prolific praise poets to emerge from Bulawayo, pays tribute to 'dear fellow writers departed', most of whom hail from Bulawayo or Matabeleland region, the likes of 'Mthandazo Ndema Ngwenya, Mayford Sibanda, Geshiom Khiyaza, Nandi Xaba, Yvonne Vera, Ndawana Ncube, Peter Mhlanga, Doris Ndlovu, Sodindo Ncube, Obadiah Mlilo, N.P. Ndlukula, P.J. Nondo, and Phillios Khumalo. Directly addressing one of the writers about the state of Bulawayo, Nyathi says;

> Dear Mthandazo Ndema Ngwenya
>
> *Babazala*, your Bulawayo still exists,
>
> We still have old buildings timelessly
>
> Starring at us with question marks
>
> No investment has come our way
>
> They destroyed G & D shoes

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And all and all and all and all

Babazala ziqunywa amakhanda ziyekwe. (p.42)

The foregoing stanza captures the issues of investment in Bulawayo, and the mention of G & D shoes company is quite significant as this company, among others, was one of the biggest shoe company in Bulawayo, that was taken over by the so-called indigenous investors who happened to be aligned to the government and they later failed to manage the company profitably and it closed shop. The repetitive line, 'and all and all and all and all' refers to many companies and businesses that have been destroyed thereby living Bulawayo in a deindustrialised state. The poet shows that there are many companies that have been affected and one may not count them all. The reasons for the destruction of these companies are shrouded in mystery as the poet says, 'Babazala ziqunywa amakhanda ziyekwe' meaning that, 'my father-in-law some things are better left unsaid'. The poet goes on to capture many indicators of the crisis that have given Bulawayo an ugly sight such as 'a culture of queues for basic commodities, emergence of more conmen, corrupt officials, hyperinflation, and shortage of basic commodities such as petrol and food.

Historical Narrative (Townships and Beer Halls)

In a historical narrative infused with fiction, meant to compound the telling of a story about Bulawayo and the Ndebele people, Pathisa Nyathi has presented his narrative 'The Silent Prince' in *Short Writings from Bulawayo III* (2006). The silent prince being referred in the story is Prince Nguboyenja, a son of king Lobengula, the last Ndebele king. As the story would have it, after King Lobengula, 'only sons born to Lobengula when he was king qualified for the throne. The eldest of the three eligible sons dispatched to the Cape Colony, Prince Njube, died in 1910. Nguboyenja was now the eldest among the eligible princes. He was set to become the rallying point in the efforts by Ndebele elders to install another king.' (p.121). Meanwhile, the colonial administrators had other ideas; they intended to thwart any efforts to resuscitate the erstwhile Ndebele monarchy by fomenting division between the royal family and the chiefs. Notably, since the chiefs were on the pay roll of the colonial masters, some of them were happy with the new situation and did not support the revival of the Ndebele monarchy (p.121). Already, the obtaining setup could be argued to have been fertile ground for fomenting dissent between the prospective king and the chiefs, in favour of the colonial administrators.

The plan of the colonial administrators was for the chiefs to meet to express their views about resurrecting the monarchy. Meanwhile, unbeknown to the chiefs, Prince Nguboyenja was invited to sit behind the curtain in a room in the Drill Hall to listen to their conversation. According to Nyathi, Chief Ntola Khumalo of Mzinyathini was present and spoke, after the rest of the chiefs 'had been plied with copious amounts of whisky and began to open up in praise of the white man and his philanthropic rule' (p.122), much to the awe of colonial officials in attendance who enjoyed being lavished with eulogies of inebriation. Chief Khumalo refuses the revival of the Ndebele monarchy in favour of the British rule, much to the disappointment of Prince Nguboyenja who feels betrayed as his own elders praise those who had subjugated him and his people? The chiefs are confused when Mthengisi, the messenger at the native commissioner's office, is called pull the curtain and they see that Prince Nguboyenja was listening to everything they were saying. From that moment, 'Prince Nguboyenja, the name meaning skin of a dog, never spoke again. For the rest of his life Prince Nguboyenja was a recluse. He lived in a house near present day Sunnyside, a suburb in Bulawayo' (p.123). When

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he died in 1944, his corpse was taken to Entumbane Hill where his grandfather King Mzilikazi's remains are interred (p.124).

Notably, Nyathi's narration in 'The silent Prince' revamps the history of the Ndebele people, their chiefs and the state of current Bulawayo city. For example, the setting of the whole betrayal is the Drill Hall in Bulawayo which is described as a huge building of impressive Victorian architecture. As the name suggests, the building belonged to the British South Africa Police who held their drills outside the hall. Close by are other government buildings, including the Memorial Hospital and the native commissioner's offices. The office was generally referred to as *KoMsitheli*, after the first native commissioner in Bulawayo, Mr. Herbert Taylor (p.121). The places being referred in the story, for example, Drill Hall is one of the landmark buildings that now house the Zimbabwe Republic Police offices. The Memorial Hospital buildings have since been converted into Provincial Medical Director's Offices for Matabeleland South Province, whilst the place where people apply for their national registration documents is still being referred to as *KoMsitheli*. In the same vein, the names of kings, princes and chiefs, for example, Lobengula, Njube (also King Lobengula's son, the first to be born after Lobengula had become king), Nguboyenja, Khumalo, and Mzilikazi have been immortalised through the townships in Bulawayo that have been named after them. The general tendency within the City of Bulawayo is that most suburbs have been named in honour of the revolutionary icons dating back to the Ndebele state and the coming in of the Pioneer Column.

In his short writing 'The Boxing Day Clashes of 1929' in *Short Writings from Bulawayo* (2003), Pathisa Nyathi has predicated his narrative on Makokoba, the oldest township in Bulawayo, also called 'the Location' situated on the western side of the town of Bulawayo. At the time of the establishment of the Location, its composition was predominantly Ndebele. Historically, 'the Location' has been seen as synonymous with the criminal activities in Bulawayo, hooliganism due to drunkenness, prostitution, among other social ills. The narrator shows that 'a stream flows on the eastern side of the settlement. There is a bigger one on the western side, which they call *Mazai*, a Shona word for eggs. Effluent from Bulawayo's heavy industries is spewed into the stream giving it a distinctive odour akin to the smell of rotten eggs. In the early days residents of Makokoba fetched water from the streams. That was before the installation of public water taps.' (p.83). In addition, the narrator says that the settlement was administered by the Sanitary Board in the early stages of its establishment. It would appear that the dilapidated state of the settlement was due to the motive that followed its setting up 'with a new type of chief, the white man.' (p 82).

The narrative shows how the establishment of Makokoba was not meant for the good of the black person in Bulawayo, but to the advantage of the white person. For example, after the administration of the Sanitary Board, later the Municipality of Bulawayo took over the responsibility. The black man in the Location was needed only for his labour, otherwise he was a nuisance that was not to be seen or heard. There were no social amenities to talk about. Notably, it was on this pretext that own social amenities were organised whereby in 1926 two royal princes, Rhodes and Albert, became instrumental in the establishment of the first black soccer club- Lions Football Club which was later to become Matabeleland Highlanders and finally Highlanders (p.83). In terms of the outlook of Makokoba, narrow alleys separate rows of houses. The better looking houses are referred to as the marriage cottages. Barrack accommodation houses factory and railway workers. The township was never conceived as a permanent settlement. Emerging white enterprises needed black labour. There were factories that needed unskilled hands. Roads and dams were being constructed (p.82). As further

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presented by Nyathi, the construction business needed unsophisticated black labour which was generally poorly paid. It was never the intention of the whites to live side by side with the blacks, whom they generally regarded with contempt. Consequently, it would take just one year for the [whites] to promulgate the notorious Land Apportionment Act which, in essence, legalised and formalised the social segregation of the black and white races. In addition, the mention of the Vundu area has a telling effect in terms of understanding the sources of labour in Bulawayo. As the record has it, many of the Tonga, called *Amazambezi* by the Ndebele, were employed by the city Council and lived in the Vundu area. Rhodesian Railway also built a compound near present day *Sidojiwe* Flats (an African township named after the royal son, Sidojiwe, the son of King Lobengula) (Nyathi, 2014), where men of Zambian (mainly *Lozi*) and Malawian origin were accommodated. This explains how in present day Bulawayo most of people of Malawian origin have been found in the old companies and houses in the mentioned areas.

The names of the beer halls that are currently found in Bulawayo also evolved with the history of Bulawayo. As Nyathi puts it, prior to the Great Depression (the year 1929, characterised by a worldwide economic slump, thereby imposing untenable economic situation with factories closing down and large scale retrenchments, poverty setting in), the Ndebele dominated the affairs of the Location. Ndebele women ran the business of beer brewing. That was before the Municipality took over the lucrative enterprise. Beer halls in the Location were named after the women and they still bear the names of the early women involved in traditional beer brewing, for example, *MaDlodlo* and *MaKhumalo*. The rest of the beer halls in the City have been named alike, after women, for example, *MaNwele, Masina, Mathonisa, MaNdebele,* while others have taken such names ascribed to women in terms of their body build-up, for example, *Sidudla* (big bodied woman) and *Figa* (woman with big Hips). Culturally, although no longer held revered by many, the foregoing body features have defined a typical woman among the Ndebele; hence it could be seen as befitting that such a cultural heritage be preserved through the typical naming of these places.

CONCLUSION

The contemporary picture of Bulawayo presented in the analysed short writings from Bulawayo is that the city is now ailing in all socio-economic and political facets. It has certainly fallen victim to the national economic crisis, but despite that, it remains busy with creativity and initiatives by individuals to save their lives and create opportunities for themselves and their children. The emergence of such creative works as *Short Writings from Bulawayo* is clear testimony of an attempt to preserve the image and history of Bulawayo. It is apparent from the short writings that Bulawayo's special character comes from a history of going its way and developing its own style that is derived from geographical names, names based on history and brand names.

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