



## Reverse culture shock amid anti-imperial struggles: View of the returning exile in Maruma's Coming Home

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### Abstract

This paper focuses on “reverse culture shock” in a Zimbabwean novel penned by a sojourner returning to the country at the brink of independence. Reverse culture shock is the emotional and psychological distress suffered by people returning home after a number of years overseas (Kagani, 2019). Effects include disorientation, insecurity, alienation, depression and withdrawal. The novel *Coming Home* is a semi-autobiographical text mediated through the lenses of the returnee protagonist Simon Nyamadzawo who recollects the twilight moments of the colony Zimbabwe-Rhodesia. Several weighty issues confront Simon who has difficulty piecing together this hesitant morphing society partly because he himself, has evolved. In sync with the protagonist who is struggling with this dual identity, the paper mixes Eurocentric formalist lenses with a context-centric African approach to make sense of this watershed moment for a society in transition. As the microcosmic issues surrounding identity, belonging, racial hostility and uncertainty play out for Simon in the text, it is apparent that the broader national macrocosmic shift to independence is similarly no smooth transition.

**Keywords:** reverse culture shock, homecoming, decolonisation, semi-autobiography, exile

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### Introduction

In this increasingly globalised world people are ceaselessly moving across the globe. Reasons for this movement vary from political, economic to cultural. Appadurai (1996) <sup>[7]</sup> used the term “humanscapes” to refer to this global mass migration of people around the world and its far-reaching effects. Upon migration to a new culture migrants are often beset by culture shock as they struggle to integrate in new environs. The experience of culture shock is known to carry four phases; tourist phase, shock, adjustment and adaptation (Tamin). Resultantly people in exile never lose connection with home and ever-present within them is a lingering preoccupation fuelled by nostalgia to return home. Ironically there is culture shock of an equal or even greater proportion experienced by migrants retracing their steps to parent countries. *Coming Home* by Olley Maruma, while covering the penultimate stage of the decolonising struggle in a Southern African country Zimbabwe, presents a protagonist beset by shock as he tries to reconnect with a country he left nine years before. The objective of this paper is to use reverse culture shock to critically and stylistically examine Maruma's text highlighting the parallels that exist between author, protagonist and milieu Zimbabwe-Rhodesia at the precipice of independence.

### Background

The plight of the author returning to write about home is a prevalent phenomenon across much of the Third World including Asia and the Caribbean (Ogoke 2011) <sup>[21]</sup>. The Caribbean Renaissance, coming on the heels of the Great Depression in the United States in 1929 and a rise in the social and political consciousness of Caribbean people, offered a deeper and more penetrating exploration of the region's history and rebirth. During this moment, Caribbean people within and without felt a greater sense of being at home and the necessity to examine what this sense of home implied.

In essence they sought connection with the past after being uprooted from their natural environs. Seminal fictional texts in the region like *A House for Mr. Biswas* (V.S. Naipaul) and *Omeros* (Derek Walcott) are among several canonical Caribbean literary texts embodying this spirit. Chirere (2010)<sup>[10]</sup> explains the “return of the native” subject as captivating writers at the time in question;

*... for the returnee is a man or woman who looks at home from the point of past-present, doing a mental and emotional audit. He sees what those who have always been here can never see (p. 1).*

Observations and evaluations are shaped by a dual sensibility. They must draw on memories of the place as it once was and then try to factor in and infuse the experience or world view that he has adopted while in exile (Ogoke 2011)<sup>[21]</sup>.

In this light *Coming Home* by Olley Maruma reflects on the penultimate stage of the decolonizing struggle in a Southern African country, the twilight of the colonial struggle in Rhodesia as the dawn of a new Zimbabwe looms. The novel's protagonist Simon Nyamadzawo returns to Zimbabwe-Rhodesia from England after a nine year absence to find a changed country and circumstances. Yet not all change is bad, for when he left the black majority was under colonial rule but now stares at the important precipice of independence. It is not a transition which will ensue smoothly as imperial Rhodesian powers are battling to preserve control. What results is a tense truce with either side disenchanted and severely distrustful of the other (Chidora and Mandizvidza 2017, Nyambi 2012)<sup>[9, 20]</sup>. Returning, and writing, at such a moment offers some shocking insights for author and protagonist who both, though unsure of what will happen next, appear to understand the contending forces very well. This paper now moves to conceptualising reverse culture shock, examining the analytical lens employed in examining the text before critiquing Maruma's text.

### Reverse Culture Shock

Culture shock, as mentioned above, is an almost ubiquitous experience to subjects exposed to an environment divorced from their natural, more familiar milieu. Less well known however is reverse culture shock which involves retracing one's steps back to an environment one once habited. This is not exclusive to international migration alone and can also be intrinsic encompassing for instance a convict reintegrating into society after release or a patient emerging from a medical coma.

According to Kagani (2019:3)<sup>[15]</sup> reverse culture shock or “re-entry adjustment” captures the “emotional and psychological distress suffered by some people when they return home after a number of years overseas.” This entails not all people returning to a culture experience this shock, nor are experiences uniform. They tend to be subjective and dependent on other personal, situational and environmental factors (Storti 2001, Kagani 2019)<sup>[25, 15]</sup>. Tamin agrees and adds that the degree to which people are affected by re-entry adjustment is greatly influenced by the amount of time spent abroad before returning. In essence the more successful one is in adapting to a foreign nation and culture the more difficult it is recalibrating to their own. Protagonist Simon has been away for nine years where he has managed to immerse himself seamlessly in British culture and tastes.

Gullahorn and Gullahorn, cited in Tamin, also define re-entry

shock as “a set of unmet expectations from both the migrant and the environment which used to be familiar with them.” As such re-entry shock appears more challenging than culture shock because it is unanticipated. People expect to reintegrate seamlessly into an environment they have a past acquaintance with. The lack of empathy and support for migrants in receiving countries further complicates reintegration efforts. Gullahorn and Gullahorn (1963)<sup>[14]</sup> suggest that psychological adjustment for migrants then takes four phases; honeymoon, conflict/culture shock, recovery and finally adjustment.

Several variables affect the extent and course of re-entry (Storti 2001)<sup>[25]</sup>. These include age, voluntariness of re-entry, previous re-entry experiences, length of overseas stay, the degree of interaction with overseas culture, whether re-entry was expected or unexpected and the re-entry environment. La Brack (2020)<sup>[18]</sup> and Storti (2001)<sup>[25]</sup> further examine symptoms and effects of re-entry shock. These include disorientation, exhaustion, depression, insecurity, communication difficulties and longing for escape. Many of these symptoms manifest clearly in this semi-autobiographical text, feeding into broader national concerns which include political impasse, tense race relations and alienation.

### Analytical lens

The criterion for stylistic analysis for literary works has varied with time. For instance a rich Euro-American tradition exists which espouses formal intrinsic attributes of literary works as having the ability to “speak” for texts (Cohen 2017)<sup>[11]</sup>. A formal analysis places emphasis on how the elements of writing are employed in creating a literary work (Abbott 2008)<sup>[2]</sup>. Conversely an orthodox understanding of African literature would appear incomplete without accounting for historical and contextual factors (Amuta 1989)<sup>[6]</sup>. In the face of these extremes Akwanya (2020)<sup>[4]</sup> counsels moderation and moots a merger of these two seemingly polar perspectives in analysis of African literary works. In *Coming Home* the author, protagonist and country, in a state of shock it can be argued, appear shackled by both traditions hence inspiring collaboration of the two seemingly divergent lenses in examining the text.

Amuta (1989)<sup>[6]</sup> identifies specific categories which capture interlinks between works and their determinants. He categorises two sections, with the primary section containing the key features for analysis of texts; history, the mediating subject and the literary event. The mediating subject is the author and/or persona whose role will be dealt with later while the literary event is the literary work, the “product of the attempt by the mediating subject to derive form from socio-historical experience” (p. 82). The secondary category of analysis consists of context, form and content. Context is extrinsic while form and content are intrinsic, hence better discerned by close reading of a text. To understand form is necessary if one wants to grasp the integrity of the work while content deals with questions such as “*who* crafted the work, for *what purpose*, *when* and *why*.” For Amuta (1989)<sup>[6]</sup> the literary work is essentially the “mediation of context into content and form” (p. 89).

Pursuing Amuta, Eurocentric aspects like theme and characterization become comparatively inferior from an African perspective. Themes are to be derived from the organic relationship that constitutes the aforementioned categories “as context is mediated” while individual

characterization conforms to the bourgeoisie trick of trying to isolate then decimate archetypes (1989). This paper, inspired by the protagonist's split personality, alloys both literary criticism traditions in analysing the text. Stylistic categories of context, form and mediating subject will now be examined within the text to calibrate the extent of reverse culture shock.

### Findings: (A) Context and Setting

The context in which events transpire is important to revisit and grasp in *Coming Home*. In Zimbabwe-Rhodesia war had dragged on for over a decade after Ian Smith's Unilateral Declaration of Independence (UDI) from the British in 1965. Nationalist political parties are subsequently banned. Before the breakthrough Lancaster House Conference several efforts are made chiefly by the British and Americans to bring an end to the war including the 1976 Kissinger Plan which was rejected by both sides. However, by the late 1970s both contending parties were willing to make concessions as the war had taken its toll. The talks led to a new constitution and elections which ushered in a new black government (Raftopoulos and Mlambo 2009) [22].

The moments around these negotiations and eventual settlement are Maruma's interest. He is always close to history, giving vivid accounts of goings-on during these turbulent times. He does this chiefly through the lenses of protagonist Simon Nyamadzawo who attempts to comprehend a country he left nine years earlier but which has morphed rapidly. National and personal events are interwoven as discovery for him is in two parts, the broad and the individual.

The protagonist Simon notes on arrival that the war is far from over. A squadron of camouflaged Hawker Hunter jets stationed outside a huge hangar is a reminder that the country is still in a delicate position. Chirere (2010) [10] explains;

*Simon comes back to a shell-shocked Salisbury, where one thinks twice before making a single step or statement. The beer flows easily but beneath every gulp lurks the unknown. There is a huge calm before the storm and the newcomer is torn between defiance and submission (p. 144).*

Salisbury (now Harare) is the capital city of Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe). Simon is at a disadvantage. The colonist "forces" he comes to face that are holding fort are the same "forces" he fled nine years before. They are greatly incensed given that recently a nationalist operative has just blown up government petroleum reserve tanks in the Southerton industrial area of Salisbury, a decisive blow for Prime Minister Ian Smith and moderate elements of the black nationalists he has brokered a stodgy Internal Settlement with.

Exiling oneself constitutes a careful consideration of what one is running away from and where and what one is running to. In England life has been comparatively better for Simon though not cosy. Race and class are still major stratifying criterion. Simon discovers that in Zimbabwe Rhodesia the same dictum applies. To survive or prosper any black person has to kowtow to white whims;

*Any black person who wanted approval, acceptance or protection from the system had to accept without question the premises upon which his or her humiliation was based (p. 20).*

Bhabha (1994) [8] focuses on the ideas of "colonial ambivalence" and "hybridity" in particular the obligation on the part of the colonized to mirror back an image of the colonizer. This, he argues, produces neither the aspired target identity nor actual difference but only a version of a "presence" that the colonized subject can only assume partially. This resultant 'mimic man' occupies an impossible space between cultures which is the effect of a flawed colonial mimesis. He becomes both a symbol of both the enforcement of colonial authority and its strategic failure (Bhabha 1994) [8]. Another instance to support this is when a black guard manning the Press Club Simon patrons shows duplicity by being harsh and aggressive to blacks while becoming "obsequious and over solicitous" when any white person arrives.

Consequently blacks are forced to act out different roles in the fight to survive against white dominance. To shore this Maruma, in his preface, cites Armah's call for sophistication, for ". . . entrails hard enough to bear the contradiction and to thrive on it" (p. II) as a necessity if one is to survive in these uncertain times. However, any act no matter how convincing is bound to wear thin if overdone. White Rhodesians fail to realize this, insistent on believing that blacks are contented in their subservient roles. They perceive a prototypical image of a "good African" who is; obedient, Christian, obsequious, simple minded, self-effacing and politically neutral. The African should, they additionally perceive, look at themselves as political and economic failures without tracing the historical factors that accentuate this. Blacks' acquiescence is only ephemeral though as colonial and racial issues remain top priority to them. At the political level Maruma notes the oversight on the part of whites who look at themselves as Messiahs delivering Africans from 'primitive barbarism';

*Indeed, many whites did not seem to understand that their pathological hatred of the Patriotic Front was one of the major reasons why many blacks rallied their support behind its militant leaders (p. 40).*

The Patriotic Front was an amalgamation of the two major nationalist parties. Its allure for many blacks here becomes hatred for white minority rule. Fanon, cited in Fairchild (1994) [13], explains this further when tackling the question of truth. Truth is anything, even falsehood, which repudiates colonialism. It speeds up the break-up of the colonialist regime and;

*Promotes the emergence of the nation; it is all that protects the natives, and ruins the foreigners. In this colonial context there is no truthful behavior; and the good is quite simply that which is evil for 'them' (p. 11).*

"Them" in this case means the whites and Simon is puzzled by the influx of white journalists in Zimbabwe-Rhodesia (p. 28) at a moment when the colony appears ready to be lost. Like the whites within they are equally skewed, postured and biased in their reportage and interpretation of events. They soldier on, propagating their reports of election campaigns in the run-up to the elections.

Maruma thus advances a race-inspired nationalism that preaches a patriotic reading of events. In Chidora and Mandizvidza's words *Coming Home* operates "... within the ambit of nationalist historiography and depicts home as a



utopian space in which its children are happily returning” (2017: 54). The “children” implied are black Africans. Maruma paints an essentialist view of blackness and home, categorically declaring the newly found nation a space for blacks. This is in line with the hegemonic political nationalist historiography which envisions an exclusionist, possibly vindictive, new state exclusively for blacks. Nyambi (2012)<sup>[20]</sup> notes this “race-inspired nationalism” in *Coming Home* but joins Chidora and Mandizvidza (2017)<sup>[9]</sup> in casting aspersions over its narrow propagandistic outlook. It is instructive to note that in 2007 when the novel is published people are ironically fleeing Zimbabwe. Maruma, as someone writing in hindsight, would have been expected to present a more balanced and realistic narrative reflecting the shortcomings of homecoming. At another level Maruma’s utopianism may be a reflection of an escapist vision he must sustain at all costs as culture shock sets in. Home must be glorified and remain, “... the myth that he nurses to help him survive exile, he attempts to will home into existence, as it were, by blindly glorifying it” (Chidora and Mandizvidza 2017:58)<sup>[9]</sup>.

As a result juxtaposed are two forms of “coming home” with quite a difference. At the national level nationalist leaders Robert Mugabe and Joshua Nkomo return triumphantly from the Lancaster House negotiations in England against Ian Smith and his Internal Settlement partners. This can be contrasted with Simon who sneaks into the country unnoticed and consequently befuddled by what awaits him. Mugabe and Nkomo have been away for six months and conceive an entire nation while Simon’s nine years away reap, at most, personal rewards. Lancaster is however a compromise settlement. Mugabe from his very first speech in the aftermath of the negotiations is deemed “worthy of a seasoned statesman” (p. 132) by relieved South African far right newspapers, a complete change of opinion from a crew that had deemed him a terrorist for the past decade. Whites are roundly surprised by the olive branch extended to them by the new government, the urbane cut of the new Black Nationalist political figures as opposed to the guerrilla communists they had dreaded as well as the new government’s incorporation of Rhodesians Peter Walls as head of the new Zimbabwe National Army and David Smith as Finance Minister.

Hence Maruma shows the culture shocks that are incumbent to the establishment of a new independent state. A context conscious reading of *Coming Home* must acknowledge the tension and uncertainty of these times which elucidate the eventual joy and euphoria experienced in Maruma’s text at the end. Yet it is not without further shocks. Racial tensions still fester. A terrorist plot to blow up Rufaro Stadium, the venue for the new independent government’s installation, is thwarted while a few over-excited blacks appear too eager to destroy Cecil John Rhodes’ statue. Maruma continually warns of the reality of a neo-colonial threat.

### (b) Literary Form

Cohen (2017:1)<sup>[11]</sup> questions the place of form in understanding literary texts. Contributing to debate on the conceptualization and value of form he poses a number of salient questions;

*Is form an ornament or supplement to literature’s essential content, a component of literature’s meaning and function, or the very defining essence of the literary? Does form in here in the macro-structures of*

*literary mode and genre, the micro-structures of figure, style, and prosody, or the unique shape of the individual text? Does form stand apart and insulated from the vicissitudes of history and the pressures of ideology, is it the object (or agent) of historical and ideological determination, or does it provide us a vantage from which to understand and perhaps resist them?*

As already stated literary form encompasses everything contributing in creating a literary work. If the answers to Cohen’s questions above are dominantly affirmative it raises the danger of being overly reductionist. However two dominant features that stand out in *Coming Home* are parallelism, as the protagonist’s experiences are juxtaposed to national events, and secondly how the text draws on the coming of age discovery novel genre. The novel in this case carries traits of the *Bildungsroman* form as the protagonist negotiates apparent culture shock in getting to grips with the new reality.

There are noticeable parallels that can be drawn between Simon’s experiences and the broader national political tensions. The absorbing and wide ranging debates Simon has with whites, black journalists and other sections of society “... even prostitutes are not spared” (Chidora and Mandizvidza 2017:70)<sup>[9]</sup> can be a microcosm of the bigger Lancaster House talks that drag on for months between Rhodesians and nationalist forces (Patriotic Front) over the fate of the country in Britain. In both sets of debate there is no ultimate winner. The death of Simon’s father so close to achieving his political objectives with ZAPU can be compared to the deaths of nationalists like Herbert Chitepo and Josiah Tongogara who both die so close to the attainment of independence. The brewing struggle between Simon’s Uncles Jewel and Zepheniah points to the struggles between the Patriotic Front’s (PF) two decolonizing parties ZAPU and ZANU. The beer drinking and drunkenness that are almost a motif in the novel reflect the general confusion and mundane state of national affairs.

Form can also be defined as the piecing together of a literary work, the construction and structure of an art work (Cooley 1993). Maruma’s novel presents challenges in trying to fixate to particular formal categories. Reinhardt Kuesgen (cited in Cooley 1993) observes the “fundamental problem of the concept, the function and the adequacy of the novel as a major Western genre in Africa and other non-European countries” (p. 15). One can note at times how the narrative flows almost passively, how it is being told from the point of view of a returnee while also detecting parallels from European literary traditions that are also negated by the writer’s pro-African content, mission and vision. One of the main reasons for this can be found in how the writer himself who now possesses a dual Euro-African background.

*Coming Home*’s narrative plot operates at different levels. There is the “biographical” plot capturing the returning prodigy or prodigal (depending on how one looks at it) and the bigger background story that captures the significant political and social events occurring in Zimbabwe just before independence in 1980. Chidora and Mandizvidza (2017:58)<sup>[9]</sup> view it as a metanarrative which has “... created a home for black people which enabled them to come back home both physically (from exile) and symbolically (from feelings of alienation).” In the first plot Maruma’s narrative is “laid back” as the past-present dichotomy plays out in the returnee who tries to deconstruct the society he has left some nine

years before. It is easy to misconstrue the novel as a heap of episodic recollections by a nostalgic returnee moving from plane to office, households to parties and clubs, to bars and even the rural areas. Or, more fatefully, as a set of anecdotes or diary entries to be consumed passively with little need for reflection and interrogation. The novel is deliberately episodic in this sense but also embedded is an attempt to explore the broad and differing moods in a country at the precipice of independence after an armed struggle.

The protagonist Simon is an observer and an advocate at the same time, noting different things and trying with difficulty to correct those he can. His cerebral eagle eye observance of happenings confirms the former, while the ideological debates with colleagues reveal the latter. At best he can subconsciously see that “home” is no longer home for the change in place, persons, time and circumstances he discovers in his audit point to a new society that has made its own advances and regressions.

This gives credence to the view that Maruma is also drawing from Eurocentric literary forms. In a way Maruma’s novel fits with the *Bildungsroman* novel whose chief aim is to show growth and consciousness in a character that registers events investigatively and indiscriminately (Abrams 2005) <sup>[3]</sup>. Simon, however, goes beyond simple registration proceeding further to deep analysis and active participation in them. Ironically the supremely patriotic Maruma is often at odds with his protagonist Simon, perhaps unwittingly, stumbles into shortfalls of the nationalist historiography often noting how pyrrhic the notion of independence is and how even 2007’s bitter realities cannot be easily wished away (Chidora and Mandizvidza 2017) <sup>[9]</sup>. Moreover the narrative is tempered by tendencies that are found in the action-packed, romantic paperback Western novels and movies espousing debilitating Western cultural traits. A case in point in the novel is the eternal presence of beer and festivity, as if to say this is something that any sane person cannot do without. This dilutes the impact of the protagonist’s agency for it is tempered by his near permanent drunkenness and pursuit for carousal.

In the final analysis the “coming home” implied in the title takes a different meaning altogether. Then again, “coming home” appears problematic from the onset as ironically the protagonist has already “arrived” and is actually in the final moments of his flight. This first person narrator is somewhat a recluse, afraid of large welcoming crowds of relatives and traditions, another contrast to the nationalist leaders’ celebrated and publicized return from Lancaster. With this in mind Maruma’s “coming home” becomes symbolic at another level, the arrival of a new country from the clutches of colonialism. Home seems a source of comfort and, for some like Simon Nyamadzawo, potentially offers them the chance to assume a leading role in the rebuilding of the country. His education (and class position) puts him in a more favourable position in the post-settler nation.

Nonetheless Fairchild (1994) <sup>[13]</sup> warns about narratives’ impulse towards closure, that is, how texts aim to end having made a re-establishment of order that is always “politically correct.” The tendency of narrative fiction to hastily defer to convention and re-establish equilibrium (in the face of shock) mirrors the experience of Franz Fanon’s colonial revolutionary, who discovers “*that while he is breaking down colonial oppression he is building up automatically yet another system of exploitation*” (Fairchild 1994: 145) <sup>[13]</sup>. Revolutionary narratives, like revolutions in the larger sense,

need to resist any such rash utopian generalisations. Clarity on the part of the author and mediating subject, now to be examined, is crucial maintaining perspective and objectivity.

### c) Mediating Subject

Africans responded differently to colonialism. Some took up arms instantly, while others sought to negotiate with either the colonialists, or with life. Others took flight escaping to advance the struggle from other areas or to further studies. Maruma, author of *Coming Home* falls into the last category. However like many Caribbean writers; V.S. Naipaul, George Lamming and Kamau Brathwaite for instance, Maruma remains attached to home hence the inspiration to write *Coming Home*. Maruma actually comes home unlike many Caribbean writers who remain exiled forever.

*Coming Home* carries autobiographical aspects. There are strong links between author Olley Maruma and mediating subject Simon Nyamadzawo. In reviewing the novel Chirere (2010) <sup>[10]</sup> suggests this by implication, “Maruma has chosen a subject and circumstances that he understands very well because he went through more or less the same experiences as his major character” (p. 144). The author acts in part as the conscience and spokesman of his society. Kehinde (2008) believes the protagonist plays a similar role as a tool, construction or device wielded by the author;

*Their heroes (protagonists) offer a reflection of a moral code arising out of a cult of innocence, love alienation and redemption; they often form a particularly adolescent troupe of spiritual non-conformists, tough minded and fragile, humorous and heart breaking* (Kehinde 2008: p. 5).

Simon Nyamadzawo in *Coming Home* reflects this in several ways. Yet Maruma also attempts to divorce himself from Simon via fictional narrative. This removes the focus from the author thereby foregrounding other important and historic developments unfolding in the country. The focus will be to try and evaluate this narrator/author’s role and impact in light of a changing Zimbabwe.

The narrator like the author has been away for nine years and returns in 1979 with a law degree from Kent University and undergoes a training course with the British Council’s Media Department. He is also a formidable academic. Upon return he worked briefly as a public prosecutor then journalist. Maruma returned to France in 1983 to learn film production and lectured at Harare Polytechnic. He was also Secretary General of Zimbabwe Union of Journalists (ZUJ). His other significant traits include his nationalist activism, extrovert nature, versatility and optimistic outlook (Kanengoni 2010).

Simon is wealthy and cosmopolitan, well-read, inquisitive, an optimistic patriotic, indulgent, calculating and patronizing. Chirere (2010) <sup>[10]</sup> defends his less appealing traits saying, “*But Simon is well redeemed because at least his nationalist-leftist sentiments are on the side of history*” (p. 144). Kanengoni (2010) in his own review adds;

*He (Maruma) was an extremely optimistic man to return at such a time before the conclusion of the talks at Lancaster House. Less optimistic people would have waited a little longer, perhaps until the end of the talks. Indeed, as it eventually turned out, some would take years before they risked returning* (p. 3).

On the whole he appears the Biblical prodigal son, a disciple who now knows the true material and symbolic value of home. He now knows better than to reject or run away from circumstances. His time away in the jaws of an unaccommodating England refines his perspective showing him that home with all its imperfections is still home and worth the trouble, a characteristic of those at recovery and adjustment phases according to Gullahorn and Gullahorn (1963) <sup>[14]</sup>.

There is scope enough in *Coming Home* to realise that Africa's problems are not merely a matter of rotten luck or abysmal governance alone but are partly accentuated by lopsided relations with the West;

*The truth is that we Africans are poor because we do not have control over our minerals and natural resources. We don't have any control over our financial institutions and economies. All these valuable assets and resources are in the hands of foreign owned multinational corporations (p. 76).*

In short Maruma believes Africans are poor because they are robbed. Globalization and neo-colonialism ensure that Africans remain at the wrong end of benefits from trade on the global market. The cotton and coffee farmers in Burkina Faso receives less than ten per cent of the ultimate value of their now processed materials (Mshomba 2002). The American government can willingly pour four billion dollars to its farmers to subsidise maize production which realizes two billion dollars. In essence, Africa's underdevelopment cannot be explained without pointing at Europe (Mshomba 2002). However, Simon's preference for a white wife and his almost religious devotion to her symbolically points to praxis of sorts.

The protagonist's class position, aided by his education, is unlikely to suffer in the impending political shake-up. In Salisbury he prefers to live in posh Eastlea suburb as opposed to high-density Highfields. Like Jean Medza in *Mission to Kala* he is a constantly carousing flaneur, taking advantage of his journeys and visits about the city. His regular breakfast consists of crisp bacon and soft fried eggs and he can treat guests to a crate of beer without wincing. Despite his nationalist sentiments his musical taste is Western. Unlike the unemployed majority he can afford to reject jobs and wait for the right one.

Chirere (2010) <sup>[10]</sup> adds; "*He represents the new breed of black men; cosmopolitan, well read, articulate and 'cheeky'*" (p. 144). It could be added that, due to his tastes, he will be part of the bourgeois soon, that comprador alliance so detested by Fanonians (Fairchild 1994) <sup>[13]</sup>. One can surmise he has betrayed his country by going to study in England while others are at the battle front, only to join in when history is on the verge of being made. As the prostitute fears (with irony) he may be one of the many hastily returning home sensing political opportunities in the new nation (p. 74). Behind his versatility lurks menace. At worst he can be accused of being a mercenary, a man who "wears different hats and flies no flag." He is a nationalist, yes, but has been clamouring and weeping for change from outside perhaps louder than the bereaved who have borne the brunt of colonialism and then war.

Also noteworthy is Simon's general optimism about the new country's prospects. His understanding of history, philosophy, religion, ideology and Marxism is almost

impeccable. He is eager to argue his views fearlessly. His all-round knowledge runs him the risk of being patronizing and snobbish to people around him. When asked by Bill what he has 'read' at University of Reading he beams noticeably;

*The fact that he said 'read,' as the well-educated English did, rather than 'study,' as Jordan had done, reminded me how the cumulative experience of living in England had altered the way I spoke, foisting on me an exaggerated concern about the proper use of grammar, inflection and phonetics (p. 29).*

In being particular, marveling and accepting English mannerisms of speech Simon passes for an Olaudah Equiano, so awed and absorbed by what he sees that he cannot help celebrating it even though, as Bhabha (1994) <sup>[8]</sup> cautions, it repudiates him.

In summation protagonist and author fall into a trap that affects most contemporary African writers. There is a genuine effort to tell the African story that encompasses historical factors and a skepticism and lack of clarity in regard to the future. This is symptomatic, as can be argued in this study, of the confusion or lack of clarity resultant from re-entry shock as the past-present audit ensues. As Amuta (1989) <sup>[6]</sup> and Ramirez (1999) argue, writers are not independent of their productions as personal influences, perceptions and experiences consciously and subconsciously find their way into their supposedly "neutral" works. The concern is that many African writers are at the mercy of at least two incompatible cultures, as shown by Maruma's example. The consequence is works, characters and authors affirming reverse culture shock.

## Conclusion

To conclude, the paper has shown how re-entry shock is very much prevalent in *Coming Home*. By examining the context, form and mediating subject the tensions of reintegration into a society are put in sharp focus. As Simon struggles to reacquaint with Zimbabwe so does Zimbabwe struggle with its "new" re-established existence as an independent nation. The author Olley Maruma, like Simon Nyamadzawo, finds himself having to make a past-present audit. He is writing about events that occurred thirty years before. As he digs into the past trying to re-enter a realm gone by his awareness of present realities intrudes. This complicated situation, as shown with re-entry shock in this paper, is not navigated in an easy, painless or straightforward manner.

## Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that no conflict of interest relevant to this article exists.

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