Dialogues of Memory, Heritage and Transformation: Re-membering Contested Identities and Spaces in Postcolonial South African and Zimbabwean White Writings

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Summary

The protean and contested symbols of Zimbabwean literature remain the land and invented heroes, including a hagiographic iconisation of shrines, best seen in the Zimbabwe ruins, the Zimbabwe Bird and the national heroes' acre. In South African white writings, the symbolic topos has been dominated by prison walls, the hangman's noose, Robben Island and, in the post-apartheid era, Saartjie Baartman and the imagined rainbow generated through the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC). The horrors of apartheid are ideographically embodied in Coetzee's tongueless protagonist, Foe. In both locales, white writings – fictive renditions and auto/biographical – have invited critically legitimated constructs of coherence. This article contends that answers to our present postcolonial crises inhere in the multiplicity of voices, not monological narratives. Diversity, and therefore polyphony, is valued for its ability to suggest multiple ways of seeing and belonging to national imaginaries; its ability to suggest answers to the postcolonial problematic related to memory, heritage and transformation. This article explores how the meanings of cultural objects often display shifting appropriations that garner either symbolic or ephemeral qualities, demonstrating the ability of those in power at different historical junctures to determine and confer minted meanings. In turn, this anxiety and re-membering of space and symbol has a bearing on ownership claims, and gives rise to a choreographed heritage discourse.

Opsomming

Die simbole van die Zimbabwese literatuur, alhoewel dikwels bevraagteken, is steeds dié van fantasie helde, insluitend oordrewe ikonisering van monumente, soos gesien kan word in die Zimbabwe ruïnes, die Zimbabwe Voël asook die nasionale helde akker. In Suid-Afrikaanse wit literatuur, word die simboliese onderwerpe gedomineer deur tronkmure, die galg, Robben Eiland en in die post-apartheid era is dit Saartjie Baartman en die voorgestelde reënboognasie, uitgedink deur die Waarheids- en Versoeningskommissie (WVK). Die gruweldade van apartheid word ideologies begrond in Coetzee se tonglose karakter, Foe. In beide lokale, wit literatuurstukke – fiktiewe en outo/biografiese weergawes – is kritiese, regmatige, samebindende konstrukte teenwooordig. Hierdie artikel beveg die antwoorde vir ons

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huidige post-koloniale krises, bevat in veelvoudige stemme en nie narratiewe as monoloë nie. Diversiteit, en daarom ook polyfonie, is waardevol ten opsigte van die vermoë om veelvoudige maniere aan te beveel om uitkyke oor "behoort aan", sowel as "nasionale drome" aan te spreek; die vermoë om antwoorde ten opsigte van die problematiese post-koloniale geheue, erfenis en transformasie voor te stel. Hierdie artikel ondersoek verder die betekenis van kulturele simbole, wat dikwels die veranderde aannames van kultuurobjekte ten toon stel, met soms vervlietende kwaliteite, wat demonstreer hoe mense in magsposisies verskillende historiese tydperke gebruik om betekenisse te bepaal en bespreek. Hierdie angstige her-onthou van spasie en simboliek beïnvloed hoe eienaarskap beleef word en veroorsaak 'n diskoers oor erfenis.

Introduction

In colonial Zimbabwe the most enduring symbols have been the stone walls of the Great Zimbabwe ruins, the soapstone Zimbabwe bird, the chevron patterns of Munhumutapa Empire, the lion, the kudu and the imprimatur of a founder, Cecil John Rhodes. These conveyed an imagined identity suffused by a sense of permanence and stoicism. After ninety years of colonial rule, post-independence Zimbabwe carved a new national anthem, "Simudzayi mureza we Zimbabwe" to replace "Voices of Rhodesia" but, ironically, the new ideological mint re-booted the same, aforementioned, symbols that had defined white Rhodesia, albeit with a different imprimatur of a founder, Robert Gabriel Mugabe. If the "heroes" of Empire and Ian Smith's UDI were buried in the precincts of church cathedrals and private cemeteries, the new postcolonial government repatriated its "fallen heroes" and re-buried them at the national heroes' acre, a space that dramatises an obsession with bones, blood and the cemetery (Muchemwa 2010: 6). The arched stonewall entrance to this "heritage site" bears the stony faces of the unknown soldier, Nehanda and Kaguvi, the latter two having been mediatised into emblematic architects of the first Chimurenga against settler colonialism.

  On 12 September 1890, white settlers hoisted the Union Jack on a kopje and re-named the space Salisbury; on 18 April 1980, ninety years later, the nationalists lowered that flag and hoisted the multi-coloured Zimbabwean one. To underscore that "there ain't no black in the Union Jack" (Gilroy 1993), Rhodesia's new roads in Salisbury, Bulawayo and other major cities were named after Queen Elizabeth, Allan Wilson, Prince Edward, Selbourne, Robert Moffat and the ensemble that made up the Pioneer column. A minute past political independence, Zimbabwe's claim to legitimacy and a new hegemony were enacted through an erasure of the colonial names and a new symbolisation imbued with spectacle gave new names to roads, shopping malls and buildings: Kenneth Kaunda, Samora Machel, Julius Nyerere, Joshua Nkomo, Tongogara, Chinamano and the current president of Zimbabwe, Robert Mugabe. In an instance of unintended irony, at the presidential offices located at the corner of Second

Street and Robert Mugabe road, a white soapstone carving of Cecil John Rhodes stands guard to date.

In South Africa too, the roads were re-branded: Jan Smuts was renamed Oliver Tambo, Paul Kruger became Chris Hani, Prinsloo earned Walter Sisulu, the unassuming, bland Church Street attracted the militant Helen Joseph, apartheid's architect D.F. Malan was replaced by the black literary giant Es'kia Mphahlele while Voortrekker was named after the founder of the Black Consciousness Movement, Steve Biko. In an uncanny replay of the historiography of Zimbabwe, there have been tumultuous "hashtag" calls for the "Rhodes must fall" campaigns in South Africa.

This article argues that Rhodes, the first white governor of Cape Town, the man who bought Groote Schuur and decoratively adorned his living room with a replica of the Zimbabwe bird and a chevron pattern, continues to dominate white metanarratives and dramaturgical inventions that are suffused with violence and insecurities connected to citizenship and belonging. In fact, the article is framed by the ways in which imagining the nation, in colonial and postcolonial times, excludes and disposes of undesirable ethnicities at convenient points in narrativising constructed identities and symbols that forge and confer binaries of difference and homogeneity. Dialogues of memory, heritage and transformation are re-membered differently in each epoch, carving contested – and at times contrived – identities and spaces in both postcolonial South African and Zimbabwean white writings. Guy Debord (2002) proposes conceptualising society as a spectacle and this conceptualisation is adapted for this article in order to build upon Achille Mbembe's analysis of the selective paring of memory, heritage and selving (Mbembe 2001). Exhibition, display and the notion of the pageant are interrogated in their manifestations as state-sponsored funerals in Zimbabwe and Pauline magnanimity that is accoutred with beneficence in the TRC in South Africa.

Crucial Moments in the Legitimation of Hegemony

This article purposively selects white South African and Zimbabwean writers in order to tease out concepts of memory, heritage and trans-formation. In line with Jan Assmann (1998: 130) it identifies problems associated with representing memory and identity, reminiscence and the presence of the past, the hiatus that separates forgetting and silencing and the enactment of remembrance. Tagwirei (2015: 2) suggests that auto-biographical self-knowledge requires a capacity to represent the self as a psychologically coherent entity persisting through time, whose past experiences are remembered as belonging to its present self. It is this remembering that constitutes a dialogue between the "now" and "then"; it is the assemblage of cultural, historical and experiential toolkits whose

function is to project past injustices together with the phantasm of an ideal *paradiso*. The horizon of cultural memory, I argue, is framed through texts, rites and monuments where agency is embedded in recitation, practice and observance. In this vein then, texts, rites and monuments thematise the nexus between memory and group where memory is epistemologically understood as contemporised past. Cultural memory preserves the repository of knowledges from which the group, the nation and the state derives an awareness of its (dis)unity and peculiarity – it is an identificatory determinant imbued with a capacity to reconstruct and crystallise a culturally institutionalised heritage.

Paul Hubbard (2009: 3) argues that Great Zimbabwe is a unique monument whose symbolic figuration has been institutionalised in Zimbabwean historiography, literature and public memory. He suggests that Great Zimbabwe monumentalises the architectural ingenuity of the forebears of the Shona people who built it. Hubbard adds that at its political and economic zenith, it had a population in excess of 12,000 people and controlled a massive trading nexus that went beyond its cartographical borders. In the Zimbabwean imaginary, Great Zimbabwe represents an elusive global and political stability (Garlake 1985; Huffman 1996). The site itself and pedigree artefacts recovered from there, including one of the soapstone birds that graces Rhodes' Groot Schuur house in Cape Town, have been used in a variety of ways as symbols of both colonial and independent Zimbabwe (Sinamai 2003). It is pertinent to observe that even in modern day architectural designs, the Harare international airport, product of embezzlement and corrupt tenders, prides itself of a patriotic control tower which is "a stylized replica of the acropolis at Great Zimbabwe" (Godwin 2006: 137).

In the narratives written by whites, and narratives that hedge coloniality, the Zimbabwe Bird has been projected as a symbol of the nation, especially the imposing ruins (Hubbard 2009; Matenga 2011) but ironically, little has been documented on the overly politicised adoption of Zimbabwe as a name for the country. For many a white writer after the transfer of political power to the "tribesman", there is nostalgia for the Rhodesian laager and remorse at the loss of an edenic time where "government was in responsible hands" (Godwin & Hancock 1993: 123). Ambivalence, duplicity, riven loyalties and often incredulous narratives characterise the literary productions of this newly minoritised group.

For many historians the name Zimbabwe is anchored on the nationalists' protracted battles against Rhodesian brutalities during colonial oppression. The settlers were militarily and culturally aggressive and the nationalists resorted to equally militant strategies of recovering and reclaiming cultural and political identities through defiance and erasure. During the liberation war, the Zimbabwe ruins constituted a site for redesign and articulation for belonging and for memorialising the fortified nationalist assault on Ian

Smith. The ruins stood for resilience, unity, and reconstruction. Identity and autonomy were imagined in monolithic terms to rally a nationalist agenda, something corroborated by the late Eddison Zvobgo, a founding member of the ruling ZANU PF, when he said "As practical politicians we did not worry whether it was linked to religion or not. We had found a rallying point" (Fontein 2006: 153). Great Zimbabwe was adequate, almost primordial in its elaborate and enduring structuration.

This notion of "practical politicians" becomes the forte for insidious practices where the national heroes' acre has become the performative arena for re-booting nationalistic narratives of loyalty and entitlement on funeral occasions. Kizito Muchemwa (2010: 505) reflects presciently that the Zimbabwean narrative of perpetual heroic struggle is defined by Chimurenga:

> Chimurenga is a [military, sociological and] cultural moment [that] has established its hegemony over the culture, politics and economy of [Zimbabwe] and continues to assume fresh articulations as its grammar of violence is employed whenever there are crises in the country.

The current Zimbabwean political leadership has choreographed and perfected the art of performance through rituals and crafted ceremonies, pageantry that Muchemwa (2010) calls "biras and galas." These state-funded rituals are grandiose displays that revolve around funerals, invented histories and libation ceremonies. The most outstanding stylisations are the public parade of armoury and patriotic corpses in desperate and often despotic efforts to reboot popular support through repetition. Some observers have even suggested that the demise of patriots is clandestinely planned to coincide with one or another national crisis and therefore the Zimbabwean narrative is suffused with "prominent deaths" and others rescued from oblivion for intense appeal to a national public that has largely "abandoned" the path of the party (*gwara re musangano*) to take an oppositional situatedness. Muchemwa (2010: 505) is therefore apt to observe that the ZANU PF government thrives on "repetition of the state narrative in which bones, blood and death have become symbolic currency minted by the state to circulate in spaces in which the nation is imagined."

Muchemwa uses the trope of repetition and minting to stress how symbolic capital is appropriated by a hegemonic political apparatus to advocate notions of "sovereignty, inflation and devaluation" (2010: 505). In the political rhetoric and fictive versions, "symbols, like currency, are minted, circulated and subjected to the vicissitudes of the market" (2010: 505). Muchemwa thus identifies many parallels between financial and ideologically hegemonic currencies, particularly in the areas of inflation, overvaluing and the Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe's reckless printing of valueless currency post-2000. Unlike the decommissioned financial currency, the impregnable symbolic coins that have arisen from the ideological

mint are the Zimbabwe Monument, Nehanda, Chaminuka, blood and bones. As suggested already, bones occupy the central position in the motif of contested identities that has shaped Zimbabwe's historical, literary and political landscapes. The ultimate hero in white Zimbabwean writings dies and, to extend Muchemwa's metaphor, their remnants, the bones, "acquire an emblematic quality of sharp and ineluctable power that will seek restitution for past wrongs" (2010: 505). Blood, for the Rhodesians as for the Zimbabweans, is the preferred symbol of strife, violence and ineffable sacrifice.

The remarkably disproportional intersection at which the geopolitical meets ordinary individual life invites its own problematic of representation and narrative filters. The formal strategies that have been, and continue to be, useful in exploring the unfathomable distance between the individual and the geopolitical include the defamiliarization of reality, the expansion of narrative space, syntactic transgressions, the bricolage of diverse styles and voices, and non-mimetic modes of registering "the disjunctures in the *understanding* of the real" (Jameson 2001: 83). If, as Jameson (2001) argues, the global network of imperialism in the age of high modernism is imagined from the metropolitan vantage point, then, in the postcolonial era, one can talk about a reverse process of cognitive mapping; now it is the periphery that is trying to make sense of the larger network of the system. Pheng Cheah (2007: 29) puts it another way, that "[t]he [postcolonial] nation recognises itself in the world, which thereby becomes a world *for* it." Yet, the imperative of cognitive mapping and collective imagination in the postcolonial context comes with its own challenges, especially when one considers the disproportionate relationship between the subject and the geopolitical totality.

Guilherme and Dietz (2014) argue that there must be alternative understandings of contemporary postcolonial problems and challenges, suggesting that an embrace of diversity offers a possible pathway. My purpose in this article is to bring attention to those postcolonial white writers whose interests lie in imposing a singular definition of Southern African hegemonic problems, and insisting on a singular set of western solutions. Peter Godwin is one such writer who essentialises and laments the descent of Zimbabwe into a community founded on an unworkable indigeneity. He says:

> [This] whole country is a chimera: part developed, democratic; part ancient, atavistic, authoritarian, and in its very conception, a foolish, unworkable contraption destined to split asunder along its very evident seams, a Frankenstein country where the crude sutures are visible to all …. Nothing is as it was.
>
> (Godwin 2006: 86)

Godwin deploys charged commentary through the first person narrative voice, rising to a crescendo when he frames his dispossession through an index fecund with his otherness:

> It is sometimes said that the worst thing to happen to Africa was the arrival of the white man. And the second worst was his departure. Colonialism lasted just long enough to destroy much of Africa's cultures and traditions, but not long enough to leave behind a durable replacement.
>
> (2006: 153)

While a more thorough-going inter (or trans-) cultural understanding may well suggest avenues for modern Southern African humanity to escape their current crises, the elites who currently wield power have accrued immense material, social and political benefits by maintaining what Skilling (2015: 9) calls "a sense of perpetual crisis and emergency" in their states. Norman Fairclough's (2006) observation on the irreducible relationality of human beings and the corrective potential such realisations make to the western-liberal insistence on the autonomous self is significant. This article also makes similar conclusions that the anxieties generated through the powerful elite's maintaining a sense of *perpetual crisis and emergency* has become an expedient way of managing and marginalising divergent perspectives within their b/orders. I insist on the deconstructionist reading of borders and the slippage between coercive "orders" employed to (mis)manage postcolonial states and the porosity of national "borders" in times of political and economic crises. In white narratives discussed so far, it could be legitimately concluded that these artefacts re-present a counter discursive platform that privileges dispossession and marginalisation, a peripheralisation that stokes nostalgia for an irredeemable past.

  Postcolonial white *écriture* in Zimbabwe and South Africa can be said to have initiated the groundwork for imagining the nation as an implosive political structure (Brennan 2006) that would become a charade of memory, belonging and commitment. Deemed to be already ahead of a backward economic mode of production, or an underdeveloped base, postcolonial white literature would account for, and overcome the excesses of African dictators, the malfeasance of corruption and recover therefore an edenic past. High expectations for a peculiarly "postcolonial" recuperation under a black hegemony led to the emergence of a counter-discourse of disillusionment with postcolonial government and aesthetics for failing in the task of creating the nation in the mould of a collective "white" imagination. By this argument, the new nation in postcolonial white writing could not but remain the absent object of desire and longing, a chimera, unworkable, a Frankenstein country. After all, what hope was there for a reconstructive white literature in representing equally belated black nations that tended toward cultural paralysis and political repression in response to

the pressures of the global call for "human rights, right to property and the pursuit of happiness"?

What this pessimistic approach has overlooked is the fact that literature is always already *entangled* with the social reality that it figuratively attempts to represent. I argue, therefore, against a certain ideology of postcolonialism that makes an impossible demand from the postcolonial fictive imagination, that being to transcend or subsume an entire set of contradictions in the social realm. I identify that postcolonial white narratives represent the structural superimpositions of external systemic and epistemic forces on the national space of sovereignty in a form that is reminiscent of montage. Such narratives enact an affective transnational aesthetic that mediates the uneven relationship between individual and collective subjects and the external dynamics of historical-spatial transformations of the global system. Montage in this specific context refers to the collision – and collusion – of the national and transnational.

Entanglement, montage, and delinking undergo a regressive semantic shift in the neocolonial context, which overlaps with the rise of perceived one-party state dictatorships and authoritarian regimes in many postcolonies such as Zimbabwe and South Africa. The Rhodesian Front, as much as the National Party in South Africa, was a de facto one party state. As formulated by Édouard Glissant (2009), entanglement or *point d'intrication* encapsulates the hybridisation of human societies, as a result of the historical brutalities of colonialism and other forms of domination. Glissant proposes the concept to emphasise the fragmented diversity of the multiplied poetics of the world and the nonassimilatory relation of cultural difference from specific historical dispositions that are individually distinct but also variously connected. Achille Mbembe (2001: ix) states, "the postcolony encloses multiple *durées* made up of discontinuities, reversals, inertias, and swings that overlay one another, interpenetrate one another, and envelope one another: [in short,] an entanglement."

Edward Matenga (2011) observes that at least eight soapstone carvings of birds decorated Great Zimbabwe when the white colonists arrived at the turn of the 19th century. This political and urban centre had receded in stature politically and economically for four centuries, but it had remained a spiritual acropolis. The shrine has been revered and continues to be a heritage and pilgrimage site, a centre that stokes memories of stubborn hope and an exclusively black lineage. The Zimbabwe birds had the aura of deities whose power has not been fully illuminated. When the European settlers removed them from the site in dubious transactions, relocating the birds from Great Zimbabwe, they claimed the birds as trophies of imperial conquest. These treasured objects were translocated from the Great Zimbabwe, and their migrations have since been intertwined with that of "the site in a matrix of contested meanings and ownership" (Matenga 2011: 3). Characteristically, "the forced migrations of the Zimbabwe Birds within

the African continent and to Europe and their subsequent return to their homeland decades later are characterised by melodramatic episodes of manoeuvring by traders, politicians and theologians" (Matenga 2011: 6). These trans-Atlantic journeys are glossed as barter deals where even the negotiated return of seven of the birds is extolled as grand gestures of international museumisation and generosity.

Diversity, Difference and Dispersal: Polit(r)icking Powers

Zimbabwean independence meant a great loss for white enclaves and was therefore met with fear, trepidation, anxiety and puzzlement by the white community. Godwin and Hancock (1993: 314) observe that "most [white Rhodesians] were decent ordinary folk who … never dreamed beyond their immediate security and happiness …. They experienced a warm inner glow when thinking of their [invention] …. Rhodesia." In *Rainbow's end*, St John (2007: 11) explains that "the euphoria" of independence amongst black citizens stood in stark contrast to the non-committal and often unambiguous resentment of Mugabe and the rest of the nationalists. He contemplates this day as one where "I'd only recently registered the name of Mugabe, and yet every black person in Zimbabwe seemed to have known about him for years" (11). He had stubbornly believed the whites were fighting against communism. In a forlorn tone he recognises that "[the war] had turned out to be someone else's war of freedom." For their involvement in a war decidedly fought on chromatic differences, he admits that "*We* [the whites] were the terrorists" and therefore in the new dispensation, "our heroes were not heroes at all, they were evil racists. Only black people were allowed to be heroes" (11).

By the same token, Fuller suggests that

> There are, it turns out, no white war heroes. None of the army guys for whom I cheered and prayed will be buried at Heroes Acre under the eternal flame. They will not have their bones dug up from faraway battlefields.
>
> (2001: 6)

The end of the war and independence generate spasms of fear, insecurity and impulses of anxiety in white writers such as Fuller, St John and Godwin. New relational registers highlight the anxiety and bewilderment of such transition to majority rule. This is discursively extended through an increasingly "disoriented" white identity formation, pushed to the political and cultural margins where practical hybridity seems impossible. One way white Zimbabwean pain registers is in the ways that several white writers struggle with questions of "belonging." The protean and contested symbols of Zimbabwean literature remain the land and invented heroes, including a hagiographic iconisation of shrines, best seen in the Zimbabwe ruins and the

national heroes' acre. James Kilgore, author of the novel *We are all Zimbabweans now* (2007: 3) wryly observes:

> On the opposite pole, the seizure of white-owned farms by the Mugabe government prompted a resurrection of colonialist history. The few Western media reports I saw pictured beleaguered white farmers under attack by *unrelenting, unreasoning Africans*.
>
> (emphasis mine)

These post-2000 narratives typically portray whites as innocent victims of a chaotic land reform programme. The narratives insist that a well-intentioned white minority who had built the country during Rhodesian days was now the subject of state-sponsored vilification; reviled and dispossessed. The memoirs by white Zimbabweans/Rhodesians – Buckle 2001 and 2006; Hunter, Farren & Farren 2001; Harrison 2006 – emerged to revive the myths of a Rhodesian past. Elsewhere, Kilgore (2014: 2) adds that "like its patriotic counterpart, this *resurgent white supremacist history involved simplifying and omitting*. Blights on the days of white rule such as the migrant labour system, black disenfranchisement, and expropriation of African lands conveniently disappeared" from these memoirs.

The pastoral romances of colonial Rhodesia re-emerge in a complex tapestry that invites a thorough interrogation of the relationship between the copy and the original (Grobler 2015). The status of the original is both affirmed and threatened by the creation of a copy - similar to the identity of the b/order that is both claimed and contested from the inside as much as from the outside. Rhodesia had rehearsed and memorialised its own triumphs though such calendrical dates as Rhodes and Founders Day, an imperial occasion set aside to remember and eulogise the individuals who led the pioneer column and those "gallant" fighters who paid the ultimate sacrifice and perished in the Wilson Patrol at Shangani. Grobler (2015: 3) are insightful in observing that "the tension between original [Rhodesian narratives] and copy [post-independence Zimbabwean white narratives] encourages liminality as it threatens the status of the original but also simultaneously precludes the memory of the original from being erased."

On a website bearing the title of his memoir *Jambanja*, Eric Harrison (2010) summarises his view of Zimbabwe thus:

> In this new nation, tyranny replaced the democratic process. National self-sufficiency gave way to drastic shortages and malnutrition. Through this entire sorry history one thing stood out – the indomitable spirit of the white and black Zimbabweans who were the victims of this insanity.

Quest for Truths: The White Post-Apartheid Literary Archive

South African narratives by white writers have conveyed a disturbing gloominess and anxiety after Nelson Mandela. This segment of the article selectively deals with two woman writers, Antjie Krog (1998, 2003, 2009) and Zelda la Grange (2014). The demise of apartheid engendered novel ways of framing and negotiating identities, an experience succinctly captured in the following observation by Van Schalkwyk:

> The[re] are tensions between belonging and separation, but from opposite starting and ending points. Put together, [belonging to an apartheid dispensation and separation from it] complement each other, illuminating loss and desire.
>
> (2013: 122)

The post-apartheid white narrative intimated that the "white native" belonged differently. A new alloy of being integrated into a new political order was evident. As such, integration was on the terms initiated by the inclusive narrative of a rainbow nation. The comprehensive but under-stated truth was therefore of an unfulfilled and "othered" enclave, reminiscent of the tropes that filled Rhodesian white narratives.

As a consequence of such fluidities in the sense of belonging, citizenship and separation, Zelda la Grange inscribes her experiences with Nelson Mandela and the tension-filled moments when P.W. Botha – former president of apartheid South Africa – demands additional security personnel. La Grange distils this *unheimliche* – an uncanny anxiety – in the following:

> [Botha] seemed insistent on holding Mandela personally responsible for his grudges and grievances with modern South Africa. Many people who have not accepted the new South Africa do that. Whenever something goes wrong, it is put on Mandela's shoulders. People inherently want a scapegoat or someone to say, 'I told you so' when something doesn't go their way. For whites to have surrendered power they were always going to be overcritical of a black government, and when things no longer pleased them it would be blamed on the fact that blacks were inefficient and unable to run the country as they insisted they would … the racial issue complicated matters.
>
> (2014: 167-168)

Grudges and grievances, together with the "over-criticism" evident in white conversations about the "inefficiency" of black governance are privileged for their narrative gravitas.

Antjie Krog, in *Country of my Skull* (1998), explores questions of change and becoming, coherence and connectedness. In essence, she is trying to live across racial lines, beyond the ethnoscapes cartographically designed by

apartheid and politically erased by the democratic dispensation. She intimates such hard line experiences when she identifies the uneasiness of each chromatic silo: "this is how the Boere are. They will never change in their unchecked, local racism" (2009: 8). In both white and black lives, the skull is a symbol of death, standing also as a sign indicating danger or a b/order that may only be crossed at one's own peril. The symbol of a skull activates the notion of trespass and transgression, together with the attendant prohibitions. Possession, in tandem with invasion by the indeterminate is, in itself, also an uncanny experience. Although celebratory and reconciliatory in the humanistic footprint of the TRC, Krog's book communicates something of the "*Unheimliche*" in which the beauty of possibility and the horror of loss merge. Disturbance, getting dislodged and unsettled, including a pulsating desire are all emoticons that characterise the narrative as Krog incessantly questions: "what does one do with the old/which so cheerfully stinks along with the new?" This reads almost like an appropriation of Frantz Fanon's warning against essentialist notions of identity and framing in the saying "all natives are the same" and the colonised person replies "all settlers are the same" (Fanon 1967: 72).

Krog's work is hybrid – a montage of memoir, reportage and metafiction. Such stylistic and structural features of lamination confer a degree of similarity between the writings of Krog and Godwin. Her creative non-fiction texts apparently supplement and sequestrate from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in as much as Godwin's auto/biographical texts problematise the veracity of Zimbabwean experiences. Mark Sanders (2000: 23) argues that *Country of my Skull*, for instance, "reflects upon how truths are interlaced with acts of telling and questioning." The acts of telling and questioning are in turn implicated in intricate dynamics between the questioner and the teller where the disjointed narrative mimes the TRC sessions and seeks (an)other audience for whom such a vexed story would be coherent. Storying the experiences of human rights abuses and the attendant violences under apartheid in first person narrative voice is a performative attempt at presenting forensic attestations to the veracity of the historical narrative, and in the TRC archive, this is rendered in the third person. Hove (2014: 45) identifies such challenges whereby the auto/biographical text is deployed to conveniently re-version and re-vision political and ideological labyrinths.

Krog's sequel to *Country of My Skull* is *A Change of Tongue* (2003) and this is closely followed by *Begging to Be Black* (2009). Both sequels dramatise the quest for transformation and recuperation of white identities. They express a desire to be "homed" in an "unhomely" space. Perhaps, more accurately, Krog echoes Homi Bhabha (2003) who claims that to be un-homed is not to be homeless. In order to secure a postcolonial and post-apartheid future, Krog desires a change of tongue, a way to language her world, not any longer in Afrikaans as she begs to be black and in such

transmogrification replicate the experiences of this nation's becoming. *A change of tongue* is thematically and stylistically transgressive: it conflates testimony with fiction, autobiography and memoir in a tapestry that calls to mind Peter Godwin's *The Fear*. Such interstitial pluralities in craft and storying allow Krog to foreground her experiences of displacement from apartheid moorings and transition as a white Afrikaaner writer who has to negotiate a new constellation of identity matrices through language and the fragile (im)possibility of blackness.

   One of the most telling passages in *A Change of Tongue* is the following, which poignantly memorialises the funeral of the protagonist's father: "We stand here forlornly, your children, lost in a landscape in which we so often feel we no longer belong" (Krog 2003: 364). For the protagonist, generation after generation of this family have bled to make things work. They have toiled for their sustenance and the deceased trunk of this lineage can no longer "safeguard a place for us here [because] you left us bereft, unfamiliar with sharing" (Krog 2003: 364). After such a loss, the mourners are understandably "forlorn." It is the disorientation suggested by "lost in a landscape we no longer belong to" that stubbornly etches difference, a Derridean slippage from the centre, characterised by certainty and possession, to the periphery characterised by anxiety, vulnerability and dispossession. There is a sudden epiphany in the protagonist that after the change to a new black majoritarian rule, the deceased could not – *cannot* – "safeguard a place for us here." This epiphany viscerally mimes the vulnerability of the protagonist and her kith and kin.

   Peter Godwin etches similar testimonial quirks in order to reveal the enormity of his conceptual and psychological transition in *When a Crocodile Eats the Sun* (2006: 59):

> [The black man] feels sorry for Martin Olds and for me and for our little tribe of white Africans. I feel embarrassed, humiliated, mortified. I am not used to being pitied. I am the one who pities others.

Here, Peter Godwin demonstrates the visceral white anxieties that are precipitated by displacement and disempowerment, specifically where the one who dislodges has been projected as irredeemable and savage. Krog amplifies her sequestration from the only authentic orientation she has ever had; her sense of profound loss imbricates her uncertainty and insecurity, vulnerability and fragility as she has to belong differently to the tongues of other speakers.

There was this goat (2014) follows up on the vexed notions of forensic and historical truth. It is co-authored by a linguist, Nosisi Mpolweni, and a psychologist, Kopano Ratele. The triad in this narrative investigates the "incomprehensible" testimony of Notrose Nobomvu Konile, mother of an African National Congress activist who was part of a group that has become historicised as the Gugulethu Seven and murdered by apartheid agents. This

mother's name teams with unsettling layers of semantics: *not* [a] rose; yet Nobomvu suggests a red hue. Her testimony raises troubling questions of alterity and the disjointed oeuvre of the book seeks to demonstrate the impossibility of achieving coherence in the name of the rainbow nation and the philosophical magnanimity of Ubuntu. In a nutshell, Krog's post-apartheid literary archive troubles the notions of citizenship and belonging, certainty and sovereignty that were privileged in the monumental archive of the TRC.

Young (2012) makes an insightful observation about the "displays" that characterised the televisual footage and newspaper reportage during the TRC, an aspect that corroborates this article's observations about the insti-tutionalisation of burials of heroic cadres in Zimbabwe. She notes that such re-booting of mourning, pain and grief by the victims of apartheid projected them as exemplars of the spirit of forgiveness that is the quintessence of Ubuntu:

> The visibility of the bereaved mothers, as bereaved mothers, at the TRC hearings and in the media reporting on the hearings, follows the patterns of commemoration and resistance during the fight against apartheid. Media reports at the time of the hearings recall media reports in the immediate aftermath of the Gugulethu shootings in March 1986 and demonstrate the prominence of the category "the mothers" in public discourse. [A] bereaved mother was invited to speak at the combined funeral of the Gugulethu Seven in March 1986, as reported in The Argus, a prominent local daily newspaper, on March 13, 1996, under the headline "ANC man's mother guest at funeral": "Mrs Martha Mahlangu, mother of Solomon Mahlangu – the first member of the African National Congress's military wing to hang in South Africa – will be a guest speaker at the funeral of the seven men killed in a shootout with police in Gugulethu last week" (Staff Reporter, The Argus, March 13, 1986). Here, *the self-evident link between women mourning the loss of their sons becomes a powerful mechanism with which to link and therefore render politically significant seemingly isolated deaths*
>
> (Young 2012: 10; my emphasis)

What Notrose Nobomvu Konile's narrative does is to rebut, instead of reboot, the historiography of the ANC struggle. Konile's adamant statement that she has lost her only source of livelihood saddles, perpetually, the apartheid state (and the new dispensation) with liability for delictual acts performed by agents of the state. Konile represents an afflicted polity – the oppressed – and her stance mocks this fractured "republic of friends and enemies" (Motha 2010: 291). In one simple statement, Konile suggests a concrete and democratic demand that nullifies the epiphany envisaged in sacrificial reconciliation. Her narrative of belonging differently to the new South Africa engenders an aporia that indicts The Promotion of National Unity and Reconciliation Act 34 of 1995 as much as it projects the fallibility of a choreographed nationalist recuperation agenda monumentalised in the

archival details of the TRC's findings. She confesses that her son was an ordinary child who was true to his roots and routes. Her narrative revolves around intrigue and despair: "As far as I know he was *not* a member of the ANC or any other political organisation." In the same breath she adds: "We live in the Transkei and I don't know where he was working *but* he sent money every week." Consequently, Notrose Nobomvu Konile cannot forgive nor forget her loss. She refuses to be inserted into a South African rainbow national metanarrative that occludes the testimonial imperative of her agonal past.

Conclusion

Antjie Krog rejects the option of "white flight" from South Africa; Godwin takes flight from Zimbabwe. Zelda le Grange, in a terse prose, relives her alienation from white customs and Afrikaaner traditions as she becomes inserted into the private and public life of Nelson Mandela in a radically transformed South Africa that, in some quarters, remain spatially and politically connected to a laager-like Orania. Krog uses her laminated genre of literary non-fiction – an assemblage of documentary, autobiography and storying – to respond to the epistemological and ontological meanings attached to the processes of decolonisation-as-becoming. Godwin, unlike Krog, uses the semblance of auto/biography in his trilogy to recover and recuperate an older colonial order where his nostalgia inveighs at the horror and the moral depravity of Robert Mugabe through partial and selective documentation. All the texts discussed in this article are frenetically marked by uncertainty; they are postcolonial textual inaugurations of liminality and critique. The texts convey vanishing joys and glories by re-inscribing the vaunted national symbols that each regimen has monumentalised to articulate the predicament of marginality and the plasticity of white citizenship.

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