Subversive Verses: How Ndebele Musicians Counter-Framed the State Propaganda on The Gukurahundi Genocide

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Summary

This article argues that while the state succeeded in framing Gukurahundi as suppression of armed rebellion with the help of some artists, Ndebele musicians also successfully counter-framed the carnage as genocide using subversive metaphors and analogies. It demonstrates that Ndebele musicians were among the earliest public sponsors of the genocide frame. In framing theory, metaphor is one of the key framing devices; as such, this article is a case-based comparative examination of metaphorical framing and counter-framing of selected songs. It uses songs by Lovemore Majayivana (*Inhlanzi Yesiziba* and *U Tshaka)* and Ebony Sheik (*Isavungu-zan*e) but also touches on the broader context and deeper insights provided by other artists such as Thomas Mapfumo and Patrick Mukwamba.

Opsomming

In hierdie artikel word aangevoer dat hoewel die staat, met die hulp van kunstenaars, daarin geslaag het om die Gukurahundi te kontekstualiseer as onderdrukking van gewapende rebellie, Ndebele-musikante die slagting ook suksesvol as volksmoord geteenkontekstualiseer het – deur die gebruik van ondermynende metafore en analogieë. Dit demonstreer dat Ndebele-musikante van die eerste openbare ondersteuners van die volksmoord-konteks was. In kontekstualiseringsteorie is die metafoor een van die belangrikste kontekstualiseringsmiddele; as sodanig is hierdie artikel ŉ gevalgebaseerde, vergelykende bestudering van metaforiese kontekstuali-sering en teenkontekstualisering van uitgekose liedjies. Liedjies deur Lovemore Majayivana (*Inhlanzi Yesiziba* en *U Tshaka)* en Ebony Sheik (*Isavunguzan*i) word gebruik. Die breër konteks en dieper insigte wat deur ander kunstenaars soos Thomas Mapfumo en Patrick Mukwamba geskep word, word egter ook bestudeer.

Background and Context

In 1983, Prime Minister Robert Mugabe's private army, the Fifth Brigade, stormed Matebeleland and the Midlands provinces ostensibly to quell an armed rebellion. Gukurahundi, a Shona word for the "rains that wash away the chaff before the summer rains" (Phimister 2009: 471), became the

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metaphorical code name for the operation. Blaming the Zimbabwe African People's Union (ZAPU) and its leader, Joshua Nkomo, for the armed dissidents, Mugabe framed the opposition as the cobra [snake] deserving destruction (Lelyveld 1982). Then intelligence minister, Emmerson Mnangagwa, said the Fifth Brigade was the DDT (pesticide) targeting cockroaches and bugs (Allison 2017).

However, the threat of armed rebellion was "greatly exaggerated", easily becoming a "convenient justification" for the genocide as the army's "energies were devoted entirely to the rural civilian population" (Phimister 2009: 473). Villagers were routinely gathered into public spaces, forced to sing Shona songs praising Mugabe and the ruling Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU) before they were machine gunned into mass graves. The result was the systematic and wanton massacre of an estimated 20 000 Ndebeles, village by village.

Theoretical and Methodological Approaches

As demonstrated above, framing and metaphor were intrinsic in the state version of the massacre of the Ndebeles between 1983-1987. This naturally necessitates an investigation grounded in framing. What is meant by framing is the process of "selecting some aspects of a perceived reality and making them more salient in a communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation for the item described" (Entman 1993: 53).

This article is based on the notion that the frame *armed rebellion* was the very aspect of a "perceived reality" in Matebeleland which Mugabe's government "selected" and made "more salient" to promote a "particular problem definition" (see Entman 1993: 53). Using Gamson's definition of a frame, it is argued herein that the frame *armed rebellion* became a "central organizing idea for making sense of relevant events and suggesting what is at issue" (Gamson 1988: 157). Naturally, the metaphors *Gukurahundi* (state sponsored) and *cobra [snake]* (sponsored by Mugabe) became the morally acceptable "treatment recommendation[s]" for the defined problem.

It is implied herein that where something is selected (as in Entman 1993) something is automatically and intentionally omitted. Therefore, that which was omitted by the official version of the Gukurahundi, naturally constituted the material for counter-framing. Hadebe (2001: 17) gave an insight into the official narrative omissions:

> Ndebele people were subjected to wanton cruelty as well as the most inhuman psychological warfare they had ever experienced or imagined before. However, this is the missing chapter in Zimbabwe's history, which only oral literature, and especially music, has recorded.

Hadebe also argues that much of what has been recorded about the Ndebele people's history, arts and politics amounts to "vague impressions" by non-Ndebele people fuelling "negative stereotypes and consequently prejudice" (2001: 16). And indeed, as shall be demonstrated below, musicians from other parts of Zimbabwe did not just mimic the state but peddled negative stereotypes about the Ndebele people. To add insult to injury musicians from Matebeleland have tended to receive both little attention and less airplay as compared to Shona counterparts (Gambahaya & Muwati 2016).

It was opportune, therefore, to discover how Matebeleland musicians counter-framed Gukurahundi as genocide using the concepts of metaphorical framing and counter-framing. This approach is partly inspired by Sniderman and Theriault (2004)'s notion that "frames are themselves contestable" and that their effects and influence can decay with time creating room for counter insights (cited by Anderson 2018: 115). It is also partly driven by the proven fact that counter frames do have an impact on how audiences react to the earlier frame as they (frames) can either "neutralise" or impact negatively on "otherwise successful frames" (Anderson 2018: 116). The argument is also cognisant of the fact that politicians, like in the case of Gukurahundi, often use metaphors to describe their rivals in a way that impacts on audiences' views (Boeynaems et al. 2017: 118 citing Bougher 2012; Mio 1997; Ottati et al. 2014). Also, because metaphors have the capacity to trigger "emotional connotations and give a moral evaluation" they can also impact on "social relations and society at large" (Boeynaems et al. 2017: 116 Citing Charteris Black 2004) as happened during Gukurahundi.

What is meant by a counter frame is a frame which is deployed down the line as contradiction to the forerunner; a counter frame develops after the original frame would have impacted on the perceptions of the intended recipients causing the need for a rival viewpoint (Anderson 2018: 116). Quelling armed rebellion became the state's "resonant master frame" meaning a "generic type of a collective action frame that is wide in scope and influence" and whose "articulations and attributions are sufficiently elastic, flexible and inclusive enough" to be "adopted and deployed" (Benford 2013: 1). Therefore, politicians and sympathetic musicians adopted the *armed rebellion* frame out of which scion frames (metaphors, stereotypes) emerged. However, as these frames collectively decayed, Majayivana and Ebony Sheik launched counter narratives.

Zimbabwean History and Politics: Music's Place

To fully comprehend the importance of music in Zimbabwean politics and history, two issues cannot be discounted: the African context and the struggle for Zimbabwe's political independence. Music is the "most widely appreciated art form" in Africa standing out as a significant platform with both power

and potential to shape public opinion; it is a "revealing window into African people's experience" (Allen 2004: 1-2). So rich in music is Africa that multiple genres exist, each one of them addressing the daily society activities, touching on issues ranging from ethical to ordinary (Adesina et al. 2016).

According to Ogwenzy, 2008 (cited in Adesina et al. 2016) music in Africa is used to celebrate events; worship; motivate warriors and for vengeance (as in mocking opponents). Music is also used in funerals (Mano 2011). This means music is "embedded in economic and political life" (White 2002: 464) and is "central to the effective dissemination of politics" (Allen 2004: 2) making musicians more than just singers and performers. As such, musicians are agents of social change, publishers (Adesina et al. 2016). It should come as no surprise, therefore, that Africans, are, in varying ways, across the continent, today "engaging their political circumstances through music" (Allen 2004: 1).

The struggle for Zimbabwe's independence was spurred on by cultural nationalism. What is meant by cultural nationalism is the "use of art and other cultural practices to develop or maintain national sentiment for political purposes ..." (Turino 2000: 14). Ndlovu-Gatsheni and Willems (2009) have demonstrated the role played by music and dance in key events such as the formation of ZAPU at Gwanzura stadium in the early 1960s. This important piece of history shows that music can be used to "coordinate the actions and inflect the emotions of large groups of people" such as in worship, matches and concerts (Allen 2004: 5).

Music played a key role throughout the liberation war era from within the country and from exile (Mozambique and Zambia) where Zimbabwean guerrilla fighters were based. Particularly, protest music was key in the "mobilisation of physical and psychological resources" (Chitofiri et al. 2017: 61). This was to the extent that later it could be argued that Zimbabwe is the "only country in Africa to have made a name for itself in world music because of a nationalist liberation struggle" (White 2002: 464). Among the many artists whose music was instrumental during the war were the Light Machine Gun (LMG) Choir, Comrade Chinx and Mapfumo; their songs were aired in exiled shortwave radio stations such as the Voice of the Revolution owned by ZAPU and ZANU's The Voice of Zimbabwe (Ndlovu-Gatsheni & Willems 2009).

In 1980, music was used to celebrate the end of colonial rule and to mock the erstwhile oppressors. Jamaican reggae icon, Bob Marley, also graced the independence celebrations at Rufaro stadium and composed a song titled *Zimbabwe*. Many songs were composed by local musicians like the Four Brothers (*Makorokoto*), Ilanga (*Zimbabwe*) and Cde Chinx (*Maruza imi*). It was the time when the "the discourse of celebration and thanksgiving co-existed with the discourse of ridicule" (Chitofiri et al. 2017: 61).

Gukurahundi by Song: How Some Musicians Stoked the Fire

The positive atmosphere brought forth by the independence euphoria was to soon disappear. The "fragility of the new nation" (Ndlovu-Gatsheni & Willems 2009: 949), that which Nkomo called Zimbabwe's false start (Nkomo 1984), was soon exposed when tension between ZANU and ZAPU degenerated into open hostility. Zimbabwe was "increasingly imagined as 'Shona-centred' and 'ZANU-PF-centred'"(Ndlovu-Gatsheni & Willems 2009: 950). As a result, ZANU banned songs and destroyed any material that mentioned ZAPU (Ndlovu 2014). This total ban on ZAPU songs led to a demonstration by ZAPU followers at the Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation's Bulawayo studios (Ndlovu-Gatsheni & Willems 2009).

According to Ndlovu (2014), musicians such as Thomas Mapfumo, Elijah Madzikatire and the Harare Mambos, "fuelled the fire" through hate songs which perpetuated the state narrative while undermining ZAPU's contribution to the liberation struggle. One of the "most popular hate songs" was Mapfumo's *Nyarai* (Be ashamed) which mocked ZAPU followers as *Nhunzvatunzva* (rogues) and losers (Ndlovu 2014: 37, 58). In the song, Mapfumo wonders what "kind of people are you who do not want to be led?" And yet, it can be argued that the song amounted to othering, meaning the "attribution of relative inferiority and/or radical alienness to the other/out-group" (Brons 2015: 69).

Mimicking Mugabe's cobra (snake) frame, Mapfumo titled his other song *Nyoka Musango* (Snake in the bush). In the song, Mapfumo likens the genocide to a hunting expedition, virtually inciting the troops to crush the serpent. Although Mapfumo once admitted during an interview (1988) that the song *Nyoka Musango* was about "dissidents" he was to later deny (Ayre 2013).

Parallel to the killings, incitement of disdain and hate against Ndebeles heightened. In Patrick Mukwamba's 1984 his hit song, Jonas *Wapenga Nayo Bonus* (Jonas goes Crazy over bonus) a man called Jonas squanders his bonus with friends and sex workers. Sung in Shona, the song suddenly features a Ndebele speaking sex worker called Ma Sibanda giggling, marvelling at Jonas's reckless spending, urging him on. After her less than 10 seconds slot, the song is back to Shona language. In Paul Matavire's *Basa Rinopera* (The job will end), a Ndebele woman is heard brazenly demanding sex from her gardener, threatening him with the sack if he did not oblige. In the song, Matavire, introduces the woman thus: "Listen to a Ndeeere (a contemptuous distortion of the word Ndebele) woman asking for sex from her servant; speaking in that Ndeere." Interestingly, Matavire, who lived in Bulawayo among the Ndebele speaking people and demonstrates fluency in their language elsewhere in that same song, deliberately says Ndeeere.

In the death camps, Gukurahundi troops gathered villagers together, forced them to sing demeaning songs before summarily executing some of them. One

of the songs was *Mai VaDhikondo* (Dhikondo's mother). Composed by Rephius Tachi, a former Air Force of Zimbabwe musician, the song mocks Ndebele women making it the "keyhole through which we peep to better appreciate and interpret the Gukurahundi memory" (Maedza 2017: 216).

Heywood postulates that language is a "political weapon, shaped and honed to convey political intent" (2004: 2). As such, these songs presented Ndebele women as loose women who frequent bars and sleep anyhow, causing reckless men to blow their wages. While reinforcing what Maedza (2017: 225) refers to as "stereotypes about the morality and sexual avail-ability of the Ndebele girls and women" the songs directed contempt and hate towards the Ndebele women. According to (Maguire 2018: 5) the "incitement of hatred and disdain" against a group of people is a cultural genocide crime. Such gender-specific othering is typically aimed at what Derderian (2005: 1) referred to as the "destruction of the integrity of the group [in this case Ndebele people] through its women" all because women "embody genetic and cultural continuity".

Songs of hate continued until well after the genocide. The Gukurahundi (washing away of chaff) frame was perhaps well received and illuminated by Viomak who, in 2007, not only celebrated the genocide but blamed it on the victims. In their song, *Gukurahund*i, they sing; "*Zvakatanga nema Madzviti"* (it all started with the Ndebele). Madzviti is a Shona pejorative for the Ndebele people meaning chaff or rubbish.

At international level, Mugabe's rebellion frame remained strong and was well echoed in Dr Alban's 1993 song Fire. Instead of the genocide, Alban blames some "rebel in Zimbabwe, victimising all my people".

Gukurahundi and the musical Counternarratives: Ebony Sheik and Lovemore Majaivana

Ebony Sheik

Founded in 1980, Ebony Sheik is currently led by George Phahlani and his wife Siphathisiwe Ncube. Their first recorded song was *Bayete* (1986), a touching tribute to the Ndebele warriors who perished in defence of the Ndebele Kingdom in 1893. In 1990, they recorded *Nelson Mandela*, a seven single celebrating Mandela's release from detention. Born in Bulawayo in 1957, Phahlani (Real name Josiah Ndlovu) is a descendant of a Ndebele warrior who hailed from Zululand in South Africa. Before venturing into music, he was a ZAPU Youth Wing member where he was Vote Moyo's underground messenger in Sizinda, Tshabalala and Westgate in Bulawayo.

Siphathisiwe joined Ebony Sheik in 1987. She was raised by her grand-mother in rural Mbizingwe, Esigodini. Her grandmother was a popular Sitshikitsha dancer who won the top award for dancing to the Ndebele folk

song *iSavunguzane* (The whirlwind) in the early 1970s. She later whisked Siphathisiwe back to her parents in Bulawayo to save her from possible rape by rogues who were taking advantage of the liberation war in the rural areas. With reports of rapes during Gukurahundi, Siphathisiwe remembered her grandmother and the song *Isavunguzane*. In her memory and to thank her, Siphathisiwe wrote her own version of *Isavunguzane* (1987). She combined the original chorus with her own verse to adapt the song to the current situation to mourn the Gukurahundi victims. She explains:

> When I heard of women being gang raped in Esigodini and all over, I remembered my granny taking me back to Bulawayo just to protect me. The song Isavunguzane came to my mind. In her memory, I had to record it as a thank you and as a lamentation over the whirlwind which was sweeping through our land that time (Interview)

Symbolically, Esigodini is where armed rebel Morgan Nsingo, known as Gayigusu, massacred 16 whites in cold blood in 1987. Then Home Affairs minister, Enos Nkala, speaking from the murder scene, said the troops were hunting for Gayigusu in the mountains and was certain they would have his head in no time (Reuters 1987). However, contrary to Nkala's optimism, Gayigusu was never caught; instead, the troops wantonly murdered civilians. The song captures this in harrowing words, depicting a deliberate, swift, village by village brutal onslaught on the Ndebeles:

Chorus

Isavunguzane
Ayeyi yeyi! ma Ndebele
Isavunguzame; singu moya welizwelonke ma Ndebele
Sathathindlu yami 'aye yiyeyi ma Ndebele
Singu moya welizwe lonke ma Ndebele.

Verse

Sadlule' Esigodini; sathathu' muzi wami bo!
Siphose Sangithatha
Wow Wow ngilamlelani bo!
Sadlul' Emawabeni sathathi nkukhu zika Ndebele
Siphose Sangithatha
Wow Wow ngilamlelani bo
Ngivele ngabona, ngese lizwe lonke

Chorus

The Whirlwind!
Ahoy Ndebeles!
The whirlwind is sweeping across the entire country Ndebeles

It blew away my house; Ahoy Ndebeles!
It is sweeping across the entire country

Verse

It swept through Esigodini, destroying my home
It nearly swept me away
Uh-Oh! Rescue me please!
It swept through Mawabeni, blowing away Mr Ndebele's chickens
It nearly swept me away
Uh-Oh! Rescue me please!
From tell-tale signs, I was in no doubt; it was sweeping across the country

Echoed here is the notion of musicians as investigative journalists (Allen 2004), providing news on hot topical issues (Mano 2011) with the ability to "reveal wrong doing" and "slip subversive messages into the public forum" (Allen 2004: 5-6). At a time when the news media were still parroting the state narrative, Ebony Sheik turned the accepted view on its head with a new frame: whirlwind. Perhaps, the absolute power of this frame and therefore strength of the song are both affirmed in the fact that the metaphor whirlwind to refer to genocide is in the zeitgeist, distinguished by its universal applicability and traceability. The whirlwind metaphor has been used to refer to other genocides; for example, the Indonesian genocide of the 1960s (Cribb 2002), the massacre of unarmed Tutsis in Rwanda in 1994 (Thijs Bastiaan 2018) and the pogrom against the Armenians and other peoples in the final years of the Ottoman Empire over a century ago (Suny et al. 2011).

> This song applies even at universal level. We still have the whirlwind today; whirlwinds will always be there. We adapted it to our local situation, but it retains universal relevance (Interview).

Like a newspaper that has just sourced a scoop contradicting official press statements, Isavunguzani tells the story of brutal soldiery in metaphorical, graphic detail. In the story, a desperate villager who has just narrowly survived a violent invasion, is loudly crying for help. Narrow escapes were common during the Gukurahundi. Some people often survived raids but after the soldiers would have either cut off their ears or lips or severely belaboured them. In some cases, because the Fifth Brigade legendarily lacked the precision of a conventional army, some victims would end up with gunshot wounds. As such, in this song, the survivor is still in deep agony inflicted either by bodily physical harm or trauma or both. This is captured in the plea "Please rescue me!" and in the words "It [whirlwind] nearly swept me away".

The song is also a warning to adjoining villages. Even though in pain, the survivor still feels duty bound to shout a warning to fellow tribesmen who are in the direct path of the gale advising them to steer clear. This is captured in the call "Ahoy Ndebeles!". The yelling survivor is clearly sending out

firsthand information as she graphically describes the destruction of homes, plunder of the livestock and is no doubt the carnage is directed at fellow Ndebeles. The mention of chickens being blown away by the wind, brings into memory the Fifth Brigade soldiers' love for chicken. Known as O Sadza ne huku (Sadza and Chicken), they routinely looted villagers' chickens for barbequing in their camps. Strikingly, the targeting of a specific group of people, the destruction of their homes, narrow escapes, and the plunder of their livestock are typical genocide crimes.

Another strength of the song is the instrumentation which penetratingly captures the sound of a powerful gale sweeping across a compound or orchard. Listening to the song, one cannot help imagining the helter-skelter of a windstorm. Combined with the lead singer's pleas for help "Ngilamlelani bo!" (Please rescue me!) it brings into one's mind the harrowing desperation of the Ndebele villagers who were abandoned by the international community during Gukurahundi.

Significantly, the phrase and plea "Ngilamlelani bo!" features frequently in other Ndebele protest songs of a similar scope. For example, in Lovemore Majaivana's 1978 song Ngilamlela is the line "Ngilamlelani bo! Ngilamlela Nanka amakhiwa engibulawa" (Rescue me please; the whites are killing me. This was an attack on the white colonial rule and the Rhodesian state's brutality against black people's push for democratic non-racial rule. This song was also adopted by Highlanders Football Club fans whose version goes in part "Ngilamlela Nanka ama Shona engibulala" (Rescue me; Shonas are killing me). About the song Ncube (2018: 11-12) wrote:

This song has roots in Gukurahundi conflict of the 1980s ... through such songs, Highlanders FC fans express that Gukurahundi was a deliberate attempt to wipe out the whole Ndebele ethnic group.

Teary pleas for help derive from Ndebele society's community spirit where trouble and burden are shared. Driving the philosophy is that an attack on a neighbour by an alien is an attack on the entire community. Calling for a rescue party is akin to calling for defence and is, therefore, a war cry.

Lovemore Majayivana

Born in 1954 to a cleric of Malawian origin and a Lower Gweru woman, Majayivana grew up in Mzilikazi township in Bulawayo. Majayivana sings "primarily for a Ndebele audience" (Hadebe 2001: 19) and has a "deep concern for the Ndebele people". He is easily the "finest musician to emerge from Matebeleland" (Gambahaya & Muwati 2016: 249). Like Ebony Sheik, Majayivana's songs borrow from Ndebele folklore; they communicate a cross section of problems faced by the common people in the townships and rural districts. As mentioned earlier, his song Ngilamulela, which was an adaptation of a Nguni folk song with the same title, demonstrated his contempt for

colonial misrule and his quest for black majority rule. However, Majayivana's dream was shattered when it dawned on him that independent Zimbabwe was Egypt, the land of bondage and Pharaoh, and not the promised Canaan. His 1984 tune, Simoni Ka Jona (Simon Peter), conveys his sorrow.

> Simoni ka Jona uyangithanda na?
> Yebo Nkosi yami, ngiyakuthanda
> Ngilokhe ngise Egypt, angikafiki e Canaan
> Ngiguqe ngamadolo, kakho ongibonayo
> Ngikhali' zinyembezi, kakho ongibonayo
> Ngikhale kwabaphansi kakho ongizwayo
> Ngikhale kwabaphezulu kakho ongizwayo
> Zehli' zinyemmbezi, kakho ongibonayo
> Yebo Nkosiyami ngihawukele
>
> Simon Peter, do you love me?
> Yes, My Lord I love you
> I am still in Egypt, not yet in Canaan
> I am down on my knees, nobody seems to notice me
> I am weeping, nobody hears my cries
> My pleases to the ancestors have not been heard
> My cries to the heavens remain unanswered
> Tears flow down; still nobody is noticing me
> Yes my Lord, have mercy on me

Simoni ka Jona is a reference to the biblical Simon Peter, Jesus Christ's disciple who infamously denied his master in the few hours leading to crucifixion. In this case, Simon Peter could be a metaphor for the international community which turned a blind eye to the mass killings in violation of international covenants stating that people have a right to life and protection. It could also be a reference to the Zimbabwean government. Just as Peter denied Jesus at the most difficult time and after vowing that he would never desert him, the Zimbabwean government turned against its own people despite pledges to protect them.

With this song, Majayivana did not merely confirm his skill and talent in conveying powerful and subversive messages through metaphor, but he successfully deployed his "resonant master frame" (Benford 2013: 1); what Davis (2009) calls a central frame. As opposed to rebellion, he saw Egypt. It was both a prophetic frame and a brave stance on behalf of Majayivana, taken at the height of independence euphoria and optimism expressed by fellow musicians. The song conveys Ndebeles' collective sense of neglection and suffering which was not yet felt in some parts of the country at the time. The strength, elasticity, influence, and prophesy of the metaphor Egypt were all echoed 30 years later when Hosea Chipanga framed Mugabe as *Pharaoh* in his 2011 song by the same title. This was confirmation of Benford (2013)'s notion that a master frame yields more frames.

The *Egypt* frame set the compass of Majayivana career; it set the tone and scope of his music; it became the "central organising idea" (Gamson 1989: 157) for his messaging and the very base from whence he counter framed the state propaganda; the very source of his twin themes: protesting and mourning. Having framed the newly independent Zimbabwe as Egypt and not the promised Canaan at the very outset, it became easy for Majayivana to notice patterns of misrule from henceforth. Songs, *Inhlanzi Yesiziba* and *U Tshaka* speak to this as they capture the genocide crimes and convey Ndebeles' collective sorrow more vividly.

Inhlanzi Yesiziba

Ntshelele! Ntshelele! nhlanzi ye Siziba
Dzwino yabanjwa ngumdaka
Ngivele ngabona ngokwakhiwa kwejele, beqala bemb' umgodi
Ngivele ngabona ngokubotshwa kuka Siziba
Bazangifaka e jele
Ngivele ngabona ngokuthathwa kuka Siziba
Bazangithatha
Ngivele ngabona ngokubotshwa kukaSiziba
Bazakusibopha thina; bazasifak' ejele
Bazangithatha; bazangifak' ejele
Bathi kangilunganga
Bazangithatha
Bathi asilunganga
Bazasithatha

Flounder! flounder! stream pool fish
The catfish is bogged down in the mud
When the building of a prison and the sinking of a mine shaft
From Siziba's tell-tale arrest
I knew they would put me in jail
When they took Siziba
I knew they would take me
From Siziba's tell-tale arrest
I knew they would arrest us; put us in jail
I knew they would take me; put me in jail
They say I am bad
They will take me
They say we are bad
They will take us

In this song, one Siziba has apparently been abducted by the state security agents. The song partly derives from a Ndebele proverb "Inhlanzi itshelwe ngamanzi". A literal translation would produce an English idiom, "the fish is out of water". It could also mean a domineering someone has come to their wit's end. However, whatever interpretation, the song alludes to someone who

has lost their familiar position of comfort like a fish taken out of water. Water is the fish's lifeblood; a fish is both uncomfortable and extremely vulnerable when taken out of water. In this song, the catfish is floundering in the bog, struggling for survival, gasping for breath. A few more hours in this situation the fish could perish.

Siziba finds himself in an uncomfortable position because he was abducted. During the Gukurahundi, when villagers said *bamthethe/ Ubotshiwe* (They have taken him/he has been arrested) the meaning was that state security officers had arrived at the victim's home (usually at night or dawn) without a warrant of arrest, ordered him to come along with them to a concentration camp. Most of such abductees were never seen again. Symbolically, Siziba in Ndebele means a stream pool which could also mean that Siziba himself has been severely tortured (possibly by water-boarding; a common technique then) to the extent that he can no longer support himself and his family like a bog would not sustain a fish's life; or has disappeared. He is now just a bog and not a stream pool.

Apparently, Siziba's abduction was a harbinger of mass abductions in the area. The abductees, including Siziba, were taken to a nearby 'jail' which was erected shortly before the kidnappings commenced. Before the jail was built, a mine shaft was sunk, the song says. One is reminded of the Bhalagwe Concentration Camp in Kezi where thousands of civilian abductees were detained, tortured to death before being thrown into Antelope Mine shaft. Antelope mine is a disused mine which was reopened by the troops in 1983 for the purposes of dumping dead bodies. Abductees were normally those people who would have been initially othered as bad apples for whatever reason. Othering is evidenced in the words *"*they say I am bad/we are bad people*"*.

Through this song, Majayivana cleverly lists and alludes to instruments of genocide namely othering, abduction, detention, disappearing, murder, body dumping. These crimes listed above, demonstrate that Majayivana's *Egypt* frame succeeded by producing supporting sub-frames. As if to echo the notion that musicians can be editorial writers (Allen 2004), the lyrics read like an editorial comment contextualising and analysing a sequence of events that amount to genocide crimes.

Utshaka

Watsho lapho U Tshaka mhla efayo
Wakhala uTshaka mama mhla efayo
Wathi lelilizwe liyobuswa zinyoni
Watsho Utshaka mama wathi
Lelilizwe Seliyobuswa zinyoni
Ingane zaphelela engigeni
Obaba baphelela emlilweni
Omama labo banyamalala

Sadubeka thina
Sadubeka thina bakaMthwakazi
Sesivela e Njelele
Sadubeka Thina
Entabeni Yezinduna
Sadubeka thina
Sidinga imali yamanzi
Sadubeka thina
Sesinding' imizi ezweni lakwethu
Sadubeka thina
Sesingo dingindawo
Sadubeka thina
Akusela tshukela
Sadubeka thina
Sekusele isawudo
Sadubeka thina
Lalofuthi lizaphela
Sadubeka thina
Kuzasala ibilebile

The overall frame in this song is the suffering of the Ndebele people as echoed in the repeated words *"Sadubeka thina"* (We are suffering) and in the words *"Sadukeba thina abakaMthwakazi"* (We the Mthwakazi people are suffering). Mthwakazi means the Ndebele nation. This frame is a typical scion of the Egypt master frame as shown by the severe suffering told by the song. So intense is the suffering that the Ndebele people have nowhere to live and are in dire need for money to finance their water bills. According to Hadebe (2001), Majayivana is laying the blame on bad governance; the song is also saying the hard times brought forth by the rule of birds are what Zulu King Tshaka predicted before he was killed. The Ndebele people originate from Zululand in South Africa. Even though the Ndebele nation was created by Mzilikazi, a general who rebelled against the Zulu Kingdom, Tshaka is still respected in Matebeleland hence his prophesy is seen as being fulfilled through the suffering of the Ndebeles.

The strength of Majayivana's frame about the suffering the Ndebeles was demonstrated 20 years later through Ingane Zoma's tune *Mzilikazi ka Mashobana*. In their song, the Kwazulu Natal-based band mourns the "suffering of our people who went with Mzilikazi in Zimbabwe" who are being "discriminated against by the Shona".

Even though the song *Utshaka* touches on the general suffering of the Ndebele people it, like *Inhlanzi yesiziba*, also specifically mourns atrocities. This is apparent in the words:

Ingane zaphelela engigeni (Children perished in mortar)
Obaba baphelela emlilweni (Fathers perished in the fire)
Omama labo banyamalala (Mothers also disappeared)

All these were typical crimes committed by the Fifth Brigade throughout Matebeleland during the genocide. According to the Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace report (2007), soldiers often seized newly born babies, shoved them into the mortar and forced parents to pound their little ones with the pestle to a pulp. In other areas they would force people into a grass hut, lock it and douse it with petrol before setting it ablaze. The soldiers would wait outside until the hut burned to ashes; escapees would be finished off with sniper fire. In some areas, as mentioned earlier, abductees disappeared for ever.

Considering these above lines, it is not surprising why Majayivana refers to the post-independence dispensation in Zimbabwe as the rule of birds. As is known, birds have no sense of belonging; some birds devour other birds; some migrate anyhow. Like birds that consume fellow birds the ruling elite killed children, burned fathers alive and caused mothers to disappear. Interestingly, Tshaka was also known as a bird that feasted on others (Sibusiso Nyembezi et al. 1984).

Conclusion

This article has proven that both Ebony Sheik and Majayivana successfully countered the claim that Gukurahundi was merely about the quelling of armed rebellion in Matebeleland. Majayivana, specifically, successfully framed Zimbabwe as an oppressive state where people suffer and disappear through his *Egypt* frame. The selected songs prove that Gukurahundi was genocide which targeted Ndebele speaking people. Through their songs, Ebony Sheik and Majayivana list and allude to instruments of genocide namely targeting of a specific group of people, destruction of their property, abduction, unlawful detention in concentration camps, dumping of bodies. This article also proves that the government incited hatred against the people of Matebeleland and this triggered negative musical representation of Ndebele through songs of hate.

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