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## Resurrecting Power of Memory in Displaced Selves through a Post Colonial Reading

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### ABSTRACT

This paper attempts to explore the representation of post colonial identity in Tendai Huchu's work *The Maestro, The Magistrate & The Mathematician*. Paper aims to state the integral relationship between memories and post colonial aspects such as diaspora, hybridity, mimicry and double consciousness through different characters in the novel. Their memories about home act as a catalyst in rejuvenating their souls. Researcher attempts to analyze the various psychological, sociological, cultural, challenges faced by immigrants in their host land. Under the light of the novel *The Maestro, The Magistrate & The Mathematician* the paper attempts to reveal the crises of Zimbabweans who are in search for complete self in their host land, Edinburgh. The paper attempts to offer a closer vision to the life of immigrants and their sentiments towards their homeland through their memories. Memories give life and colour to post colonial victims of modern era. By applying Homi.K.Bhaba's theory of Mimicry and Hybridity, the paper focuses upon the cultural changes an individual is forced to face in displaced dislocation of self. Post colonial themes such as identity crises, loss of belongingness, cultural shock, alienation, frustration are brought into light by explaining the life of immigrants in their antagonistic environment.

**Key words:** Post colonization, Memories, Diaspora, Hybridity, Mimicry, Loss of identity

"Nothing is ever lost to us as long as we remember it"

(L.M.Montgomery, *The Story Girl*)

All human beings hold memories within them. Every page of human life is a memory. One with no memories means no life with in him. Memories make our life worthy and enthusiastic. It makes us to understand how much we value things that were once belonged to us. It makes us nostalgic. The word nostalgia is closely associated with diaspora community. These people are covered with memories about their homeland. In simple terms diaspora community can be defined as the scattered population from their homeland- across the globe.

Diaspora people hold memories about their homeland. They share a longing for their identity, culture and traditions. In their host land, they become victims of alienation, identity crises, cultural shock etc. Memories about their homeland give them the strength to challenge their atrocities in their host land. They are living in a "mediated tension" between their homeland and host land. Diaspora community holds a collective memory about their homeland. The reason behind their dispersion may vary but their hearts shares the same feeling for their homeland. A diasporaic mind always feels pangs of alienation and isolation

because of racism, sexism, cultural difference, socio-economic exclusion etc in the host land.

Diaspora people will always be seen as an 'other' by the native people of the host nations. So in order to fight against the challenging situations in front of them they try to hold the feeling of oneness in them. They try to tie themselves with their artistic, linguistic, religious, cultural and political activities. This makes them feel secure and productive in their host land. It provides them with a feeling of oneness and belongingness. It makes them to feel more optimistic towards their future.

Post colonial literature is a meditation of literary writings that gives voice to the discussion of colonization. It involves writings which deal with colonization, decolonization and neo colonization. It raises the socio, political, cultural problems of the colonized. The various post colonial elements are diaspora, hybridity, racism, mimicry and double consciousness. Diaspora means a group of people who are dislocated from their home land to a new environment because of various reasons. Diaspora community wants to face many heart throbbing experiences and challenges in their host land. They become victims of identity crises, alienation, and cultural shock.

In the book, *Diaspora, Memory and Identity: A Search for Home*, it is stated that

"Diaspora refers to 'the doubled relationship or dual loyalty' that migrants, immigrants, exiles and refugees have to geography, "their connection to the space they currently occupy and their continuity involvement with " back home" (Lavie and Sweden burg 1996,14). Hence, those living in the diaspora has a double perceptives: they acknowledge an earlier existence elsewhere and have a critical relationship with the cultural politics of their present home- all embedded within the experience of displacement".

Tendai Huchu, a contemporary man of letters from Zimbabwe, in his second novel *The Maestro, The Magistrate & The Mathematician* tries to explain various aspects of post colonial theory. His writings are mainly focuses upon his African roots through his characters. His first novel *The Hairdresser of*

*Harare* was published in Zimbabwe in 2010 and had got critical appreciation to a larger extend. He was short listed for Canine Prize 2014. In his second novel *The Maestro, The Magistrate & The Mathematician*, he states about modern man's feeling of disillusionment, loss, alienation and identity crises as faced by Zimbabwean immigrants in Edinburgh, Scotland.

The main setting of the novel is in Edinburgh, Scotland. It is a novel of social observations of the people who are yearning for their identity in a foreign land. They struggle to make a place for themselves in an alien land. In the novel *The Maestro, The Magistrate & The Mathematician*, Tendai Huchu tries to depict the fact that how memories about home land in a diaspora mind can give a new life to a dying being. By focusing on diaspora studies as a meditation, memory analysis helps one to think about completeness he/she felt in past and the incompleteness he/ she feels in the present condition. It helps to get a correct picture of their current situation and helps to have a self analysis. Through the character Magistrate, Huchu is giving life to a true diaspora who misses his home land every moment he spends in his host land. The novel deals with the life of immigrants from Zimbabwe in Edinburgh. Novel depicts the social, political, cultural and psychological feed backs of their mind during their stay in Edinburgh. They belong to different strata of the society and posses different purposes in life. Even though their purposes are different they share a common feeling of uprootness in their Edinburgh life.

Magistrate lives in Edinburgh with his family including his wife Mai Chenai and his fifteen year old daughter Chenai. Magistrate is a well educated man but remains as an unemployed or doing menial jobs which do not suit his academic qualifications. His wife Mai Chenai works as a nurse and she is the bread giver of the family. She is the only earning member of the family. Magistrate wants to look after the house hold works of the family including cooking, cleaning, laundry etc. Every moment he spends in Edinburgh makes him miss his homeland. He lives in the nostalgic memories of his motherland. For the betterment of his family he still

lives in Edinburgh. The unstable income affects the marital harmony between Magistrate and his wife. This adds his alienation and depression. He finds himself in an inactive state. He feels like there is nothing that he can do to make his life worthy. He finds himself as an alien in a hostile land. He "imagined the past a simpler time, free from the over whelming complexity of modern life" ( Huchu 12).

He cannot identify himself with his fellow beings and their customs and manners. He finds himself as an 'other' among them. Magistrate survives in Edinburgh with the help of some beautiful memories of his home, friends, college days, Pan African sentimentality in him. At that time everything was possible but now there is complete despair in front of him. "Nothing remained but shadows, distant memories echoing in the dark crevices of the mind, conjured up now and again by a simple toast or some grand gesture. The age of possibility was over"(Huchu 4). He finds himself as a worthless being to his nation, family and to himself.

Magistrate emphasises the idea of homeland. He belongs to Shona tribe of Zimbabwe. His memories about his homeland are coloured with Shona culture and its traditions. Shona tribe is the largest indigenous tribe of Zimbabwe. The majority of the population of the country belongs to Shona tribe. The tribe has its own traditions and customs. It gives importance to agriculture than education. Farming is the major occupation and loves land more than anything. "Life kumusha revolved around the seasons, around agriculture" (Huchu 113). They can feel life in the soil. Magistrate's ancestors are farmers. It is only by chance, he break family tradition and "came of age at a time when the right education meant open doors and limitless opportunities" (Huchu 61). But his Edinburgh life as a result of his education meant nothing at present. He felt guilty inside and develops a farm in his back yard. To him farming and teaching are the two most prestigious professions. This so called sophisticated modern world is built upon the backs of farmers and teachers. No other profession can give satisfaction to him. The back pain from the hard toils of farming can be "massaged by the soothing voices of the family, banter, the gossip about neighbours and the

satisfaction that your labour was meaningful" (Huchu 69). To him "there was nothing like watching your seedlings grow, tending them until they matured" (Huchu 69). His memories about Shona culture awake the farmer in him. It gives a creative energy to him. There is a significant effect of memories in the development of Magistrate's character.

In case of diaspora studies, memory analysis has a great role to play in determining the psychological as well as the sociological state of post colonial diasporas. It helps to understand the inner turmoil such as frustration, alienation, fear, isolation, despair and desire in a diaspora mind. Magistrate feels great pain as well as grief whenever he tries to recall his past memories. He thinks "if only he had no memory, no sense of his old successful self, then it would be easier to accept his new circumstances"(Huchu 39). In Edinburgh he never gets the same feeling of space or expansiveness as he felt when he was back in home. "The sky did not feel as large. One could not look at the sky outside of its relationship with the land. The absence of space he felt was because everything here was owned, sub divide, surveyed, for sale, catalogued for use. On the other hand, the illusion of a large African sky was the product of the feeling that land was communal and shared the absence of boundaries"(Huchu 93). In Bindura, he can very well understand its boundaries and he has a mental map of the town. He is even familiar with the direction of sun set and sun rise. But in Edinburgh he is trapped by buildings from all sides. "His experience of the city was a series of micro environments, no different to that of a tribe man in the Amazon with a limited range"(Huchu 94). To him his days in Edinburgh are "Days rolled by in purposeless succession"(Huchu 11).

Magistrate is a man of nostalgia. His life runs through his recollections about his past days in Zimbabwe. "Back home we used to drink Seven Days, home brew chaiyo"(Huchu 4). He rose his glass and tossed "To the Motherland". He was free like a bird. His wings were not chained by any rules and regulations. But now he is "tied to geography and the rules of physics, his mental side free to wander far and wide, to traverse through the past, present

and future, free from limits expects the scope of his own imagination”(Huchu 13). He thinks about the court room, his colleagues, attendances etc. He misses his golf buddies, his family, the sun shine, wide open space in his home town. Even in the description of nature, Magistrate expresses his passionate love for his home town. He can feel “the clouds back home which came rain-laden, where you could taste the moisture in the air and know rain was coming, here it caught him unawares every time”(Huchu 91). The sun in Bindura is bright, magnificent and all powerfull rather than cold disc, distant, vague, powerless sun in Edinburgh. Through the character Magistrate, Huchu passes comments on western way of living and manners. In Scotland, dogs are living with humans inside the home. They consider it as the ideal relationship between man and dog. He shows the insanity of western society through the programme named “Dog Whisperer”. In Edinburgh houses are tightly packed doll like houses where as in Bindura there is low prospect, giant, chimney houses.

Throughout the novel the Magistrate is presented as an onlooker of Shona culture. Shona tradition gives importance to relationships. Chenai, Magistrate’s daughter is represented as the hybrid product of Shona tradition and Scottish life. Hybridity is a new identity created by the fusion of indigenous culture and host culture in an immigrant. They occupy a “third space” where the native as well as host identity gets maintained and over thrown. It makes them feel rootlessness. The phrase “third identity” used by Homi.K.Bhabha has the same meaning of “occupying imaginary spaces” exemplified by other Diaspora writers like Salman Rushdie, Jhumpa Lahiri, Hanif Kureishi. Though being a girl with Zimbabwean root, how much Chenai has been inclined towards the mesmerizing Scottish way of life proves this character to be the one who upholds the element of hybridity, in this novel. She is a cross between two races – one that is the root of her existence and the other that she tries to be one with. Chenai is a hybrid with no memories about her past. The absence of memories makes her a hybrid. She lacks the memory of her ancestors and thus she tries to identify her with the Scottish identity which her father disapproves. She herself

believes that she can attain completeness only in Scottish identity and is never ready to accept the fact that she is a hybrid of Shona and Scottish culture. Her absence of memory gives her an identity of a hybrid.

Magistrate can feel the influence of Scottish life in Chenai through her straight forward attitude towards life. He wants his daughter to be grown under Shona culture. He takes all efforts to make her aware of her traditions and customs. He makes Chenai as his companion in his farm land in the back yard. He always worries about her Scottish inflexion, her education system and more about her morality. Magistrate is completely shattered when he comes to know about Chenai’s pregnancy. He criticizes the Scottish manners that are visible in her attitude and ways of life. His work in old age home makes him think about Chenai’s attitude towards him in future. He is worried of Chenai’s too modern and westernised attitude. Here people are rich with money but poor in terms of time. He advises her about family relationships and their importance in life. When Chenai addresses Alfonso as ‘Pa’, Magistrate corrects her to ‘*Babamudiki* Alfonso’ means uncle Alfonso. He warns her to show courtesy to guests. “The Magistrate felt his daughter had been here too long. Already her speech had a slight Scottish inflexion, those rolling Rs, the coarse tongue, guttural Gs” (Huchu 5). The dreary thought of Chenai, losing her Zimbabwean cultural values makes Magistrate moans. To make her aware of her cultural tradition, Magistrate gives a detailed lecture of importance of family relationships in Shona culture. “*Baba* – Father. *Baba* – *mudiki* – Little – father. *Baba* – *mukuru* – Older – father. That was on the paternal side. The uncles on the maternal side all held the title *Sekuru*, equivalent to grandfather, indicating an elevated status. So many fine intricate woven in these blood ties that the young did not care to learn. In Shona culture, relationships were everything. The Magistrate held a resister, of relations, far and near, in his mind” (Huchu 5).

Mai Chenai, wife of Magistrate is a character who exhibits the traits of Mimicry in her behavioural attitude. Mimicry is one of the recurrent post colonial aspects which represent the imitating behaviour of suppressed minds to be a part of so

called dominant traits in society. This trait of behaviour is usually focused in exiles who want to be a part of their host nation. Homi.K.Bhaba states that mimicry is a result of colonization. He argues that mimicry 'doesn't merely "rupture" the discourse, but becomes transformed into an uncertainty which fixed the colonial subject as a "partial" presence'.(Huddart 2005: 60-61)

[...] 'mimicry is at once resemblance and menace'[...] This means that in a way the colonizer 'spooks himself': he fantasizes endless monstrous stereotypes that can only lead to anxiety rather than the desired certainty.( Huddart 2005:61)

Mimicry as a result of colonization makes the colonized sense incompleteness, identity crises and double consciousness. In the novel, Mai Chenai exhibits mimicry in her character. She tries to imitate various traits of the colonizer-For example the way of addressing people using their first name. She addresses 'Alfonso Pfukuto' as 'Alfonso' as so casual in their conversation. Even though she does not seem to be conscious about her behavioural changes, Magistrate notices it and marks it as her inclination towards western manners which is the result of individualistic culture. Her character exhibits individualistic culture of western world. She shows double consciousness in her attitude. She is aware of her state of mind with two identities, her traditional self, a typical Zimbabwean who values every tradition and customs and the self she tries to assume in Edinburgh community.

In case of Mai Chenai too memories play a role even though consciously she is not making any reference to her past life. But her unconscious mind always lives in the nostalgia of her past memories. Her post colonial circumstances force her to suppress her memories of her ancestry and to indulge in practical living. In order to take care of a family with single income, she forces her mind to live in present and to get adapted to the reality in front of her. This causes frustration and depression in her. She becomes tough and rude to Magistrate not because she does not love him but because of the frustration she is passing through. She wants to hold the responsibility of the family in an alien land

which is new to her too. But as the Magistrate's character gets rejuvenated, she too gets a new life. Once again they start a new love life with colours. Memories make human life colourful. It may fade but never dies.

"Memory is the diary that we all carry about with us"

(Oscar wilde, *The Importance of Being Earnest* 27)

Magistrate's mind is a diary of memories about his happy life in Zimbabwe. He felt completeness of self in his home land. In Edinburgh he has lost his self and it keeps him wandering in the quest for completeness. His mind is in confusion whether he forgets his nation or his nation forgets him. He felt guilty for his selfish mind set. It was because of his materialistic mind; he leaves his country and comes to Edinburgh. Now he regrets for his wrong decision. He understands the value of his nation and culture. He remembers his old successful self in Bindura and longs for it. In Bindura he was very successful, greatly respected. His memories about his old successful self inspire him to find a new job in Edinburgh. But now he struggles to get a job and finally gets a job as a helping aid. This new job helps to him understand his wife Mai Chenai. He recalls his happy moments with Mai Chenai and tries to bring back the same happiness they felt before. "They'd begun waking one another in the middle of the day to satisfy their lawful, lustful longing. It had been years since they had been this passionate and had felt this longing. Then they had been young; now those same intense feelings returned as if by magic" (Huchu 194). They start to love each other again. "All the troubles of the past seemed to wash away, swept away by love and warmth" (Huchu 200) they shared each other. It makes both of them feel completeness of their existence in Edinburgh. Mai Chenai gets back her old vibrant cheerful husband and it makes her more optimistic and passionate. She realizes the meaning of life. Once again she finds colour in her life.

Magistrate acts as a critic of western culture throughout the novel. "Western business of calling people by their first name riled him"(Huchu 10). He reasoned it was " the consequences of an individualistic culture, as through everyone had

simply spring up from nowhere...The Shona way, the right way, stressed the nature of the relationship. The individual was the product of a community and had to be placed in relation to the next man. It was the glue that held them together, giving each value”(Huchu 11). Shona tribe has a great inclination towards arts. They are good artists who value art with high admiration. In the novel Magistrate has been greatly influenced by music. Music is the only companion that stands with him to face all his discomforts in Edinburgh. Chipanga’s song ‘*Makomborero*’ makes Magistrate to feel absurdity of his existence in Edinburgh. Music comforts him in his personal as well as public life. In personal life, it helps him to adjust with marital disharmony by providing a sense of hope for a new life. The indifference he experiences as a human in Edinburgh is also cured by the therapeutic effect of music. By using music as a relief aid, Magistrate travels to the realms of memories regarding his homeland. Music forms memories in Magistrate. He is often transported back to golden past days when he listens to the familiar tones. He feels pity for Chenai’s memories which are formed by soulless, commercial music of modern life. Magistrate is greatly influenced by the singer Munhumumwe and the four brother’s performance at Kimberly Reef. He becomes nostalgic about the time he had spent with his workmates. It makes him happy. At that time he did not rate the group with great credits but now he can experiences the artistic beauty in their music. The song ‘*Ndibvumbamireiwo*’ is the Magistrate’s favourite song and he considers it as the work of beauty and compassion. He feels it as equivalent to St.Francis Prayer. Munhumumwe has captured something that is essential for human spirit.

These songs have great social importance. These songs represent the shades of his nation which help him to find out a true patriot in him. Music helps to raise a national consciousness in him. These songs speak about the social injustice and cruelties against women in the male dominated society in Zimbabwe. “The music on his walkman provided his soundtrack to the city. The right song at the right time moment could fix an image, an emotion, a memory in his mind for the rest of his days. He felt a flutter in his heart, a familiar feeling

from long ago. He was failing in love again, feeling in love with the city” (Huchu 91). Music was the only comfort of Magistrate to forget about his depressed life in Edinburgh. Other great musician that influenced Magistrate was Paul Matavire, a blind musician who wears dark glasses on stage. He was a court jester of popular music. The music acts as a shield from outside chaos. By portraying the character of Magistrate, Huchu is underlying the fact that “Africans are a musical people. Without a bit of music they get confused” (Huchu 127). Magistrate’s Diaspora feeling has got a bit lightens up by his inclination towards music. His mind gets resurrected by the effects of music in him. It gives him a new hope in life. Music brings out the real human being in him.

In Edinburgh, Magistrate felt his “days rolled by in purposeless succession” (Huchu 11). He does not feel any life in his existence. He is a highly educated man but remains unemployed. He recalls his past days in Bindura with his colleagues, court room, working as a man of great importance and respect. But now these memories hurt him. His existence as an unemployed being in Edinburgh kills him from inside. This creates marital disharmony in Magistrate and his wife’s life. Mai chenai is the only bread giver in the family and it is very difficult to live in Edinburgh with a single income. As a man, he feels ashamed of himself. “The shame sat somewhere in his gut, looping round his intestine, a dull ache that was with him every minute of every day” (Huchu 12). In Shona culture, men are the head of the family and the bread giver. It is his duty to put order in the family. Kitchen is the domine of women. But here he is unable to perform his duty as the head of the family and it even creates a wide distance between his wife and him. As time passes they started avoiding each other. Even though they share a room, inside that room they live as two complete strangers. They are continuing their marital relationship only for the sake of Chenai. As the frustration keeps raising, Magistrate cannot cop up and finally decides to engage in any job by abandoning his self- made ego regarding his high qualification.

In Edinburgh, immigrants have to face great difficulties to find a suitable job which suits their

academic qualification. Westerners follow a system called "Voluntary Slavery". Natives consider immigrant exiles as uncivilized and not eligible for professional jobs. "They think we come from the jungles. They think we have kangaroo courts. They will say, 'How can you practice here when you couldn't even preserve the rule of law in your own country?'" (Huchu 41). His job as a helping aid in a nursing home helps him to understand the miserable condition of human beings who are ostracized by the society as well as their family. He identifies his existence with them. Now he understands the frustration and difficulties of Mai Chenai. Now he understands her very well and once again they fell in love with each other. Magistrate recalls his days as a suitor of Mai Chenai and such thoughts add a new colour to their new life in Edinburgh. Now he finds himself more enthusiastic towards life and ready to engage in more lively activities. He wants to bring the old self inside him by actively engaging in political activities in Edinburgh. At first he becomes a bit resistant but the national consciousness brings life in him. Zimbabwe is under the supervision of Robert Mugabe and Zanu PF. They are destroying the future of Zimbabwe. As a protest against Mugabe's rule in Zimbabwe, a union named 'MDC' is formed. Magistrate and his friend Alfonso become active members of MDC. Social evils like corruption, unemployment, inflation of money, diseases etc are worsening the bright future of Zimbabwe. To bring an order, Magistrate plans various agendas and proposals as a true patriot of his country. It will help to bridge the gap between the party and the people of Zimbabwe. During high council meeting of MDC in London, Magistrate presents his agendas and proposals before the committee and those proposals win approval. He plays the role of an authority with official designation under MDC for taking care of different Diasporas across the globe. He has a big role to play and once again find the old self in him. Here too his past memories about his love life, working days and the pathetic condition of his home country awaken the true patriot in Magistrate's mind and make him determined to help his country men in their disguise.

He waits for a chance so that men like him might be called back once more to rebuilt the nation. "He kept his hope alive in his heart, a warm ember cocooned by despair, weighed down with each report that things were getting worst" (Huchu 36). Western broadcast industry is using Zimbabwean stories as a mere filler to represent African diaspora for comic relief. They use these stories for commercial benefits and pretending to be the saviours of Africa.

Magistrate is always so nostalgic and strongly feels for his homeland, Zimbabwe. People like him always have to face identity crises in their host land. They face difficulty to adapt to their new circumstances. In order to withstand in their life they will take their diaspora existence as a challenge and strive for it. Even though diasporaic experience causes great mental crises in case of migrants, it can be viewed from an optimistic side too. It helps the immigrants to have a passion for their homeland.

The constructive power of memory can be experienced throughout the novel by analysing the increasing degree of patriotism in Magistrate's mind. In the beginning of the novel Magistrate is represented as a common immigrant from Zimbabwe who is faces difficulties to survive in the harsh environment in Edinburgh. As the novel progresses his character becomes too deep and immense in reader's mind through his ideas about the development of the country as a true African. He starts actively working for the rights of Africans in Edinburgh as well as other African diasporas across the globe. Diaspora experience has made him a fully responsible, vibrant African citizen. Mai Chenai's character gets resurrected from a state of selfless existence by the development of Magistrate's character. Memories help her to bring out colours in life. Memories remind her of the purpose of human life. The mere existence does not make anyone living. Our existence is marked by the happy moments which make us living. Her memories taught her very important lessons of life. In case of Magistrate and Mai Chenai, memories act as a controlling force in life. They do not grope in darkness anymore because the memories of their past life act as a guiding light to their future. Their memories bring back the real spirit of love in them.

In the novel *The Maestro, The Magistrate & The Mathematician*, Tendai Huchu tries to depict the life of an immigrant in host country from socio-political, cultural and psychological perspective. Through the characters Magistrate and Mai Chenai, Huchu explains the positive effects of the creative energy obtained from memories. The novel is a powerful exploration of the post colonial concepts like diaspora, loss of identity; hybridity, mimicry and double consciousness. These aspects are explored through a detailed analysis of the immigrant experience of Zimbabwean diaspora. The mind of a diaspora can be rejuvenated by his memories about homeland. Memories can act as a catalyst for self development and betterment of human mind. The process of recollection can make memories alive in a diaspora. Huchu conducts a psychological study of the characters to exhibit the resurrecting power of memories in diaspora communities.

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