Beyond Hope for a Brighter Future: Radical Love and Solidarity in NoViolet Bulawayo's *Glory*

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Abstract: This article draws on affect studies and the theory of solidarity to examine the emergence of a grassroots revolution in NoViolet Bulawayo's *Glory* (2022). While the novel engages with existing scholarship on the affective politics of solidarity, it also adds a critical dimension to these discussions by exploring the nuanced role of various emotions in fostering coalition-building for resistance in a fictionalised post-2017 Zimbabwe. Contrary to Sally Scholtz's assertion about the primacy of hope in political solidarity, *Glory* suggests that hope alone is insufficient to unify and mobilise the novel's characters. They remain paralysed by their fear of the authorities despite their simultaneous frustration and anger about their sociopolitical circumstances. In this sense, the narrative also challenges the traditional dichotomy of hope and fear as opposing forces, particularly through its depiction of the emotional state Katie Stockdale calls "fearful hope" (25). The novel illustrates how intense feelings of injustice, specifically protagonist Destiny's bitterness, can mobilise a profoundly divided populace into collective defiance, despite the reputation of this emotion for being destructive. The movement towards rebellion, which also encompasses grief and remembrance, forges solidarity across deep social and ethnic divides, thus evoking the traditional Black feminist approach to coalition politics. Ultimately, *Glory* advances radical love as an essential component of this intersectional solidarity and emphasises love's transformative potential as both a means of embracing difference in the pursuit of liberation and a framework for imagining more just futures. By portraying this emotional evolution, the novel deepens our understanding of the affective and ethical foundations necessary for solidarity and provides innovative insights into the intricate relationships between fear and hope, anger and revolution, and love and solidarity in contemporary postcolonial contexts of oppression.

Keywords: NoViolet Bulawayo, *Glory*, hope, radical love, solidarity

I. Introduction

Published in 2022, *Glory*, the second novel by award-winning Zimbabwean author NoViolet Bulawayo, portrays the political and emotional turmoil surrounding the fall of the Robert Mugabe regime in November 2017 in Zimbabwe. Inspired by George Orwell's *Animal Farm*,[1] this political satire recounts the sufferings, frustrations, hopes, and efforts of a nation of anthropomorphic animals on their path to liberation from decades of oppressive leadership. The fall of the Old Horse in a military coup, followed by the installation of another horse called Tuvius as the new "Father of the Nation" (1), mirrors Zimbabwe's recent political transition to Emmerson

Mnangagwa's administration, in which the brief optimism that the 2017 coup engendered quickly dissolved into disillusionment and anger over continued corruption, repression, and economic hardship.[2] More specifically, *Glory* covers the time stretching from Mugabe's removal as president of Zimbabwe and leader of the still-ruling political party ZANU–PF (Zimbabwe African National Union - Patriotic Front) to his death in 2019.[3] However, through "flashbacks and recurring historical intertexts" (Mavengano, "The Polemics of Zimbabwean Nationalism" 18), the novel also reaches beyond this timeframe, thereby evoking the nation's broader historical traumas, particularly through its depiction of the protagonist's return to Jidada, a fictionalised version of Zimbabwe, after years of exile. The narrative focuses on how, through their individual acts of defiance, a young goat named Destiny and her mother, Simiso, inspire others to unite and ultimately rebel against their government's ongoing abuse of power, despite the prevailing ethnic tensions that have long divided them.

Drawing on the theory of solidarity and affect studies, this article examines *Glory*'s representation of a grassroots revolution and illustrates how the text not only engages with established scholarship on the emotional dimensions of political solidarity, which I discuss below, but also builds on this work by challenging its predominant focus on Western contexts. I argue that *Glory* explores the nuanced roles of various emotions in fostering coalition-building for resistance within a contemporary postcolonial setting marked by the prolonged suppression of rights. Hence, I start my analysis by examining the main reasons for Jidadans' frustration at the beginning of the novel. Specifically, I contextualise, both historically and politically, the characters' subjugation and passivity, with particular attention paid to the portrayal of a politics of violent repression. I then shift my focus to explore Jidadans' "fearful hope" (Stockdale 25) for liberation in the aftermath of the coup, an emotional state that complicates the traditional conception of fear and hope as opposing forces, and highlight their complex interplay in oppressive contexts. Katie Stockdale's work on hope under oppression, particularly regarding the loss of hope, is a fundamental theoretical reference as I consider Jidadans' emotional transition to intense anger at

their unjust treatment and the broken promises they experience following the presidential elections. I explore the novel's portrayal of hope and anger, both of which prove insufficient for stimulating collective action in Jidada and thus problematise Sally Scholz's belief in the unique potential of shared hope to build political solidarity, as well as traditional Black feminist approaches that view rage as a catalyst for empowerment and resistance. Furthermore, I focus on Destiny's bitterness, which emerges as a critical trigger for both individual and group mobilisation in the novel, and ultimately forges solidarity across deep social and ethnic divides. I contend that the narrative gradually but closely aligns with Black feminist and decolonial perspectives on coalition politics, particularly as Jidadans' eventual unity highlights radical love as an essential component of effective transformative solidarity.

II. Solidarity and African Writing: Political, Emotional, and Creative Dimensions

The notion of solidarity has historically been of interest to many social scientists and philosophers, and has resulted in a broad body of literature that distinguishes between different types of solidarity and examines its various dimensions, such as the political (for example, the work of Scholz or David Featherstone), the emotional (for instance, the work of Clare Hemmings or Carolyn Pedwell) and the creative (for example, the work of Rubén Gaztambide-Fernández or Paola Prieto López).[4] However, as Prieto López notes, referencing Kurt Bayertz's, Max Pensky's, and Featherstone's critical reflections on the theory of solidarity, there is a growing consensus that the term remains conceptually ambiguous and lacks a solid theoretical framework (29). Prieto López observes that "the word solidarity [has been and still is] mobilised in hugely diverse contexts" and "contradictory ways," usually "as part of political speeches in response to natural catastrophes" and "terrorist attacks," among other contemporary challenges (28). Furthermore, she points to "the rise of [transnational] social movements in the name of solidarity," such as the Black Lives Matter movement, as a major reason for the recent resurgence of interest in the

concept and the realisation that there remains a need for a more comprehensive and nuanced understanding of solidarity (28).

For her part, Robin Zheng, who identifies the frequent use of the term during the COVID-19 pandemic as a key factor in the increasing academic focus on solidarity, notes that although it has been "variously conceived of as a feeling, sentiment, or disposition; a type of action; a relationship; or a scheme of social arrangements," much of the academic discussion has defined solidarity through the idea of "unity" (893). Prieto López adds that the debate over the meaning of solidarity has primarily focused on "its political dimension and its potential to achieve global justice" (32)—that is, it has revolved around what Scholz calls "political solidarity," which she defines as "a moral relation of a social movement that unites individuals because of their shared commitment to a cause or goal" (72), particularly in confronting "injustice, oppression, tyranny, or social vulnerability" (79). Featherstone offers a similar definition of political solidarity but adds that it is also "a practice that can be forged 'from below'" (5), or, in other words, by the oppressed and marginalised. Through his concept of "solidarity from below," he dismantles the customary conception of solidarity as something that only those in privileged positions "'have' in the form of supporting disadvantaged groups" (Ross, Li, and Call-Cummings 4). Instead, he emphasises that solidarity can emerge from marginalised communities themselves as an active practice of collective engagement. Moreover, Featherstone challenges the conventional idea of solidarity as primarily based on "likeness"; he argues that this perspective "obscures the importance of solidarities in constructing relations between places, activists [and] diverse social groups" (5). He contends that such a narrow view contributes to "the cementation of existing identities and power relations" (5). Taken together, these discussions underscore that solidarity is not a fixed attribute or a one-way form of support, but a dynamic and relational practice that relies on the agency of all participants in achieving meaningful social and political change.

When considering solidarity as a social form and thinking about the phenomenon of group solidarity, texts such as Audre Lorde's *Sister Outsider*, bell hooks' *Feminist Theory* and "Sisterhood,"

and Chandra Talpade Mohanty's "Under Western Eyes" and *Feminism Without Borders* are particularly important, as is the work of other Black feminist scholars who criticise the assumed solidarity of sisterhood for masking the oppressive racial, class, and heterosexual hierarchies that subjugate certain women while privileging others. Instead, they advocate for coalitional solidarities across differences and borders or, as Angela Davis puts it, an "intersectionality of struggles" for social and political justice (147). This approach, which I discuss below, acknowledges the distinct histories and oppressions of women and other marginalised groups and does not enforce a false notion of shared oppression.

Drawing our attention to the affective side of solidarity, Prieto López emphasises its fundamental role in building transnational activist connections and simultaneously points to the passivity that too often accompanies solidarity when it is mobilised by privileged groups. In this sense, she stresses the importance of distinguishing between "solidarity" and "empathy" (28), terms that are frequently used interchangeably. Although she agrees with Pedwell that empathy can be a useful lens through which to explore and understand solidarity relations, Prieto López argues that empathy alone, without "a process of self-reflection" (38), is insufficient to drive the social change that true acts of solidarity intend to achieve. To make this point, she draws on Hemming's concept of "affective solidarity," which prioritizes the crucial role of emotions like rage and frustration, rather than empathy, in building "a sustainable feminist politics of transformation" (Hemmings 148).

For Hemmings, "the experience of discomfort" (158) or "affective dissonance" (148) leads first to individual reflection, then to "the desire for transformation" (158), and finally to "collective engagement" and action (152). Prieto López applies this perspective to analyse contemporary theatre by Black Afrodiasporic female playwrights in the United Kingdom as an "effective cultural instrument" for generating "transformative solidarit[ies]" (Prieto López 40). Her study shows how this theatre can "[activate] the spectators' responsibility and solidarity" towards the injustices it represents (92) and establish "alternative modes of relationality" or "connection with the *Other* that

may result in political solidarity" (144; emphasis in original). Prieto López thus emphasises "the creative and political role" of contemporary female-authored Afrodiasporic theatre (145)—specifically, its ability to "reach audiences affectively in a way that could lead to broader [transformative] action" (41). Her notion of "creative diasporic solidarity," drawn from Gaztambide-Fernández's decolonial and pedagogical theory of solidarity, therefore extends beyond merely examining "how the playwrights engage with problems and create solidarity networks across different times and geographical locations" (Prieto López 41). Instead, it gives an account of the political alliances to which their works can give rise through the discomfort they provoke in their audiences (41). In particular, Prieto López mentions "anger" and "indignation" (145); in so doing, she revalues Hemming's theory and, more specifically, the work of Black feminist theorists such as Lorde's *Sister Outsider* and hooks' *Killing Rage* that consider the role of rage in political and social mobilisations against systemic racism, gender inequality, and economic injustice.

Sule Emmanuel Egya, Margaret N. Agu, and Safiyya Adam argue that African writing is often characterised by a "protest aesthetics" (59) that has the "extra-artistic goal of seeking to bring about change" (60). They emphasise the longstanding efforts of African authors to dismantle the colonial discourse of Otherness that continues to dehumanise African people, as well as the related goal of attaining "epistemological justice" (59). While twenty-first-century Afrodiasporic writing is sometimes criticised for its alleged neglect of African national issues due to its focus on migratory existence in the West (Hodapp 3) and "the affective and intimate scale of the individual" (Krishnan 119), the reality is that it continues to engage deeply with themes of "oppressive leadership" and the resulting "burdens of exploitation, discrimination and dehumanization" that impact many Africans (Odari and Chesaina 131). At the very least, such representations contextualise the protagonist's or their parents' emigration from Africa to the West.

Zimbabwean writing, including Bulawayo's debut novel *We Need New Names* as well as her second novel *Glory*,[5] is no exception to this wider African tradition of protest aesthetics. It similarly

addresses, among other topics, the poverty, hunger, and illnesses such as AIDS that result from the government's malpractice (Alden). Astrid Rasch, Minna Johanna Niemi, and Jocelyn Alexander contend that Zimbabwean authors "have played a key role in speaking truth to power" (735), though they often "[steer] clear of direct engagement with the politics of the country" (Alden) so as to avoid censorship and other forms of repression, including state violence (Rasch, Niemi, and Alexander 736). Instead, many authors "[turn] to alternative forms to the dominant mode of realism[,] . . . most notably the use of satirical and post-realist modes" (Alden). As I discuss below, *Glory* continues this tradition. Nonetheless, we must also be aware of Bulawayo's prominent position as a renowned Afrodiasporic author based in the United States and published by Western publishing houses, since this positionality not only shapes the global visibility and reception of her work but also distinguishes her situation from that of writers within Zimbabwe, who face the immediate risks of censorship and repression when addressing similar themes.

Egya and his co-authors' previously mentioned observation on African writing resonates with broader discussions about the capacity of these works to mobilise action for social justice, such as Bill Ashcroft's extensive study of the utopian vision of African literature. Andrew van der Vlies also emphasises the crucial role of South African writing in addressing social issues and reflecting on historical injustices while simultaneously fostering hope and inspiring societal reform. By examining the interplay between trauma and resilience in South African writing, van der Vlies illustrates how narratives of hope empower readers to envision a more just future and reinforces the notion that literature can act as a catalyst for change in a post-apartheid society.

While Simon Gikandi identifies a utopian vision as a distinctive feature of the work of the first generation of African authors (Okuyade 9), Ashcroft maintains that this utopianism, which he suggests is "deeply embedded in African anti-colonial rhetoric" ("Remembering the Future" 703), is a fundamental characteristic of African literature as a whole. His argument, which draws on Ernst Bloch's theory of hope and thus problematises the negative conception of "utopia," is that this utopian vision "transforms the rhetoric of resistance into a positive anticipation of future

freedom," thereby transcending the "expectations that quickly died out under the weight of post-independence reality" (703). Furthermore, influenced by Paul Ricoeur's work on ideology and utopia, Ashcroft contends that the hope generated by this vision is not simply "wishful thinking" but a "willed action" ("African Futures" 104) towards liberation (106). For Ashcroft, "art and literature offer a vision of possibility" ("Visions of the Not-yet" 7) and in so doing encourage change through both the critiques they articulate and the hope they inspire.

Ashcroft highlights the connection between a literary discourse of resistance, a sense of hope, and deliberate action towards emancipation, and this connection, in turn, resonates with theories of political solidarity that emphasise the essential role of collective hope in building transformative social movements. I refer specifically to Scholz's assertion that "hope is necessary for political solidarity" and, in fact, is "the only moral feeling that . . . is necessary" for the building up of this type of solidarity (79). Scholz suggests that hope entails a belief that "the future can be better than the present" and "motivates activity within solidarity because it fosters the desire for the final ends or goals . . . of political solidarity" (82). However, in *Hope Under Oppression*, Stockdale complicates Scholz's argument by suggesting that while "hope can [certainly] motivate people to come together in solidarity against injustice . . . it is also the case that the beginnings of a solidarity movement are evidence . . . of its loss or absence" (168), especially in situations of oppression in which people constantly face threats and injustice. Stockdale thus stresses the importance of considering the context in which solidarity movements arise and argues that hope must not be viewed "in isolation, abstracted away from the complex emotional lives of people living [under oppression]" (81). Hope, Stockdale asserts, should be understood "as an attitude that interacts with other mental states to influence how people experience and engage with the world" (9).

As I write above, Bulawayo's *Glory* serves as a compelling case study for exploring the theoretical debates surrounding the emotional dynamics of political solidarity. The following sections will illustrate how the novel investigates the interplay between hope and other emotions, such as fear and anger, in the pursuit of change in a contemporary postcolonial context. Via its

representation of grassroots solidarity, *Glory* deepens our understanding of hope as not just an abstract ideal but an integral component of the broader emotional and social fabric of resistance. The novel ultimately offers a nuanced perspective on the role of hope in solidarity and demonstrates how complex emotional realities shape collective action in oppressive situations.

III. Jidadans Hoping against Hope

Glory opens with the Independence Day celebrations in Jidada. The scene highlights the citizens' increasing irritation and annoyance as they await the Father of the Nation's long-delayed arrival in Jidada Square to deliver his annual speech:

> When at last the Father of the Nation arrived . . . the citizens . . . had had it with waiting; they could've razed the whole of Jidada with their frustration alone, that is, if Jidada had been any other place. But the land of farm animals wasn't any other place[,] . . . and just remembering this simple fact was enough to make most of the animals keep their feelings inside like intestines. (Bulawayo 1)

From the outset, the novel showcases a politics of repression that turns Jidadans into submissive and voiceless individuals despite their dissatisfaction with the government, which becomes increasingly evident as the narrative describes the Old Horse's transition over "four solid decades" (1) from a respected liberation leader to a dictator: "[T]he Father of the Nation may indeed have been celebrated, hailed, for his Liberation War credentials" (37), but "he simply didn't have the capacity for such a task as leader. . . . [He had] no ethics, no principles, no sense of justice, no compassion, no discipline, no honesty, no idea of what real service to the nation looked like" (38). These words, which allude to Mugabe's prolonged presidency and "the tragic direction" in which he led Zimbabwe after his struggle against colonial rule (Sevenzo), provide insight into the deeper roots of Jidadans' frustration in the longer quote above. Their feelings are the result of a profound and longstanding disillusionment with their leader. Although the scene opens with an allusion to the potential of social frustration, a type of "affective dissonance" (Hemmings 157), to transform

into revolutionary action, Jidadans end up containing their feelings of unrest "inside like intestines."

Jidadans are marked not only by dissatisfaction but, more significantly, by a palpable fear of state violence. This fear, as stated in the passage above, makes Jidada not just any place but a country where frustration, to use Hemmings' words, "cannot guarantee . . . politicisation or even a resistant mode" (157). The oppressive and violent nature of the authorities is made evident in the novel's third paragraph, which recounts the attempt by some citizens, weary from waiting, to leave Jidada Square. Their escape is thwarted when they encounter "the Jidada Defenders[,] . . . appropriately armed with batons, ropes, clubs, tear-gas canisters, shields, guns," who force them to "promptly turn around and retrace their steps, miserable tails between their legs" (Bulawayo 2). The narrative again highlights the masses' submissive attitude, notably with the idiom "with one's tail between one's legs," which conveys the humiliation and shame of defeat ("with your tail between your legs", Collins Dictionary). This expression adds complexity to the emotional landscape portrayed, especially since such feelings of shame usually lead to anger at being treated unfairly and "hope for something else" (Stambe and Parsell 3). As I discuss below, this emotional transition unfolds gradually as the plot develops.

Against this backdrop of social frustration and fear, the novel's action takes off with a pack of dogs determined to protect the current regime; a vice president, also a horse, who schemes to take over; and an opposition convinced that overthrowing the government will bring a brighter future. The chapter "Even Monkeys Fall from Trees," which fictionalises the 2017 Zimbabwean coup, stresses the length of time that Jidadans have been hoping for a change in their sociopolitical environment: "[W]e'd always imagined it'd happen" (Bulawayo 70). William Lynch emphasised long ago that hope is inherently tied to imagination, since "one has to imagine what has not yet come to pass but still is possible, and without wishing there is no sense of the possible" (22). However, *Glory* suggests that imagination may be constrained by sociopolitical limitations, and more specifically that people may struggle to imagine alternative futures due to systemic

oppression, yet they still hold out hope for a better tomorrow. As the narrative progresses, Jidadans' hope is portrayed more concretely as a form of cautious optimism, particularly as they anticipate the upcoming elections: "Credible elections, held the sweetness in their mouths, savored it, and when they finally reluctantly swallowed it, felt it fill their stomachs with the tangible hope of the first-ever truly free Jidada . . . in which it was possible to win the presidency and rule" (Bulawayo 132).

Mugabe's coerced resignation on 21 November 2017, as Oliver Nyambi, Tendai Mangena, and Gibson Ncube explain, was prompted by the imminent threat of a "disgraceful impeachment vote" orchestrated by his own party, as well as mounting pressure from the military (1). The last quoted lines from *Glory* in the previous paragraph allude to the days before Mnangagwa's victory in the 2018 elections and, more broadly, to Zimbabwe's electoral history, which Bekezela Gumbo describes as a system of "competitive authoritarianism" in which elections are routinely manipulated and, therefore, "public trust and confidence in the system" wears down over time. Indeed, while the novel suggests that the coup injects new hope into the citizens' outlook for a democratic transition, their initial reluctance to fully embrace hope reflects their scepticism about whether the upcoming elections will break the pattern of manipulated outcomes. *Glory* thus explores Stockdale's concept of "fearful hope," a state of "emotional ambivalence" that emerges systematically under oppression, both because "members of oppressed groups face persistent threats to their safety and wellbeing" while they hope for something to change, and because "oppression makes more ubiquitous the formation of . . . hopes that are . . . often unlikely to be realized" (26).

Fear and hope are often seen as oppositional forces, with fear inhibiting action and hope inspiring it.[6] For instance, Bloch contends: "Hope, superior to fear, is neither passive like the latter, nor locked into nothingness. The emotion of hope . . . makes people broad instead of confining them" (3). However, *Glory* reframes this relationship by exploring the delicate balance between fear and hope in a contemporary postcolonial context of oppression, and illustrates how the

promise of change is tempered by a history of unmet expectations. Fear, the novel suggests, creates space for hope, and allows the two emotions to coexist, as can be seen in the cautious optimism that results from the Jidadans' experience with electoral manipulation. Their fear does not take away their hope; rather, it transforms into a fearful hope, which indicates that communities under oppression navigate their circumstances through a layered emotional response in which fear does not paralyse but instead contributes to the establishment of hope.

The Jidadans' renewed hope is fuelled, in particular, by the promises espoused by Tuvius, who is initially seen as the "Bringer of Change" (Bulawayo 96) and the "Savior of the Nation" (97), particularly after the Old Horse's removal from the presidency. As a candidate, Tuvius promises to implement reforms, including an end to corruption in Jidada: "I hope I have aptly convinced you that we will indeed get rid of corruption. . . . If we won a war as humongous, as brutal, as the Liberation War, then what . . . will stop us from . . . liberating Jidada all over again?" (136). His words evoke the notion of "societal hope," which is a form of hope generated by the state for its own benefit and composed of "collective visions" (Kleist and Jansen 382) of "meaningful life and dignified social life" (Hage qtd. in Kleist and Jansen 382) within a given society. *Glory* thus illustrates how emotions are deliberately cultivated or manipulated for political ends and demonstrates that they are not simply spontaneous reactions but can be powerful tools in the hands of political actors.

As Maurice Taonezvi Vambe notes, Tuvius seeks to instil societal hope through "manipulative speeches" (10) such as the one above, whose effectiveness becomes evident in the novel's characterisation of Jidadans as "convinced animals [who] agreed with [the Savior] with their hearts and intestines" that "[a]nything was indeed possible" (Bulawayo 137). However, the novel also highlights the difficulty that Jidadans face in envisioning a better future: "It wasn't that the citizens didn't desire a corruption-free country; it was just that . . . they simply couldn't imagine the country without it" (133). As Stockdale argues, "while oppression creates conditions under which members of oppressed groups may find themselves hoping that they will not be subjected

to unjust forms of treatment[,] . . . they may not . . . have much hope that they will escape such treatment" (25). Their "[h]istory, past experiences, and their knowledge of present conditions may lead them to assign a low probability estimate to the possibility that their hopes will be realized" (25). Consequently, Stockdale contends, oppressed groups usually find themselves in the desperate situation of having to "hope against hope" (10), if they can sustain any hope at all.

The tension between the hope promoted by Tuvius and the citizens' entrenched scepticism due to their past experiences reveals the fragility of state-generated optimism in contemporary postcolonial contexts like the one that *Glory* depicts. Nevertheless, this section has also provided evidence of the persistence of hope among Jidadans despite "the dreams unfulfilled, the betrayed hopes [and] the crushed prayers" (Bulawayo 83) until the Old Horse's long-desired removal from power. By presenting Jidadans as caught between the promise of change and the fear of repeated disappointment, the novel shows that fear does not always stifle hope but rather transforms it into a cautious, ambivalent force that both sustains and constrains individuals' engagement with their sociopolitical future. This intricate emotional landscape highlights the ways in which certain emotions contribute to the establishment of hope, even in the most oppressive circumstances, and offers a more complex understanding of how hope operates in contexts where fear remains pervasive. The following section, however, focuses on Destiny's hopelessness in the face of the upcoming elections, specifically on her bitterness.

IV. Destiny's Bitterness as a Trigger for Action

Around the middle of the novel, in the chapter titled "Returnee," the narrative focus shifts to Destiny's return to Jidada after years of exile, a moment that is resonant with the historical context of postcolonial Zimbabwe. As Natasha Venables explains, postcolonial Zimbabwe has experienced two major waves of emigration: the first following independence in 1980 and the second beginning in 2000, when the nation experienced "a mass exodus" caused by "the persecution of some ethnic groups and individuals and the economic and political decline of the

country" (3). After the 2017 coup, when "Zimbabweans thought the ongoing violence and economic chaos would abate and conditions would improve," Venables observes, emigrants began returning (3). Destiny's homecoming, set against the backdrop of the 2018 Zimbabwean general elections, alludes to this historical moment of hope, but her distrust of the authorities due to past events in Jidada reveals a more complicated emotional landscape: "[T]he all-too-familiar election frenzy daily fills the goat with a gnawing unease. . . . [S]he thinks this could very well be the past itself, as if Jidada has somehow careened ten years backward into that time that was full of . . . a promise so alive Destiny, like many, was completely swept up by it" (Bulawayo 185). The temporal reference in this passage alludes to the 2008 Zimbabwean general elections, when the ruling ZANU-PF lost its parliamentary majority for the first time since independence. The Movement for Democratic Change (MDC), founded in 1999 as the main opposition party to the ZANU-PF, claimed that their candidate, Morgan Tsvangirai, had won the presidential ballot. In retaliation, the ZANU-PF launched Operation Mavhoterapapi ("Who Did You Vote For?"), a campaign of organised violence against those suspected of supporting the MDC. Many were killed at the hands of the authorities, soldiers and war veterans (IRIN). In *Glory*, Destiny's memories of this violent repression, suggest that she is one of the surviving victims:

> She remembers, her body remembers[,] . . . the sharp sear of burning tear gas[,] . . . the pummeling of Defender batons[,] . . . the stomp of Defender boots[,] . . . the thwack of Defender whips[,] . . . the dreadful struggle for breath. . . . Destiny remembers how . . . the hoped-for future lay broken, bloodied. . . . This country, she thinks, with bitterness. This country! This country! (Bulawayo 186)

Destiny expresses bitterness, an emotion that Stockdale describes as "a form of unresolved anger involving a loss of hope that an injustice or other moral wrong will be sufficiently acknowledged and addressed" (115). While Destiny's loss of hope is evident in her distrust of the upcoming elections, the passage above suggests that her bitterness is rooted not only in her personal trauma

as a survivor of violence but also in the nation's collective failure to address the injustices of the 2008 elections, when the perpetrators of brutal repression seized power.

Stockdale expands on her description of bitterness by noting that, despite its "reputation as an inherently bad and destructive emotion, bitterness can sometimes be an appropriate emotional response" to injustice (11). She argues that the constructive side of bitterness lies in its function as a "moral reminder" of past or ongoing wrongs that "indicat[es] that there is still moral and political work left to do" (116). The repetition of "remembers" in the passage above from *Glory* both evokes a traumatic memory and emphasises this dimension of bitterness, which, as Stockdale suggests, can motivate action against injustice "even without hope" (116). This transformation is evident in Destiny's transition to rebellion when Tuvius' ascendence to the presidency only worsens their situation.

The post-election scenario in the novel is marked by a general feeling amongst the citizens of growing despair. This is illustrated by the recurring motif of queues, which in turn reveals the population's loss of agency: "[Jidadans] found themselves standing hungry and thirsty and hopeless and penniless in the queues" (Bulawayo 289). As Alden notes, "[t]he trope of the queue shows up quite often" in postcolonial Zimbabwean literature, and alludes to the "fuel and food shortages which have given virtually all Zimbabweans the experience of being in a queue, where one feels . . . a loss of agency and futility." Given the timeframe depicted in this part of the novel, the queues it references can be understood as a reflection of the fuel shortages of 2019, when Mnangagwa had already assumed the presidency (Cotterill). Yet, Alden's observation, made in 2007, is powerfully exemplified in the description of Jidadans standing in the queues, "heavy with the kind of weight that could not be set down," so that "they dropped their tails and shuffled their feet and spit their anger on the hot pavements[,] . . . contemplating their predicament" (Bulawayo 289). These queues represent physical deprivation and emotional stagnation; the Jidadans' anger fails to translate into meaningful resistance.

Stockdale writes that "anger" is "an umbrella term that encompasses a range of emotional responses such as resentment, indignation, bitterness, and rage," all of which stem from "a perception that a wrong or injustice has occurred or is continuing" (82). These responses, Stockdale suggests, vary in intensity and are often influenced by the simultaneous "presence of other emotions" (83). In *Glory*, anger escalates into rage as Jidadans witness Tuvius' failure to meet his promises. They experience a massive rise in "the price of the very fuel they were lining up for, the fuel that was not there" and "was already expensive" (Bulawayo 299). At first, this increase causes "despair and frustration" amongst the population, and later leads to an anger that "frothed and gurgled and seethed and oozed from every opening in their bodies" until they were "blind with rage" (299). However, while rage, as noted above, is often associated with courageous action and resistance by Black feminist scholars such as Lorde and hooks, and the verbs used in *Glory* denote a spirit of rebellion, this intense emotion is not accompanied by any agential action at this point in the narrative. In fact, the Jidadans' anger seems to intensify alongside not only their growing frustration and despair but also their fear of the authorities, which stifles any potential uprising. Despite their collective fury, "[they] did not dare raise their voices against the regime" and "shriveled at the sight of power" (Bulawayo 319-20), which highlights the contextual specificity of anger and its more intense counterparts in relation to their transformative potential for inciting resistance. While Lorde and hooks argue for the role of anger as a catalyst for social change and empowerment in Western contexts,[7] *Glory* suggests that in contemporary postcolonial environments characterised by severe repression, this emotion, much like the frustration discussed earlier, does not always lead to rebellion due to the fear of potential repercussions.

Despite the paralysing fear that grips most Jidadans, Destiny emerges as a notable exception, particularly after her mother tells her the family history that she has kept secret for so long—a fictionalised account of the Gukurahundi. This massacre, which occurred between 1982 and 1986 in Zimbabwe, remains "the first, and still unpunished genocide" of the Mugabe regime (Essof 21). Sabelo J. Ndlovu-Gatsheni and Pedzisai Ruhanya describe it as "an orgy of ethnic-

driven cleansing leading to a one-party nation" (qtd. in Mavengano, "The Polemics of Zimbabwean Nationalism" 110), and it remains a source of ethnic conflict in the country. In *Glory*, Destiny's ancestors are portrayed as victims of this dark period in Zimbabwe's history. Her grandfather's experiences of discrimination and violence, as Simiso recounts, led him to advocate for "talking about the past[,] . . . telling one's story if you wanted it told right[,] . . . keeping records to make sure the truth remained true" (Bulawayo 222-23). Motivated by her mother's story, Destiny embarks on a journey to Bulawayo, another city in the country, to uncover her family's past and writes *The Red Butterflies of Jidada*, a historical narrative that honours the dead of the nation and confronts Jidada's violent history.

The Red Butterflies of Jidada, which intertextually connects to Yvonne Vera's novel *Butterfly Burning* (1998), ties Jidada's past to its present and inspires hope for a transformed future: "[Destiny] writes from the present into her past, into her mother's and family's pasts, which is also Jidada's past, then back again into the present and beyond into a hoped-for future" (Bulawayo 351). Similarly, although *Butterfly Burning* is set in the late 1940s in Zimbabwe, it "demonstrat[es] how [the past] overwhelms the present [of the country], leading to acts of extreme barbary but also to potential catharsis" (McCann 59). *Glory* draws parallels between the violent tactics employed by the state in 1983 and 2008, and when Destiny leaves Jidada with strong and repressed emotions, she finds a pathway to release these feelings and, in turn, speak truth to power. Her writing reflects Sara Ahmed's assertion that "[a]nger is creative" and can generate a language of resistance (176). Specifically, Destiny's bitterness motivates her to both raise her voice against past and present injustices and pay tribute to those who were killed by the regime. Like Ahmed's feminist commitment, which "has never been reducible to the feelings of pain, anger or rage" but rather embodies "something more creative, something that responds to the world with joy and care" (Ahmed 179), Destiny's defiance is not fuelled solely by bitterness. Instead, it arises from a profound sense of responsibility to her ancestors, her community, and the memory of those

murdered by the regime, and culminates in "a manifesto for remembering and a plea for resisting" (Ramone) in the chapter "My Bones Will Rise Again."

This chapter draws its title from words attributed to Nehanda Charwe Nyakasikana, the Shona spiritual leader who was executed by the British in 1898 for her resistance to colonial rule (Akawa 17). As Martha Akawa explains, Nyakasikana was the only woman among the leaders of the Chimurenga Uprising of the 1890s, which expelled the British from Zimbabwe (17). Her defiant spirit and refusal to submit to colonial authority resonate throughout *Glory*'s narration of Destiny's path of rebellion, which culminates in her reading from *The Red Butterflies of Jidada* in front of a crowd, despite the imminent threat of violence. The novel's acknowledgement that "since [Destiny's] visit to Bulawayo, since she sat down to write, she has chosen not to be afraid" (Bulawayo 356) is evident as she "stands facing the crowd from the stage, leaning slightly into the microphone, calm despite the hundreds of watchful eyes" (357), and begins reading "in that voice that was full of the dead" (358), continuing even after being struck by a bullet (359). As Esther Mavengano argues, Destiny's act of rebellion embodies hook's idea of "speaking out" (hooks qtd. in Mavengano, "The Phallocentric Paradox" 7) as "an act of talking back" (Mavengano, "The Phallocentric Paradox" 7) in defiance of the "politics of domination" (hooks qtd. in Mavengano, "The Phallocentric Paradox" 7), which represents an "act of overcoming our fear" (hooks qtd. in Mavengano, "The Phallocentric Paradox" 7). Furthermore, Destiny's focus on honouring those murdered and raising awareness about the importance of remembrance so as to prevent repetition reinforces what appears to be the chapter's main purpose: to pay tribute to Nyakasikana's courage and legacy. Like Nyakasikana, who "died defying and denouncing the British" (Akawa 17), Destiny's death both occurs within an act of resistance and symbolises resistance. A significant connection can also be drawn between Nyakasikana's symbolic burial at Heroes Acre in Harare, Zimbabwe's national monument for honouring the liberation fighters of the anti-colonial struggle, and Destiny's burial at the Wall of the Dead. This memorial, erected by Simiso to honour her daughter, gradually evolves into a communal space for mourning and commemorating all those

killed by the regime. It fosters a sense of collective solidarity and radical love, which in turn gives rise to the resurgence of hope among Jidadans.

V. Towards a New Jidada

The chapter "My Bones Will Rise Again" also recounts that the Wall of the Dead initially featured "a red butterfly, and under it, the name Destiny Lozikeyi Khumalo" (Bulawayo 361), and next to it other butterflies and the names of Destiny's ancestors, as an expression of Simiso's personal grief following her daughter's murder. However, this private act of mourning soon evolves into a collective one as other Jidadans arrive to "silently [paint] a red butterfly, and beneath it wr[i]te a name of a loved one murdered by the Seat of Power" (361). The text highlights that "animals were arriving from places near and far," until "every inch of Simiso's Durawall was red with butterflies, with the names of the dead" (361). The wall thus transforms into a sort of monument of remembrance for the victims of the state, marking a shift from individual to collective sorrow, and more specifically to collective solidarity, since Jidadans are depicted as empathetic and supportive of one another in their shared state of grief.

Jidadans come together not only to console Simiso for her personal loss but also to participate in a broader mourning for the injustices they have suffered. In this regard, the use of the word "Durawall" (361), which refers to the Wall of the Dead, adds an important layer of meaning, as it suggests both physical and emotional defense. In Zimbabwean towns and cities, this term refers to the protective concrete fencing that usually surrounds a factory or a suburban home (Maxwell 10). Hence, the Wall of the Dead becomes a symbolic fortification against the oppressive forces of the Seat of Power, especially as Jidadans later unite to form a human barrier in front of Simiso's house to protect her from arrest for having publicly denounced the violence perpetrated by the state:

> We didn't disband that day, no. We stayed put. . . . It wasn't only to guard Simiso but also to show . . . the evil regime that we were absolutely without fear now, that we were there

> to face what should've been faced ages and ages ago. . . . Waves of animals came and just kept coming. . . . Jidadans of every age, every hue, every gender[,] . . . of any and every ethnic identification alike[,] . . . of all faiths and religions alike[,] . . . of any and every occupation and profession and economic bracket alike, Jidadans of whatever category was used to define Jidadaness . . . we all stood together as one. (Bulawayo 372)

This passage marks a pivotal moment in the narrative, as it highlights Jidadans' newfound determination to confront their oppressors. They are depicted as empowered individuals who, as is explicitly mentioned, have overcome their paralysing fear. Their collective action not only signifies a revived sense of hope that contrasts with their earlier passive wishful thinking, but also reflects a movement toward change that recalls Featherstone's solidarity from below and, by extension, illustrates the capacity of the oppressed to collectively mobilise in pursuit of justice. More specifically, the enumeration of the different groups of Jidadans explores the traditional Black feminist approach to coalition politics, which, as discussed, advocates for alliances across differences.

In fact, throughout the narrative, there are recurrent references to injustices in other parts of the world, such as George Floyd's murder in the US (Bulawayo 206), which expand the novel's call for unity to encompass intersectional coalitions that bridge different struggles against oppression and transcend national borders. In this way, the text aligns even more forcefully with the ideas of Black feminist thinkers, particularly Davis' view that the struggle for freedom must be fought on a global scale, as systems of oppression are intertwined and extend beyond national boundaries. More specifically, Davis emphasises the importance of building common ground in the struggle against oppression while recognising the different ways it is experienced by various groups (147).

Nonetheless, *Glory* firmly situates us in Zimbabwe with its emphasis on the ethnic tensions and divisions that have shaped the country's transition to independence and still surface in everyday lives (Dzimiri et al.). This fragmentation is portrayed as a major reason why, despite

shared frustrations and hopes, Jidadans have been unable to unite to collectively demand their rights: "This kind of tribalism won't get us anywhere!" (Bulawayo 292), shouts one Jidadan. Later, another citizen reflects: "The thing which I'm sure we all know but just don't want to acknowledge is that we, all of us, are oppressed by . . . the Jidada Party. Aren't we, no matter our miserable ethnicities, standing together in these queues? . . . This is us! Together!" (298). As Alden notes, the trope of the queue in Zimbabwean writing usually shows how the experience of waiting in line has given Zimbabweans "a sense of a community that forms spontaneously to assist each other without much regard for skin color, class, sex, or other identity markers." In *Glory*, this dynamic suggests that solidarity can emerge from collective hardship, despite the persistent fractures within society.

While the last quoted words from the novel stress that, despite their different ethnicities, Jidadans recognise their shared oppression under the ruling party and their common presence in the same queues, the text ultimately advocates for a broader coalition among all marginalised groups in the country as a vital solution to their plight. Moreover, the description of the gathering to protect Simiso illustrates that Jidadans do more than unite in solidarity. Through this collective act, they come to realise their interdependence and mutual need to achieve shared goals:

> And what we learned . . . standing together . . . was that . . . what truly counted was showing up for each other[,] . . . was demanding justice for your fellow citizens even if you didn't necessarily agree with them or hold their views, even if they weren't your neighbor or of your ethnic group or of your political party or of your religion. . . . [T]hat night, outside Simiso's house, by the Wall of the Dead, we discovered that the only way to be a better Jidada was to in fact start by being each other's treasures. And that discovery, that education made us fall in love with each other; we held each other's precious eyes and communicated, in silent silence, our love, our solidarity. (Bulawayo 372)

This moment alludes to the affective dimension of solidarity; love and mutual care are essential components of collective action. As Karen Ross, Peiwei Li, and Meagan Call-Cummings argue,

solidarity is not sustained by emotions of frustration and rage alone. Drawing on Hemmings's claim that such emotions can "lead us toward a desire for structural transformation" (Ross, Li, and Call-Cummings 13), they emphasise that solidarity also relies on "relational affects" like "care and love," which "center on mutuality and reciprocity" and "create the connections necessary for acting in solidarity with others" (13). *Glory* echoes this perspective, though the predominant affect in the quote above is a radical form of love, one that raises above "force, fear, and apathy", and whose radicality "does not make it imbalanced" (Colonna and Nix-Stevenson 7) but rather fosters "cooperation" (Cunningham qtd. in Colonna and Nix-Stevenson 7), reflecting a profound and transformative solidarity.

Given the setting of the story, the text particularly resonates with Devin Atallah's notion of decolonial solidarity as radical love, which accentuates the power of love as a strategy for social transformation and justice. (Lorde and hooks also advocate this approach.) For Atallah, decoloniality is a "revolutionary relationality that we build together, and that we build against, the colonial 'system of compartments' from a shared feeling of 'love'" (81), "a basic foundation of solidarity" (78). He writes that colonised peoples' experiences of "[f]acing loss and perpetual pain" can lead to "radical grief and remembrance" that culminate in a "love so powerful and transformative that new understandings and pathways towards freedom are forged" (78). His reflections are particularly relevant here because they delineate the emotional transition portrayed in *Glory*, especially in its latter part and through the character of Simiso.

The novel's encouraging ending further reinforces this transformation. Filled with renewed hope, the younger generation of Jidadans call for a new national flag that features "the kind of fire to raze the things that no longer serve, so it's a fire that also purifies" (Bulawayo 397). This reflects their desire for transformative change and renewal. They envision a fire that incorporates all colours: "[T]he bright red . . . for justice[,] . . . the white for peace[,] . . . [t]he blue . . . for compassion[,] . . . orange, for prosperity[,] . . . [a]nd bright yellow, for integrity" (397). The narrator explicitly states that these colours "represent all different kinds of Jidadans" and signify "a Jidada

for anyone and everyone no matter the differences" (397). The narrative thus presents a hopeful vision for a harmonious and equitable future built collectively, and suggests that "[r]ecovering hope [largely] depends on discovering some new way of relating to others" (McGeer qtd. in Stockdale 169). According to Stockdale, this is "a renewed or strengthened hope for some form of justice," one that is "generated through solidarity" (169). It is the kind of hope that, ultimately, *Glory* not only portrays but also inspires through its nuanced exploration of how oppressed communities transform their complex emotional landscapes into powerful tools for collective resistance and social change.

VI. Conclusions

My analysis of the depiction of a grassroots revolution in Bulawayo's *Glory* challenges Scholz's assertion that hope is the only emotion necessary to build political solidarity and collectively achieve justice. Instead, the novel suggests, in line with Stockdale's argument, that a loss of hope can become the catalyst for coalition initiatives against oppression, often when combined with intense feelings of injustice. More specifically, the Jidadans' emotional journey from desperate hope to anger reveals that neither hope nor anger alone can sufficiently mobilise collective action in a contemporary postcolonial context marked by governmental repression and pervasive fear. *Glory* begins with a palpable sense of frustration among Jidadans; the novel illustrates their transition from the hopeful euphoria of post-independence to a state of disillusionment and fear under a dictatorial regime, which prevents them from taking action, even as the hope for a better future lingers in the background. This emotional trajectory highlights the complex interplay between hope and fear, and suggests that, rather than being opposing forces, they can coexist; this becomes clear from the Jidadans' cautious optimism about potential political changes that might result from the transition in government. In particular, Jidadans embody the ambivalent emotional state Stockdale calls "fearful hope." While their yearning for a better future is evident, it is simultaneously tempered by the oppressive realities of past experiences; this tension

creates a profound affective dissonance which gradually manifests as rage when new promises are broken. In this context, Destiny's bitterness in response to lingering injustices emerges as a transformative force for resistance, and her reaction challenges conventional narratives that frame this emotion as inherently destructive. The narrative suggests that, within postcolonial contexts of oppression, bitterness is a powerful reminder of unresolved wrongs that, when coupled with historical memory and a commitment to truth, motivates resistance and demands accountability. In this sense, Destiny's journey reflects the potential for change that can arise even from despair. As she confronts her family's traumatic history and articulates her anger through writing, she embodies the possibility of reclaiming agency in an oppressive landscape.

Furthermore, the novel's depiction of Destiny's murder and Simiso's construction of the Wall of the Dead highlights the transformative power of collective mourning and solidarity among Jidadans, and illustrates how personal grief can evolve into a shared communal experience that galvanises collective action against oppression. The Wall of the Dead, adorned with red butterflies that represent both personal losses and state violence, powerfully conveys the shift from social fragmentation to a form of solidarity that fosters the radical love that is necessary for liberation. Hence, while *Glory* initially problematises Black feminist perspectives that position anger as a primary catalyst for resistance and revolution, it simultaneously echoes key insights from Black feminist scholarship on coalition politics. The novel advocates for intersectional coalitions that unite diverse struggles against injustice, and emphasises solidarity, interdependence, and mutual support as essential foundations for effective resistance. Moreover, through its description of the new national flag of Jidada, *Glory* depicts a renewed hope that is cultivated by radical love and solidarity, and encourages readers to envision a more optimistic future and alternative ways of being, acting, and feeling together. By exploring these emotional landscapes, *Glory* invites a deeper understanding of how hope, fear, anger, grief, and love can coalesce into powerful tools for social transformation within contemporary postcolonial contexts.

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Notes

[1] As Menon notes, although several "reviewers object to the comparison" by claiming that Zimbabwe has "a rich, animal-filled storytelling tradition," Bulawayo herself "has acknowledged *Animal Farm* as an influence" (176).

[2] For more historical details beyond those presented later in the literary analysis, see Nyambi, Mangena, and Ncube's edited volume.

[3] The ZANU–PF has been the ruling party in Zimbabwe since independence in 1980. It was led by Mugabe, first as Prime Minister and then as President, from 1987 to 2017. Former Vice President Mnangagwa was appointed as party leader following the coup that ousted Mugabe. Mnangagwa became the President of Zimbabwe after the 2018 general elections.

[4] For an updated, comprehensive, critical review of the scholarship on solidarity, see Prieto López's first chapter in *Black Women Centre Stage*.

[5] The first half of *We Need New Names* is set in a fictional Zimbabwean slum ironically called Paradise. The protagonist's living conditions after moving to this place recalls Operation Murambatsvina, a slum clearance programme officially known as Operation Restore Order, which left thousands of people homeless on the outskirts of several Zimbabwean cities. Initiated in 2005 with Mugabe's approval, this massive urban demolition is widely regarded as one of the most significant violations of human rights during his regime. I provide a more detailed analysis of the representation of Operation Murambatsvina in *We Need New Names* in my article "Strangers and Necropolitics."

[6] See, for example, the works of Bloch, Freire, Ahmed, Bauman, and Butler for additional discussion of the interplay between fear and hope.

[7] For Lorde and hooks, anger is a powerful and constructive emotion, particularly for Black women facing racism and sexism in Western countries like the US. Lorde views anger as transformative and capable of generating collective resistance and fostering solidarity. She argues that expressing anger against injustice can dismantle oppressive systems and inspire courageous action. Similarly, hooks views anger as a critical component of feminist consciousness-raising, a means by which to challenge patriarchal and racist structures and drive social change. Both frame anger within contexts that permit protest and organised resistance, even when met with opposition.