



Entanglements: A Review of *Suffering for Territory: Race, place and power in Zimbabwe*

Moore, Donald S. 2005.

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We must continue to struggle and not rest until the land is our own, the property of the people, of our grandfathers, taken from us by those who crush the land with their stone step... with the strength of our heart and our hand held high, we raise, to be seen by all, that beautiful banner of the dignity and freedom of we who work the land (Subcommandante Marcos, 2000).

Zimbabwe's history seethes with struggles about land, struggles that, although the country has been independent for over twenty-five years, remain unresolved. The Land Apportionment Act of 1930, and its successor, the Land Tenure Act of 1969, allocated fixed 'Reserves' for Africans dispossessed of their fertile lands by the settlers. These were located in areas of poor soils, characterised by difficulty of access and overcrowding. Their former lands became 'European Areas'. 'Purchase Areas' were available to a few (richer) African commercial farmers to buy.

Drive out of Harare in any direction and you might think that time has stood still. The soil fertility patterns are immediately visible and clearly demarcated, red soil giving way to sand, adjacent, like the squares on a chess-board. In the sandy areas, where the trees are stunted and goats roam, there still live the majority of the people of Zimbabwe.

In the 1950s and 1960s, the African National Congress (ANC), precursor to the Zimbabwe African National Union – Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF), was formed mainly as a pressure group for land rights, against enforced cattle destocking and other restrictive measures. It was only after the formation of ZANU in 1963 that the demands incorporated total emancipation from settler rule.

In 1979, the Lancaster House Conference began, and almost ran aground time and time again, on the issue of land. Eventually, ZANU-PF was persuaded that land would be restored to its rightful owners on a ‘willing seller, willing buyer’ basis, and an unwritten promise was made that Britain, with the help of the United States, would pay for this. But, although some land was transferred after independence, most remained in the hands of the former Rhodesian settlers, their descendants and new ‘settlers’ who bought farms in the mid 1980s.

Suffering for Territory describes the ‘landscapes of dispossession’ still haunting Zimbabwe. It focuses on a single locality, Kairezi, in Zimbabwe’s eastern Highlands. It emphasises, in the author’s words, ‘the geographies of violence historically *sedimented* in landscapes of racialised dispossession’.

Kairezi has a special place in Zimbabwe’s history. It had a special chief, Rekayi Tangwena, who, in the 1960s and 1970s, defied Rhodesian rule by refusing to leave ancestral lands usurped by white conquest. He took his struggle to the courts, but was evicted. His people were forced to disperse, and many settled in Mozambique, just across the common border. In 1975 it was chief Tangwena who led Robert Mugabe and Edgar Tekere across the border into Mozambique, in order to prosecute the war of independence.

The story opens with an idyllic picture of the rural life of the Gumbo family. Squatters – because this family, though living within Kairezi settlement scheme, lives *outside* planned settlement sites. Already, from page one, the complexity of the issues of land and dispossession emerge.

To address the ‘entanglement’ of Kairezi’s land politics, the author uses

three concepts: governmentality, racialised rule and spatiality. His approach to the problem is anthropological rather than political, and this adds a new dimension to the plethora of literature on Zimbabwe's land question, as he observes the situation from another perspective. He sees 'government' from a Foucaultian perspective, as opposed to the value-laden 'governance' of political economy. Racialised rule incorporates both space and culture, as does spatiality and power. Foucault insists that space is fundamental in any exercise of power, but power does not reside in a unitary state (as a geographical entity), as the Kairezi study reveals. There are multiple 'entanglements', and power does not act in a vertical line from King to subaltern.

The author also uses the term 'landscape' to describe Kairezi's entangled social and cultural relations. Landscape describes how a particular location is seen – is Kairezi a white farm, a chiefdom, a rainmaking territory, a resettlement scheme? All these are sites of contestation.

The book is divided into three parts: Governing Space, Colonial Cartographies and Entangled Landscapes, with an epilogue written in 2004, twelve years after the author's 26 months of fieldwork among the Kairezians was completed. Part One is situated in the early 1990s (the period of the author's fieldwork), with chapters on the effects of the various Rhodesian Acts, and the livelihood practices of the Kairezians. Part Two discusses the pre-independence landscapes – the Tangwena chiefdom and Gairesi Ranch – and the power relations embodied therein. Part Three returns to post-colonial Kairezi, and the traditional practices of rainmaking, chiefly, and headmen's rule, and the interaction with the State.

Kairezi was one of the first resettlement schemes to be established after Zimbabwe's independence. This was partly due to the respect accorded Chief Rekayi Tangwena for his role in the liberation struggle. The scheme 'entangled' two chiefdoms, two former white farms, and surrounded the Nyafaru co-operative, established in the late 1950s by Guy Clutton Brock, one of several progressive socialist cooperatives that nurtured many who were later to become prominent in the liberation struggle.

The author describes in detail the debates within the community on the resettlement pattern imposed by government on the people of Kairezi. He is able to provide the background to various individuals and their points of view.

Moore took the trouble to learn the particular dialect of Shona that is spoken in the Eastern Districts, and thus, unlike many an anthropologist, he is able to interact with people without having to have an interpreter constantly present.

But in Zimbabwe, resettlement's rhetoric always exceeded its implementation. In chapter two, Moore describes some of the bureaucratic hindrances to the resettlement schemes of the early to mid-1980s. He also shows how closely the post-independence government followed colonial land-use prescriptions, even so far as endorsing the prescriptions of the notorious Land Husbandry Act. Tangwena settlement patterns were too 'disorderly'.

And the disagreements over space and the organisation of livelihoods were compounded by the Renamo incursions from Mozambique in the late 1980s and early 1990s. Chapter three opens with a description of a hazardous journey undertaken by the author's 'family', with whom he lived, to a dip tank near the border with the family's cattle. The narratives and lives intertwined in the book lend interest to the argument and immediacy to the problems encountered by its subjects. The dip tank provides a fine example of the struggles between villagers and bureaucrats over the use of resources in Kairezi. The dip tank the farmers were made to use was far away, and another nearby tank lay idle because the government and a group of white anglers feared pollution if that one were to be used.

Villagisation separated homes and fields, in direct opposition to traditional livelihood practices. Again, entanglement is the term used to describe the ways homesteads and agrarian methods were closely interrelated, and the understanding the villagers had of good soil management practices. Moore describes the various livelihood practices of the Kairezians, and why home and field should be enmeshed. Perhaps this is too idyllic a picture of traditional rural life and farming practices, but the author is making a point.

And the settlement is also entangled with Nyanga National Park. The Kairezians considered the resources of the Park, the wood, animals and fish to be theirs by right. This was a way of seeing the world, as the author explains, not merely an appropriation of resources. Park officials, of course, saw things differently. He also describes the concept of *kuchengetedza* (to take care of). One takes care of the soil, the water sources, just as one takes care of a fragile pot, or a child. So traditional practices are holistic and non-divisive, and if one 'poaches', one also cares for resources.

Part Two of the book returns to the history of racialised dispossession of the land, and chapter four describes the colonisation of the Kairezi.

Theoretically too, the book breaks new ground. Although the author takes a mostly Foucaultian perspective, he draws also on Marx. He suggests a convergence between Marx and Foucault that few have noted – their shared insistence on forms of subjection that work in freedom's name. Both stress the cultural politics of territory and subjection in their analyses of Europe's historical transformation. In both accounts, Empire echoed rather than shaped Eurocentric history. Marx states that serfs evicted from their ancestral lands were thus also freed from their feudal bonds, and were free to sell their labour to competing capitalists, and Foucault also finds examples of freedom within domination. The author's conceptualisation of 'entanglements' supports the views of these two theorists.

Throughout the book the author uses geography – space and landscape – to describe the ways in which the authorities – colonial and post-independence – attempted to impose their ways on the Kairezians. The situation of the Tangwena people was complicated by the fact that they were located on both sides of the arbitrarily drawn Rhodesia/Mozambique border. Thus the term 'colonial cartographies' signifies more than mere map-making, and 'violent geographies' are sources of various conflicts between and within the communities.

In chapter six, Moore maps the attempts to evict the Kairezians from their land, attempts which coincided with the start of the liberation struggle. Rekayi Tangwena was a member of ZANU. He took his fight for his land to the courts in Salisbury. Their houses were razed by bulldozers in 1969, and within a week, Chief Tangwena and his people were back, rebuilding them. His people lived in hiding rather than settling on the land allocated to them by the government. They were chased by police, bitten by dogs, but remained defiant. Some of those evicted alongside Rekayi Tangwena in 1969 found themselves once more named 'squatters' by the rulers of independent Zimbabwe.

Nyafaru cooperative, located in the midst of the Tangwena, was a source of great assistance to the villagers in hiding, and provided a school for the children. The conflict entangled the Rhodesian authorities with 'liberal' whites, who supported the Kairezians in their struggle to retain their land. Guy Clutton

Brock is the only white person buried at Zimbabwe's Heroes Acre. He actively supported the Tangwena people in their struggle against eviction and helped to publicise their plight to the wider world.

The author is scrupulous with regard to gender. He documents the active role played by women in the struggles of the Kairezians against eviction from Gaireza ranch. Women's subordination in patriarchal households, notes Moore, did not eclipse widespread recognition of their crucial role in suffering for territory during the era of evictions.

Part Three of the book is entitled 'entangled landscapes', describing the overlapping reigns of chiefs and rainmakers, emphasising the fact that there was no single sovereign ruling over any piece of territory – relations between people and place were important, rather than power.

The resettlement scheme treated the Kairezians like the colonial authorities had. It arbitrarily allocated sites and pegged them out, ignoring sacred sites, places where ancestral spirits lived. The way the people farmed mingled homes with farming activities, enabling practices such as manuring, and watering, and minimising the time wasted in travelling to and from distant fields, but the resettlement scheme insisted that fields be located away from homesteads. Traditionally, people selected where they wished to live and farm, and land was never allocated.

The author uses the term 'traction' to describe the Kairezians' assertions of land rights. The issue of rights to land was further complicated by the personality of Rekayi Tangwena's successor, acting chief Magwendere, who was generally disliked. Magwendere ignored women, and was generally dictatorial, unlike Rekayi. He was also seen as corrupt, and he relied on a clique of men around him, for his support, and he was not respected. During the war he had lived securely in the Honde Valley.

Then the ethnographer turns agent – he proposes establishing apple orchards in Nyamutsapa, as a way of strengthening the people's rights to live there. Apples take years to grow and produce fruit, thus planting an orchard is not the activity of a 'squatter'.

And, it turns out, the extent of Chief Tangwena's land has never been conclusively mapped. More entanglements.

Some twelve years after Moore ended his fieldwork among the Kairezians,

the Epilogue to this book describes how the issue of land dispossession was turned on its head, as *Mbuya* Tangwena protests against Didymus Mutasa, one of the co-founders of Nyafaru farm, and who was now trying to dispossess the Tangwena people from their land. A document written by *Mbuya* and the six Tangwena headmen sent a petition to a local newspaper (which did not publish it) and to the Minister of Lands, John Nkomo. In July 2004, police arrested several Tangwena headmen and elders, jailing the author's host, SaGumbo, and others on trumped-up charges. The Kairezians are still suffering for their territory.