The ten chapters that follow are an essential read for every researcher interested in the Horn or in borderlands. They paint a vivid picture of the different ways in which the lives of ordinary people are influenced by state borders, and in which state borders are turned (or not) into a social reality by local agents. All chapters are written on the basis of a deep knowledge and in most cases familiarity of a specific border region; they are nuanced without the argument becoming lost in empirical detail.

Christopher Clapham's conclusion takes up the themes of the introduction. Where the editors have concentrated on borders as resources, Clapham points to the blind spots of such a partial analysis. Borders are always resources but they may simultaneously be constraints and sites of conflict. Through their existence and their specific history, they create realities that often stand in the way of better arrangements. If one tried to weigh the positive and the negative impact of borders for local people, what would be the result?

It is not the aim of Feyissa's and Hoehne's volume to answer this question. Instead, they offer a partial but extremely valid theoretical perspective sustained with detailed empirical data. Together with other recent work on borderlands in Africa, their work opens up a crucial debate that nobody interested in African political and social issues can ignore.

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Pioneers, Settlers, Aliens, Exiles: the decolonisation of white identity in Zimbabwe by J. L. FISHER
Canberra: Australia National University, 2010. Pp. 276, $29.95 (pbk).
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Since the political implosion of Zimbabwe in the 2000s there has been a rush of texts adding to the existing genre of white writing in Southern Africa. These texts have taken the form of biographies, novels, poems and political commentary, and have varied in quality and depth. They have provided a range of views from the insightful to pious protestations of colonial nostalgia thinly disguised as righteous responses to majoritarian repression. All these texts, however, have sought their authority from the emergence of the authoritarian nationalism of ZANU-PF, and have therefore located their narratives within a selective construction of national decline and general disillusionment with the liberation project. Much of the output addresses the tumultuous Zimbabwean land question, around which a good deal of white identity was historically constructed through the tropes of 'improvement', 'conservation' and 'modernisation' – and with these, an earned sense of 'belonging'. However, as Ranka Primorac has observed, a substantive amount of such writing on Zimbabwe 'continues to reproduce a deep and colonially-rooted ambivalence towards notions of Africa, home and belonging'.

Fisher's book is a refreshing contribution to the understanding of the challenges of white identity in post-settler colonial Zimbabwe, focusing as it does largely on urban whites – already a departure from the more characteristic rural story of white decline. Fisher skilfully tracks the ways in which white Zimbabweans attempted to respond to the different phases of post-colonial

politics, through a finely nuanced application of post-colonial theory. *Pioneers, Settlers, Aliens, Exiles* provides a valuable guide to the changes that have taken place over the last thirty or so years, from the period of National Reconciliation, in which whites were invited to join a new unified nation – even as their special status was continually noted in opposition to the majority – to the politics of indigeneity and patriotic history, in which they were thrust into the role of outsiders and enemies.

In the chapter entitled 'The loss of certainty', Fisher tracks the dilemma of white Zimbabweans whom she describes, in James Ferguson's words, as having 'neither an unequivocal sense of membership in their community of origin, nor an uncomplicated conviction of having left it behind'. The only role that the Manichean language of ZANU-PF's nationalism has provided for white Zimbabweans is that of colonial oppressor. Given all the blockages that settler rule put in place, it was not difficult for African nationalists to construct and appeal to such stark cleavages between races. Thus at an important level Mugabe's racialised nationalism speaks to those harsh delineations of the colonial experience. Yet as with all such absolutisms the authoritarian discourse of the Mugabe state occludes the interrelatedness of the colonial experience – in short, the ways in which the experiences of colonialism are now a vital part of what it means to be Zimbabwean. There is no returning to an original Zimbabwean-ness, which never existed in the first place. Any more plural notion of the nation would need to look at what Fisher calls the 'recognition of mutuality' between the races in Zimbabwe. Of course, such a course can easily veer into a superficial rainbow nation politics that very quickly fractures on the structural logic of persistent racial inequalities. However, the search for such a dialogue remains one of the many historical legacies facing post-settler Southern Africa. Fisher's book is an important contribution to the debate.

One of the few weaknesses of the book is that it does not differentiate sufficiently when discussing white identities in urban Zimbabwe. There have been important interventions by white Zimbabweans in the post-colonial period that have contributed to key discussions around sexual politics, democratisation and publishing, and played an important role in opening up the discussion about the nation and belonging in the last decade. These dissenting views may be in the minority within the broader spectrum of white opinion, but they deserve more attention in any future discussion of white identity in Zimbabwe.

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Whiteness in Rhodesia: race, landscape, and the problem of belonging
by D. M. HUGHES
New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2010. Pp. xx+204, $30.00 (pbk).
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David Hughes has done good work in the past on black identities in the south-eastern Zimbabean lowveld. He is now working his way out of being an anthropologist of Zimbabwe, a task which he says has become impossibly difficult. His work once involved dressing down to mix with an African peasantry. Now, on his route out of Zimbabwe, he has done some dressing up,