

## Significance of the Title *Without a Name* - An Analysis

**SHABAZ KHANUM**

Research Scholar

**Prof. P. KANNAN**

Research guide

Davangere University, Davangere

### Abstract

*Yvonne vera is a Zimbabwean writer who in her novel explores the painful experiences of brutal rape, abuse and oppression in the forefront. The present study however, aims to present significance of the title Without a Name, as it reflects on how the existence of women bodies frame their experiences, options, and choices and the embodied experience of these discourses for women living with inappropriate identification on the extreme margins of society.*

**Keywords:** *Brutal Rape, Oppression, Trauma, Without a Name, Civil War, Geopolitical conflict, Economic Crises, Bloodshed, Absurdity.*

### Introduction

Yvonne vera is a renowned novelist in Zimbabwe. She has written "*Butterfly Burning, Without a Name and Under the Tongue*". She is a recipient of commonwealth Writers Prize for the Africa Region in 1977. *Without a Name* her second novel published in 1994. The title is very unusual and draws the attention of readers to its significance. Although the novel is about Mazvita and all characters, places, things, and incidents are with a name, the title as *Without a Name* creates curiosity. Thus an attempt is made to identify the significance of the title of the novel in this paper. The paper contains plot, the identification of the significance of the title and conclusion besides introduction as its structure.

### Methodology

This paper tries to analyze the significance of the title "*Without a Name*" by using the analytical research method.

### Plot

Vera's *Without a Name* dwells upon the struggle of Mazvita from her native town-Mubaira-to Kadoma and from Kadoma to Harare city during civil war time and malechaunism in 1977. She is abused by a soldier in her village from where she moves to Kadoma to find freedom of living. Here she starts working in a farm and meets a man of her acquaintance called Nyenyedzi in the

plantation and lives with him. She is left to the lurch as he returns to his native town deserting her. Her aim is to reach Harare and finds some work for her survival. On reaching the city of Harare, she encounters another man called Joel and stays with him. She realizes that she is pregnant. Joel drives her out his residence as he feels that she has betrayed him, she becomes alone and gives birth to a baby. Her existence is vague and thus without a name.

### Significance of the title *Without a Name*

The title, named "*Without a name*," requires critical analysis as there is a name for everything in the novel. Name is a major element in creating identity in the human world. There is nothing *Without a Name*. Human beings, animals, birds, lands, events, incidents, matters, materials, and relationships are given names. Yet there is also a denial of identity to some sections of the people in the act of domination, ruling, and hegemony. It may be racial, gender, religious, or geographical. Yvonne Vera has given without a name as the title for her novel. Hence, curiosity is created to detect **why** such a title is given. In order to detect it, an attempt is made in the following structure. There will be four sections in which each of them will be taken for analysis.

- Section: I: Examination of Characters
- Section: II: Examination of the places

- Section: IV: Examination of Relationships

## Section: I: Examination of Characters

### Mazvita's Character

Yvonne Vera's titular character Mazvita begins her journey from Mubaira to Harare as a lonely orphan girl who seeks freedom and a job in a new place away from Mubaira, in Mohondoro. Harare, the big city, is an obvious place in which to dream and escape. Lamentably, she is not able to escape from the unkind attitude of society and gets abused and raped violently. She was raped many times in the novel. When Mazvita first emerges in the story, it is unclear what her true identity is, including her age, parents, and physical appearance. During her stay in Kadoma, there is Nyenyedzi, with whom she feels more comfortable staying. He has worked in the tobacco barn in Kadoma for the last two years and is willing to be in Kadoma. He claims that if she stays a year with him, they will possibly make decisions for the future and are not ready to connect Mazvita on the journey to Harare. He is fascinated by joining the civil war in Mubaira instead of escaping from the liberation war.

Their relationship continued for a short period of time. However, Mazvita carried a strong desire to free herself from the trouble of terror in Mubaira and was ready to move to Harare alone without Nyenyedzi. She is so desperate to achieve success in the big city of Harare.

In Harare, she meets Joel a soldier. They just met and stayed together as though they did not have pasts or futures. She is uninformed of Joel's work or family details and became an efficient housekeeper, which illustrates her dependability on Joel throughout the stay. She pretended that she had no plans for the future and secretly searched for jobs in industries and homes to live her dream life free from Joel. Later, Mazvita learns about the pregnancy and tries to hide from Joel due to the fear of aloofness in the big city of Harare, although it gets uncovered and he refuses to let her stay with him under the same roof for any longer. She became unaccompanied once again with pregnancy and became dissatisfied with the pathetic condition of life. Mazvita delivered a baby during the journey and kept it mysterious from society; however, she blames the arrival of that baby as a major reason for the

failure of her dreams, and later it dies without getting any identity.

### Nyenyedzi

He is a static character, and his extremely short appearance can be observed in the story. He has worked in the tobacco barn in Kodoma for the last two years. He is willing to have a better future with Mazvita if everything goes well, and he is also so fascinated by participation in the freedom war of independence during the civil war that he rejected going with Mazvita to Harare in search of a new world and remains in Kodoma. They have an excellent connection and relationship, but stay for a short period of time together and later diverge.

### Joel

He is a static character in the story. He appears as a soldier but does not get any authentication about his profession or family background in the novel. He offered shelter to Mazvita during her first arrival in Harare and misused her body whenever he wanted. He never spoke of discussing it with her parents, as Nyenyedzi did. He came into view emotionless and disengaged emotionally with Mazvita. When Mazvita becomes pregnant, he drives her out of his residence because he feels that she has betrayed him.

### Examination of Places

These places describe the situation of civil war in 1977. The places mainly highlighted in the novel are as follows, Kadomo-Mubaira-Harare, are the three main places in the novel which describes not only the geographical aspects but also geopolitical conflict in Zimbabwe.

Mazvita born in Mubaira as an orphan and raped by the unidentified soldier in the farm and moved to Kadoma in search of safety but soon learns about the civil war in the city and tried to rush towards Harare in search of work and free survival. These places, roads, streets are evident for the bloodshed and economical havoc during civil war, due to this people turns meek and passive. It is quite uncommon to die natural deaths in these places yet full of corruption and unlivable rituals can be observed.

### Examination of Events

The events in the novel are traced on the basis of the late 1970's. It is hotbed of violent political action and revolutionary social change in Zimbabwe. These events created major impact on the writer to Pen this novel by her creative style of narration to portray the civil war impact on women and children living during and after the civil war in Zimbabwe.

Vera describes the common features of daily life in Zimbabwe through the circumstances of the bus where human and animals travel together. It represents the economical difficulty in 1977 Rhodesia. The event has disturbed the common lives in Rhodesia, mainly the lives of women and children. This is depicted through the view of Mazvita on street sale by a small boy and a woman due to war the people turns impassive, bleak, miserable and aimless in Rhodesia.

### Examination of Relationships

The definition of the word "relationship" is the condition of being related, interrelated, or having a close connection with another person." Relationships in the story exhibit a perplexing nature in that they lack a clear label for their connection. There is nothing Without a Name, names play a significant role in developing identity in the human world. Names are given to people, animals, birds, regions, occasions, matters, and connections. Nothing in the world can be identified Without a Name. The three main unidentified relationships highlighted in this paper, such as the relationship between Mazvita and Nyenyedzi, who had a tight bond during her visit to Kodoma, is unnamed. The text does not explicitly describe their relationship as one of love, marriage, or cohabitation. Therefore, it cannot be properly acknowledged as such. As a result, Mazvita's relationship with the male characters in the book is not given the due respect.

The second relationship is with Joel, who picks her up on the street of Harare not for the sake of affection, love, or marriage but because he wanted a woman for pleasure and to get free from the war stress. He brings her to his house, but he is not serious about their relationship and is not ready to label it by a particular name. So the

relationship between Joel and Mazvita is regarded as Without a Name.

The third unidentified relationship is with her baby, who arrived anonymously, and she has no name for the baby because of the unidentified relationship.

Vera said that "Then the baby arrived, just like that. She had no name for the baby. A name could not be given to a child just like that. A name for calling a child into the world, for acceptance, for grace. A name binds a mother to her child. A name is for waiting, for release, an embrace precious and permanent, a promise to growing life. She had no promises to offer this child. Mazvita could not even name the child from the emptiness which surrounded her. She simply held the child, and fed her from her breast. The child grew in a silence with no name. Mazvita could not name the silence." (85, *Without a Name*)

The above lines gives enormous sense to its reader that having a name is more important to leading a meaningful life in society than living without one, as there is no name for the baby and the mother's relationship in the novel, and the baby dies before it could be called by any name in the world.

### Conclusion

The study reveals that the novel is about a zimbabwean girl called Mazvita who represents the young women of her time in Zimbabwe. She is vulnerable on two accounts namely war and woman. War shows no respect and sympathy to anybody and more so to women. The soldiers who are hungry of lust takes advantage of her helplessness and rape her. In the world of patriarchy with the gender discrimination, she as a woman is exploited and treated not as a human being but as a sex-object for man's sexual gratification.

Mazvita is deprived of a stable and respectable identity. Her name is just a word without signifying anything. Her relationship with two men gives her no identity but makes her pathetic as she becomes pregnant and mother without anybody as her husband. The author shows that Without a Name refers to woman as being always denied a place or position or status or dignity.

**References**

1. Dodgson-Katiyo, Pauline, and Gina Wisker. *Rites of Passage in Postcolonial Women's Writing*. Rapidi, 2010.
2. Etymoline.com
3. Graham, James. *Land and Nationalism in Fictions from South Africa*. Routledge, 2014.
4. Guignery, Vanessa. *Voice and Silence in the contemporary Novel in English*. Cambridge Scholar Pub,2009.
5. Jstor.org
6. Vera, Yvonne,1994. *Without a name*. Harare. Baobab Books.