

# Zimbabwe's Politics of Violence as shown in Music from the Liberation Struggle to the Post Independent State

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**ABSTRACT**—*The paper is an exposition on how violence is/ (has been) inherent in Zimbabwe's political struggles. This violence is shown through music. The paper shall look at the songs that were sung during the liberation struggle that are in Pongweni's Songs That Won the Liberation War. In the post independent state songs by the MDC choir and the Mbare Chimurenga Choir shall be analyzed. Content and discourse analyses shall be used as methodological tools to analyze the music. Although violence during the liberation struggle could be seen as constructive in Fanonian terms, this paper notes that the culture of violence did not die and continued into the post independent state, and has become unrefreshing. The paper will conclude by noting that Zimbabwe's music shows that the culture of violence in politics seems to be so embedded and that it will take a drastic paradigm shift in the political landscape to have any corresponding transformation in Zimbabwe's musical thrust.*

**Keywords**— political violence, music, culture and Zimbabwean politics.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

The paper argues for a violence free political communication in Zimbabwe, of which music is one of the mediums at the centre stage. The paper analyses Pongweni's *Songs That Won the Liberation Struggle*, Mbare Chimurenga Choir and the MDC choir.

As noted, the principal aim of the paper is to participate in the struggle to do away with the scourge of violence in Zimbabwe's political processes. The paper hypothesizes that the culture of violence that was nurtured into Zimbabwean societies during the liberation struggle failed to die and has continued into the post independent state. This violence has been largely reflected in the political music that has been recorded in the country. Whilst the violence during the liberation struggle was constructive in that it helped to dislodge a white centered regime, in the post independent state this violence is quite unrefreshing. And whilst music was used constructively during the struggle to fan revolutionary violence, today music would be best employed to forge a unity of purpose and as some form of development support communication.

Thus the focus on Pongweni's *Songs That Won the Liberation Struggle* will show how music was used to fan revolutionary violence during the struggle whilst the focus of the two choirs in the post independent state will show how music has been used to fan a nauseating and unnecessary brand of violence.

The paper takes a qualitative approach to the analysis of the songs under the focus. Thus content and discourse analyses are the major methodological tools to be employed by the paper.

## 2. DEFINING REVOLUTIONARY VIOLENCE: PONGWENI'S SONGS THAT WON THE LIBERATION STRUGGLE

Physical violence has been defined by Jinadu (1986) as “somatic injury inflicted on human beings the most radical manifestation of which is the killing of an individual”. Jinadu (1986) further notes that the impact of violence is that it dehumanizes the dominated and the subjugated. It injects them with trepidation and aims at ensuring that the victims accept the version of reality as handed down to them by the perpetrator. Jinadu (1986) also defines psychological violence as “injury or harm done to the human psyche and it includes brain washing and indoctrination of various kinds”. It can therefore be seen that music as a medium of communication can be used to promote and perpetrate both kinds of violence as defined. Fanon (1963) defines violence during the colonial periods in Africa as:

Colonialism is not a thinking machine nor is it a body endowed with reasoning faculties. It is violence in its natural and absolute state and it will only yield when confronted with greater violence.

Fanon's definition of violence thus justifies the revolutionary violence that helped to dislodge colonial governments in some African countries. He further notes that:

National liberation, national renaissance, the restoration of nationhood to the people, commonwealth: whatever may be the headings used or the new formulas introduced, decolonization is always a violent phenomenon..... Decolonization is the meeting of two forces, opposed to each other by their very nature, which in fact owe their originality to that sort of substantification which results from and is nourished by the situation in the colonies. Their first encounter was marked by violence and their existence together—that is to say the exploitation of the native by the settler—was carried on by dint of a great array of bayonets and cannons.....

This citation from Fanon (1963) establishes several things. The first is that colonialism caused suffering for the colonized and this ‘exploitation of the native by the settler’ was marked by violence. Such suffering is captured by songs of tribulation in songs that won the liberation struggle which according to Du bois (in Pongweni) ‘tell of an unhappy people, of the children of disappointment, they tell of death and suffering and unvoiced longing toward a truer world’. Such songs articulate the message of struggle and defiance and were sung even in the face of Ian Smith's declaration that ‘not in a thousand years will there be majority rule’. Such songs were sung in the face of such tribulation as was faced during and after the massacres at Nyadzonia and Chimoio. Suffering of the black natives was also worsened when they were ordered into ‘keeps’ that were referred by the Rhodesia minority regime as ‘protected villages’. In such times music inspired the guerrillas and the masses to carry on with the struggle and Pongweni notes that this was the “music of anger and strife [which is] a symphony denouncing fascist deeds”. An example is the song ‘kuyaura/distress’. The persona in the song sings about distress of the dispossessed describing the desperation of a drowning man who will cling onto a reed in the forlorn hope of surviving against overwhelming odds:

Baba vanguardakafavachitambura  
Amaivangundokufavachionapfumvu (my father and mother died of distress)

This tribulation was definitely caused by violence which was perpetrated by the whites against the Africans. And thus the brave African people rose to confront the violence through chimurenga/war. Cnaan Banana (in Pongweni) notes that:

The chimurenga songs helped to instill grim determination among all the actors in the revolutionary process. The gallant fighters themselves drew tremendous inspiration from the songs

As noted ‘chimurenga’ means war; the name is inspired by the Shona legendary fighter Murenga whose spirit inspired the first and second liberation wars in Zimbabwe. Banana's statement denotes the exhortatory function of music in the chimurenga war. It is also at this stage that according to Fanon (1963) the native realizes the necessity of confronting colonial violence with equal or greater violence:

The violence which has ruled over the ordering of the colonial world, which has ceaselessly drummed the rhythm for the destruction of native social forms and broken up without reserve the systems of reference of the economy, the customs of dress and external life, that same violence will be claimed and taken over by the native at the moment when, deciding to embody history in his own person, he surges into the forbidden quarters. To wreck the colonial world is henceforward a mental picture of action.

An example of such songs is ‘nziradzamasoja/soldier’s code of conduct’ which is a conscientization song. Pongweni notes that this song is a politicization song directed at the guerrillas, the masses and the enemies in the field.

What is clear therefore is that the chimurenga songs inspired violence. This violence was seen in the bravery and the fighting spirit that was instilled in the freedom fighters after singing and listening to the songs. In other words these songs were part and parcel of this violence. They were an instrument in the revolutionary violence that was the machine used to overthrow the minority white regime in Zimbabwe. The whites were forced to the negotiating table at Lancaster resulting in elections that gave ZANU PF the mandate to rule the newly liberated country.

### **3. THE POST INDEPENDENT STATE AND OTHER SONGS OF VIOLENCE**

After independence it was clear that violence was no longer necessary as the liberation had been won. In Zimbabwe reality however shows that the politics still carry with it a lot of violence. It is therefore also instructive to note that according to Fanon (1963), the revolutionary party ZANU PF, like many liberation movements in Africa that assumed power after the fall of colonial racist regimes, fell into ‘pitfalls of national consciousness’. The middle class making up the liberation movements were not prepared to rule, armed only with a bookish acquaintance of their country. Many became satisfied with becoming intermediaries of a rampant though camouflaged capitalism. Fanon (1963) writes that national consciousness:

instead of being the all-embracing crystallization of the innermost hopes of the whole people, instead of being the immediate and most obvious result of the mobilization of the people, will be in any case only an empty shell, a crude and fragile travesty of what it might have been..... The national middle class which takes over power at the end of the colonial regime is an under-developed middle class. It has practically no economic power, and in any case it is in no way commensurate with the bourgeoisie of the mother country which it hopes to replace..... The national bourgeoisie of under-developed countries is not engaged in production, nor in invention, nor building, nor labour;..... The psychology of the national bourgeoisie is that of the businessman, not that of a captain of industry; and it is only too true that the greed of the settlers and the system of embargoes set up by colonialism has hardly left them any other choice.

According to Fanon (1963) it is at this stage that the masses wallow in poverty while the ruling class pseudo bourgeoisie engages in primitive consumerism, acquiring flashy cars and big mansions. It is also at this stage that the masses realize this great betrayal and pockets of resistance and disgruntlements emerge. Thus, on the eleventh of September 1999, a new political party, the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) was formed in Zimbabwe. The direct challenge of this new party was to try and wrestle power from the Zimbabwe African National Union Patriotic Front (ZANU PF), the ruling party that had been in power since 1980.

This birth of the MDC which came as a direct opposition to the liberation movement, ZANU PF, in Zimbabwe can be traced back to what Patrick Bond and Masimba Manyanya (2005) refer to as the black Friday: the day is 14 November 1997, and the Zimbabwean currency fell from around Z\$10 to below Z\$30 to the US\$ over four hours of trading time; the economy shrunk, screamed and inflation soared to unprecedented levels. Working class Zimbabweans, who earlier had been ravaged by ESAP, another economic mistake by the ZANU PF ruling party, fled their country and flocked South Africa and some reached far off places like New Zealand and Canada. Industry suffered through these years and the year 2008 became the pinnacle of the crisis as most households really struggled to make ends meet. According to Bond and Manyanya (2005) the people of Zimbabwe grew more and more disillusioned by the nationalistic movement (ZANU PF), which they call ‘exhausted nationalism’ and support for the MDC and Morgan Tsvangirai grew day by day.

Tsvangirai’s growing stature in opposing Mugabe was also buoyed by what was seen as an emerging common trend in Africa that had seen liberation movements being replaced by newly formed political movements through elections: the so termed third wave of democracy in Africa. Thus Zambia saw Chiluba replacing Kaunda, Kibaki replacing Moi in Kenya and similar changes in Ghana. Schraeder (2011) summarizes the issues associated with this third wave of democracy in Africa as was written by Samuel P. Huntington. This democratization was referred to as Africa’s ‘springtime’ or ‘second independence’ and it dramatically increased in the decade of the 1980s. Factors leading to its emergence include: the end of the cold war, and the downfall of single party communist regimes in Eastern Europe and the former soviet union,

which in turn significantly discredited the existence of single party (especially Marxist) political systems throughout Africa; severe economic stagnation and the ‘crisis’ of the African state which facilitated the widespread adoption of structural adjustment programmes largely designed by the IMF and the World Bank; and finally, and perhaps most important, the rise of increasingly organized and vocal pressure groups within African ‘civil societies’ that sought the liberalization of their respective political and economic systems. One such labour group in Zimbabwe was the ZCTU which was later to become the launch-pad of the MDC led by Tsvangirai.

It is at this time that violence seriously reared its ugly head in Zimbabwe’s politics, especially during election time. Although violence had also been seen in other elections before the period after the formation of the MDC and the gukurahundi period of the 80s, the focus of this paper is more targeted at this period which is more recent and fresher in the minds of the researchers. According to Bond and Manyanya (2005), faced with the direct challenge of the MDC, Mugabe’s rhetoric became white hot:

In response to the crises, the presidents’s rhetoric became white hot. Shifts in political winds allowed Mugabe to posture left, so as to merge critiques of white Zimbabweans, ex Rhodesians, the gay mafia of Tony Blair, European Union diplomats, the US right wing, neo-liberals, Ugandans and Rwandans fighting his troops in the DRC.....most ominously, ZANU’S (PF) electoral techniques appeared as potentially effective in March 2002 as they were in June 2000: applying fierce intimidation-including murder, torture and kidnapping to thwart opposition votes.....

This rhetoric invoked war memories in ZANU PF supporters and music as usual became an instrument of rallying them together against the opposition. State controlled radio at this stage also continuously churned out jingles that were similar in style and content to songs that had been sung during the liberation struggle. One such artist who became popular on radio and television was Tambaoga who sang songs such as ‘rambaimakashinga/remain resolute’ and another in which he sang ‘the Blair that I know is a toilet’. The first song is typically a war song as masses were exhorted to ‘fight on’ in the face of hardship. As such it is a violent song as it aroused emotions of anger and grim determination akin to those in a war atmosphere. Unfortunately, it was not a war situation and this violence was quite unrefreshing. The other song mocked Tony Blair the then prime minister of Britain likening him to a pit latrine called the Blair toilet. Again this was a violent song in that it invoked feelings of anger and hatred against Blair and the MDC party that was perceived as a surrogate of London by ZANU PF.

Fanon’s critique of violence also outlines the motivation behind this facet of music. The critique transcends the colonial situation to detail the “pitfalls” that bewilder newly independent African nations. Fanon is distrustful of parties involved in decolonisation upon achieving independence. This includes political parties and the nationalist bourgeoisie who, as comprised mostly urban intellectuals, have a stake in the colonial system. As such they desire “reform” not “revolution” (Fanon, 1963). The decolonizing bourgeoisie, having failed to resolve the impasse between international finance capital and the aspirations of their domestic populace, then turns to frustrating and repressing the latter group. In postcolonial society the methods of repression are less direct with structural violence (hegemony in Gramscian terms) more common. The police and army are a last resort as a means of repression with softer forms of control like legislation, moral and educational codes more expedient.

ZANUPF also came to a stage where group choirs were sponsored to sing songs in support of the party. One such group is the Mbare Chimurenga Choir which by the end of 2012 had recorded at least two albums. Formed in Mbare in 2004, Mbare Chimurenga Choir is a group that clearly aims at bringing the masses together through dances that remind many of the days of the liberation struggle. The Mbare Chimurenga Choir uses ‘jiti’ and ‘pfonda’ melodies that are deeply rooted in the liberation struggle to denounce imperialism. The music is particularly angry and outspoken against colonialism and neo-colonialism.

One song by the group celebrates President Mugabe’s aides as tough:

*Vamugabevanofambanemamonya, kwavanoendavanofambanemahwindi*

(President Mugabe takes with him tough aides and touts wherever he goes)

Here the word ‘monya/tough someone’ has violent connotations. It is associated with physical strength, brutality and street violence. The song therefore creates an image of an untouchable President and also seems to celebrate the violent credentials of his aides. It can also be understood as a deliberate provocative song to those who are not sympathetic to ZANU PF.

Other songs like ‘*VaMugabemurimusozajzvake/you are a soldier President Mugabe*’ and ‘*chibhakerasimudza/raise fist*’ all have violent connotations. It is clear that they are meant to arouse a revolutionary fervor in ZANU PF supporters to take them back in time to the protracted liberation struggle which as already highlighted was principally a violent exercise.

And in the face of all this violence in music, elements sympathetic to the opposition MDC did not go to sleep but sought to take the battle to the arts as well. It is also instructive to note that beside music, a considerable body of “transgressive” literature was published in this time which not only pointed at the failures, excesses and demerits of Zanu PF but even more frighteningly for the incumbents began to suggest the sprouting MDC as a remedy for these ills. Weaver Press Publishing House under the guidance of Irene Staunton took the government to task with publications such as *Writing Still* which were critical of government policies, corruption and moral decadence of the general populace as a result of poverty.

It is also important however to note that artistic protest critical of the revolutionary ZANU PF led government did not take-off with the advent of the MDC. Prominent works like Shimmer Chinodya’s *Harvest of Thorns* had already expressed the disillusionment of the masses in the aftermath of the liberation struggle while Yvonne Vera in *The Stone Virgins* touches on the Matabeleland disturbances in the first decade of independence popularly known as *Gukurahundi* (Swarns 2010). Musicians had similarly sounded their discontent with the course the country was taking in the formative decades of the nation. Picking on the theme of ‘harvest’ Leonard Zhakata’s hit song “*Mugove*” is a reminder to authorities to apportion him his share of the national cake as the effects of poverty had reduced Zimbabweans to destitution in the ESAP era.

Such irritant and dissenting voices could be tolerated by the state as long as they did not transcend into more confrontational forms of expression. At times these balking voices were even actively encouraged by the state as they spruced up government’s democratic and tolerant image. However Ngugi (cited in Bere 2008) suggests that there is often friction between artists who seek to express themselves and the state which seeks to control. This is primarily because they have the same audience and this creates divergence. In post independence Zimbabwe this became apparent once a group of trade unionists, encouraged by the success of their “No” Vote in the 1999 Constitutional Referendum, proceeded to form a political party (the MDC as already noted). The new political party went on to make successful inroads in the March 2000 Parliamentary elections.

It is at this stage that transgressive artistic works extended to music in a more serious and confrontational manner. With time and the intensification of struggle between Zanu PF and MDC the lyrical content become more acute, polar, corrosive and violent. It is in this context that groups like MDC Choir arose, a direct foil for established revolutionary voices aligned to Zanu PF like CdeChinx and, as this paper directly addresses, Mbare Chimurenga Choir. Whereas Zanu PF could rely on a seasoned caste (albeit less direct) like Simon Chimbetu and Clive Malunga the MDC Choir was breaking new ground. In addition, with the media firmly clasped by the state, the MDC Choir had virtually no guaranteed audience although reproduction and pirating of their music was widespread. As such the group rose to prominence by performing during rallies, particularly those addressed by party leader Morgan Tsvangirai. Names like Patience Takaona (founder of MDC Choir), Paul Madzore and Raymond Majongwe began to emerge with music countering the Zanu PF narrative.

The music fashioned by the MDC Choir resultantly varies in intensity, content, tone and message. Recurring messages in these songs which Staunton, cited in Swarns (2010), calls “Zimbabwe’s unofficial truth commissions” become thematic areas. They range from derision of Zanu PF (and government) policies, deploring of the poor state of economic affairs, indicting Zanu PF’s celebrated violent past, eulogizing “martyrs” of this new struggle, strengthening resolve amongst both MDC leaders (in particular Tsvangirai) and supporters in the new struggle as well as satirising vulnerable Zanu PF elements. Music articulating these messages will now be explored in greater detail.

“*Famba Tsvangirai*” is a call for unity amongst all democratic forces. It is a call for all progressive elements in the nation to rally around the party’s iconic leader Morgan Tsvangirai who is also warned to guard against scheming Zanu PF elements,

*Save musacheukemuridzo, ngwariraimabasaeZanuFambai baba vedutiende,  
dzamaratatoranyikayedu. (x2)Simuka Africa simuka, simukaiZimbabwesimukaFamba  
Tsvangirai tiende, dzamaratatoranyikayedu. (x2) (Tsvangirai don’t look back, beware of  
Zanu’s scheming March on, march on until we reclaim our country. Arise Africa arise. Arise  
Zimbabwe arise!)*

The path to freedom is rendered a protracted and thorny one with many obstacles lying in wait. Hence there is need for strong resolve and dedication on the journey. These obstacles include efforts by Zanu PF to destabilize the party. Destabilisation efforts by Zanu PF include, as alleged by the MDC Choir, creating divisions in their party. Welshman

Ncube and Gibson Sibanda are deemed sellouts whose greed and political ambition steer them off course. There was great disharmony in 2005 as Ncube and Sibanda broke away from Tsvangirai with a sizeable number of members and supporters to form another MDC.

Another track entitled “*ChikaracheZanu*” scoffs at more party senior party members who also defect to the splinter MDC party. The effervescent pair of Job Sikhala and Gabriel Chaibva were founding members of the original MDC who were lauded for their fiery rhetoric in the party’s formative years. However, by continuously conferring the title of “*chikara*” (scourge, nemesis, and archenemy) to Tsvangirai, the track mitigates the effect of these defections by locating the reins of power to Tsvangirai. As somewhat confirmation to this the splinter MDC formation has in successive elections played second fiddle to Tsvangirai’s formation.

That said, appearing to locate all answers and meaning in one person (Tsvangirai) may be falling in a trap that Zanu also falls in. The same charge can be laid on the song “*ZvinozibwaneZanu*” in Pongweni’s collection, which foregrounds Zanu ideology as the answers to all questions.

Zanu PF also stands accused of using a variety of violent tactics to destabilise the MDC. In “*Saddam waendasare Bob*” the MDC Choir predicts that the end is nigh for Robert Mugabe who is slotted onto a somewhat spectacular list of world dictators who were meeting their demise at the time.

<i>Vakomanasiyaiutsinye, tarirairiroyaSaddam.</i>	<i>Mugabe</i>
<i>svinuraucherechedzeutarisise,</i>	
<i>UsangomirapedyopedyoMungwarirekuteterekamugwararevaneumbimbindoga.</i>	
<i>Abacha, Milosevic vaizviitamachindarume,</i>	<i>vakabatwachirikirikivaona</i>
<i>mass yajamuka</i>	<i>Saddam waendasare Bob.</i>
<i>(Gentlemen do not be evil, observe how Saddam has died.</i>	<i>Mugabe wake up and</i>
<i>observe clearly, not just waiting nearby.</i>	<i>Beware following the example of dictators.</i>
<i>Abacha and Milosevic deemed themselves as invincible</i>	<i>but then fell once the</i>
<i>masses woke up.</i>	<i>Saddam is gone only Mugabe is left).</i>

The fall of dictators like Saddam Hussein, Slobodan Milosevic, General Sani Abacha, Muammar Gaddafi, Hosni Mubarak and even Osama Bin Laden are attributed to the West and the so-called springing wave of democratic forces that is forecasted in the song as ultimately descending on Mugabe as well.

Crimes accredited to Mugabe include corruption, poll rigging, repressively enforced laws like AIPPA and POSA, unlawful detentions with no explanations or trial and failure to democratise the state media given the multiplicity of voices in the political arena. “*HurumendeyeZanu*” laments these state ills, in particular “*Operation Murambatsvina*” (drive out filth). This was a government program which began on May 25, 2005 which displaced thousands of people with destruction of homes and property for millions more in the name of restoring order. The operation was even condemned by the UN in a report orchestrated by Anna Tibaijuka with the Western world equating its Tsunami like effect to genocide;

<i>Vanavakabudazvikoro, panguvayeTsunami (x2)</i>	<i>Zvakamurwadza (x4)</i>
<i>Vamwevakabudamabasa, panguvayeTsunami (x2)</i>	<i>Zvakamurwadza (x4)</i>
<i>Vamwevaigaramusango, panguvayeTsunami (x2)</i>	<i>Zvakamurwadza (x4)</i>

“*HurumendeyeZanu*” is also distinct in that it is in Acapella form and not punctuated by instrumentals. This dirge like “*lament*” manages to achieve pathos by the sombre mood created as ill after ill committed by the state is observed by a pained Tsvangirai “*zvakamurwadza*” who proceeds to assume the call of a Biblical Moses who readies himself to deliver oppressed Zimbabweans to Canaan’s shores. Another song “*Pandimirepakaoma*” (I am in a difficult position) almost confirms Tsvangirai’s Messianic regard in MDC circles. The song is a corruption of a gospel track which can be paraphrased to “*Lord, help me. I am in a difficult position God.*”

An almost chronic complaint in MDC Choir music is the violence meted out against MDC activists. This includes the killing of party activists, beating and unlawful detention. In “*Saddam waendaSare Bob*” Ian Makone, Morgan Komichi, Luke Tamborinyika and KudakwasheMatibiri and many MDC activists are detained for lengthy periods with no explanation or trial. In “*Bumbiro*” which calls for the drawing up of a new constitution several agitators clamouring for constitutional reform also face the state wrath;

<i>Madhuku, akazosungwaasinamhakaachiratidzira.</i>	<i>Chibhebhe,</i>
<i>akazorohwaasinamhakaachiratidzira.</i>	<i>Mai Matibenga,</i>

*vakazorohwavasnamhakavachiratidzira. (Madhuku was arrested for no reason while demonstrating. Chibhebhe and Matibenga were beaten for no reason while demonstrating).*

Lovemore Madhuku had constant confrontations with the state as head of pressure group National Constitutional Assembly (NCA), a leading non-governmental organisation pressuring for the establishment of a new constitution in Zimbabwe. The NCA was constantly accused of being an MDC appendage. Wellington Chibhebhe and Lucia Matibenga were prominent MDC activists. However these arrests and beatings are not confined to prominent activists as mentioned above alone but even to ordinary citizens through laws such as AIPPA and POSA.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

In conclusion the research notes that music is an integral medium of political communication in any polity. Music is more valuable as compared to other art forms partly because it is blind. It can even arrest untargeted audiences. It is a useful medium in transmission of messages particularly in third world nations where other forms of art come at an esoteric cost or for one reason or another fail to communicate messages to the wider community. Its advantages over literature are clear as highlighted here.

Written productions are communicatively complex as they isolate writer and reader. The association between reader and writer is impersonal, “Both reading and writing are both acts of desperate anguish” (Amuta 1989). The social and economic circumstances in which writing occurs is one in which, ironically, communication has broken down. He continues;

To sit down in one’s study to communicate experiences, feelings and emotions artistically is a veritable act of anguish, a desperate reaching out for the warmth of fellow men. Similarly to sit down and read a work of literature is frustrating in the sense that the enjoyment of literature which should ordinarily be a shared experience is personalized and privatized

Both writing and reading (-except in reading aloud- Amuta, 1989) take place in the context of graveyard silence. This silence becomes the central attribute of the writer-audience relationship.

On this basis written works fail to identify with the majority of the audience. The language employed by these authors is hardly intelligible to the majority of Africans who do not share the same European education enjoyed by the privileged writers. In extreme, but frequent, cases these audiences can neither read nor write.

As such audiences now increasingly prefer media that is audio-visual and interactive. Literary works do not afford readers this advantage. Instead they are complicated by the use of languages that are exotic and intricate, thus making music, video, DVD and other web-media easy choices. These advantages of music over literature then make it necessary that music should never be irresponsible because it has the potential of destabilizing communities. As such the researchers note with concern that the music of the two choirs analyzed are highly partisan in a nature that is potentially detrimental in that they can fan violence. In echoing the concerns of the researchers, Bere (2008) distinguishes between music on and off the frontline. Bere (2008) notes the frailties in Pongweni’s songs but forgives them as this is music that had an urgent and immediate purpose which was the quick mobilization of troops during the struggle and fight against a stubborn imperial force. Bere (2008) however, refuses to forgive defectiveness in quality of the latter choirs’ music. The excuse that these defects are similarly attributable to the fact that the music is again being crafted for an instantaneous purpose, that is to torpedo an immediate political enemy cannot be accepted because as discussed above, these choirs are operating in peace time as opposed to Pongweni’s songs, hence offering them more time to compose music that is more discursively constructed as opposed to the shrill propaganda either camp reverts to. The multiplicity of perspectives in the narrative of Zimbabwean politics should not create room for artists to distort realities to the extent that is apparent in some of the music, or worse to neglect other significant national issues. Corruption of this genre by these polar political entities has a debilitating effect on development issues which are arguably a more pressing concern at this juncture in Zimbabwe. The researchers therefore recommend a paradigm change in political music as emphasis on violence is unnecessary and exhausted at this stage when more pressing economic development issues are waiting unattended in the nation’s “to do” tray.

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