

Drums, lyrics and melodies: listening to the history of a nation

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"Those who cannot learn from history are doomed to repeat it." -- George Santayana

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PROLOGUE

When I read Professor Ranger's thought-provoking and fascinating paper on the struggle for the past in Zimbabwe, it dawned on me that even the great minds of the discipline that I had left to pursue the labyrinth of law were clearly concerned about the way in which history has become a potent tool in present day Zimbabwean politics. It confirmed a belief that I had steadfastly held ever since I was a student of secondary school history - it is the belief that that history matters.

It provoked two key questions: Firstly, who tells the history and for what purpose? Additionally, how do we go about finding the history of the nation? Do we resort only to academic texts? Or do we look to the newspapers, journals, the archives, oral tradition or media documentaries? It became clear to me that there are inevitable contradictions in the telling and interpretation of history depending on the sources that one draws upon and the agenda that drives one to write about and comment on history. I found out too that it is necessary to liberate the mind and open up spaces for all sources to enable one to get a clear and balanced picture of how we have come to be where we are and what the future might hold in view of the present events.

I also formed the idea that it is necessary to open spaces for other voices that are not often taken into account in the dominant political history. It is this that led me to pursue an exploration of our history in presently marginalised areas such as music and fiction. Inevitably my attempted mission will suffer from the handicap that I am simply a trained lawyer, whose modest connection with academic history remains the journey I undertook up to A Level history. I hope however, that despite this handicap, the ideas I shall explore will provoke better-trained minds of history to invest some time and effort in this area.

In my discipline, there is often a tendency to play with words and create an eye-catching title to attract the attention of the reader to an article that is otherwise filled with dry and uninspiring legal analysis of laws for which criticism is often the primary mission. I have not escaped that tendency, though I doubt if the title that I have given to my paper has caught anyone's eye!

The principal aim of this paper is to briefly explore the potential of music and fiction as sources and aspects of history to which scholars might resort to listen to, interpret and construct the history of a nation. Given that musicians and writers do not always set out on a mission to compile the history of a nation, it is arguably quite difficult to decipher history from their work. Yet that does not detract from the idea that there are key potentials for history in this area. One would have to undertake a complex process of deducing and interpreting meanings and messages from various and often contradicting sources. Yet in my view, as I intend to demonstrate with a few examples, it is not an improbable task.

INTRODUCTION

This paper seeks to discuss the role of music and fiction in the history of Zimbabwe. Two broad points will be pursued. Firstly, the place of music and fiction as part of the knowledge system of a society is established. We try to explore and explain the position of music and fiction of the traditional and modern African people within the historical context. A key feature is that music and fiction, like all knowledge has from the beginning been contested territory. Secondly and following from the first point, the role of music and fiction in power relations and its reflective capacity in

respect the history of a nation is also explored. We consider, more specifically, the role of protest music and oral literature in traditional *Shona* society, in pre-colonial, during the colonial and post-colonial eras. We conclude that although underestimated, music and fiction are interesting and valuable points of study in exploring and understanding the history of the nation. There are key lessons that one can draw which might not be obvious from the supposedly factual accounts of men and women.

MUSIC AND FICTION AS PART OF THE LOCAL KNOWLEDGE SYSTEMS

Music and fiction form part of the fabric of society. As creations and performances, they form part of the knowledge built up by individuals and society over time and across generations. This paper places music and fiction within the general context of knowledge systems constructed and developed within individual societies. In the last twenty years, there have been major movements across the world, encompassing the progression of indigenous knowledge systems from the periphery into the mainstream of contemporary society (Tuhiwai-Smith 1999). At a general level, knowledge encapsulates the expressions of people's conceptions of the world. The conceptions vary according to *inter alia* needs, time and space. Every society has developed systems for survival and progress. Knowledge is both an individual and collective construction of the world and its components. One receives knowledge from the community into which he is born but also engages in the process of transforming it and this goes on from one generation to another (Bhola 2003).

Every society has developed a knowledge system that is indigenous to its own specific origins. IKS are therefore by definition knowledge systems that are indigenous to a particular society that is indigenous to its environment. In this context, IKS embody the expressions of Indigenous Peoples' world-views (Tuhiwai-Smith 1999). IKS is neither archaic nor static but continually develops as new challenges arise (Chitsike 1999). In a nutshell IKS embody the "totality of information, practices, beliefs and philosophy that is unique to each indigenous culture" (Tunney 1999: 336). This encompasses agricultural, industrial, medical, artistic, cultural and educational aspects of knowledge.

An understanding of that history is important for the recognition of the contributions of the African peoples to the realm of global knowledge. In an era where knowledge is a key part of the economy and a history where the pursuit and production of knowledge have defined civilisation, uncovering the traditional knowledge of the African people will go a long way in establishing their position world-wide. Western-based knowledge systems have ample protection and recognition through the intellectual property laws. It is therefore necessary that the contributions of the local men and women be uncovered and given more prominence in the history of the nation. In an encouraging way, books like *Voices from the Rocks* by Ranger go a long way in attempting to deal with the natural, cultural and related histories of the people of Zimbabwe. In that book he deals with the historical dynamics surrounding the area of Matopos Hills in Matebeleland which is crucial to the relations between the various tribes and races in Zimbabwe as well as the religions and politics.

These are the histories that are often marginalised in preference for the more visible, political and war-related histories of peoples. Indeed feminist critics point to the exclusion of women from history. In my view, music and fiction enables us to see the role that has been played by other sectors of society than is often presented in history books. In this paper we will also explore why and how these histories have been subordinated and to explain how they continue to struggle for recognition. In my view, song and fiction provide alternative space for otherwise marginalised voices and therefore provide lessons in history of power relations and struggles within a nation.

Crucially music and fiction also occupy an important place within the historical dynamics of Zimbabwean society from the pre-colonial period to the current chaotic post-colonial phase. Orality and tradition have maintained a significant role in African society. Unless we understand

the role of music and fiction, space in history will remain restricted to the dominant and more visible figures and voices that dominate the political scene. When the celebrated Zimbabwean musician *Oliver Mtukudzi* asks "*Who is a hero?*" in his soulful ballad of a similar title, he is pleading for space for those players and voices that are often marginalised when the history of this nation is told and recognised. He realises that the artiste's role in making history is subordinated to the more dominant voice of those in control of political power. The task of researching thoroughly into these issues undoubtedly calls for the talents and labour of those better schooled in history and may be beyond a lawyer's reach. Ironically, more than 10 years after Zimbabwe's independence, the history that I learnt in great detail was that of West Africa and Western Europe.

FRAMEWORK OF ASSESSMENT

The framework used to assess and explain the position of music and fiction and its role in history is that of the "Dominant and the Other" - borrowed in part from the work of the Edward Said. The main proposition is that in any society and at any point in time, when opposing entities encounter each other within a given context, there is likelihood for struggles for space. It does not have to be that way, nor does it happen all the time but in many situations where there is intolerance, that clash is inevitable. That struggle is more likely to produce a dominant and subordinate entity depending on which entity is better supported within that given context. In society, when one entity is supported by the institutional framework and the state it is more likely to dominate the space and marginalise the Other. However, that does not mean that the Other disappears completely. It may be silenced but it remains in place because it is part of the fabric of that society within which it exists.

It is within this simple framework that the place of music and fiction is analysed in the history of Zimbabwe. The struggle for space is a continuous process and one that calls for the democratisation of space within a given environment to accommodate all entities.

Pre-Colonial Zimbabwe

The pre-colonial period was characterised by the dominance of traditional music, dance and fiction all of which were held and communicated orally. Music was created for different occasions and it was shared by the communities. Stories were told by the elders, etc. There were also praise singers, who created and recited poetry in praise of the chiefs or kings. Music that praised the rulers was used on special occasions, etc. This was the dominant music and fiction though, we may speculate that there must have been disgruntled individuals and communities who also wanted to be heard. According to Kwaramba, music was used as a medium of communication (1997). To that extent, music and fiction could be created or told in such a way that the targeted persons would get the messages. That way music served as a means of expression by the people.

Colonial Zimbabwe

During the colonial era, the advent of Christianity and western-style education presented challenges to the existing traditional systems and way of life. These new forms of knowledge were supported by the new colonial state and the institutional framework did not favour the local systems (Chavunduka 1994). In the same way music and fiction were sidelined particularly where they were used for purposes of protest. Even before the new musicians like *Mapfumo* began to sing versions of the traditional music, they did cover versions of US and British music which was more dominant. While traditional music and fiction remained in use in the rural areas the mainstream sector was dominated by the modern western-style systems. During the 1960s the traditional forms of music began to emerge within the mainstream sector but what the colonial state considered to be offensive was banned from the air- waves. This again confirmed the phenomenon of the dominant subordinating the other forms of music. The same happened to books. Although the Literature Bureau promoted the local languages literature some books like Solomon Mutswairo's *Feso* were banned because of the messages that they purportedly carried

for the freedom fighters.

Post-Colonial Zimbabwe

The post-colonial period initially witnessed the emergence of more local artistes but the independence spirit meant that most musicians composed songs that were supportive of the ruling party. The critical element that had characterised the music in the 1970s disappeared as musicians celebrated the advent of independence. Some authors like *Dambudzo Marechera* however remained critical of the new regime. He may have had his own weaknesses, but that stance meant that *Marechera* was never a welcome individual in official circles but interestingly the ideas he wrote about then are exactly what Zimbabwe is experiencing today. That fiction tells us that even in the euphoria of independence there remained critical voices. I often hear some people making blanket statements that the *Shona* people did not care when the massacres were taking place in Matebeleland.

After the euphoria of the 1980s authors and musicians began to take more critical positions. That too coincides with the time when the people began to feel disgruntled with the general systems of governance. When *Mapfumo* did songs like *Corruption*, in the wake of the Willowgate scandal and *Jojo* he was merely highlighting the mood and concerns of wider society. Indeed in singing "*Varombo kuvarombo*" (*Separating the rich from the poor*) Mapfumo was lamenting the growing gap between the rich and the poor in society. Protest music grew in strength as the years went by and this will be assessed in more detail below. At present it suffices to state that the tradition of protest music has not diminished despite years of suppression under colonial rule.

FUNCTIONS OF MUSIC AND FICTION IN SOCIETY

Entertainment

The most visible and acknowledged role of music and fiction is the entertainment value that it provides. This is as true to African societies as to other societies throughout the world. Music and dance are performed at occasions to celebrate and enjoy. In traditional African society, songs were composed to celebrate harvests, the coming of the rain season, the birth of a child and generally to make people happy when they gather. This value of music is as true to day as it was a century ago. Children sat by the fireside to listen to the old folktales from the grandmothers. So where the English kid listened to his father reading the story of Cinderella from the book, some of us also enjoyed the story of *tsuro* (the hare) playing tricks on *gudo* (the baboon). The contemporary authors, such as *Mungoshi*, *Marechera*, *Hove*, *Zimunya*, *Chinodya*, *Dangarembga*, *Vera*, *Hamutiyinei*, etc have all produced written literature of entertainment value. Indeed I realised recently that the stories of *tsuro na gudo* (hare and baboon) have been translated into print.

Education

A key feature of the African literature and music is its educational value. The themes explored in most folk stories and contemporary African literature relate to societal values and key areas that require attention. Authors reflect the mood of the society and show the experiences of society. A reading of *Solomon Mutsaers' Feso* the epic adventure and war novel gives good lessons on the life of the *Shona* people in pre-colonial Zimbabwe. Similarly, a reading of *Hamutiyinei's Chine Manenji Hachifambisi*, to my mind by far one of the best *Shona* novels indicates the clash between traditional and modern life and customs. It indicates the challenges of the African people as they came face to face with urbanisation and new values. Musically, it can be said that most Zimbabwean musicians try as much as possible to sing about issues that concern people's daily lives. For example *Oliver Mtshudzi's* social commentaries touching diverse areas like AIDS, domestic violence, abandoned children, inheritance, etc are meant to educate the audience at large. These social commentaries are reflections of society and from an historical perspective, play a crucial role in informing present and future generations about the state of the society and

the nation at any given time.

Spiritual

Music has always been used at different functions in the cultural life of the *Shona* peoples. In the religion of the *Shona* peoples ancestral spirits play a key role in the communication between the living and *Mwari*. The functions like *Biras* include song and dance which are crucial to the possession of a chosen individual by the spirits. At funerals and *kurova guva* ceremonies, music and dance are performed as part of the healing process. These aspects of music and dance therefore serve to educate present and future generations about the cultural histories of their predecessors. These songs embody strong messages about the life and culture of the people. It is becoming increasingly popular in a world characterised by rampant forces of globalisation, to promote multi-culturalism and preserve the cultural lives of the different societies. When we talk about history, the place of African song and dance should be ensured.

Communication

A more subtle and probably more crucial role of music and fiction is the communication of messages within families and society. This is connected to the educational value but deserves special mention because of certain unique aspects. The creators of music reflect the mood and thinking of individuals or sections of society. Music is a mode of communication of emotions, thoughts and feelings. According to Kwaramba, ***"through songs, a daughter in law would express her bitterness against a horrible mother in law, a bitter wife against a greedy husband and the whole community would protest against an unjust chief"*** (1997). To that extent, certain types of music should tell us about the nature of individual relationships at any given time, the political relationships between leaders and the public, etc. It is within this category that one can analyse protest music in Zimbabwe and its potential as a tool for understanding the history of political struggles and relationships. That assessment of protest music deserves a section of its own.

There are other roles of music such as inspiration during war-time (Indeed followers of the sweet science know that the entrance of pugilists into the ring is often accompanied by powerful beats and lyrics). In traditional society, when men and women were working, they often used songs for inspiration. I recall the powerful songs and great banter at traditional *nhimbe* ceremonies when old men and women prepared the *rapoko* harvest in the village back in the days.

PROTEST MUSIC IN ZIMBABWE

According to Kwaramba, there is great tradition of protest music within Shona society (1997). As the above quote shows, ***"the whole community would protest against an unjust chief"***. Those that romanticise traditional African society and portray a picture of harmony and consensus fail to heed those voices carried through song and fiction. In a system where space may be limited, music becomes the most viable and easiest way of expressing those views and emotions. In an environment where the media is tightly controlled and alternative voices are unwelcome, where the democratic space of parliament, judiciary and the executive is circumscribed, music and fiction become the spaces through which the society, through individual authors can express itself. Others like Marechera remained critical and according to Muchemwa, his ***"status as the poet of rebellion, the articulate spokesperson of artist in the Philistine post-colonial Southern African world cannot be questioned."*** (2000). When Oliver Mtukudzi did the song *Wasakara*, it became an anthem among the protestors who used the song to send a message to the political leadership.

As indicated protest music has a long history in traditional society. In the modern era, analysts often point to the period after 1965 as recording the emergence of strong protest music in contemporary Zimbabwe. After the Smith regime took power in the early sixties and enacted various pieces of legislation restricting democratic space, the nationalists began to take a more active stance towards military opposition. Musicians who had been playing cover versions of US

and British artistes began to reconstruct traditional songs to meet the new conditions and deliver messages to both the nationalists and the rulers. There was limitation to freedom of expression and space was severely restricted. The musicians became the voices of the people and music therefore created alternative space for the oppressed to articulate their views.

During that period there emerged the genre of music now popularly known as *Chimurenga*, symbolised in large measure by Thomas Mapfumo. Tradition states that the term *Chimurenga* was coined after a celebrated warrior and legend known as *Sororenzou Murenga*. He was, it is said, a great fighter to the extent that future great warriors were said to be possessed by his spirit. So fighting *chimurenga* style translates to fighting in the style of the great *Murenga*. The great battles against the inception of colonialism in 1896 - 98 were also coined *Chimurenga* to connote a great uprising. The modern war of liberation was coined the Second *Chimurenga*, as the natural continuation of the First battle. Of late, some people have begun to call the chaotic land reforms, the Third *Chimurenga*, which to other minds is nothing but a subversion of history. Anyway, that is the origin of the title *Chimurenga* music now given to the genre of protest music before and after independence.

The songs during the colonial period tell us of the tensions between the colonial government and the oppressed Africans. Songs such as *Pfumvu paruzevha* painstakingly showed the trouble brewing in the reserves where the majority of Africans lived. Others like *Tumirai vana kuhondo* (Send the young men and women to the liberation war) (Mapfumo) and *Rova Ngoma Mutavara* (Beat the Drum Harder) (Mtukudzi) encouraged young men and women to go to take up arms to fight for independence. They also acted as inspirational messages for the fighters. On the literary side there were poets and authors who also played a role of encouraging freedom fighters and often used memories of past heroes and heroines like Chaminuka and Nehanda. Such authors like *Bernard Chidzero*, *Nathan Shamuyarira*, *Herbert Ushewokunze*, etc found expression in literature and many of them were to become cabinet ministers or senior officials in the new government. Literature was the medium that was used to communicate messages and inspire others.

The immediate post-colonial period was engulfed by the euphoria over independence which saw people like Mapfumo releasing songs like *Congress* that were clearly pro-the ruling Zanu PF party. Other songs ridiculed the losers at the elections like *Nkomo*, or foreign adversaries like *Alfonso Dlakama* of the Mozambican National Resistance movement and *Botha* of the SA apartheid regime. That song, if anything will educate future generations about the fractious relations between *Dlakama* and Zimbabwe at some point in our history. The euphoria however gave way as the reality began to sink. In addition, that music did not reflect the general suffering of the peoples of the south at the hands of state forces. One might have to look seriously into music in the southern region to see whether protest songs were being done at the time. But as Kwaramba shows, the protest by *Mapfumo* in the late 1980s and early 1990s was more subtle and indirect. However songs like *Corruption* were protests against the growing scourge of corruption. The song *Maiti kurima hamubviri* (*You used to claim you were great farmers*), which was done in 1993, is even more reflective of the situation in 2004 after the land reforms and claims that better times would come out of it. Anyone that disputes the recording of history in literature ought to read Julius Chingono's poem *Civil War*, in which at the time the *Gukurahundi* massacres were raging in *Matebeleland* just after independence. He wrote,

*We have only started
creeping out of our holes,
enjoying the morning sunlight -
you are at again.
We have only started
laying our women
who have not yet conceived -*

*yet, you are at it again.
We have only started
to eat on prepared tables,
not peck hurriedly -
but you are at it again.
We have only started
breathing fresh air
free of gunpowder, yet
you are at it again,
shooting, shooting, shooting.*

Yet when I was in school no history book mentioned the massacres. Chingono in this poem talks about the war that was going on in Matebeleland just after our independence (Muchemwa 2002). When he writes the poem, *Flag of Rags*, he laments the deterioration of the independence dream. In this poem we find the voices of the "those on the margins of the new political order, neglected old mothers, street kids and slum-dwellers, and he gives voice to these marginalized and disadvantaged groups in society". These images give us the picture, which no newspaper or official document can conceal no matter the standard of censorship. Indeed authors like Doris Lessing writer of the critically acclaimed novel *The Grass is Singing* and poets like John Eppel represent the part played by some in the white population in highlighting the injustices of the colonial period. The distortion of history in the present day, which seems to erase any memory of assistance from other sections of the population and to paint all white people as enemies can to a certain extent be minimised by referring to the music and literature of the day.

Even today, whereas Mapfumo has become more direct, Mtukudzi remains a potent protester though most of his messages are couched in proverbial and indirect terms. Others like Zhakata also use images and metaphors while the likes of Majongwe go direct in criticism of the system. There has also been an upsurge of gospel music in the last 10 years with many artistes and record labels cropping up everywhere on the scene. This may be an expression of the people renewed and visible beliefs in the Christian faith. It may also be the most popular way to break into the market and earn money. In my view, it is an expression of the frustration and the powerlessness of the individual and the desire to call for divine intervention in a time of extreme hardships. Those who will look back at this epoch may need to explore why gospel music and the rise of the church in general became quite prominent in the last few years. Interestingly musicians such as Mtukudzi and Mapfumo have in the last seven years been doing new versions of the same protest songs that they did during the struggle against colonialism. The message, it seems, remains true despite the difference in leadership. The idea of music as a tool for protest is epitomised by the underground group called *Zvakwana/Sokwanele* (Enough is Enough) which produced a tape and CD compilation of songs of protest from across the world. The web-site states that the tape is free to anyone within Zimbabwe. Radio Dialogue, which is based in Bulawayo, also records music and tapes that provide people to access news and ideas where the space in the press has been severely restricted. So there you see, when the history of Zimbabwe at this point is told, relegating music to the periphery will be a most unfortunate shortcoming.

One would have to be careful however before making blanket conclusions about music as there are different artistes and players. This also indicates the phenomenon of the "dominant and the other" as some forms of music are more acceptable than others and therefore dominate the space. Musicians like Simon Chimbetu, Andy Brown, Chinx Chingaira, Tambaoga, etc are considered to have been supportive of the incumbent government during the current period of turmoil. Indeed even Jonathan Moyo recognises the power of music as evidenced by his efforts to create the long jingles for radio and television, celebrating the land reforms. Despite public protests the jingles went on for a long period of time. The songs that were used such as *Sendekera Mwana Wevhu* were used during the liberation war. One might argue that they were timely reminders of that bitter struggle and indeed the images of war which many people who witnessed that war would not dare to face again. Those songs and images carry messages which

remind people of what not to do or the possible consequences of dissent.

The current period presents exciting, if disturbing, aspects of the contested nature of music and fiction in Zimbabwe. Those who will look back at this era will have to consider the role of music and fiction in assessing the political and socio-dynamics of the nation. As we have seen, the proliferation of gospel music may be an indication of the pursuit of space by other socially excluded groups such as women and children (Chitando 2002). Indeed a reading of *Chenjerai Hove's* acclaimed novel *Bones* shows the key role of women during the liberation war, which our current histories may not necessarily record. The suffering of the women at the centre of the novel and their strength and willpower, in a fictional novel, nonetheless teaches readers about the space that women occupy in Zimbabwean history. Those who find it hard to participate in the formal channels find solace and avenues through gospel music. Even during the colonial period, the church provided the avenues for association and expression for the oppressed people. Indeed the freedom of association was often exercised through the formation of independent churches, which unlike political parties were able to establish themselves without excessive interference. In a way, gospel music is also protest music at the misdeeds and abuse of power by earthly authorities as people seek solutions and guidance from beyond.

One of the defining aspects of this historical period in respect of music and fiction is the banning of certain music or artistic creations. The protest music of *Mapfumo*, *Mtukudzi*, *Zhakata* have been banned from the airwaves. Instead it is the music of the likes of *Elliot Manyika*, *Andy Brown*, *Chimbetu*, who continue to extol the virtues of the current regime that gets priority. The Minister of Information and Publicity, *Jonathan Moyo*, ushered what he calls "local content" on the airwaves. This strategy is meant to promote by giving greater amounts of airtime to local artistes work. What has emerged however, is a new genre of music given the name "Urban Grooves" which is no more than a poor imitation of the American Hip-Hop music industry. Most of it, falls within the entertainment function and there is very little if any, protest music or music that might be considered to be offensive by the governing regime. The idea of 100% local content in the airwaves might seem noble and positive at first sight, in that it seems to represent the movement of the local music from the periphery to the centre of the mainstream. Yet in reality it simply represents the change in the character of the dominant from harmless entertainment based American music, to entertainment based poor Zimbabwean imitations of American styles and seemingly neutral gospel music. The protest music remains on the periphery just as it was during the colonial era. If anything, it tells us about the attitude of power-holders to anything that appears to challenge their authority or question their policies regardless of their race, culture or sex. A history that fails to record and interpret these attitudes and relationships in respect of music and fiction does not do justice to the experiences of the people.

Indeed theatre productions have also been affected, with the notable banning of the play *Super Patriots and Morons* by the Zimbabwe Censorship Board. Writers such as *Chenjerai Hove* have fled Zimbabwe because of the difficult conditions writers face when they take a critical stance. One can thus see that the phenomenon of the dominant and the other. The favourable, less-offensive music and theatre gets priority over what is considered to be offensive protest music and theatre. The prohibitions indicate the limitation of space. When parliament and other formal channels have failed to bring forth the aspirations and views of the people, music has been an easy channel for the people at large. In a way therefore, the limitation of the space in the airwaves is indicative of the limitation of democratic space within the country. There are clear parallels between the current scenario and the history of colonialism when certain music was also banned from the airwaves for similar reasons. The struggles over the place of music and fiction is therefore about power relations and not about race or culture.

CONCLUSION

This paper sought to pursue two themes. First it has been established that music and fiction constitute a key part of the knowledge systems of a people. In the case of Zimbabwe, the IKS have been left on the sidelines for a long time. To that extent the ability of the people has not received the recognition that it deserves. The artistic productions of the Western world have long

received recognition and protection through intellectual property laws. The dangers are that not only do the local peoples fail to get intellectual recognition, but modern artistes and companies expropriate these traditional creations and privatise them at the expense of the local communities. Historians have a duty to uncover this rich history.

Secondly, it has been established that music and fiction constitute highly contested territory. They are not only indicative of the history and culture of the people but also of the historical power struggles between different constituencies in the life of the nation. In particular, protest music is a vital tool of free speech and expression and politically, it acts as a medium of communication between the people and the rulers. The limitation of space for protest music during the colonial period and the present post-colonial period indicates continuity of policies that perpetuate restrictions of democratic space. Music and fiction are key aspects of the history of the nation and much can be gained from exploring the meanings and ideas that are communicated by these arts. History will be much richer, and I dare say, more exciting. The exploration and understanding of music and fiction helps us to see the role of other often less visible voices and players in history. Then we might avert the worries and frustrations of Jane Austen, who speaking through the medium of Catherine Morland in *'Northanger Abbey'*, said of history, *"it tells me nothing that does not either vex or weary me. The quarrels of popes and kings, with wars and pestilences in every page; the men all so good for nothing, and hardly any women at all - it is very tiresome."*

Maybe through other sources like music and fiction, we might open up the spaces and appreciate roles played by others who have remained on the margins of the dominant political history of the nation.

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Ranger T. Historiography, Patriotic History and the History of the Nation: The Struggle over the Past in Zimbabwe (October 2003)

These include the Convention on Biological Diversity adopted at the Rio Earth Summit in 1992. In 1999 the World Intellectual Property Organisation carried out extensive Fact-Finding Missions on Traditional Knowledge Systems throughout the world.

This paper does not intend to engage in a prolonged and deeper analysis of the concept of knowledge, which is a subject of great philosophical debate of historical proportions.

Traditional Zimbabwean music is now widely known across the world particularly the Mbira music as can be evidenced by various web-sites and shows held all over.

<http://www.zimfest.org/music.html>, Solomon Murungu's www.zambuko.org and Forward

Kwenda's <http://www.mbira.org/forwardkwenda.html>

The Agreement on Trade Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPs) established under the World Trade Organisation provide global protection of intellectual property rights.

Voices from the Rocks: Nature, Culture and History in the Matopos Hills of Zimbabwe (1999)

The main motivation to pursue this area, other than the aforementioned passion, is the writer's encounter with history during research for PhD studies in the last couple of years. That research took me beyond the law library at the UZ to the Department of Economic History where I met the likes of Professor Alois Mlambo and to the Pharmacy Department where I met Professor Gundidza. I also went down that famous hill to the Education Department where I sought assistance from Dr Ndlovu and indeed to the offices of ZINATHA where I had fruitful and educative meetings with the likes of Professor Chavunduka and the late Sekuru Peter Sibanda. It was not only a lesson in history, but a lesson about the histories that have social and economic value but continue to be marginalised from the mainstream academic and political discourse. I still surprise my European colleagues with my knowledge of the French Revolution, the Napoleonic Wars, Bismark and debating that famous question did he plan the unification of Germany or was it by chance?

One can draw parallels with the contradictions in the music and literary scene in today's Zimbabwe - the praise singers on the one hand and the protest musicians on the other.

Preface to the English version of the epic novel *Feso*

His much-acclaimed first novella *The House of Hunger* won the Guardian Prize for fiction in 1979.

I recently received an email with a web-site on the *Mthwakazi* in which similar statements were made, i.e. that the Shona people always liked Mugabe and only realised later that there was something wrong. Such blanket statements obscure the reality that there were indeed elements of opposition even then. Some of this is portrayed in the music and fiction such as the poetry of Julius Chingono, a Shona which I will quote shortly.

Refers to the biggest early scandal involving government ministers and the state company Willowvale Mazda Motor industries whereby ministers abused their authority and powers in the buying and selling of imported vehicles. In the aftermath several ministers were sacked while one, Maurice Nyagumbo committed suicide.

We heard recently that the England football team manager selected a music and DVD library collection for his players as they prepare for the EURO 2004 tournament.

The song reminds an elder that he is too old and must accept that fact.

Ironically there was an independent newspaper called the Daily News which was also banned by My Van der Byl, the then minister in charge of that portfolio. The parallels between Jonathan Moyo and Van der Byl in their attitude to a free press are quite striking.

Those who might be interested in learning more about Zimbabwean poetry should visit the following web-site: <http://zimbabwe.poetryinternational.org/cwolk/view/17257> last visited on

01/06/04

<http://www.zvakwana.org> visited on 02/06/04

Visit another web-site of protest music www.mannfriday.com which I came across during my research. It includes free audio and video compilations that tell the story of present day Zimbabwe.

I recall a party in Bulawayo where an old man pleaded that a certain song be stopped (the new version of Mapfumo's *Tumirai vana kuhondo*). It brought back bad images of the atrocities and he added in a hushed tone, the authorities might interpret it as encouraging people to go to war. I thought it was far-fetched but I could understand him and respected his views. I realised not only the power of music but the strength of oppression which leads to people censoring themselves and restricting their space and freedom.

Zimbabwean Producer Reacts to Ban of Satirical Play Super Patriots and Morons 13/05/04

<http://openhere.com/current/425028141.stm> The play was produced by Daves Guzha of Rooftop Productions

Hove's more recent production is the novel *Palaver Finish* (Weaver Press, 2002) which is also translated into Shona as *Zvakwana!* and Ndebele as *Akudle Inqondo*. In another recent anthology called ***Rainbows in the Dust***, Hove reflects the anger and hopelessness of the people in the face of broken promises after years of independence.