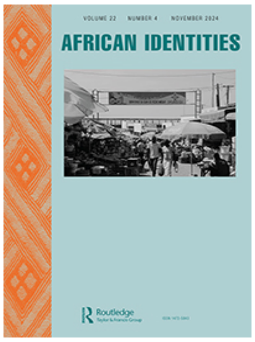

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ARTICLE

Migration and pathology: a comparative reading of fragmented selves in Brian Chikwava's *Harare North*

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ABSTRACT

The paper is a comparative reading of dissociation and spirit possession as worthwhile tropes of analyzing the fragmented selves to lay basis of interpretation of similar works with African and Western cultural heritages. In spite of availability of critical works on pathological consequences of othering on African immigrants, this comparative reading is absent. Some literary scholars interrogate the clinical trope and point out the need to incorporate both the clinical and spirit possession tropes, whereas most literary scholars focus on clinical madness as a consequence of othering, this paper extends it to spirit possession among migrant characters. The article adopts postcolonialism and concepts from diverse fields to enable comparison of the clinical and possession tropes with reference to Brian Chikwava's *Harare North* (2009). The study is anchored in ideas of scholars from different disciplines such as depth psychology (dissociation) and anthropology (spirit possession) as theoretical bases of interpretation. To ensure a flawless interaction of these theorists who occupy different academic disciplines, I foment an interdisciplinary exegesis by adopting Ato Quayson's 'Calibrations' theory, which is a fine-tuned tool for textual close reading that 'oscillates' rapidly between different domains – the literary-aesthetic, the social, the cultural, and the political.

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Brian Chikwava; dissociative identity disorder; migration literature; minorities; spirit possession; the fragmented self

The migrant and fragmented selves: background of the study

Studies from diverse fields attest to the non-unified nature of the self and its vulnerability to different social and cultural contexts. An immigrant who moves from the West to Africa cannot retain an unaltered self. Prins et al. (2013) observes that identities are constructed and negotiated through interaction" (81); subsequently, the different cultural conditions of the immigrant character affects his or her self. Prins's postulation reiterates Reuter (2006)'s ideas on the meaning of the fragmented self when he observes that the psychological restructuring in the immigrant as they move from one culture to the other results in a 'compartmentalization' or 'fragmentation of the mind' into two or more selves to reflect the new fragmented world (257). In Reuter's perspective, the fragmented self is a divided mind and contradictory memories to enable the immigrant adjust in a cross-cultural environment.

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Scholars contend that there is nexus between trauma and the fragmented self and describe it as self under constant depression, alienation, hopelessness and search for wholeness. Using the life of Frantz Kafka, Gray et al. (2005) demonstrate how adultism and other othering experiences exposed Kafka to the fragmented self. The scholars' conclusions suggest that the fragmented self is a psychological condition rampant among members of the marginalized groups such as children, immigrants or women.

While Gray et al belong to the modern school of thought; tradition has its own meaning of the fragmented self. Studies in anthropology associate the fragmented self with spirit possession, a condition where selves from without supplant the human self and direct the victim to live the kind of life they want (Boddy, 1994, p. 407). These persons may be ancestral spirits, divinities or ethnically alien forces that take control of the individual and use their body as they wish during the possession trance.

The literary genre concerned with mental health and spiritual lives of characters is referred to as stream of consciousness. According to Vujnovic (2013), this genre brings to the fore aspects of mental health and spiritual lives of characters (74). Most critics in the genre take either the clinical trope based on trauma or spirit possession paradigm to analyse literary works. This study is an exegesis of fragmented selves as a pathological consequence of the trauma of othering in Chikwava (2009), *Harare North*. The study is a comparative reading of dissociation and spirit possession as potent paradigms of analyzing the fragmented self as a basis of interpretation of similar works with African and Western heritage. Previous scholarship in the plight of immigrant characters in migration literature have either dwelt on its merits or pointed out clinical madness because of the trauma of othering. A close reading of primary texts, however, unearths diverse strains of the fragmented self among migrant characters ranging from the clinical to possession trances.

Review of related literature

In this section, I review related literature to establish the gap in the study and specify the major canon of analysis. I begin with theoretical review and end the section by examining the empirical review of the study.

Studies have delved into the most appropriate canons for literary analysis; while most critics adhere to single paradigms of analyzing literature, some contemporary literary critics suggest a multifaceted approach. Quayson (2003), refers to this interdisciplinary model as 'calibrations,' a fine-tuned tool for textual close reading that 'oscillates rapidly between domains – the literary–aesthetic, the social, the cultural, and the political – in order to explore the mutually illuminating heterogeneity of these domains when taken together.' Mitchell (2003) observes that Quayson's model cuts across diverse contexts and texts to adopt interdisciplinary perspectives for effective reading of African literatures. Indeed, in the third chapter, Quayson oscillates between literary and historical analyses of Ken-Saro Wiwa's environmental activism (58). In chapter four, he adopts Freudian concepts of trauma and the uncanny to analyse selected works of South African Literature.

Quayson's calibrations is invaluable to this study as it enables the reading of fragmented selves from different planes – the social, the cultural and psychological. Although postcolonialism is the umbrella theory, calibrations, as a mode of reading facilitates the contributions of other scholars such as Howell (2024), Dissociative Identity Disorder (DID), and Mbiti (1970) on spirit possession. While Quayson stops at adoption of Freudian tenets of the uncanny and trauma in the clinical analysis of fragmentation, the present study extends the reading to later scholars of dissociation such as McDavid (1994), Ross and Ness (2010) and Howell (2024) for effective comparison with the possession trope. According to Howell, DID refers to a fragmented self in which a patient has an 'interrelated though differentially dissociated parts with separate subjectivities that are all facets of one person' (4). The dissociative parts are not independent, but part of one person. Howell suggests that the condition splits memories and the mind rather than substitution of the host.

Studies point out the nexus between cultural conditions – othering – and pathological conditions such as fragmented selves. The social conditions in which individuals live have the potential to lacerate and destroy their selves. Fanon observes that racial and political othering causes psychic collapse and subsequent pathology in the marginalized (182). Cornette (2018) explores Italian postcolonial literatures and attendant pathological consequences. Castro (2016) contends that English scholarship has marginalized spirituality in African diasporic literatures. She argues that despite this, the prevalence of the spirit possession trope in these works is palpable (6). Cohen (2008), on the other hand, observes that spirit possession is rampant among members of the marginalized group, particularly those with a history of protest and resistance (6). These four studies are invaluable to the present study: Fanon's strand of postcolonialism is the umbrella theory that enables the study to interrogate the clinical model for analysis of fragmented selves among marginalized immigrant characters. Laing bolsters Fanon's postulation on the nexus between pathology and social conditions, and Cohen's ideas enable the researcher to interrogate spirit possession among the marginalized immigrant characters in the primary text. While Castro generally reads spirituality in the African diaspora (Caribbean and Americas), the present study juxtaposes the possession and clinical trope with reference to Chikwava's *Harare North*.

Specialists in the possession trope point out permanence as a distinguishing feature from depth psychology (the clinical model). While spirit possession appraises the influence of cultural factors in contraction of the fragmented self, the clinical model individualizes pathology. Mbiti (1970) observes that spirit possession does not have to be dreaded because it is sometimes induced through 'special dancing and drumming' until the spirit gains entrance into the person. After possession, they become mediums or seers (100). Similarly, Perman (2011) observes that spirit possession in some members of the Ndau community is passed from one generation to the other (59). Perman expounds that the spirits have a great influence in the lives of the victims. Once the patient gives way to the spirit, their true self is no longer in control of what goes on around (86). Mbiti and Perman's studies enrich the present study as they present spirit possession as a fragmented self in the traditional societies. This study interrogates spirit possession as an alternative trope in analysis of African literature. The study extends Mbiti and Perman's restricted religious focus to literary studies.

The empirical review will focus on two major studies on the clinical and spirit possession tropes in *Harare North*. Literary critics have demonstrated how the trauma of migration experiences cause fragmentation among undocumented characters in Chikwava's *Harare North*. Chigwedere (2015) examines how the narrator loses his 'ontological security' in the face of traumatic experiences in the West and turns into a victim of the fragmented self and insanity. Basing her analyses on psychoanalysis and Laing's concept of the unembodied self, Chigwedere expounds that alienation and fragmentation caused by 'the trauma of dislocation affect Chikwava's protagonist' such that he runs mad (169). Chigwedere's study enriches the clinical model, which is one of the canons of analysis in the present study. While Chigwedere adopts the trauma theory in her analysis, the present study encapsulates trauma as consequence of othering of marginal groups in the context of postcolonialism, and a feature of the fragmented self as defined by Gray et al. (124). Further, Chigwedere does not pay attention to spirit possession as viable trope for analysis of the fragmented self. Quayson's calibrations adopted by this study extends theoretical interpretation to postcolonialism and clinical models (postulated by Fanon and Laing) and the possession trope (Cohen and Mbiti) for a comprehensive analysis of *Harare North*.

Literary readings of Chikwava's *Harare North* have suggested the possibility of analyzing African literature in the light of depth psychology (the clinical trope) and spirit possession trope. In his study of Aminatta Forna's *A Memory of Love*, Helen Oyeyemi's *The Icarus Girl* and Chikwava's *Harare North*, Gunning (2015) observes that the three writers explore both spirit possession and multiple identity disorder (120). He singles out Chikwava's use of the *mamhepo* as a reference to *Ngozi* spirits in Zimbabwean culture. Citing Primorac, Gunning concludes that reference to *Ngozi* enables Chikwava to delve into the Zimbabwean literary tradition of spirit possession trope (253). Gunning concludes that Chikwava provides another way of interpreting the text through the character Jenny, a white destitute who is confounded at Shingi's use of third person to refer to himself and says, '[y]ou have DID,' which is dissociative identity disorder. Gunning refers to dissociation as a Western model of interpretation that is not the same as the African model of spiritual possession. He cites Craps, '[i]t can be argued that uncritical cross cultural application of psychological concepts developed in the West amounts to a form of cultural imperialism' (2). In Gunning's perspective, spirit possession cannot be interpreted in a Western non-spiritual sense as 'mental episodes where a person displays unexpected behavioural disturbances' (129). While Gunning elucidates the idea of application of both Western clinical and African spirit possession tropes in three novels, there is no clarification of the merits and demerits of the tropes by a side-by-side comparison. This study therefore finds a gap to extend Gunning's study through a comparative reading of the two tropes to demonstrate their differences with reference to Chikwava's *Harare North*. Further, unlike Gunning's, the present study specifies the cause of trauma as arising from othering conditions in which characters live as laid down by Fanon's strand of postcolonialism.

The choice of the text is justified to enable a comprehensive comparison of the spirit possession and clinical tropes as a basis for satisfactory interpretation of selected works of migration literature. Since Gunning evades in-depth comparison of the two tropes, this study extends his study through detailed comparison. This paper will also interrogate Gunning's claims that the two tropes are equal. The analysis begins by examination of the primary text in the light of the clinical model to show how DID hampers normal life of characters and then turn to interrogation of spirit possession for effective synthesis.

The clinical model and the adversarial ‘others’: dissociation and the marginal space

Postcolonial scholars single out a nexus between the social conditions of characters and the pathological conditions they experience (Cornette, 2018; Fanon, 1961). This section points out DID as one of the pathological conditions in which different identities take ‘executive charge, in effect pushing the identity that had previously been in charge, out of charge’ (Howell, 2024, p. 4). As a result, the individual suffers memory lapses to the extent that they forget important personal information. Using her patient Janice, Howell enumerates features of DID as presence of many identities referred to as ‘polyfragmented multiple’ (16) arising from adultism in her childhood. Janice’s father and mother persistently punished her for no apparent reasons; her friends would pour muddy sand in her vagina, cover her with a board and walk on her. Consequently, a hundred alters are diagnosed in her mind (17). DID in Chikwava’s *Harare North* is pronounced in MaiMusindo, Shingi and the narrator of the novel. MaiMusindo is an immigrant Zimbabwean character in England with ‘prophetic’ abilities. Shingi is the narrator’s friend who migrates to England to escape spiritual haunts from his family. The narrator is Chikwava’s mouthpiece who tells traumatic experiences of migrant characters in England. Like Janice in Howell’s study, these characters are exposed to othering experiences that cause their fragmentation. According to McDavid (1994), patients that undergo dissociation exhibit a number of symptoms including, ‘facial changes, body shifts, voice tones, accents, change in handedness, eye changes, involuntary movements, and the use of “we” are less subtle signs [. . .] Though affect and mood changes arc non-specific, they tend to be exaggerated’ (36).

With regard to MaiMusindo, the narrator says that she has the self of ‘the old spirit’ and spends time conversing with it. At her residence at Peckham, she exudes enmity when the neighbour plays loud music. MaiMusindo loses temper, picks a brick and throws at the neighbour through the window (87). These outbursts are aspects of depression that Ross and Ness (2010) associate with DID (462). McDavid describes the outbursts as ‘dramatic shift of affect’ (36) that possibly gives way for another alter’s expression. When Tsitsi tells her that her partner, Aleck deliberately declined to support her and child, MaiMusindo loses temper to exhibit another alter in control. She storms the house and insults Aleck, [sic] ‘[i]f you had keep that front tail inside your trousers, none of this will have happen . . . ’ (111), besides being a symptom of alters at work, MaiMusindo’s violence also confirms Gunning’s assertion that DID refers to ‘mental episodes where a person displays unexpected behavioural disturbances’ (129). Aleck does not expect vulgarism from an elder he respects and therefore abandons the residence, and Tsitsi in search of to another peaceful place.

Another most palpable aspect of DID in MaiMusindo is hypnosis or trances (Braun, 1984, 34–40). The narrator says that when talking to them, she wanders out of conversation in a funny absent-minded way ‘[sic] then suddenly she awaken from her trance and she sneezes in funny way. She remembers the point that she is wanting to make now’ (46). This trance is a symptom of the presence of what Howell describes as alter personalities in her. One obvious alter personality existing alongside MaiMusindo’s primary host is the ‘old spirit’ by whose manifestation she divines the lives of the visitors, but the narrator does not give any specific case that she divines. While talking to Shingi, the alter interrupts the conversation and she enters a trance. MaiMusindo’s host is quite peaceful as is evident in her relationship with the women at the saloon and Tsitsi. But when she is disturbed, 'the old spirit' alter transforms her into an awfully violent person. Like Janice in Howell's study, DID causes disturbances in MaiMusindo's life.

Shingi is another victim of dissociation, which manifests through a number of features. Howell observes in relation to Janice that past chaotic family situation subject one to DID (16–17). For Fanon, these are othering experiences that cause psychic collapse in the marginalized group. Shingi's odd family background may have exposed him to the dissociation because the narrator gives details of his desperate background. Born out of wedlock, his mother dies at his infancy and a ceremony is performed to facilitate his adoption by the mother's sister. The aunt who adopts Shingi is barren because of high levels of testosterone (11). His father is said to have been a freedom fighter and having shed innocent blood, evil alters, *mamhepo* are said to have tracked him down to his death. Worse is the relationship between his adoptive father and mother. It is tempestuous marriage oftentimes insulting and assaulting each other before Shingi and the narrator (67). It affects Shingi's childhood and as Fanon suggests, may have caused trauma and psychic collapse. At school, he is so shy that when the girl Thoko challenges him to a fight, he screams, calls for his mother's help and runs away (27). According to Howell, the physical abuse such as that Shingi experiences accentuates DID symptoms. Indeed, Shingi develops phobia (what Howell describes as "adult-onset-type trauma (AOTT)) after Thoko's abuse. Howell defines AOTT as a condition that 'collapses and divides the self' (22) of the victim after experiencing horrific incidents in childhood. Thoko is Shingi's female classmate who assaults him brutally. When the narrator meets Shingi in England, he realises that Shingi cannot maintain eye contact with the youngwoman, Tsitsi (84). Aware of Shingi's weaknesses, Tsitsi feigns love to steal from Shingi and leaves.

Furthermore, adult-onset-type trauma (AOTT) dominates Shingi's response to his job losses in England because as a young man the villagers assert that the *mamhepo* that haunted and killed his father and mother pursue his life (60). Shingi views his family as a cultural other or pariah in the village owing to the father's abominations. Shingi pelts the man who tells him of *mamhepo* with a stone. This episode resonates with Gunning's 'mental episodes in which a person displays unexpected behavioral disturbances' (129). While Howell's patient, Dennis exhibits phobia or AOTT through high-blood pressure, Shingi manifests through depression whenever he loses jobs in England. He loses jobs three times, one of which goes while staying with the narrator – all of which remind of the destructive potential of *mamhepo*. He gets depressed after losing a construction job, which according to Ross and Ness (2010, p. 462) is a 'depressive disorder' typical of DID patients. The narrator says '[sic] [w]hen food talk make Shingi sore like that, I step with care' (67). He also says Shingi is in a funny mood and has a headache (68).

Shingi goes to visit his older friend and when he returns, the narrator tries to excite him, but there is a dramatic shift of emotions (McDavid 36). He blurts, '[n]ow you will start looking after yourself, I have no more ginger for looking after some baby' (79). Shingi cooks beefsteak and eats alone as the narrator looks on. He buys alcohol and drinks; the narrator says that before they go to bed, '[s]hingi is drunk now in a pathetic way' (70). When Tsitsi walks out on him, he joins a company of drug addicts, Dave and Jenny and abuse hard drugs. According to Dorahy et al. (2014), self-harm and substance abuse are typically found in over 50% of people with DID (403). When Dave comes to the house, the narrator says, '[o]ur house is full skunk smoke' (175), as Shingi talks to himself under the influence of hard drugs. He also talks to himself after taking all his money from the narrator. Jenny asks, '[w]hy you talking to yourself, DID man?' (169). Jenny realizes that Shingi refers to himself in the third person. While talking to Dave and Jenny, Shingi says, 'Shingi have never hear this kind of thing. Maybe that is why Chairman Mao try to put things straight' (162). Malone (2009) refers to this as illeism, defined as the use of second or third person pronouns to refer to oneself (500) because other alters speak to the audience about the character. In this episode, the alters tell Dave and Jenny about Shingi.

There is change of voice, as Howell experiences with her DID patient Janice, whenever Shingi is angry, depressed or drunk. Before stoning the man who tells him that he is haunted by *mamhepo*, the narrator says: 'Shingi groan, spit and growl until them veins in his neck writhe under the skin' (60). Instead of speaking calmly, Shingi 'groans', 'growls' and commits an act that distorts the public peace. These changing tones are voices attest to the presence of alters.

According to Howell, the presence of alter personalities is a major symptom of dissociation (13). While her patient, Janice, has a hundred alters, two alter personalities are evident in Shingi's life. One obvious alter personality is the *mamhepo*, which emerges when provoked or after losing a job. The animal grunts, growls and groans signify its presence. It drives Shingi to pelt the man in his village with a stone possibly because he revealed its identity. As the villager's claim, Shingi's life is unsteady; he cannot keep a job for a long time because of this alter personality. Thoko is another possible alter personality in Shingi. According to Howell, such alter personalities gain entrance after childhood traumatic experiences (17). Thoko is the girl who physically abused Shingi in primary school (27) and so whenever Shingi comes across girls, the alter reminds his host personality how dangerous girls are. He therefore gets scared of girls. When Tsitsi 'giggles at him, Shingi looks lost' (85–86), which is a reference to a trance. Shingi's adoptive father and mother are also possible alter personalities. In his childhood, he could see them fight over food and got traumatized by it. The two alter personalities appear whenever he senses that he is likely to lack food in the house.

After he is sacked, he holds back his money so the narrator can go without food. The narrator notices his grumpy face–a sign of Mamhepo –and says, '[s]o when food talk make Shingi sore like that, I step with care' (67). After the departure of Aleck, Farayi and Tsitsi, these alter personalities influence the advent of Dave and Jenny, not because of their integrity, but because they can provide expired food from 'Marks & Spencer' bins (167). Dave comes day after and Shingi 'refuse to cook saying that he is not hungry' (168). Shingi then proceeds to take all his savings from the narrator and chooses Dave's company in preference for the narrator's. The two alter personalities influence Shingi to spend his money on food and hard drinks, which the narrator may limit. The alters lead him to a weekend of carousal after which he does not attend his duties at parliament. After his sacking, the alters influence him to the Mark & Spencer bins at night where *mamhepo* take advantage to avenge through a mad man who stabs him to death.

The narrator of *Harare North* is another victim of DID as result of class othering in his childhood. The poverty of his situation exposes him to crimes that result in his imprisonment. After leaving prison, he makes little or no money from his career as a cobbler, and resorts into joining ZANU-PF as youth member to terrorize members of the opposition. Having killed an opposition supporter, the party members demand for bribes to acquit him from the crimes, and he flees to England. His poverty and failure to have a stable family expose him to guilt as he has not met his late mother's expectations. DID in the narrator's life adopts Howell's theorization on dreams. She writes, '[d]issociated self-states, dreams of people with DID illustrate with particular vividness how parts of the self take on a character and a voice, stating their perceptions, beliefs, fears, and desires' (240). In this quote, Howell observes that alter personalities find voices in the dreams of their patients.

One of the alters that are evident in the narrator's life are his late mother. In England, the mother appears in his dreams to express her disappointment. In one dream, she demands to know whether he has fallen. In another dream, she orders him to return the chicken he and Mhiripiri have stolen (114). Ross and Ness point out depression as a major symptom of DID – the mother alter is responsible for the narrator's depression because she subtly reminds him of his mother nation. Soon after reaching England, the alter reminds him that it is not his motherland he should just raise the required cash to arrange for *umbuyiso* (a ceremony in her honour) and settle back home. The severe sense of alienation in the narrator's life in England emanates from this alter.

Additionally, Comrade Mhiripiri is an alter personality in the narrator's life. As aforementioned, he dreams stealing from the villagers in his company. Citing Fairbairn, Howell expounds on how different alters such as 'the little girl,' the 'mischievous boy' and 'the martyr' appeared in DID patients' dreams and hallucinations (240). Although the narrator does not experience hallucinations, he dreams stealing from villagers with Comrade Mhiripiri. This was his leader in the Green Bombers with whom they committed atrocities against opposition supporters. Howell associates DID dreams with symbolism and metaphor (239). Mhiripiri's alter symbolizes violence and is therefore adversarial in his life. When Aleck quarrels him, the alter says (in Mhiripiri's own words), '[i]f he is not careful, he is just asking for a heap of forgiveness' (125). For Mhiripiri, 'punishment is the best forgiveness (for a traitor).' Before he injures Shingi's foot with a knife for rummaging through his suitcase, the alter manifests when the narrator mentally says that he is not a civilian to panic because his past gives him ability to survive in the present (69). In this incident, the alter prepares to utilize the Green Bomber experience of violence to deal with Shingi. The narrator makes a crude incision into Shingi's wounded foot and blackmails him to confess that he rummaged through his suitcase (71).

In line with Howell's postulation, the narrator dreams about Shingi, after his death to prove that he is another alter personality. They grew up together in Zimbabwe and he has served as a role model. When villagers claim that Shingi is possessed by *mamhepo* that render him unstable, the narrator defends Shingi. He contends that despite them besmirching Shingi's name, he has attained his goals through Westward migration (11). When Aleck bullies Shingi around, the narrator defends Shingi. In the initial episodes, Sekai harasses the narrator and he goes to the toilet to think about Shingi for consolation. After his death, the narrator admits that Shingi is in him. He says, '[t]his Shingi thing now sit tight inside me' (201). The alter is adversarial because it is one of the causes of his madness. He experiences hallucinations in which he hears Shingi's relatives calling him (219). His mental state deteriorates after Shingi's death because (as Chgwedere elucidates) the narrator loses the only connection he had in England.

The fragmented self in the African context: merits and demerits of spirit possession

Depth psychology as laid down by most psychiatrists presents fragmented self as a condition with many side effects on the patient. Mbiti contends that the presence of other selves is not always perceived as a pathological condition in Africa because people desire it so much that they induce it until a spirit possesses the person. Mbiti writes:

> Spirit possession occurs in one form or another in practically every African society. Yet, spirit possession is not always to be feared, and there are times when it is not only desirable but people induce it through special dancing and drumming until the person concerned experiences spirit possession during which he may even collapse. (106)

Some traditional communities revere the possessed because they have unique abilities to commune with that spirit and solve problems. Such people are referred to as seers or mediums as they relay essential information to the community to save it in time of need. Castro (2016) gives the analogy of giving one's car to a friend to demonstrate how mediums surrender their selves and bodies to external agents for the service of communities. She concludes the prevalence of 'the occupied body' (26) in Afro-diasporic literatures deserves rigorous academic analyses.

One character who becomes a medium in Chikwava's *Harare North* is MaiMusindo. She is possessed by 'the old spirit'. The narrator says that all Zimbabwean immigrants in Pekam revere her because of this. The narrator says that as a medium, she divines immigrants who have problems to guide and solve their problems. She meets Tsitsi the first day and goes to her residence to diagnose and solve her family problems. The medium therefore plays essential roles in the African society particularly in situations that require guidance and counselling. Hazel (2009) observes that the Shona community of Zimbabwe reserves important positions such as mediums and seers for all genders. He expounds that the *mboga* have the responsibility to preserve clan charms and conduct rainmaking (453). To evade patriarchy, some of these women forfeit marriage. Mbiti observes that mediums are associated with diviners or medicine men and priests. The priests' duty is to receive, relay or interpret the messages through the mediums (230). African immigrants therefore consult MaiMusindo for guidance because she receives oracles for them, and as Hazel observes, she is single. This way, MaiMusindo finds her place against patriarchy and other othering practices that marginalize her. Hazel further posits that spirit possession trope enables women to reclaim 'verbal space' long denied in their cultures (454). When she is made aware of Tsitsi's travail under patriarchal domination (her partner Aleck has deliberately declined to support Tsitsi, a young mother) MaiMusindo intervenes to sort out the issue. Aleck remains adamant and MaiMusindo storms the house and threatens to curse Aleck by exposing her nudity (110). As a medium (regardless of her gender), the African society bestows on her the powers to correct or curse even male offenders. Aleck is so scared and migrates from his house.

The possession trance is a temporary; it manifests at certain moments when MaiMusindo desires it. According to experts in possession, mediums lose, or sometimes pretend to lose, their mental and physical senses so that the spirit world through them can 'pop up' into the human world without causing fear disturbance or disgust among people" (Mbiti, 223). This is a possession trace – moments when the spirit manifests in the medium. The narrator of *Harare North* describes this moment concerning MaiMusindo thus '[s]he wanders out of conversation in a funny absent-minded way then suddenly she awaken from her trance and she sneezes in funny way. She remembers the point that she is wanting to make now' (46). This trance is a sign of the spirit's presence. A consciousness substituting the primary personality (Rashed, 2020, p. 366) by whose manifestation she taps into the spiritual for the benefit of her visitors. While talking to Shingi, the spirit interrupts the conversation and compels her into a trance. This episode attests to the differences between spirit possession and dissociation, whereas in dissociation, an alter personality exists alongside the host personality to cause a disruption, in spirit possession, there is a substitution of the host by the foreign agent (Rashed, 2020). According to Keener (2010, p. 221), the possessed person assumes a new identity and voice. This is the same perspective that Mbiti upholds when he writes, "[d]uring the possession she may have either one 'personality' or several, depending on how many divinities or spirits enter her at a time. She then behaves in the manner of the divinity or spirit possessing her, like a warrior, or pregnant woman, or lame man, and sometimes animal spirits 'come into mediums and make them bark, snarl, or go on all fours' (227). After the episode expires, the medium behaves like someone that has just awakened from sleep and cannot remember that episode.

In her short conversation with Shingi, MaiMusindo prompts immigrants to think about their religious heritage. She reminds them of the witchcraft in Chipinge and lets them to explore it. Aleck narrates how Banda from Chipinge can shrink animals to the size of grains of sand, sweep them into an envelope and take them to the livestock market for sell (47). The immigrants dwell on witchcraft in their conversation because they know MaiMusindo is a medium whose guidance is essential in neutralizing such malicious powers. According to Mbiti, sorcerers, evil magicians, witches and medicine-men or diviners are believed to send flies, bats, birds, animals, spirits and magical objects to achieve their ends and so people turn to medicine men and diviners to give them protective charms (262). The immigrants therefore congregate at MaiMusindo in the hope that they will receive this protection from her against evil powers. The narrator says that her 'presence make everyone stand still and quiet and wait for she to talk' (46). Her faith in the spirit is quite intense, so strong that she expects submission from those she offers guidance as it does not stem from human wisdom. This accounts for her threat to curse Aleck when he refuses to support Tsitsi. While depth psychology perceives his aggressive stance as symptomatic of pathology, the possession trope views it as expression of what Castro refers to as 'prophetic cosmology' (99), in which the agent directs the medium to perform acts that appear obscene or foul.

Further, the clinical model views the violent act at MaiMusindo's residence at Peckham as symptomatic of her impoverished relationships; however, the spirit possession trope singles out the incident as a possession trance in readiness for community service. According to scholars in African religion, the spirit has to be induced by special rituals or dancing, and once the mediums get possessed, they act according to the spirit's wishes including barking as a dog to serve those around (Mbiti, 1970, p. 262). The narrator observes that while performing the ritual to induce the 'old spirit' to serve her clients, her neighbour plays loud music and she 'throw one brick into a window of a neighbour's son' (87). The possession trope singles this out as an act of the old spirit to pave way for its operation. Indeed, Farayi (one of the immigrant characters) tells the narrator that MaiMusindo entered a 'possession trance': he did not act violently or commit a conscious crime.

At Aleck's residence, she also prompts immigrants to explore the wrath of *mamhepo* spirits against those who shed innocent blood, whereas Mbiti points out unsolicited spirit possession as harmful, other experts such as Nyathi (2015) contend that malignant evil spirits pursue people who shed innocent blood to execute social justice on behalf of the weak in the society. He expounds that the spirits join forces with the spirits the one who was killed to wreak havoc on the blood group of the perpetrator (6). It is apparent that although the existence of foreign selves in a person has been viewed in the clinical sense as purely pathological, it contrary in the spirit possession trope because spirits such as *ngozi* among the Shona execute social justice against influential persons that abuse their power. Generally, the spiritual realm in the African context is believed to possess invincible powers that can vanquish the most powerful human person. Ezenweke (2008) writes:

> The ancestors are seen as retaining their role in the affairs of their kin-group [. . .]. They are appropriated with sacrifices. They are seen as dispensing both favours and misfortune; they are often accused of being capricious and of failing in their responsibilities, but at the same time their actions are related to possible lapses on the part of the living and are seen as legitimately punitive. (4)

Ezenweke suggests that the spirits of the dead in African communities watch the conduct of their relatives including their attitude towards them. They reward those that show them worth and punish those who neglect them. It is worse for those that offended them before death; they have to offer many sacrifices to appease them or have a miserable existence in the world. Such reactions from the spiritual, as underlined by Ezenweke and Nyathi, should not be perceived as wanton vengeance, but justice that deters even rulers from abuse of power. This section takes spirit possession as a means of attaining social justice in Chikwava's *Harare North*.

The nexus between spirit possession and justice is evident in the character Shingi in Chikwava's *Harare North* when he manifests strange traits possibly because he is possessed by *Mamhepo* or *Ngozi* spirits. The villagers contend that his father violated cultural norms by shedding human blood. Guilt devastates Shingi when he gets to know it, and isolates himself, which possibly is the reason why he flees to England. Keener emphasizes the role of the indigenous community in the definition of spirit possession, which is the case in Shingi's experience. Shingi's neighbours observe that his father returned from the war disturbed because he spilled [*sic*] 'wrong blood and those bad spirits is avenging now and affect and affecting whole family, taking Shingi's real mother away to punish Shingi for the sins of his father' (11). Having been a freedom fighter in Zimbabwe, Shingi's father sheds blood and as Nyathi expounds, the spirits 'join forces with the spirits of the specific spirit of the one who was killed to wreak havoc on the bloodline of the perpetrator.' Shingi's neighbours believe *ngozi* spirits pursue Shingi and his mother to vindicate those who lost lives in the father's hands. When Shingi's mother dies, the community blames the spirits, but there is nothing they can do because justice is served. They also single out Shingi's unstable life as a direct consequence of the spirits. To the community, Shingi is a pariah or cultural other, which for Cohen, exposes him to spirit possession.

Social scientists have noted odd behaviour among people in possessed states that demonstrates the presence of another spirit: trembling, sweating, groaning, speaking with strange voices, assumption of a different identity, giving commands and foretelling the future (Keener, 2010, p. 221). When a man tells Shingi that he is haunted, he reacts in manner that demonstrates spirit possession. The narrator says, '[sic] Shingi groan, spit and groan until them nails in his neck writhe under the skin like fat worms. . .Shingi have pick up half brick and hit him square on his face.' The act of violence arises from the spirits' fury to guide Shingi towards retribution to suffer for his father's abomination. While the clinical model narrows the act to a behavioral disturbance, the spirit possession trope finds it advantageous.

Perman (2011) avers that in the Ndau communities of South Zimbabwe, people are born with a variety of spirits (59), which suggests that Shingi got possessed at birth. He is abnormally vulnerable to job loss in Zimbabwe and England. He gets a job as a tea boy in Central African Pharmaceutical Society in Zimbabwe and for inexplicable reason spills tea on the company boss and other visitors. He is fired a week later (59). Shingi's disappointment reiterates Ezenweke's assertion with the ancestor's capacity to allot misfortunes to the living (4), and 'legitimately' punish those that violate norms.

The main claim by Shingi's community is that the spirits that haunted his father give him ill luck and he will not be stable in his life (59). This claim has is a replica of Ezenweke's observation that underscores the social justice from the spiritual world. In England, he loses jobs three times (73) and whenever he is working, he cannot settle down in marriage. He shies away from the opposite sex (84), and even after he loves Tsitsi, she steals his money and flees (165). Through this act, the *Ngozi* spirits succeed in bringing Shingi's bloodline to an end. It is strange in most African communities for a healthy man of Shingi's age to be unmarried. African societies hold marriage and a means to their continuity and young men have to marry on time to perpetuate the lineage. According to Mbiti, marriage is a milestone in which everyone should participate unless they are abnormal (176). Shingi's inability to have a marriage relationship allots him the 'under-human' or 'abnormal' stave because of the presence of spirits that are determined to destroy or stop his bloodline to avenge the blood that the father shed. Mbiti's use of the word 'curse' connotes possession by evil spirits in the African sense. Although African societies expect a young man to date and marry a virgin, Shingi's relationship with Tsitsi, a woman with child, does not last more than three days. The stealing of his cash reiterates Ezenweke's acknowledgement of the spirits' ability to allot misfortunes as a punitive measure (4). After Tsitsi's departure, Shingi's instability worsens. He joins a company of drug addicts and abuses drugs so much that he starts talking to himself. He also groans, grunts and belches (175), which Keener considers symptoms of a possessed person. After a weekend of carousal, he does not report to the work place and is sacked (185). He visits Marks and Spencers bins to search for food and a mad man stabs him to death (186). Besides living an unstable life, Shingi dies painfully to pay for his father's past wrongs. In Nyathi's view, the *Ngozi* have perfectly executed their mission (4).

As much as he maintains a judgmental attitude towards Shingi, the narrator is another character that has shed innocent blood and therefore in Zimbabwean context being the right candidate for spirit possession. In the story, he is recruited to serve the Green Bombers (the youth wing group of the ruling ZANU PF), just after leaving prison. Identifying the opposition as the political other, he says that '[t]he Green Bombers is there to smoke them enemies of the state out of them corrugated iron hovels and scatter them across the earth' (8). Because of his decision to murder, his life exhibits many symptoms of the *ngozi* or *mamhepo* spirits. According to Nyathi (2015), these spirits 'join forces with the spirits of the specific spirit of the one who was killed to wreak havoc on the blood group of the perpetrator' (6), and hence the narrator's inability to get married. While Shingi is making an attempt to propose to Tsitsi, the narrator simply exposes his sex addiction in the pretext of advising him. He takes a prostitute from Josephine street to demonstrate how Shingi should use other women to make Tsitsi jealous to win her over (160–161). However, this demonstrates his perverted view of women as sex objects rather than partners for marriage. After Tsitsi's act of theft and departure, he tells Shingi that what matters in relationship with women is having sex (165). The narrator does not view women as partners in a marriage relationship. In Mbiti's perspective, the narrator's failure to participate in marriage places him under the 'underhuman,' 'abnormal' and 'curse to the community' (176) in the African context. The term 'curse' is mostly used in Africa as a point to possession by evil spirits, but in this context the particular spirits, Ngozi pursue him to execute social justice.

The worst punishment that unsolicited spirit possession metes out is madness for the culprit to suffer for the consequences of their past evil. Mbiti writes, '[t]hen the spirits possess men, and are blamed for forms of illness like madness and epilepsy' (106), and this is what *ngozi* spirits achieve when they destroy the narrator's relationships to lead him to the path of insanity. He is hated by Shingi because of dependence on him; by Aleck for refusing to pay rent and Farayi for being hostile. Left alone in a racist world, his psyche collapses and he runs mad (Chikwava, 227). He starts conversing with voices (possibly *ngozi* spirits) while walking nude along the streets of Brixton.

Chigwedere observes that with no one to turn to because of rejection by colleagues and the white society in England, the narrator's psyche collapses (138). What Chigwadere does not refer to is the spiritual cause of the rejection that stems from the Ngozi.

Conclusion

From the foregoing discussion, it is evident that the othering conditions of migration to foreign nations do not just result to clinical madness as most scholars observe, but equally cause the fragmented selves that are quite disabling. This article is a comparative reading of the clinical and spirit possession model in the analysis of the fragmented selves. In the first section of this article, it is evident that the clinical model presents the fragmented self as not only detestable, but absolutely devastating to the person's health. MaiMusindo, for instance, was singled out a criminal because of the different selves in her consciousness. The victim is condemned as a patient and therefore a burden to society. The second part of the article is an exegesis of the fragmented self in the light of the spirit possession. It is insightful to note that spirit possession is beneficial to society by ensuring social justice for the weak and manifesting the work of seers, mediums and prophets. MaiMusindo also becomes a medium to guide and counsel immigrants in England. This study suggests that there is a difference between the clinical and spirit possession trope contrary to Gunning's suggestion that they are equal, whereas for the clinical model the fragmentation of the self refers to mental episodes that cause disturbance, the spirit possession model involves total substitution of the self with a foreign self to execute social justice or express important messages to the community.

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