1 *Introduction*

Projection, Introjection and Recognition in International Relations

NoViolet Bulawayo's novel *We Need New Names* describes the games of a group of children living through the tough political and economic climate of Zimbabwe in the mid-2000s. Living in impoverished and decaying surroundings, among disillusioned and increasingly desperate adults, the children make their own world of play in which they assign themselves new identities based on their ideas of elsewhere.

> To play country-game you need two rings: a big outer one, then inside it, a little one, where the caller stands. You divide the outer ring depending on how many people are playing and cut it up in nice pieces like this. Each person then picks a piece and writes the name of a country on there, which is why it's called country-game. But first we have to fight over the names because everybody wants to be certain countries, like everybody wants to be the U.S.A. and Britain and Canada and Australia and Switzerland and France and Italy and Sweden and Germany and Russia and Greece and them. These are the country-countries. If you lose the fight, then you just have to settle for countries like Dubai and South Africa and Botswana and Tanzania and them. They are not country-countries, but at least life is better than here. Nobody wants to be rags of countries like Congo, like Somalia, like Iraq, like Sudan, like Haiti, like Sri Lanka, and not even the one we live in – who wants to be a terrible place of hunger and things falling apart? (Bulawayo, 2013: 48–9)

Through their games, the children make sense of themselves and their country. They rely on fantasies of magical far-away places that can represent extremes of goodness and perfection, or horror and evil, and they play out the relationships between these places and Zimbabwe, a place where political repression and hyperinflation have eroded emotional and physical well-being.

Like the protagonist of her book, Bulawayo moved to live and study in the US. Her fantasy of the international turned into a complex and flawed reality; and then she turned around her desire for a 'new name' and re-named herself after her Zimbabwean hometown. Her

explorations of the wider world – through imagination and then physical engagement – were the ways by which she came to realise herself, her community and her country.

This book is about how ideas of the international help people make sense of themselves and their political communities. On one level it is a book about Zimbabwe, one that looks at how citizens' ambivalence about their state is played out and realised in their ideas about international relationships. Ultimately it explores the ways in which the state itself is imagined and created through these ideas. And on another level it explores, through the experiences of Zimbabweans, much larger questions about international relations, in particular how ordinary citizens are emotionally attached to the international, and how they use these attachments to create domestic meaning and coherence.

The book can be read as a critique of Robert Jackson's work about statehood in the Third World (1993). Zimbabwe, a state that might be viewed in Jackson's terms as a model of internal incoherence, emerges here as a place where state–society relationships are both powerfully important and extensively implicated in the wider world through the emotional and imaginative lives of its citizens. My argument challenges Jackson's dismissive account of such a state as 'quasi': what he views as an empty or partial statehood is actually a rich and complex terrain, tied to the international in emotionally fertile and important ways.

Jackson's argument that Third World states are 'quasi-states' is rooted in a formal-legal and materialist account of the meaning of statehood. 'Quasi-states' lack empirical sovereignty and are held together by juridical sovereignty, external recognition and support. Jackson suggests that statehood in the modern world comprises positive and negative sovereignty. Positive sovereignty concerns the capacity and desire of states to enable and provide for citizens and can be seen as the degree to which states are bound by and to citizens. Positive, or empirical, sovereignty is about the coherence and effectiveness of internal politics. Negative sovereignty rests on a state's recognition by other states within the international system. It is described as juridical in that it rests on a purely formal legal basis: any state, no matter how internally incoherent or collapsed, elicits this external recognition simply by virtue of its acceptance into the international club of states. Jackson's controversial claim is that Third World states are only sovereign by virtue of negative sovereignty: they are effectively

held together from outside by legal forms and procedures. Internally, they are characterised by weak or repressive governments that cannot or will not adequately respond to the needs of their populations. Indeed, the external scaffolding supplied by the international system often enables repressive or inadequate states to survive and even to continue to repress or fail their populations – through the authority gained from extra-juridical recognition, and through the material benefits of aid and/or military support they attract from donors.

One of the criticisms levelled at Jackson is the way he understands empirical sovereignty as stemming from the principles of state–society relations and accountability enshrined in the French Revolution (Grovogui, 2002; Williams, 2000). Having defined empirical sovereignty within a European historical model, Jackson cannot find it in the Third World states of his study, leading him to conclude that they are essentially empty. For many scholars of Africa, this ties into an old Western tradition of viewing the continent as empty, a place of lack (Achebe, 1983; Mbembe, 2001; Mudimbe, 1994), rather than looking for what is actually there.

To this I would add a further criticism that Jackson, in common with many mainstream IR scholars, tends to focus on the state level, exploring politics from the perspective of state elites' activities and motivations, or from a more abstract perspective in which the dictates of the international system are sufficient for explaining sovereignty. He does not attempt to account for the meaning citizens attach to statehood, and how they conceive of the wider world as a means of constituting themselves and their state. Jackson is uninterested in how statehood, and its relation to the wider world, is bound up with the emotional or moral well-being of citizens.

In ignoring the perceptions, feelings and motivations of citizens, Jackson misses a far more nuanced appreciation of the meaning of statehood, how it is perceived and created by ordinary people, sometimes against, sometimes in partnership with elites.[1] Moreover, in Jackson's depiction, the interactions between states and the

[1] Although the richer texture offered by such an analysis is something that mainstream IR scholars have tended to overlook, many postcolonial and feminist scholars have long been engaged with such concerns, and produced work that frequently highlights the intellectual and explanatory poverty of mainstream approaches. This book owes much to the approaches and methods developed by these scholars.

international are untouched by the actions and ideas of domestic societies. Again, this leads him to present a too-flattened version of how the international supports and undermines state–society relationships and, via the ways in which citizens imagine and engage with the wider world, how they constitute and engage with their state.

This is why in this book I have decided to explore questions about the meaning of statehood from the perspective of the citizens of one state. Rather than presenting an abstract argument that attempts to encompass all states, or a group of states, I begin with a single example, exploring its history and the particularities of its domestic and international politics in depth, in order to build a more nuanced account of how international relations impact on statehood. I do this from the perspective of the citizens rather than elites, as a way to demonstrate the richness of state–society relationships, and the important role the international takes in contextualising and constituting statehood *in the minds of ordinary citizens*. My bottom-up approach challenges ideas about the emptiness of the domestic politics of a Third World country and the materialist and mechanical account of international politics provided by Jackson.

The argument of this book is that Zimbabwean citizens engage with and thereby constitute themselves collectively in relation to the wider world. They do this in two ways: through imagination and fantasy, and through more grounded engagements of recognition.

First, in imagination, ordinary people create ideas of the world and relate them in various ways to themselves. The world is viewed as a place of alternatives to Zimbabweans in a process that might be recognised as projection or negation, in which the other is always defined negatively against the self. A familiar example of this is Robert Mugabe's depiction of the British 'monster' in which he summons up an idea of British aggressiveness in order to present a Zimbabweanness that is pure and uncontested. Another is the way in which Zimbabweans depict the Chinese as alien and 'other' in order to create a collective meaning of a secure and comfortable Zimbabweanness. This is a politics of theatrical engagement with, or fantastical storytelling about, the world, which is used as a basis for developing firmer ideas of 'who we are' in comparison with 'them out there'.

An alternative form of imagination sees the world tied to selfhood by the ways in which it holds out possibilities of the ideal and the perfect – the lost or longed-for utopia – and connected to the self by an imagined

absorption, a process that can be described by the term 'introjection'.[2] This idea is expressed by many Zimbabweans in the lost 'good' colonial state, for many summed up in the idea of Britishness, that has been absorbed by Zimbabwe and helped shape its culture and sense of selfhood. This might be described as a politics of nostalgia or daydreaming that establishes the idea of a good object which endows Zimbabweans with a sense of safety, an 'antidote to despair' in difficult times.

The second way in which Zimbabweans constitute themselves collectively in relation to the wider world is in more prosaic and grounded relationships of recognition. My understanding of recognition, which draws on Hegel and the psychoanalytic interpretations of his work provided by Honneth, Benjamin and my own use of Kleinian object-relations theory, is much more complex and emotionally rooted than Jackson's legalistic one. In this book, recognition is a relationship built on an understanding of both difference/autonomy and mutual constitution/dependence. Recognition cannot be an outcome of imagination – a relationship with an object created by oneself – because it must confront the reality of another subject. For Zimbabweans, it is relationships with their neighbours in southern Africa – both competitive and supportive – that give them this sense of mutual constitution through recognition. Recognition is a more fraught and painful way of engaging with the world, involving tension between aggressiveness and affection, ultimately demanding compromise both in terms of international relationships and in an acceptance of domestic ambiguity.

Each kind of engagement with the wider world supports the construction of collective selfhood, and is intimately tied into people's perceptions of their relation to, and embodiment in, the state. Relationships summoned by imagination are rooted in fantasies of control and give rise to an assertive sense of the self as autonomous and self-created. Sometimes this is achieved in communion with the state, and sometimes in opposition to it. Fantasies of utopia, for example, can be used to separate people from their state – they see themselves aligned instead to an ideal other state – or can

[2] The term 'introjection' is borrowed from Kleinian psychoanalytic theory, which I will use and explain more fully later in the book.

underwrite the state itself as embodied in an essential Zimbabweanness that is the antithesis of the foreign.

The sense of self engendered by relationships of recognition is more ambiguous; in accepting a sense of self as shaped by an other, Zimbabweans are able to 'see' themselves from an alternative perspective, entailing a loss of fantasies of omnipotence. This sense of self forges a version of statehood that is therefore more contested and ambiguous, but one too that can surface in times of intense national introspection – as I argue it did for the elections of 2013. Such times, people seem to feel, are not for imagination and play, but for a more hard-headed assessment of who they are.

Unlike Jackson's formal and elegant argument, mine is embedded in political and social complexity. It emanates from an extensive series of interviews with Zimbabweans conducted over a three-year period. The argument emerges from the struggles I have had trying to make sense out of the many stories they told me about themselves, their state and the wider world. The result is a complex story, a depiction of state-society-international relations in a Third World country that is far from the more common accounts of emptiness.

From this story, I construct a theoretical approach to understanding citizens' emotional attachment to the international. I use psychoanalytic, social and political theory to explore the ways in which the international enables constructions of state- and self-meaning. This element of the book speaks to larger discussions within international relations. In drawing on an African example, I am attempting to understand broader trends, both within other post-colonial countries and beyond them. Although this is a novel approach for IR – a discipline in which African experiences are usually treated as peripheral or atypical – it should not be.[3] More than half of today's states came about through colonialism; nearly one-third of them in Africa. African experiences of statehood and its relation to the international

[3] IR's heavyweights have usually ignored Africa. Kenneth Waltz, for example, has admitted that Africa has been a 'blank spot' in his work, and speculated on the 'primitive' nature of African societies as the cause of the relative lack of inter-state warfare there (Theory Talks, 2011). Bull and Watson argue in their *Expansion of International Society* (1984) that 'there was no African international system or international society' before European colonisation in the nineteenth century (quoted in Pella, 2014: 16). In attempting to address this, I am responding to calls to bring perspectives from beyond the West into IR (see, for example, Gruffyd Jones, 2006; Inayatullah and Blaney, 2004; Shilliam, 2011).

should not be seen as exotic, but a central part of how to understand international relations.

The rest of this chapter is devoted to establishing the theoretical and methodological foundations for the book, and the ways in which I make them work together to provide a grounded understanding of international relations. First, I lay out my theoretical approach about the relationship between individual, society and state – the domestic sphere – and on into the international sphere. This is the essential underpinning to how I conceive the role of the wider world in shaping, underwriting and undermining domestic relationships and selfhood. Next, I move onto the other pillar of the book, the empirical, in a description of my methodological approach. Here, I discuss the particularities of Zimbabwean experiences, and how I attempted to capture them through my research. Finally, I outline the rest of the book, showing how the overarching argument builds on these initial comments.

Conceptions of the Self, Society, State and International

This book makes an attempt to link individual self-understanding to domestic society and to the wider world. In order to proceed in this, I need to lay out my understanding of how individuals, states and the international link to each other, and this is the purpose of this section. It comes in two steps: the first describes theories of selfhood rooted in society; and the second explores theories of selfhood and society in relation to the international.

Individual and Society

My argument is based on an understanding that individuality is rooted in society and the state and nourished by an engagement with the wider world. I draw on three theoretical sets of ideas: the interpretation of a social theory of selfhood from the Tswana people of southern Africa by Comaroff and Comaroff; the psychoanalytic theory of Klein; and the political philosophy of Hegel. This might not look like a promising recipe for understanding modern Zimbabwe, comprising as it does the interpretation of a group of people unrelated to the ethnic groups in Zimbabwe, living a hundred years ago, by two anthropologists, the ideas of a psychoanalyst rooted in a peculiarly European

tradition of focusing on a therapeutic interpretation of individual subjectivity,[4] and the work of a European philosopher well-known for his racist view of Africa.[5] Nevertheless, I am going to make the argument that these accounts not only resonate with and enrich each other but provide a persuasive account of how people create and understand themselves through their relationships, both in individual and collective terms. It is an account I will use to explore Zimbabweans' domestic and international relationships.

I begin with the Tswana conception of selfhood, as explained by Comaroff and Comaroff (1993). They assert that Tswana ideas on what being a person means fit neither into a Western 'individualism' or a vaunted Africa 'communalism': instead, people are individuals who are created through their relationships and activities. They see themselves as rooted in their place, in the things they do and make, and in the people around them – their community – and forge themselves as individuals within this context. Tswana people 'found themselves engaged constantly in a praxis of self-construction … [involving the] unceasing, quotidian business of cultivating relations and fields, or husbanding animals and allies, or raising offspring and avoiding the malign intentions of others, of gradually accumulating cultural capital and cash to invest in the future' (Ibid: 55).

Comaroff and Comaroff describe the way in which Tswana people show only parts of themselves to other people – largely for reasons of self-preservation – so that '[i]n anticipation of the postmodern stress on

[4] Although other psychoanalytic theories have been related to political and social theory, most notably those of Jacques Lacan, Klein's have been less so. Her theory does not easily lend itself to political discussion as it is embedded in her clinical work, and her unflinching use of visceral language to describe the way in which aggression and love are felt and expressed in terms of eating, excreting and sex, which can feel incongruous in a political or social context. She herself made little effort to directly apply her work to broader social issues (although see 'Love, Guilt and Reparation' [1998b] for a discussion of the ways in which individual reparation can lead to social good). A few attempts have been made by Alford (1989), Segal (1997) and by myself (Gallagher, 2009; 2011a; 2014).

[5] Hegel wrote that Africa is 'the land of childhood, which lying beyond the days of self-conscious history, is enveloped in the dark mantle of Night … The negro as already observed exhibits the natural man in his completely wild and untamed state. We must lay aside all thought of reverence and morality – all that we call feeling – if we would rightly comprehend him; there is nothing harmonious with humanity to be found in this type of character … [Africa] is no historical part of the world; it has no movement of development to exhibit' (Hegel, quoted in Lamming, 2006: 16).

multiple, fractal subjectivities … Southern Tswana were careful to fragment and refract the self in preserving its exteriorities to the world … [E]mpowerment, protective or predatory, lay in the capacity to conceal: to conceal purposes, possessions, propensities, practices' (Ibid: 60). Finally, when a person dies, they are fully constructed, by all the people who knew them. At the funeral everyone comes together and describes their understanding of the person, creating a 'summation of a biography that had, until now, been an inscrutable work in progress' (Ibid: 61). The individual is only made whole by the people they have known and entrusted with parts of themselves.

This approach to selfhood carries three important ideas. First, is the idea of the making of selfhood – of 'fabrication' – a process that does not end until death. For the Tswana, a person never 'was', but always 'was becoming'. Second, personhood is created within and through the context of relationships – with people and with things. Thus, 'making oneself' is actually a joint achievement within a social context. And third, is the way in which people never reveal themselves wholly, instead scattering only bits of themselves throughout their various relationships. Comaroff and Comaroff describe this in terms of 'hiding' one's self, being 'careful to fragment and refract the self in presenting its exteriorities to the world' (Ibid: 60). As a result, the construction of the individual is done through many different relationships in a variety of contexts and registers.

This is distinctly different from a European post-Enlightenment idea of selfhood as autonomous (Taylor, 1989), but it does resonate with other European ideas of selfhood that are more relational, one of which stems from a psychoanalytic tradition that explores the construction of individual egos through object relations. In this, Klein's object relations theory provides the most coherent idea of individual selfhood as a creation of relationships (Alford, 1989). Like the ideas of selfhood ascribed by the Comaroffs to the Tswana, Klein explores the ways in which individuality is developed through relationships. Klein sees early infant relationships as intensely shaped within the family, and subsequent looser relationships playing a slightly different role in the way the individual is shaped and developed. The key insight Klein brings to the discussion is her idea of object relations: she sees the individual engaged in a constant 'exchange' of internal and external objects, a projection of what is inside onto objects in the wider world, and their introjection into the self. Internal objects – the 'working

models' by which we experience and make sense of the world – thus evolve as we test them on the outer world before reabsorbing them. For Klein, objects are often fractured and partial: she argues that an important psychic defence is one of splitting complex, ambiguous objects into simplified bits that can be projected or introjected in ways that make them more manageable. In this way, she argues, the people around us can sometimes appear to embody great goodness, or extreme aggression, but each is actually the result of a projection of parts of the self.

Drawing on Klein, Comaroff and Comaroff's description can be pushed further by substituting verbs: instead of hiding and telling, I suggest we try putting. I do this because it pulls together their three ideas: relationships are key to the continual *shaping* of the individual, so hiding and telling don't seem strong enough – they imply a personhood that is already complete (capable of being fragmented and refracted) able to express itself, whereas actually, the incomplete and related nature of personhood mean that parts of the self are only created through its relationships. So why putting? You can put bits of yourself into external objects – into your work, into people you love, into your colleagues and friends, into strangers and enemies. These bits will be different depending on what these relationships are. But it is only by putting, or giving these bits, that you commit both to the other person and to yourself in that person, and thus to a relation of dependence. Other people become not just privy to bits of you, but embodied by them, and you in turn reintroject them in order to realise yourself. Thus, in some sense, the people around you are entrusted with bits of you; without them, you would not be whole.

At the same time, the process works the other way, as you are entrusted with bits of the people around you. This is no passive acceptance: in taking parts of the other into yourself, you are also shaped by them. Overall, life can be seen as an intense web of relationships in which individuality develops within a hybrid of connections that vary in quality and intensity. The individual, as Comaroff and Comaroff point out, is not lost in the web but emerges from it.

Klein and the Tswana see individuals in very similar ways. In both accounts, the individual is never fully whole and complete, but rather her fragmentation is reflected in her multiple relationships; in a sense she can be a different person within each relationship, reflecting both what she can express of herself, and what she can absorb within each