Dissident Narratives: Representations of Wars of Liberation in Zimbabwean and South African Fiction and Film

By

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For Luci and Maka who kept things together

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List of Abbreviations and Nomenclature

BSAC – The British South Africa Company, the commercial entity owned by Cecil John Rhodes and his associates which secured the British Royal Charter to colonize what is now Zimbabwe.

Pioneer Column – The initial band of mercenaries hired from all over the Western world by Cecil John Rhodes' British South Africa Company to "effectively" colonize the land north of the Limpopo.

RF - The Rhodesia Front party, the political party which won the all-white Rhodesian elections in 1965. Its leader, Ian Smith, an ultra-conservative, set the country towards armed conflict by first declaring UDI and rejecting democratic elections, imprisoning most of the nationalist leaders.

UDI – Ian Smith's Unilateral Declaration of Independence through which Rhodesian white settlers deemed the territory to be an autonomous entity in defiance of Britain, the original overall governing authority.

ZANU, later ZANU (PF) – The Zimbabwe African National Union, formed in 1963, one of two major nationalist parties that waged war against the Rhodesians. After splitting from ZAPU, ZANU was sometimes mistakenly perceived as a party for Shona people. ZANLA, the Zimbabwe African National Liberation Army, was its military wing, mainly based in newly-independent Mozambique but also in Tanzania.

ZAPU, later, PF ZAPU – The Zimbabwe African People's Union, formed in 1960, the first mass political party for Africans in Rhodesia. Though the leaders of ZAPU initially wanted peaceful

dialogue to resolve the Zimbabwe question, ZAPU later joined the armed struggle. ZIPRA, the Zimbabwe People's Revolutionary Army was its military wing.

ANC – One of two major African nationalist movements in South Africa. It became the major coalition partner in the first post-apartheid government of 1994.

Colored – The designation of people of mixed race in Zimbabwe and South Africa. Mostly used in self-affirmation, the term has endured into the postcolonial period.

Introduction

By choosing some exemplary fiction and film texts from Zimbabwe and South Africa, I seek to examine certain tendencies in the scholarship surrounding the extremely violent process often reduced to the familiar and somewhat simplistic phrase, "the liberation struggle." Broadly, I examine the relationship between the violence of the events so described and the memory of them in the selected films and fiction. In both countries, settler colonialism lasted well into the second half of the 20th century; a fact that means virtually all the filmmakers and writers who represent the narratives of war in both countries have a living memory of them.

The substantive publication of imaginative writing in Southern Africa stretches back to contact with Europe through the latter's missionaries and explorers.[1]. This study positions itself within the growing body of African scholarship on the literary and cinematic representation of violent conflict which characterized Africa's encounters with the West. In the case of southern Africa, this violence is principally between indigenous Africans and the European settlers. Over and above this generalized conflict, this study also brings into focus the violence visited upon other racial and social groups such as Indians, Coloreds, women, the youth and the vast majority of the masses whose participation characterizes all phases of African activism. South Africa and Zimbabwe provide excellent examples of the anatomy of this violence due to the enduring colonial domination of these geo-political areas, the uncompromising brutality of colonial rule and the racially-coded legislation that gave legal force to oppression and marginalization. The singular contribution of this study to existing literature of colonialism and the struggle against it

is its specific focus on the nature and legacy of wartime violence on the social groups mentioned above.

My choice of subject is premised on the simple fact that in the euphoria of political victory, colonial and postcolonial societies on both sides of the Limpopo River often forgot the nature and impacts of violence in shaping group and national identities. While individual writers and filmmakers have never pretended to forget this essentially gory history, political leaders have often chosen to simplify or ignore the true cost of large scale violence on individuals, families and whole societies in the region. Two examples suffice here; post-apartheid president Nelson Mandela famously instituted a racial reconciliation program to pacify post-apartheid South Africa by giving emotional release to families that had suffered violence during the decades of struggle.

Across the border in Zimbabwe, new prime minister Robert Mugabe astonished all by simply closing the whole long chapter of the Chimurenga War with one statement on national reconciliation. While these actions emphasize the pragmatic desire for post-apartheid/post-independence stability, what is lost is the memory of the violence that shapes both the colonial state and its postcolonial cousin. My study brings together a select group of biographical fiction, generic fiction and film to examine these nations' recent histories of violent struggles against colonialism. Instead of merely analyzing these texts as national narratives, I have deliberately chosen to stage a regional discussion that acknowledges the historical similarities in a broader effort to bridge some of colonialism's ridiculous fabrications which remain in place and have tended to reproduce themselves even in academic scholarship.[2]

At the center of my discussion are two concepts associated with the histories of Zimbabwe and South Africa: Settler occupation and liberation. Stripped to its basics, settler occupation describes the processes, both political and militaristic, through which territories of present-day Zimbabwe and South Africa fell under the control and ownership of European settlers who proceeded to create settler communities with vast commercial land interests. This process is, of course, the backdrop to what Rhodesia's foremost literary scholar, Anthony Chennells, calls the "purposeful imperial narrative" that sometimes combines frontier thrills and colonial adventure with the rhetorical and more practical necessities of colonial expansion…"[3] One Rhodesian captures it best early in the 20th century in a description that is also true of South Africa:

> Politically it is a white man's country: socially it is a white aristocracy with a black proletariat…Southern Rhodesia is a self-governing colony with a white population of 40,000, whereas the northern state is governed by the British Colonial Office and has only 2000 to 3000 white inhabitants, of whom many are civil servants. The Zambezi, which divides the two Rhodesias, is more than a physical boundary. There is good reason to think that it delimits the area in Central Africa nearest to the equator which can be regarded as a white man's country in any true sense.[4] (p.89)

Ideas about turning Rhodesia into "a white man's country" ruled by "a white aristocracy" permeate colonial white fiction, hence Chennells's emphasis on its obsessively exotic quality, described elsewhere in this study as the Rhodesia literary code. Key to my analysis of Rhodesian texts which represent colonial violence is the place of ideology in such writing, specifically the

infusion of colonial ideology – or the Rhodesian literary code - in their representation of this violent conflict. I am also fascinated by how these texts, some of which are published after the colonial project has collapsed, deviate from the classical Rhodesian master fiction or film biography by refusing to entirely endorse the Rhodesian project as it were, refusing to present Rhodesian settler colonialism as unproblematic.

The over-arching question that these texts raise is, of course, that of white identities in colonial and postcolonial southern Africa and the 'right' to represent or tell both their own stories and those of the indigenous Africans with whom colonial history has joined at the waist as it were. Both film and fictionalized auto/biography raise questions about race in southern Africa and the ambiguities of representing the historically racialized self and its Other, the colonial subject or "native". At the heart of my investigation of these war narratives in Rhodesia and South Africa is: What "sentiments and memories" (White, 2004) do these narratives, which are tied to racialized group identities, manufacture about the colonial state and the racial group they claim to speak for? Put differently, how do such texts offer themselves as blueprints for the performance of 'white African' identities reminiscent of the colonial era? (Primorac, 2010) What, I ask, can one read into the values, anxieties, ambiguities and fractured identities betrayed by the white characters' relation to Africa even as they actively seek to suppress black nationalist movements during the last days of the colonial era?

Early fictions by black Zimbabweans and South Africans, often taking the style of romantic heroism, invite one to examine them as documents within a bigger movement towards cultural nationalism, if not political liberation itself. What does such romantic representations of what was in fact a hugely complex and contradictory process say about the role of the black educated class in the narration of the future nation? How should one place such narratives in

light of political theory of African liberation such as Werbner's(1998) that calls for a critique of power in contemporary Africa through the prism of "theoretically informed anthropology of memory"?[5] In other words, who is entitled to produce such collective memory? Or, for that matter, how do we account for the folkloric elements of Shona or Zulu storytelling traditions in the texts and how do they fit into the African nationalism as articulated by these writers?

National liberation also brings to the fore, in these narratives, the class struggles long prophesied by the socialists. While the South African struggle did not, for the most part, express a desire for class equality of the kind that the European Marxists preached, the Zimbabwean war was in fact, championed by mass movements whose leadership rooted their struggle in Marxist propaganda. Remarkably captured in these narratives is the very class struggle pitting the elites against the foot soldiers of the envisaged revolution and more significantly for me, between the guerillas and the villagers that the propagandists - or political commissars as they were styled - called peasants. The direction of the struggle proceeds from a very conflictual position, what Norma Kriger(1988)[6] describes thus:

> Revolutionary guerrilla wars are contradictory affairs. On the one hand, their ends are the capture of state power for a ruling class in the making, and on the other hand, they are a means by which the "people" are empowered to participate in radical new forms of democracy and equity. The tension between these ends is closely bound up with the balance achieved between coercion and consent, or violence and democracy, between at least two constellations of participants in such tension-ridden processes - processes which can structure both the form and the content of the new regime rising out of the war's ashes. (p.376)

Putting the notion of mass politicization on trial, the narratives draw attention to the place of violence in the struggle for political conversion. The contradiction of selling the war as a "people's war" while simultaneously victimizing the same masses noted by Kriger above is clearly close to the creative impetus of these writers. Alternatively, Terence Ranger(1975) speaks of the existence of a "nationalist peasant consciousness" which produced a different balance between peasants, nationalist activities and ultimately guerrillas in Zimbabwe during the war. This dynamic, Ranger suggests, "was highly conducive to mobilization for guerrilla war…", and consequently, there was less "necessity for political education" by guerrillas than there had been in Mozambique. Compared with Mozambique, argues Ranger, radical peasant consciousness allowed for a "more direct input by the peasantry into the ideology and programme of the war."(pp.16-17)

David Moore (1995)[7] draws attention to the "tension ridden combination of coercion and consent" that was practiced during the war but largely unacknowledged by the nationalist leadership as well as the contradiction between the Chinese Marxist ideology and the pragmatic demands of the war:

> Contrary to Mao's unitary analogy, the "masses" constitute a disparate multitude of choppy waves, washing tides, and unseen undertows. Indeed, the guerrillas may be more akin to small and leaky boats riding the uncharted and ultimately unpredictable oceans than to fish comfortable with the familiar calm of the undersea. The waters of guerrilla war are hard to tame: coercion and consent make up a dialectical unity embracing peasants, proletarians, and potentially plebian-inspired praetorian guards alike, as well as

> the more classical and coercive contradictions inherent in a war against a monster state.(p.377)

While the party leadership and guerilla commissars conceptualize villagers as a uniform group whose loyalties "naturally" lie with the guerilla fighters, the texts chosen suggest a more complex web of shifting loyalties, competing ideologies and rivalries. As I will demonstrate, the violence between the nationalist movements and the masses is pervasive and numbing in its brutality.

Film and written texts that represent female war experience invite a gendered analysis of the whole process of liberation through violent action. In other words, much as such texts engage Third World aesthetics around, for example, Pierre Nora's notion of *lieux de memoire* or sites of memory or particular historical moment to articulate the experience, what is the price that these black women pay in the process? For Nora, processes such as the wars of liberation are momentous periods, historic periods where definite breaks with pre-existing societies and cultures are made. The films and fictional texts I examine here which foreground gender struggles within the broader context of nationalist struggle require that we ponder the potential of nationalism to revolutionize gender relationships. Says Nora:[8]

> … a process of interior decolonization has affected ethnic minorities, families, and groups that until now have possessed reserves of memory but little or no historical capital. We have seen the end of societies that had long assured the transmission and conservation of collectively remembered values, whether through churches or schools, the family or the state; the end too of ideologies that prepared a smooth passage from the past to the future or that had indicated what the future should keep from the past-whether for reaction, progress, or even revolution.(p.7)

Even more poignantly, how does one account for the role of women within the broader racialized politics of Rhodesia, apartheid South Africa and their postcolonial cousins. South Africa, which endured over 300 years of colonial domination poses an even more complex relationship with its memory of violence hence suggestions by some (Poyner, 2009, 8) that it is impossible to recapture the collective memory of trauma emanating from apartheid South Africa's violent treatment of non-white people apparently because any attempt to recapture that memory would amount to a distortion. In the place of efforts to recapture that memory, he has suggested an acknowledgement of South Africa's history of *forgetting* people as a kind of tribute to all those whose stories have been forgotten or excluded from that collective memory.

Mengel, Borzag and Orantes offer a useful starting point in accounting for the explosion of "trauma literature" in post-apartheid South Africa.[9] Stated simply, their thesis is that, "Twenty years after the fall of apartheid, South Africa is still struggling with the memory of its traumatic past. …(and) one way of coming to terms with a person's/nation's traumatic past is by transforming traumatic memory(hot memory) into narrative memory(cool memory) through the telling of a story."(p.vii) There are obvious echoes here to the post-apartheid Truth and Reconciliation Commission into apartheid crimes against humanity especially in the claim that "Every South African has to some extent been traumatized. We are a wounded people."

The terrain of post-war reconciliation poses serious challenges in both Zimbabwe and South Africa as reflected in the narratives I have selected for discussion. Set against the enabling mythologies of "nation-building," "reconciliation" and "equality" is the less palatable reality namely that some of which the Truth and Reconciliation Commission public testimonies themselves brought into the new nation's collective memory in the form of unresolved anger and unspoken traumas rooted in apartheid violence. Mengel, Borzag and Orantes' theory about the

role of imaginative writing as therapy brings us to fiction's role in reconciling South Africans with painful memory; essentially that through fiction, victims and aggressors in apartheid's violence can revisit the hitherto unspoken and unspeakable corners of their consciousness to articulate those memories and thereby "bear witness in a time of terror and trauma…"(viii) Conspicuous by its absence is healing; besides a few glimpses of possible dialogue and sincerity, the narratives I have chosen here suggest there is much ground to cover for true understanding and healing to occur. Through storytelling, Mengel, Borzag and Orantes suggest, both victims and perpetrators can transform "hot" traumatic memory into "cool" narrative memory and somehow come to terms with the historical trauma that shapes their contemporary realities.

In Chapter One, I examine the Rhodesian discourse[10] and its representations of colonial violence in Angus Shaw's novel, *Kandaya* and Alexandra Fuller's fictionalized autobiography, *Let's Don't Go To The Dogs Tonight.* In discussing the two, I acknowledge the enduring legacy of "Zimbabwean" narratives of the liberation war by displaced "neo-Rhodesian," mostly diaspora-based white writers, a kind of writing "…that identifies itself as 'Zimbabwean' while clinging onto Rhodesian nostalgia. Their narratives, I argue, whether fictional or not, reproduce a colonially-rooted ambivalence towards notions of Africa, Zimbabwe, home and belonging. How do these writers remember their Rhodesia, the Rhodesia of the late 1960s and 70s which was, of course, engulfed in violent warfare and yet offering unlimited opportunities for their group? I propose that Angus Shaw's novel, *Kandaya: Another Time, Another Place (1993)* and Alexandra Fuller's memoir *Let's Don't Go to the Dogs Tonight* (2001) provide ways of representing the war in the then Rhodesia that betray the tendencies described above, namely allegiance to the memory of Rhodesia. In their contrasting ways, the two Rhodesian texts chosen imaginatively map the origins and trace the nature and impacts of colonial violence within colonial Rhodesian

society during the period of black resistance to colonial rule, namely the high points of colonial violence represented by the First and Second Chimurenga of 1896-7 and 1972-9 respectively. In this chapter, I pay special attention to how white Rhodesian writers represent this violence as part of an attempt to perpetuate the colonial project itself. I also use the texts to argue that by refusing to wholly endorse the Rhodesian colonial project, the writers cast doubt on the viability of the colonial state, its ways of seeing(or not seeing), look forward to an uncertain post-colonial period in which 'major' and 'minor' histories are radically altered. One could, of course, argue that these writers write *after* the collapse of the Rhodesian project and should naturally point to the more obvious weaknesses of the Rhodesian state's response to African nationalist agitation. Still, the fact that these are writers who lived and, in the case of Shaw, fought for the preservation of that society suggests that there was more discontent within the white Rhodesian society than was apparent at the time. So, instead of merely characterizing Rhodesia as a uniform society whose rallying point was the preservation of white racial privilege, we begin to see the inherent fractures which colonial state propaganda masked at the time.

Because of the contemporariness of Rhodesian colonial state violence, I argue that it provides an ironic template for nationalist movements during and after the attainment of political independence. In this sense, the nationalist movements mobilize their own violent struggle in opposition to the violence of the Rhodesian state and this becomes the narrative memorialized in postcolonial Zimbabwe, namely that Zimbabwe is a nation born of violent struggle and will be similarly defended if necessary.

In this chapter, I also discuss the fractured identities – so fractured because of the histories of migration into and later, out of southern Africa, unresolved cross-continental affiliations and the failure to assimilate into the African space often expressed in terms of the

laager mentality in these narratives. More than showing white settlers' responses to the war situation, the narratives also reflect a desire to tame the African space while simultaneously excluding the indigenous African from equal access to material benefits of Rhodesian modernity. This forms the basis for African resistance which I examine in later chapters.

In Chapter 2, titled Manning the Chimurenga: Edmund Chipamaunga's *A Fighter for Freedom,* Charles Samupindi's *Pawns,* and Alexander Kanengoni's *Echoing Silence,* I compare and contrast black writers' portrayal of the Second Chimurenga with the two white writers from the previous chapter. These novels reveal some of the divergent positions which are part of the historical baggage of contemporary Zimbabwean society precisely because the political movements and groups that were engaged in the war – on both sides - remain part of the nation's socio-political culture to this day. It is within this context that the on-going struggles for political dominance, control and ownership of land, mineral and other resources by various factions, groups and classes should be understood.

It is also, of course, an examination of African histories in the making, what Cooper(1994)[11] has described as:

> "…histories (which) exist in the shadow of Europe not solely because of colonization's powerful intrusion into other continents but because Europe's self-perceived movement toward state building, capitalist development, and modernity marked and still mark a vision of historical progress against which African, Asian, or Latin American history appears as "failure": of the "nation to come to its own," of the "bourgeoisie as well as of the working class to lead."(pp.15-16)

In other words, the narratives I examine here already anticipate how the envisaged independent African nation-state will exercise autonomous agency by revealing the complex and often contradictory ways in which the leadership of nationalist movements interact with rural peasants, women, children and volunteer fighters. As I will show, the nation's "coming to its own" is already a flawed process before it happens. In this light, the dissidence of the three texts will lie in critiquing the nation-state from its foundational point, namely the armed struggle which gives birth to the new nation. Put differently, the novels I examine here show how the "imagined communities" Africans saw were both smaller and larger than the nation as developed in Europe; they anticipate the catastrophic difficulties awaiting the soon-to-be nation and to that extent, situate the disillusionment in the unreformed nation-state, new leadership and the rigid structures of a Cold War global economy. The external determinants of economic and social problems, and, to some extent, a consideration of the dependency theory which had already been experienced in South America and South Asia are implied.[12]

Whereas the previous chapter has discussed the bitter perspectives of writers who are also members of the losing side in the armed conflict, here we encounter the celebratory and narrowly masculine model of nationalist politics by mostly elitist black male writers whose side emerged victorious. To be precise, I use three the novels; Edmund Chipamaunga's *A Fighter for Freedom*, Charles Samupindi's *Pawns*, and Alexander Kanengoni's *Echoing Silences* to illustrate three dominant elements in war narratives by black male writers of the Zimbabwean war. In addition to the foundational issue of how these black male writers contest white narratives, I also show the impact of war as extreme violence and/or heroism within the black society, how the war itself was experienced at the level of the individual, and how fiction by this class of black males mediates this violent history and brings it back to life, especially in the early post-war years.

These novels, I argue, are examples of a literary tradition which contest Rhodesian narratives about the war within a racial and class struggle commonly called the Second Chimurenga in Zimbabwe. I also argue that despite challenging ideological positions evident in white Rhodesian writing, these black male-authored novels also betray severe limitations inherent in the male-dominated struggle itself, namely a *manning*[13] of the historical struggle as it were. I suggest that Chimurenga narratives in these three novels reveal three major tendencies in representing the historical experience of war, namely the partisan, the cautiously patriotic and cynical.

The chapter also examines how war, in all its senseless brutality, remains a much-loved theme in narratives of the country's birth. If war is essentially an experience of danger, pain and inevitable death for many, how is this violence treated by these writers as a meaningful process that gave birth to a new nation? Like the white writers of the previous chapter, I show the patterns of denial and/or selective memory in the process of writing this history. Further, I show how the war narratives as presented in the three texts feed into popular political myth in a country in which officialdom formally recognizes political heroism associated with the liberation struggles; how these narratives of war are also about the manufacture and celebration of heroes and heroines.

Over and above the creation and celebration of real and mythical heroes, I also discuss how the experience of war, particularly its pervasive brutality, is remembered as such and what kinds of brutality are erased from or inserted into the new nation's collective memory via the act of writing. In other words, how much of these fictions are as much a celebration of black heroism as they are about apportioning blame in the aftermath of war where the victors and losers are not only known but must continue to live side by side. Also, how do self-serving

ideological pursuits such as the supposed establishment of an egalitarian postcolonial society shape the experience of young people at war and how are such ideologies contested by the harsh experience of war itself? Why, for instance, did so many young black men and women join the struggle? What were their grievances against the colonial regime, what aspects of the anti-colonial rhetoric excited them and how relevant is that rhetoric in refugee camps of Zambia and Mozambique, on the battlefield and in the immediate postwar years when most of these foot soldiers of independence are quickly sidelined? Another interesting caveat that I explore in these fictions is the manipulation of the anti-colonial sentiment – the claim that the war is about destroying colonial hegemony – and yet it simultaneously entrenches "traditional" and gender-based structures of authority.

Edmund Chipamaunga's novel, *A Fighter for Freedom* suggests a few answers to some of these questions. It portrays the celebratory and euphoric mood of the immediate post-war years. It looks back at the troubled 1970s and finds a people resolved to dismantle settler authority. Beyond the factionalism epitomized by the suppression of the Vashandi group, Samupindi's narrative also shows how the struggle for power within the nationalist movement takes an ethnic dimension. Already broadly split between Shona and Ndebele in the ZANU and ZAPU camps respectively, the former is further fractured by Shona sub-group rivalries. Charles Samupindi's *Pawns*(1993) foregrounds the naked, sickening brutality of war. Despite the fighters' courage in disrupting Rhodesian authority and fighting some memorable battles, what his characters remember most is the senseless killing of innocent civilians by both sides. In a way, it tempers the unrestrained cheerleading fiction of Chipamaunga.

Whereas *A Fighter for Freedom* and to a lesser extent, *Pawns*, paint a romantic and almost nostalgic picture of the war, *Echoing Silences(1997)* shows a brutal face of war that many

refused to remember in the euphoria of political victory. Kanengoni brings yet another dimension to the Zimbabwean war experience. Unlike many writers of who have written about that experience in English, Kanengoni joined the Chimurenga and fought at the front before returning to college at the end of the war. His novel is clearly a fictionalized first-hand account of a former combatant. Like Chipamaunga's hero, Kanengoni's protagonist is seemingly inspired by romantic notions of freedom and seems oblivious to the ugliness of war at the outset. As the war drags on, however, Kanengoni's character finds nothing heroic about war. Instead of remembering moments of heroism, what endures in the protagonist's mind after the war itself is the extreme violence, in particular the banal cruelty, associated with life as a refugee in Mozambique and afterwards, as a disillusioned fighter at the front. After the attainment of independence, the novel's hero remembers his decision to join the war as ill-informed and somewhat tragic as he is rejected by his own family as a *rombe*[14].

For Kanengoni, the war experience reads like an endless nightmare despite the lofty ideals that sustain and justify it. Kanengoni remembers villagers who are as unpredictable and predatory as the guerillas themselves; they follow the line of least resistance, they would rather be left alone but where there is an opportunity, they do not mind profiting from the war itself. The villagers don't think twice about colluding with the Rhodesian authorities to poison the guerillas for monetary rewards. More than any writer in Zimbabwe, Kanengoni explores the psychological trauma that former combatants continued to suffer after the war as well as their ongoing social marginalization. While Kanengoni presents the ugly face of the liberation war with unflinching honesty, I argue that he also tends to reduce Zimbabwean women's Chimurenga experience to types. At the one extreme is the haunting figure of a sad, swollen eyed woman who is murdered without a fair trial. History itself shows that thousands of black women volunteered

and fought bravely alongside men. At the other extreme, Kanengoni presents another female character whose war experience betrays the dark dimensions of Chimurenga that other black male writers like Chipamaunga, and Samupindi overlook. Instead of being victimized by men at the base camps, this other female cadre is herself an active participant in unjustified, systematic torture of recruits. In this chapter, I discuss what it means for black women volunteers for Kanengoni to deploy these extremes.

I argue that the three offer us three narrative patterns of the Zimbabwean Second Chimurenga which give insights into the class/ethnic and gender dynamics of the struggle itself. Chipamaunga's *A Fighter for Freedom* is clearly driven by a desire to subvert colonial domination and assert a romantic, primordial African agency that echoes a pre-colonial past. Overall, I show that by delineating the settler structures of authority that impoverished Africans, Chipamaunga's superheroes refute the suggestion that black Africans are incapable of organizing themselves, Samupindi's naïve but dedicated fighters genuinely believe in they can reshape the future of Zimbabwe and Kanengoni shows the initial zeal for a more equitable society despite the many flaws in the execution of the war itself.

In Chapter 3, Gendering the Chimurenga : Contesting Historical Amnesia in the Zimbabwean Film and Fiction, I use the fiction and film of Zimbabwean women, one black and the other white to investigate a different dimension of the war: Black women's representations of the war experience. Women's participation in the liberation of Zimbabwe[15], itself a major blindspot in both the liberation war scholarship and postcolonial political debate, is at the heart of my investigation of the two texts. With the Chimurenga struggle forming the background, Yvonne Vera isolates the private experience of Mazvita in painfully intimate detail. Vera's *Without a Name*(1993) and Ingrid Sinclair's *Flame* offer complimentary and contrasting portraits

of the war from a feminist perspective. For Vera's heroine, the war will forever be associated with the memory of rape. *Flame*, the feature film about two girls' experience of war, provides a visual/aural mode that graphically captures the romantic ideals of two war volunteers, their horrific experiences inside colonial Zimbabwe, at the refugee/training camps and eventually, their contrasting paths for self-liberation after the war itself.

My analysis of Vera's fiction also attempts to draw attention to the effect of violence on the black female body itself as a core element of nationalist change in Zimbabwe. Musila(2007) writes:

> In addressing this absence of the body, recent gender scholarship has attempted to retrieve the physical body from the web of discourse. These studies seek to bridge the ever widening gap between the discursive body of structures and ideas, and the corporeal body of experiences and material conditions. …Vera examines the interactions between discursive practices and the embodied experience of these discourses for women living on the *extreme margins of society in contexts* of colonialism, oppositional nationalism, and feminist discourses. The novels explore the corporeality of the female body and the textured nature of its experiences as the manifest face of various discursive practices in women's lives. (p.50, emphasis mine.)[16]

Sinclair's film is thus a text that interrogates the Second Chimurenga as the single major "site of memory" for Zimbabwe and the amnesia and/or selective remembering that follows. In both *Flame* and *Without a Name*, the stubbornly masculinist public memory of Chimurenga is contested mainly by suggesting that dominant narratives woven by male writers and cultural

historians and circulated in the public domain as the only truth about the war are as incomplete as they are dishonest. *Without a Name* and *Flame's* intervention is critical in moving away from such reductive tendencies by reminding us that there were in fact multiple and contested narratives of the war; that there were, after all, thousands of young, black females who fought side by side with their male compatriots whose stories are marginalized by the tendencies noted in the black male-authored texts. Despite the significance of the Sinclair's film to this debate, also argue that, *Flame*'s feminist thrust is diminished by its appropriation of war-time codes such as songs, slogans and ideologies and presenting them as unproblematic. Instead of using the slogans and songs that women cadres themselves fashioned and used at the front, the film relies almost exclusively on those that celebrate the very same patriarchal model that the film attacks.

Chapter 4, Articulating the inarticulate: Dissident Narratives, Trauma and Memory in John Maxwell Coetzee's *Waiting for the Barbarians* and Tony Eprile's *The Persistence of Memory* takes the discussion across the Limpopo River into South Africa, examining two white-authored novels whose themes revolve around memories of war during apartheid South Africa. One is written and published at the height of post-Soweto Uprising repression in 1980, the other in post-apartheid South Africa. I demonstrate that post-apartheid South Africa, despite its world-acclaimed reconciliation initiative which often gives the impression of a singular national consciousness, its collective memory is fragmented and poisoned by violent history. In other words, I use the two texts that there are, in fact multiple 'nations' within South Africa, each with its own convictions, histories of suffering or domination, specific memories of war and its own set of 'truths'.

I use Coetzee's novel to demonstrate the untidy nature of remembering – and/or not remembering – apartheid violence by members of the former dominant class. Allegorical at

various levels, *Waiting for the Barbarians* stops short of mentioning apartheid South Africa, lending credence to the suggestion that for all his liberal inclinations, the author himself is unable to move beyond the severely edited memories and truths of his own group within South Africa. The portrayal of the novel's "empire" figures, primarily the Magistrate and Colonel Jol's convictions suggest that remembering or forgetting violent memory has implications for post-apartheid South African society burdened by the trauma of that history. The post-apartheid state, itself a result of protracted negotiated compromise, enters the narrative as it anxiously seeks to sell the dream of a non-racial society to a non-white population that has known little more than deeply racialized politics for centuries.

As with colonial Zimbabwe, the multiple ironies of anti-apartheid writers of European descent in South Africa are discussed. Coetzee, by refusing to assign racial markers to any of its characters, displays a desire to escape the burden of racially-coded discourse that apartheid South Africa was notorious for. And yet, despite his anti-apartheid stance, Coetzee's place within the African literary canon is also compromised by the fact of segregated privilege within the South African colonial order. I also argue that by refusing to give a concrete, historically recognizable setting to his novel, Coetzee diminishes the attack on apartheid, the cause of the trauma that the novel itself explores.

As in Zimbabwe, the question of who has the authority to represent histories of trauma looms large, not least because Coetzee, a globally acclaimed writer who is personally skeptical of apartheid, belongs to the same group that crafted the policy in the first place, at least going by apartheid South Africa's own elaborate official system of racialized categories. This, I argue, gives the novel's otherwise dissident message a measure of irony. Reduced to a scars – or scarred memories - of the Empire's power, the novel's impoverished people give us no

meaningful information about themselves and leave us once more struggling with the questions of historical violence, memory, colonialism and narration. The narrative voice that shapes the kinds of stories that do get told firmly belongs to the unnamed, *unraced* Magistrate who is nevertheless portrayed as ethnically different from the fisherfolk who live near the river and the so-called barbarians who live at the margins of the Empire. By refusing to probe the lives of the barbarians, the novel suggests that it is impossible to know the mind of the barbarians. I also propose here that Coetzee's attempts to account for the unspeakable violence immediately following the 1976 Soweto Uprising[17] from the point of view of government functionaries such as the Magistrate and Colonel Joll who are themselves implicated in the broader repression of indigenous people give us an insight into the mind of the government without necessarily doing the same for its victims.

Tony Eprile's novel, *The Persistence of Memory*(2004), revisits the dark years of apartheid to give different perspectives of that country's history of armed conflict and more specifically, the preservation, memorialization and/or denial of historical violence. Published ten years after the end of white minority rule, Eprile's narrative is "a mixture of indictment, therapy and confession."(Tait, 2008) While rooted in general apartheid repression of non-white South Africans, *The Persistence of Memory* primarily explores one of the Cold War's proxy wars in southern Africa: South Africa's military campaign in Namibia and southern Angola and political violence in the South African townships in the 1980s.

Eprile reveals what different players in apartheid violence choose to remember of that history. Among the whites, both English-speaking and Afrikaans-speaking, oppositional, selective remembering of the past is evident. Erased from their memory or absent from their narratives is the legacy of violence visited upon indigenous Africans. As I will show, their

narratives are especially silent about the true purpose of apartheid violence, namely the enforcement of racial economic and political privilege. Although the apartheid state does, in fact, collapse, selective amnesia remains a key marker of narratives about this part of South African history.

The post-war restorative justice initiative commonly called the Truth and Reconciliation Commission is described by some in the narrator's white world as "revelation of horrors as healing" and a waste of public funds since few apartheid operatives are unwilling to divulge the full extent of their involvement in the apartheid state's violent activities. What is one to make of the fact that the perpetrators of state-sanctioned violence are grossly underrepresented at the TRC sessions, I ask? To take the matter to its logical conclusion, what is one to make of the fact that the white apartheid state operatives are also outnumbered by their black assistants whose crimes are already well-known in the townships where they live and have no option but to seek the TRC's amnesty? The problem, I suggest, is not with the painful details that the black assistants give to the TRC to secure their amnesty but the uncharted territory of full accountability and possible forgiveness between the white community, apartheid's creators and ultimate beneficiaries, and non-white South Africans – including other Africans in the southern African region who bore apartheid's violence.

And yet the novel's conclusion strikes a stridently positive note by showing its hero as a man capable of standing up for the truth by challenging his former comrade-in-arms' false and incomplete TRC testimony and starting a romantic relationship with a middle-class African woman. In the final analysis, I argue, both *Waiting for the Barbarians* and *The Persistence of Memory* point to the difficulty of molding a collective memory in the aftermath of centuries of repression and violence. By using mild-mannered protagonists rather than typical apartheid-

supporting Afrikaners, they also highlight the banality and extent of violence. While attacking apartheid repression, *Waiting for the Barbarians* specifically opposes apartheid's mythologies about non-whites. Its allegory of an Empire's struggle against feared Barbarian attack destabilizes apartheid's raison d'être and to that extent, remains a significant dissident text within the context of apartheid South Africa.

Chapter 5 uses two texts – a film and a work of fiction – to explore war and memory within the South African Colored community[18]. I argue that Achmat Dangor's novel, *Bitter Fruit* and Ian Gabriel's film, *Forgiveness* offer powerful insights into the lingering and often far-reaching legacy of political violence within the Colored community in South Africa. The two texts show the psychological and material damage that colonial-era violence wreaks on its victims who carry it well past the transition of 1994. In both texts, the newly-independent nation of South Africa is presented as struggling to transcend the memory of a brutal colonialism; the individuals and families affected by that violence find it impossible to move beyond certain defining moments from that recent past. For this purpose, I explore the legacy of political violence at the level of the individual, the family and society as depicted in the two texts.

Dangor, who describes his goal as "…writing about societies that find it difficult to delve beneath the skins of their lives, of their national lives…" explores the unforeseen repercussions of political violence and memory, that is, the individual and society's struggle with historical memory. At the center of the novel's narrative is the memory of rape by an apartheid-era policeman. Although the tragic event itself happened nearly twenty years ago, neither the victim herself nor her husband has transcended its memory. In the end, the product of that rape seeks personal revenge by murdering his rapist father. I argue that while President Mandela's new South Africa encourages dialogue about the past, its limitation is that it is only interested in a

certain kind of dialogue – the quasi-religious confessional model that urges (but does not require) the perpetrator to come forward, on his own free will in recognition of his sins, to narrate his misdeeds. If the perpetrator does, in fact, come forward, so this slightly altered Catholic model holds, the victim should similarly find it in her heart to forgive and forget. In this sense, willful confession or truth-telling is presented as the logical step towards not just healing apartheid's wounds but eventual reconciliation and yet this is wholly unsatisfactory for some in the narrative. The struggles of Colored families under post-1994 pressures to forget and/or remember the past bring into focus the multi-layered tensions shaping the new South Africa. Remembering, even for a respectable, middle class Colored family living in relative comfort in Berea, Johannesburg, brings with it the wounds of shame and humiliation. I argue that because of failed reconciliation, state-sponsored racialized violence, rape, murder - the bitter fruits of apartheid as it were – return to torment family across the color continuum.

The question of Colored identity looms large for many in post-transition South Africa; some young adults in the community are still grappling to figure themselves out even as they carry the mark of their parents' violation by the running dogs of the former apartheid regime. Colored women, on the other hand, themselves victims of apartheid violence, have little more than contempt for the post-transition masculinist discourse that selectively appropriates female experience only to suppress their gendered voices –, they refused to be "contained". In spite of the refreshing gospel of Rainbowism in the air, members of the Colored community are constantly assailed by reminders of the enduring legacy of race, color and ethnicity in the new South Africa.

Ian Gabriel's film, *Forgiveness*(2004) is a powerful visual-aural medium that engages the viewer at a whole new level. Like most post-apartheid films, *Forgiveness* is pre-occupied with

reminding South Africans of the all too real history of violent colonialism. Ideologically opposed to the Bantu films whose slapstick humor "entertained" black and Colored people throughout the ghettoes of southern Africa during the colonial period, *Forgiveness* is a provocative film that draws on the legacy of apartheid violence on the lives of ordinary, non-white citizens and their former oppressors.

I argue that while the Colored people portrayed in the film are ready to embrace the gospel of Rainbowism, they also find that the "political miracle" of 1994 has not transformed their material condition and worse still, some of the perpetrators have not confessed their full participation of apartheid-era violence. The government's inability to bridge the socio-economic gap – which follows the familiar racial/class faultline – is in fact what deepens the frustration in what is now theoretically an egalitarian Rainbow Nation.

Forgiveness asks us to pause and ask about the basis of nation and nationhood given the histories of state terrorism, racial exclusion and the generational poverty that exists awkwardly alongside the beautiful ideals of Rainbowism, hybridity and a common destiny for all South Africans. By dramatizing a failed, private reconciliation, the film mirrors what the state-sanctioned, public and often televised TRC process also obscures.

I conclude by discussing the power of narration, that is who has the power and the ability to interpret trauma in South Africa and Zimbabwe? How is trauma supposed to be translated to others? How is it expressed across race, class and gender?

Chapter 1

"We Were Little Kings in Rhodesia": Rhodesian Writing and Representations of Colonial Violence and Memory in *Kandaya: Another Time, Another Place* and *Let's Don't Go To The Dogs Tonight*

Reflecting on the fate of white Zimbabweans and self-identified neo-Rhodesians in the wake of the violent struggles over land ownership, Karin Alexander, herself a white Zimbabwean, alludes to Benedict Anderson's theory of nation-building (Anderson: 1991) thus, "A nation re-imagined daily by its inhabitants requires a 'narrative of identity', a story that locates it in time and provides a sense of continuity.' This study acknowledges that for Zimbabwe and South Africa, the wars of liberation, particularly the more successful ones of the late 20th century, are fundamental to narratives of identity which essentially give birth to the postcolonial nations of Zimbabwe and South Africa. By focusing on nation-building processes and the reconciliation, what is often forgotten is the ubiquitous violence that has shaped the two young nations. This chapter will use texts that draw on these major historical processes to investigate how large-scale political violence and its memory are represented in colonial Zimbabwe.

As the discussion of *Kandaya: Another Time, Another Place* and *Let's Don't Go To The Dogs Tonight* will show, the question of racial and ethnic identities in colonial southern Africa comes into sharp focus in relation to their shifting roles in both the immediate colonial past and the post-independence period. Colonial Zimbabwe, or (southern) Rhodesia was, after all, a colony in which descendants of British settlers imposed themselves upon various indigenous

groups. Whether stated as such or not, race, or its other name, class, was the organizing principle in this society. Fictional and/or auto/biographical texts by white Rhodesians can not, therefore escape their racialized origins; in anything, a matter-fact approach is often assumed.

The questions that motivate this analysis are: What, then, is white writing in Rhodesia and how does it contribute to an understanding of historical violence in both Rhodesia and Zimbabwe? Ranka Primorac's(2010: 205) offers one way of identifying and conceptualizing white writing in colonial Zimbabwe. In her discussion of post-millennium narratives by displaced "neo-Rhodesian" writers, she points out that there is growing body of fictional and non-fictional writing by "a certain formation of white writers that identifies itself as 'Zimbabwean' even while clinging onto Rhodesian nostalgia. Central to my analysis is this tension between settler, colonial origins of these writers and the writing tradition in which they participate and the reality of post-independence political state of Zimbabwe which the writers can not entirely ignore. In fact, the writers are often forced to acknowledge this political change. Additionally, Anthony Chennells(1982, 1995, 2002, 2007)[19], Preben Kaarsholm(1991) and Godwin and Hancock(1993) have demonstrated that while white Rhodesian fictions are not homogenous, they remain the discursive blueprints which generate and underlie all socially-produced meanings in Rhodesia and beyond.

Rhodesian white writing, one can argue, constitutes its own master code which reveals the ways in which identities are "multiplied, transformed and put into circulation." Primorac supports this position, suggesting that Rhodesian narratives, whether fictional or not, reproduce a colonially-rooted ambivalence towards notions of "Africa, home and belonging." My analysis will show elements of this ambivalence between Europe as Mother Continent and Rhodesia in

Africa as the lived reality through which white Rhodesians impose themselves on both the space and its inhabitants.

While it is plausible that this "Rhodesian discourse" has become more prominent at this time to contest the "polemic and parasitic" patriotic historiography (Ranger, 2004: 103)[20] that characterized the postcolonial government, I will show in this chapter that this Rhodesian discourse becomes something of a "self-fulfilling prophecy" which perpetuates the original Rhodesian master fiction in postcolonial Zimbabwe in so far as it retells the story of the war of liberation and the obvious violence that characterized it.

In terms of historical reach, white writing stretches back to the original colonial invasion of 1890 right up to the contemporary, geographically-dispersed present. As Chennells(1979, 1997) [21] has showed, both the Shona and Ndebele people were allegorized and reduced "into the schematic: a set of truths, a familiar historical scene". Because of the pragmatic economic interests behind the colonial invasion, namely the farming and mining interests of Rhodesian settlers, the emotional attachment of Rhodesian writers to what is now Zimbabwe remains somewhat unbroken. Among the most prominent writers in this tradition are Cynthia Stokely, Nobel Laurete Doris Lessing, Catherine Buckle, Wilbur Smith, Alexander McCall Smith, John Eppel, Alexandra Fuller, Tim McCloughlin, Peter Godwin, Rider Haggard, Ian Smith, Angus Shaw(Andrew Saxon) and Heidi Holland. A large number of less accomplished contemporary writers also continue to write in the tradition, both inside and outside Zimbabwe itself. Among these are Tony Morkel, Bryony Rheam, Marina Maxwell, Ivan Smith, AJ Ballinger, David Lemon and Johan van Coller. Chennells(2003: 137), the foremost scholar of this literary tradition notes that the defining feature of white Rhodesian writing is its fascination with exoticism, or to use his own words, "…(the) various temporal and spatial locations that are always sites of desire

constructed from what is perceived to be absent in the present…the celebration of the individual (white settler)imagination (and) landscape for romance..” Chennells(147-8) notes that in addition to the exoticization of the Zambezi plateau, Rhodesian writers such as Rider Haggard revel in adventure fiction, grand quests often inspired by myths of an El Dorado, a second Rand, imperial romance, half-learned African legends, the occult and magic. From its earliest days, the Rhodesian settler literary imagination shows an obsession with exotic Rhodesiana that endures in later fiction. An early Rhodesian writer, Stockley(1911), for example, writes in one of her novels:

> He had spoken of Africa as she with mingled hatred and love that conjured up to my mind a vision of some false, beautiful vampire, who dragged men to her and fastened her claws into their hearts forever. “It’s a brute of a country!” he said …But a moment later he was talking of the veldt as tenderly as a lover might talk of the woman he loves. (: (p.11)[22]

Another scholar, Eve Bertelson(1984: 23)[23] notes that even Doris Lessing, the pre-eminent Rhodesian white writer who occupies a unique position within and without the tradition is not free from the settler literary imagination I have discussed here. In her world-famous novel, *The Grass is Singing*, she paints relationships between blacks and whites that are hopelessly governed by “…all these codes … in the relationship of Mary, the white farmer’s wife with Moses, the unspeaking black servant, in the anticipation of a ‘kaffir rising’, the murder of white farmers by black servants indexing racial fear in its most extreme form.”

In seeking to understand the theory behind white Rhodesian master fiction, one must of necessity acknowledge the often unspoken apartheid[24] that defined Rhodesian society and endures in the present, that is, the utter disconnect between black and white cultures which is reflected in the imaginative writing[25].

Paul Williams[26], author and academic brought up in Rhodesia puts it this way:

> Growing up white in Rhodesia was quite simply a lie: whites lived in a bubble of propaganda. White Rhodesia was not Africa: it was England in the tropics. It ignored African cultures and history, and made African people invisible. At school I learned Latin, French, Italian, but not a word of Shona or Ndebele. From my peers, I learned racism and sexism and arrogant myopia. I had a very privileged upbringing, and it was not until I was called up to fight in the Rhodesian army that I began to see through the façade of this 'Western Christian Civilisation' and experience the horror of war.

The film version of this Rhodesian master narrative is perhaps best represented by Harold Shaw's *The Rose of Rhodesia*[27], widely distributed across southern Africa during the early 20th century. While it was shown to settler audiences as ethnographic spectacle, a romantic adventure revealing the Christianizing and civilizing ethic of colonialism in early Rhodesia, the film in fact exposes colonial capitalism at work. The film's ostensibly empty spaces are ideal for vicarious discovery and occupation by the imperial gazer while its depiction of happy natives follows a familiar trail.

In this chapter, I locate Angus Shaw's novel, *Kandaya: Another Time, Another Place (1993)* and Alexandra Fuller's memoir *Let's Don't Go to the Dogs Tonight* (2001) within this

creative writing tradition, examining their ways of representing the war in the then Rhodesia. While a vast number of Rhodesian exists, the choice of these texts is not arbitrary; one has gained iconic status, especially outside Zimbabwe, as a brave fictionalized autobiography of a reluctant Rhodesian, the other a fictionalized confessional of sorts by a Rhodesian who reforms enough to live and work in post-independence Zimbabwe. I am attracted to their contrasting styles and sensibilities in representing and re-imagining the most traumatic period in living memory for many Zimbabweans – the war of liberation.

In their contrasting ways, these texts imaginatively map the origins and trace the nature and impacts of colonial violence within colonial Rhodesian society during the period of black resistance to colonial rule. The high points of colonial violence are the First and Second Chimurenga of 1896-7 and 1972-9 respectively. In this chapter, I pay special attention to how white Rhodesian writers represent the memory of this violence as part of an attempt to perpetuate the colonial project itself, a longing nostalgic fascination with of a Rhodesia of their imagination. As I will show later, at the heart of this violence is the "white man's burden - itself a moral justification for colonialism - that justifies violent warfare in the struggle to maintain settler colonial privilege. Significantly, the two texts also invite questions about the very legitimacy and sustainability of the colonial state and chip away at notions of racial superiority that formed the ideological centerpiece of Rhodesian colonial projects. I use the texts to argue that by refusing to wholly endorse the Rhodesian colonial project, they cast doubt on the viability of the colonial state and in some ways, look forward to an uncertain post-colonial period in which 'major' and 'minor' histories are radically altered.

The prominent use of racialized violence in the texts themselves suggests the potential limitations of such a method to ensure conformity within Rhodesia, that is, violence alone was

ultimately unsustainable as history itself shows. The nationalist movements did, after all, mobilize their own violence in opposition to the Rhodesian state. Later, I will show how this history of extremely violent colonial state terrorism by white Rhodesians, justified as legitimate state authority against black rebellion and for the black nationalists, as "anti-colonial struggle" shapes postcolonial Zimbabwe in often damaging ways. In other words, the history and memory of warfare becomes something of a permanent feature not only of Zimbabwean political culture and rhetoric but also a liet motif of written literature in English while also reflecting the bumpy road the country has taken over the past forty years.

Key to my analysis of *Kandaya* and *Let's Don't Go To The Dogs* is that the two texts have as their background a highly contested period in Zimbabwean history. It is significant to note at the outset that the armed conflict itself was perceived in divergent ways by the major protagonists. Karen Alexander (2004)[28], herself a descendant of white Rhodesians of British origin, succinctly captures the major rift in the settler colony at the time:

> "At that time, Rhodesian propaganda pitched the war as one between 'Western Christian democracy' and communism. This conception of the war justified the white struggle to maintain 'minority' rule, because it was not a question of whites not wanting to be governed by blacks, it was a question of their fighting on behalf of the nation against terrorism and communist takeover…The separation of 'us' and 'them" was …carried through into the new Zimbabwe."(205)

Significantly, while the black nationalists called it the Second Chimurenga[29] meaning the Second Uprising or War of Liberation in recognition of the failed uprisings by their Shona and

Ndebele ancestors at end of the 19th century, white Rhodesians sought to delegitimize it by giving it demeaning names.

Alexandra captures the spirit of denial within the settler community memorably:

> The whites didn't call it Chimurenga. They called it the Troubles, This Bloody Nonsense. And sometimes "the war." A war instigated by "uppity blacks," "cheeky kaffirs," "bolshy muntus" "restless natives," "the houts." We call the black women "nannies" and the black men "boys." (p.26)

Besides infantilizing blacks living in Rhodesia, what Fuller's barely-veiled persona above reveals is that oppressed black Zimbabweans cannot wish freedom for themselves and organize political movements or armies to achieve that goal. This, of course, rises out of the Rhodesian colonial logic and its sense of settler entitlement, what radical Rhodesian writer Paul Williams[30] calls a "…certain blindness to history, and a tone of self-righteous condescension and paternalism."

As such, these texts, in their nuanced forms, have particular ways of infusing colonial ideology –or the Rhodesian literary code - in their representation of this violent but necessary conflict. It is however, important to note that both texts deviate from the classical Rhodesian master fiction or biography by refusing to entirely endorse the Rhodesian project as it were; they refuse to present Rhodesian settler colonialism as unproblematic, perhaps in acknowledgement of the fact that their Rhodesian 'paradise' did collapse, after all. I conclude the chapter by arguing that the two texts also pose serious questions about white identities in colonial and

postcolonial southern Africa and the 'right' to represent both their stories and those of the indigenous Africans that many of them have never acknowledged to begin with.

Kandaya and *Let's Don't Go To The Dogs* raise questions about race in southern Africa and the ambiguities of representing the (racialized) self and its other Other, the colonial subject or "native" in Rhodesia and later, Zimbabwe. The specific question to ask in relation to Fuller and Shaw's narration of war experience in Rhodesia is: What "sentiments and memories" (White: 2004) do these narratives which are tied to racialized group identities manufacture about the colonial state and the racial group they claim to speak for? Alternatively, in what ways do Shaw and Fuller's works offer themselves as blueprints for "the performance of 'white African' identities reminiscent of the colonial era?"(Primorac, 2010: 204). Even closer to my pursuits, what can one read into the values, anxieties, ambiguities and fractured identities betrayed by the white characters' relation to Africa even as they actively seek to suppress black nationalist movements during the last days of the colonial era? Closely linked to this last theme is the characters' relationship to place and space that begins as Rhodesia and changes to Zimbabwe within their lifetime. This invites other questions about the allegiances and future of white writers themselves in the context of violent warfare, physical and psychological displacement and the symbolic death of the British Empire and Rhodesian settler colonialism late in the 20th century.

In choosing two texts published at different times, one fictional and male-authored, the other autobiographical yet not quite a biography and female-authored, I also seek to explore the ways in which "the body of texts which may be termed 'Rhodesian' is not homogenous nor are the texts' own representation of colonial identities fixed and static.

As I suggest above, - via Mbembe(1992) – these texts aggregate to a sort of "Rhodesian master code or fiction" that transcends the political change of 1980 and in that sense, remain relevant to discourses about Zimbabwe to the present day. Although the Rhodesian state collapsed in 1980, fiction and autobiography before and after this date by white writers offer insights into the evolving meanings of race, gender and class in contemporary Zimbabwe. The fact that white Rhodesians lost the war – and became a political minority overnight – and yet continued to enjoy economic privilege also points to a problematic slippage between race and class which continues to haunt postcolonial Zimbabwe. The heterogeneity and nuanced nature of these texts are important even as the texts themselves conform to a general "master code/fiction" blueprint which supposedly inspires all socially produced meanings, creating self-perpetuating 'common sense' within the white Rhodesian discourse. This 'common sense' understanding of violence in Rhodesia and Zimbabwe is evident in both film and fiction produced in contemporary times.

Before analyzing the actual portrayal of the war narratives in Rhodesia in the two texts, it is essential to acknowledge ambivalent white settler identity in southern Africa. Southern Africa, of course, hosted a huge population of European settlers. In fact, settlers in both Southern Rhodesia and South Africa gained more or less complete autonomy to rule over Africans hence the largely unfettered experimentation with various forms of population control such as racial segregation policies during the colonial period. In Southern Rhodesia itself, the settlers went so far as to declare independence from the authority of their main home country, Britain. Yet, despite this seeming commitment to Rhodesia by the settlers, Fuller's memoir suggests that white settler identity is far from stable. The conflict generated by the war situation brings this

into sharp focus. In fact, the ambiguous nature of this settler identity seems to be central to the violence of armed conflict.

Let's Don't Go to the Dogs Tonight is essentially an autobiography about the changing fortunes of a white Rhodesian family during the turbulent 1970s and early 80s. Seen through the eyes of Alexandra, a young white girl, it is a *bildungsroman* that sheds light on the fractured racial relations in Rhodesia, and to a lesser extent, independent Zimbabwe. Fuller records her family history as they struggle to establish roots in Rhodesia, Malawi and later, Zambia. Opening in 1975, the story begins on a note of white Rhodesian anxiety relating to the uncertain security situation in the wake of the armed conflict being waged by black nationalists. "They (Alexandra's parents) sleep with loaded guns beside them on the bedside rugs." The most effective way to frighten young Alexandra by her bigger sister Vanessa is to say, "There's a terrorist under your bed…"[31]

At the heart of this narrative is the struggle to establish an identity for this family whose roots are in England and Scotland. While young Alexandra's parents are, by default, part of the conquering British settler society that establishes a Rhodesian state whose wealth is almost exclusively distributed along racial lines, there is a keen awareness of being largely disliked immigrants and colonizers despite pretenses to the contrary. While Rhodesian statehood is maintained by force of military might over the temporarily vanquished Africans, young Alexandra's parents are recent immigrants who nevertheless benefit from the well-established racialized socio-economic power structure of the colonial state. Throughout the memoir, Alexandra's parents try to set themselves up as commercial farmers, starting first in northern Rhodesia, moving to the east of the country before working as Kamuzu Banda's farm managers in Malawi before eventually settling on another farm in independent Zambia. On the face of it,

one is tempted to agree with Chennells'(2002) and Kaarsholm's(1991: 37)[32] proposition that "It was the non-urban spaces of the unspoilt, 'empty' bush that were seen as the location of authentic (Rhodesian) settler identities, free from the restraint and conventionality associated with towns and cities." Indeed, according to Kaarsholm, the appeal of the country farm to the white farmer lies in "the organic closeness to nature of settler life, its immediacy, authenticity, vitality and practical roughness as opposed to the verbose abstractness and idealism of metropolitan imperialism.'(ibid)

However, a close analysis of this "pristine" setting of Rhodesian texts – including *Let's Don't Go* - betrays a stubborn unwillingness to confront the brutality of colonial rule while emphasizing the seemingly peaceful rural environment of the settler farm. The farm itself is, after all, only possible because indigenous Africans were evicted from that space. This, I argue, is a key element of the willful Rhodesian settler amnesia that the war radically disrupts.

Like Doris Lessing's *The Grass is Singing* (1950) before her, Fuller's narrative pits the colonial white settler against a generic native. The climate itself, while tropical and good for agriculture, is also presented as hostile, hence the need to tame it together with the displaced African who sells his or her labor there. And yet, like Lessing's Mary Turner, Alexandra's mother is traumatized by displacement from Scotland to southern Africa. An exchange between her and her daughter captures this tension (Fuller, 2003):

> Mum … stayed up all night once listening to Scottish music and crying. "This music," her nose twitches – "is so beautiful. It makes me homesick." Mum has lived in Africa all but three years of her life.

> "But this is your home." "But my heart" – Mum attempts to pump her chest – "is Scottish."

When asked what she loves about Scottish, the mother stumbles before saying, "The music."(p.11) Evident in this exchange is that Alexandra's mother has failed to establish a spiritual connection with the African landscape. While she only lived three years of her life in Scotland, she still cries over folk Scottish music that is neither a substantive part of her upbringing nor that of her present. While the writer doesn't reveal exactly why her mother cries, the story suggests that the pain emanates more from loss of an imagined life in Scotland coupled with lack of psychological grounding as a colonial settler in Africa. It is this subtle honesty in presenting settler ambivalence that constitutes dissidence in Fuller's narrative. It is, above all, a refusal to endorse the Rhodesian master code in full is at the heart of Fuller's narration. Much as young Alexandra's parents fit the Rhodesian settler farmer stereotype, it is the adult Alexandra the writer's acknowledgement of these uncertainties that constitutes dissidence against Rhodesian settler tradition. In the above passage, the difficulties that the Fuller family experience across southern Africa remind the mother of their outsider status, despite their privileged status. Alexandra's mother's tearful response to Scottish music is thus an acknowledgement of origins that she can no longer lay claim to.

Alexandra's father's obsession with southern African farmland is, I suggest, a pragmatic response to the opportunities that the colonial state affords the settler. While Alexandra's family does not succeed at commercial farming, what is undeniable is the father's spirited defense of what the opportunities that the colonial state has created for them. It is the farm, that almost mythical representative of "unspoilt" Africa that inspires the family all over southern Africa. As I will demonstrate, the family will go to great lengths to defend ownership of this privileged

space whose very existence meant the displacement of huge indigenous populations.[33] The reality of the war in the memoir becomes the clearest signal yet that the tensions surrounding this history of displacement are a vital part of the present.

The fractured identities, unresolved cross-continental affiliations and the utter failure to assimilate into the African space are later expressed in terms of the *laager* mentality in this story: "On the stretches of road that pass through European settlements, there are flowering shrubs and trees – clipped bougainvillea's or small frangipanis, jacarandas, and flame trees…The verges of the road have been moved to reveal neat, upright barbed-wire fencing…I can see the white owned farmhouses, all of them behind razor-gleaming fences, bristling with their defense"(p.102) More than showing white settlers' responses to the war situation, this description reflects a desire to tame the African space while simultaneously excluding the African from the economic benefits that the Rhodesia offers. The bougainvillea, frangipani, jacaranda, and flame trees - all exotic introductions from the Americas and Australia - to colonial Rhodesia that mimic an imagined Western milieu that some of the settlers have not, in fact, experienced firsthand. Not surprisingly, these plants are associated with white Rhodesian settler suburban culture. By literally pulling out indigenous plant species and replacing them with exotic, Western ones, the settlers have symbolically tamed the 'wild' African 'bush' and made it "familiar" and "more habitable" for themselves. By insisting on an imagined European, especially British setting, the settlers betray their failure to adapt to the African environment; it is, as it were, a desire to re-create an imagined miniature Britain in Rhodesia which also extends to an obsessive renaming of African settlements[34].

The security measures taken by the settlers to protect their possessions remind the reader that the Rhodesian colonial narrative is not, after all, uncontested. The Rhodesian state has, after

all, chosen to forget the Chimurenga 1 of the 1890s and built an elaborate security apparatus to protect its citizens' interests.[35] The high-rise fences are, in a sense, a new version of the 19th century laager that now serve to keep out the African guerillas, potential thieves and any other African undesirables. Despite the self-serving myth of living like kings (and queens), it is possible to read such extreme security measures as a settler fallacy that not only restricts freedom but reveal African resistance to the Rhodesian project. Indeed, the memoir's beginning captures this absurd security situation which deserves to be quoted at some length:

> Mum says, "Don't come creeping into our room at night."
> They sleep with loaded guns beside them on the bedside rugs. She says, "Don't startle us when we're sleeping."
> "Why not?"
> "We might shoot you."
> "Oh."
> "By mistake."
> "Okay." As it is, there seems a good enough chance of getting shot on purpose. "Okay, I won't."(p.3)

It becomes clear a few paragraphs later that the reason for such extreme measures is the state of warfare. And yet Fuller seems to be gently mocking the state of insecurity which necessitates this home situation in the first place. This, I argue, is in fact the true power of Fuller's memoir. Contrary to the self-serving image of the settler farm as a romantic "African paradise" where a mindless mimicking of imagined British culture can be ritually performed, the

security demands of the war situation question this element of the Rhodesian master narrative. In other words, the unusual exchange between mother and daughter above shows that there is nothing romantic about a farmhouse whose inhabitants are as much at risk of shooting each other as they are of being attacked by African guerillas, real or imagined. While the memoir is not explicit on this point, I suggest that the real dissidence of Fuller's memoir lies in its ability to satirize and draw on the ironies of settler actions and responses to armed conflict even as it also betrays some of the traits of the Rhodesian master narrative. In the exchange above, the mother figure seems to have lost all pretense to femininity; she will shoot first if she has to even if it means potentially harming her own children.

Part of the narrative's ambivalence or perhaps, dissidence, is the fact that it is marketed as an "African" narrative; indeed, the memoir is subtitled "An African Childhood," a common enough strategy within the Rhodesian white literary tradition. Fuller's, of course, has gained elevated status as a rich narrative of and about colonial southern Africa and thus the "African" tag deserves more than casual consideration. This begs the question; beyond being a geographical reference, what else is *African* about the memoir? Fuller herself often rejects the Rhodesian or, for that matter, Zimbabwean identity, choosing instead to profess herself a vegetarian, or liberal environmentalist[36]. While Fuller variously describes herself as a vegetarian and liberal or environmentalist to some sections of the Western media, she also adopts an "African" identity at convenient moments. While it is possible to categorically understand the reasons for these choices, I can only speculate that this is ambivalence is evidence of the disruptiveness of the war which radically rewrites Rhodesia and Zimbabwe's major and minor histories. In other words, the Rhodesian identity of Fuller's parents is no longer a viable badge for their daughter to wear at all times while she is not at ease with the post-independence

Zimbabwean identity that those who live there carry by default. Given the above, the *Africanness* of the narrative is principally built upon an attempt to negotiate and perhaps occupy the marginal spaces that the violence of the Rhodesian war created for orphans of the British Empire like her. While a few white Rhodesian liberals - primarily Christian missionaries - did exist, the appropriation of elements of African nationalist liberation discourse by Fuller sits oddly alongside her whole family which actively supports and fights to preserve settler rule. In fact the memoir itself is replete with statements by Alexandra's parents mocking African nationalism in general and the Zimbabwean black nationalist struggle in particular.

More central to my main argument about the dissident strain in Fuller's narrative is the fact that she attempts to appropriate the language and revolutionary codes of the black nationalists as seen in chapter titles that use the Shona word "chimurenga". What is striking about this is that Rhodesians rarely show any interest in aspects of African cultures, including African languages. The loaded, multi-layered meanings of the word *chimurenga* would be hard for the ordinary Rhodesian to tease out which perhaps explains the limited sense in which Fuller uses it. Even so, Fuller's choice is understandable given that her book is published twenty-three years after the end of the war, a time when it is no longer possible for a writer of her class to sustain the Rhodesian rhetoric of the colonial era in its totality[37]. The historical fact of Rhodesian's collapse aside, Fuller violates the norms of Rhodesian literary tradition by African terminology that debunk the myth of a Rhodesian paradise where otherwise ordinary men and women from the Scottish highlands live like kings and queens.

While acknowledging Fuller's courage in mocking the collapse of Rhodesia, one is also aware of how deeply invested she is in the politics of property ownership and the instinctive desire to maintain a privileged lifestyle in Rhodesia. For all her courage in mocking the blindness

of her parents, Alexandra herself maintains a paternalistic attitude towards the Africans around her. In one instance, she observes an African cook, "And there goes the old cook, hunched and massive, his bony shoulders poking out of the top of his threadworn khaki uniform. He is almost seventy and has just sired another baby…a fragrant pillow of blue marijuana smoke hangs above his head"(p.14) Evident in this description is the familiar stereotyping of Africans under Rhodesian colonial rule as either noble savages or buffoons. This particular African comes off as tragic, simple-minded, surprisingly virile for his age and yet totally irresponsible with women and drugs. Among other things, such a description forces the reader to examine the basis of Alexandra's "African childhood." As the rest of the memoir reveals, it is an African childhood bereft of the social diversity that one would expect to find even within a colonial society. Her interaction with Africans is, in fact, limited to the cooks, nannies (maids), gardeners and cleaners that her parents employ. Elsewhere in the memoir, Alexandra observes and comments on the habits of those workers who work close to her family. These include black female domestic staff who are called "nannies" and some black men who are belittled by being called "boys". She repeats this received wisdom with no apparent sense of irony at all: "We call the black women "nannies" and the black men "boys." (p.26) The infantilization of African adults which serves to justify colonialism by presenting African adults as child-like beings who need guidance not only redeploys the myths of the Rhodesian master code but also suggests a refusal by white settlers to meaningfully engage their African Others at a human level. For Fuller and her youthful protagonist, it reflects an apparent inability to break out of the Rhodesian discourse which eventually invites a violent response from the colonized.

Besides the extensive racist vocabulary describing black Africans that Alexandra's parents spew as a matter of course, the more interesting point is the effect of the severely limited

scope of the "African experience" that the author advertises in the title. As shown above, Alexandra's "African experience" is severely stunted by a tendency to echo and regurgitate the stereotypes, images, figures of speech, and characteristic lines of argument that the (British) Empire donated to Rhodesian settlers.

Without a doubt, Alexandra's parents pander to the notions of Africans' noble savagery widely propagated in Rhodesian white fiction. Of this, Anthony Chennells(2007)[38] says:

> Before a people are defeated, savage nobility is never literally experienced, but only imagined, and can exist as a trope in travel memoirs or fictions that mediate the exotic for those readers to whom savagery is unfamiliar, but whose cultural nostalgia discovers traces of nobility in their remote pasts. The noble savage cannot be present in any literal representation of life in an interior that is beyond colonial control. Nobility is unwelcome in people serving or refusing to serve as porters and guides for an adventurer, or converts for a missionary. Noble savages are literally exotic as they are made remote by time and place, by memory or distance.(p.70)

In Chennells' terms, the cook is noble enough to understand the basics of functioning within the farmer's home and yet, in the farmer's family's view, remains a savage who mindlessly sires children despite the fact of his advanced age. The cook, unnamed and impersonal, is merely described as "old…, hunched and massive". It is perhaps partly due to parental influence that Alexandra begins to characterize African men such the cook in patronizing terms. Impoverished by land dispossession and colonial legislation that forces him to pay various taxes, the elderly cook is thrust into a colonial economy whose dynamics are out of

his control. As standard Rhodesian race relations would have it, it is not necessary for Alexandra to know too many personal details about him, it is enough that he is, in the words of Chennells, "remote… and distant", a familiar stranger whose only presence is necessitated by the farmer's family to be served.

When the armed conflict itself breaks out and spreads to the family farm in eastern (Southern) Rhodesia, Fuller's young narrator again fails to connect this development to the aspirations of Africans. She encounters the chilling brutality of war one day:

> When driving home from a Christmas party, we came across the shell of a bus that had gone over a landmine. Bodies are scattered everywhere while the severely injured are lying about. (Alexandra's sister, Vanessa) "… bits and pieces of Africans were hanging from the trees and bushes like black and red Christmas decorations."(p.58)

Instead of being shocked by the ghastly sight of dead, dying and severely injured people on the road, the young girls are only mildly amused, and indeed the older girl likens the bloodied scene to Christmas decorations. It is not surprising therefore that the author's parents actually join the volunteer Rhodesian Police Reservists in 1976 and proceed to train every family member to operate arms of war:

> "Set up at the end of the garden, on the other side of our scorpion-infested pool, is an enormous cardboard cutout of a crouched, running terrorist, kitted out in Russian-issue uniform and brandishing an AK 47; around his heart is a series, like in a Biology book. The baboons that steal the corn and run from the gong in the watchman's hut look like this terrorist, with a long dog's nose and a short, square forehead."(pp.75-6)

In the parents' minds, it is clear who the target of this training is – the African guerilla whose image is conflated with that of the baboon, a scavenging animal, in typical southern African colonial discourse. To legitimize the killing of African guerillas, it is necessary to cast them in animal imagery, as pillaging baboons, the farmer's natural enemy in this part of Africa. Not surprisingly, when the war spreads, the white Rhodesian's sense of displacement sets in even as defense mechanisms are put in place. We are told, for example, that "Everything is waiting and watchful and suspicious. Bushes might suddenly explode with bristling AK-47s …Rhodesia's war has turned the place back on itself, giving the land back to the vegetation with which it had once been swallowed before people."(p.78) It is difficult to ascertain exactly who qualifies as "people" in the above statement since Africans communities had inhabited lands now occupied by settlers prior to colonialism. Africans, in Rhodesia did not, of course enjoy the benefits of citizenship but were considered natives or subjects of the broader British colonial Empire.[39] What this relationship between colonizer and colonized illustrates is the utter dehumanization of Africans which later spills into violent confrontation. In a sense therefore, Fuller suggests that with such attitudes common even within ordinary white families, it is not much of a surprise that violence becomes the natural outcome.

Given the parental drilling and privileged colonial upbringing, it is not surprising that the young Alexandra actually wishes death upon those Africans who dare rise up against colonial domination: "We cheer when we hear the faint, stomach-echoing thump of a mine detonating. Either an African or a baboon has been wounded or killed."(p.57)

As I will show with respect to Angus Shaw's fictionalized account of war, the conflation of African people and wild animals in Rhodesian colonial discourse was neither coincidental nor uncommon. Typical of all colonialism, the Rhodesian master fiction itself demands that all white settlers treat Africans as less than human, thus undermining Fuller's pretense at writing a memoir about "an African childhood" or, if indeed she is merely exposing the dark underbelly of Rhodesia, a narrative about her protagonist's prejudiced upbringing. Besides the historical fact that Alexandra's childhood happened in Africa, there is little else about her values as expressed in her memoir that is African.

It must be pointed out therefore that Fuller's memoir attempts to appropriate certain elements of black nationalist rhetoric such as the historically-loaded term "Chimurenga" remain at best awkward. Despite her refusal to be labeled as Rhodesian, the memoir itself seems to suggest a failure to transcend the codes of the Rhodesia master fiction. On the one hand, Fuller seeks to present her family's struggle for belonging in southern Africa and on the other, she fails to acknowledge the full humanity of Africans. While one can concede that Alexandra is but eleven in 1980, it is also true that she continues to live and attend school in post-independence Zimbabwe before going to college in Britain. As such, rather than be read as part of the post-colonial Zimbabwean literary corpus, the temptation to classify the memoir as part of a narrow, audience-specific neo-Rhodesian literary tradition remains strong.

Closely related to the Alexandra's narration of the war is her reaction to the war's outcome. Even though the war itself was not decisively won by either side on the battlefield, the historic implementation of universal suffrage meant that black majority rule became a reality and Zimbabwe was born. Alexandra's shock at this loss of settler power and privilege is quite remarkable and yet in keeping with her group interests; she describes it as "such a surprise when

we lose the War. Lost. Like something that falls between the crack in the sofa. Like something that drops out of your pocket."(p.142 emphasis mine) Without a doubt, these statements demean the fighting abilities of African liberation movements and their cadres. It is, after all, Alexandra Fuller the adult who pens *Let's Don't Go*, perfectly aware of the terrible events of the decade-long war, in particular the massacre of refugees and villagers by the colonial army. While the Alexandra the child describes the loss of Rhodesia as a foolish act, Fuller the writer also fails to give a more nuanced response to the death of colonial rule in later parts of the narrative.

It is therefore in keeping with Fuller's neo-Rhodesian sensibility that she ridicules the only quasi-political attack on the family farm which comes in the form of a cowardly act by a domestic worker. In keeping with cowardliness, July, the domestic worker, attacks a female black helper, Violet, and not the settler white family itself in a passage that deserves to be quoted at some length. Alexandra's father immediately knows who the criminal is:

> He says, "It was July."
>
> Mum straightens up and stares at Dad. "What?"
>
> "The boys haven't seen him since this morning. He's not in his hut."
>
> "Fucking *kaffir*," says Mum.
>
> "The *boys* are coming with me. I'm going to catch him."
>
> The 'boys' are Dad's most loyal laborers. Duncan is the *bossboy*…(p.123)

> Later, when Alexandra's father brings back the captured July, the former's mother screams:
>
> "Fucking *kaffir*! *Murderer*!" She starts to beat him but Dad pulls him back.
>
> He says, "Let the boys deal with him." He nods to the "boys." The militia who have come to arrest July and his companion turn the other way.
>
> Daddy's "boys" kick July and in one soft sound, like a sack of mealie meal hitting concrete, he buckles to his knees. And then they kick him again and again. July curls himself up and covers his head with his hands but the feet find holds to flip him back on his belly and prize open his arms to expose his belly and ribs, which I hear cracking like the frangipani tree. His skin split open like a ripe papaya.
>
> Then Dad says, "That's enough, hey."
>
> But they don't stop.(p.124)

On the surface, these two passages are about the effectiveness of the white settler farm community in suppressing petty criminality and restoring Rhodesian law and order. The saboteurs, July and his companion, are presented as completely defeated in the end. Apparently, Alexandra's father does not even need to call on regular police to crush such criminality and restore order. In fact, virtually all his other African workers eagerly tag along on the mission to capture the offending pair. The encounter ends with the farmer's "boys" forcefully stamping Rhodesian law and order on their boss' behalf, breaking the bones of the condemned in the

process. In fact, as the passage shows, even Alexandra's mother can beat July and his companion if she wishes.

At a metaphorical level, the robbery incident serves a psychological need to publicly demonstrate overwhelming power for the Rhodesians and their collaborators. Though July and his friend's motives in attacking Violet are never established, the story's preferred impression is that they are mere criminals with a hitherto suppressed rebellious streak. The crushing of the offending pair responds to the desire – memorably described by Julie Fredrickse[40] in her critique of Rhodesian political cartoon culture - to assert colonial authority over all natives, especially the 'uppity' ones. Over and above the deliberate ambiguity of July and his companion's objective(s), both men are not only bad at covering their tracks but offer no resistance at all when they are punished by the farmer's militia. The story of a farcical rebellion ruthlessly put down by vigilant agents of the colonial order does not, of course, begin with Fuller. Readers of Rhodesian fiction will be familiar with the disturbing but ultimately ineffectual figure of Moses, the black farmhand at Mary and Dick Turner's farm in Doris Lessing's *The Grass is Singing*. Symbolically, the masculinity of those Africans who reject, plunder or challenge settler colonial authority is supplanted. It is instructive that Alexandra's all-powerful father –the local representative of Rhodesian settler authority - doesn't even bother to participate in the beating implies that the offenders are way down the socio-political pyramid to worry him. Not surprisingly, he lets his running dogs – the other black farm workers who are derisively called "Dad's boys" mete the initial punishment before handing them over to legitimate state authority. Clearly, both the offending pair and "Dad's boys" are perceived as subhuman. According to Mineke Schipper(1999: 1), "The early settler Rhodesians classified the Africans, and themselves, in terms of an evolutionist tradition of thought characteristic of colonialism which they

'exploited to label people and to justify their exclusion from a mutually beneficial partnership.' Because the farm rebellion is presented as an act of amateurish criminality, it fails to draw attention to the structural oppression of colonial rule which is evident even in farmlife. In Schipper's terms, July and his accomplices are way down the evolution ladder to begin to bother the power structure.

Once African laborers at the farm are marshaled into types, the transposition of racism into a cultural practice via the creation of myths about self and the other seems logical. In settler Rhodesia, the two most consistent myths were the threat of "rebellion" and the fear of "black peril," the latter a reference to the fear of racial contamination. Rebellion was a threat to colonial life as established since the 1890s and the 'black peril,' the dangers of the black male's supposedly rampant sexuality, was a threat to racial purity in the form of rape. Not only could such black men defile pure, chaste and defenseless white women but their acts would also undermine Rhodesia's socio-political stratification. For Alexandra's father, it does not matter very much that July and his companion have allegedly violated Violet, an African domestic worker; it is the potential to wreck havoc in the white master's homestead that must be crushed.

Equally remarkable is Alexandra's sudden attempt to rationalize the outcome of the war and become an overnight supporter of the new government's policy of national reconciliation. Suddenly, it is 1980: "…the year I turn eleven, … the war is over."(p.9) Alexandra now suffers new anxieties about belonging in post-indepemdence Zimbabwe when black kids tease her about her sun-burnt skin,

> My God, I am the wrong color. The way I am burned by the sun, scorched by flinging sand, prickled by beat. The way my skin erupts in miniature volcanoes of protest in the

presence of tsetse flies, mosquitoes, ticks. The way I stand out against the khaki bush like a large marshmallow to a gook with a gun. White. African. White-African.

"But what are you?" I am asked over and over again.

"Where are you from *originally*?"

"Arriving in Rhodesia, Africa. From Derbyshire, England. I was two years old, startled and speaking toddler English. …

I say, "I'm African." But not black.

And I say, "I was born in England," by mistake.

But, "I have lived in Rhodesia(which is now Zimbabwe) and in Malawi(which used to be Nyasaland) and in Zambia(which used to be Northern Rhodesia)."

And I add, "Now I live in America, through marriage."(p.10)

It is tempting to conclude that these statements merely betray Alexandra's fractured identity in post-colonial Zimbabwe and not necessarily an acceptance of the multiple affiliations which have defined her life. What is evident is that she is keen on presenting herself as a victim of the new order. This narrative by Alexandra the adult has barely shifted from that of Alexandra the child in the former Rhodesia, something that could be attributed to the extreme cultural exclusivity and ignorance of the Rhodesian settler community before and after 1980 which was reflected most clearly in urban policy planning. The sequence above is also a mirror into the mindset of former Rhodesians at the outset of Zimbabwean statehood. In one sentence,

Alexandra claims a "white African" identity while simultaneously worrying that her skin color makes her stand out and invite unwelcome questions about her identity. To suggest that black people suddenly became aware of white people after 1980 is in itself a negation of the century-long struggle for justice by black Zimbabweans. It is significant to note that Alexandra does not seem to question the irony of claiming a new identity while demeaning black Zimbabweans as "gooks" in literally the same breath. To worry about her whiteness in post-independence Zimbabwe is also curious given the largely unbroken economic and social apartheid that persisted beyond the lowering one flag and the raising of another. It is, after all, a fact that race and class remained synonymous for many years after independence and descendants of settlers have never had to worry about justifying their presence, at least until the renewed struggles over land ownership.

More significantly, the just-ended war redefines major and minor histories in the former Rhodesia between the black and white races as political fortunes between the two shift radically. Black Zimbabweans who have been downtrodden for some 90 years suddenly wield political power - at least symbolically via the new black elites - although a vast majority of them remain massed at the bottom of the economic ladder. Despite the seeming certainty of settler lifestyle seen earlier in the story, the war does expose the tensions within the Rhodesian community itself. Within the Fuller family itself, the mother's increasingly unstable mental condition seems to point to the tenuous settler roots in the post-Rhodesia era.

In summary, I have shown that Fuller's fictionalized autobiography betrays elements of the Rhodesian master narrative while also revealing some of the anxieties and ironies of settler mythology in Rhodesia. The violence of war is largely understated and barely given a context while the memory of it is quickly forgotten by Alexandra the adult. For Fuller's persona, space,

time and memory are largely unresolved issues and despite the story progressing on the familiar path of migration, she chooses not to discuss post-colonial Rhodesian identity in the concrete terms.

The Rhodesian sentiment is evident in *Let's Do Go* but at the same time, the narrator's family's is ill-at-ease in both colonial Rhodesia and the newly-independent Zimbabwe. The constant but ultimately futile search for the idyllic settler space in the form of a farm that takes the family from the former Southern Rhodesia to Zambia and Malawi mirrors this endless quest while the mental breakdown of the mother seems to mock the very notion of the mythical El Dorado that initially underpins Rhodesian settler colonialism. Young Alexandra herself seems to undergo an epiphany right after political independence and while not entirely at ease with black majority rule, she awakens from the racial fantasy that her Rhodesia was. Although Fuller half-heartedly stages a discussion about the limits of racial reconciliation in post-Rhodesian society, the attempt fails primarily because, like Alexandra the child narrator, her white characters quickly claim victimhood status, apparently oblivious to their largely unbroken economic dominance.

Angus Shaw's historical fiction, *Kandaya*: *Another Time, Another Place* in many ways starts where Fuller's narrative ends and in that way seems to be driven by a desire to explore the roots of the Rhodesian armed conflict, a subject Fuller refuses to engage in detail. Where Fuller's fictionalized autobiography is sustained by rueful white Rhodesian humor and the somewhat doomed quest for racial reconciliation, *Kandaya* adopts a gritty, informal style that privileges a male white Rhodesian perspective to historicize the war experience of the 1970s. In examining *Kandaya*, I isolate the role of the white male Rhodesian within the Rhodesian master narrative to stage a discussion about the construction of violence in war-torn Rhodesia. To unravel this

aspect of the novel, the starting point is here: Though the Rhodesian settler master fiction is rooted in the "civilizing mission" it actually longs for stasis, a longing for the past and the unchanging relations between the settler and the world around him. While the war has huge implications on what major and minor histories are in terms of relations between the settler and indigenous populations, the colonial settler and his defenders on the battlefield long for a temporal, and spatial discreteness (Kaarsholm 1991, 37)[41] and a fear of a non-Rhodesian future.

It is for this reason, I argue, that the Rhodesian master fiction itself does not assign independent individuality to the African character, often denoted by the all-encompassing but rather unhelpful term, 'native'. Shaw's Africans are portrayed as either the grateful natives or the bloodthirsty savages but both are denied individuality. The novel gets its title from Kandaya, a black worker in colonial Rhodesia who is recruited into the ranks of liberation war fighters. The novel is plotted around the Rhodesian army's attempts to capture Kandaya. To understand *Kandaya*'s place in the Zimbabwean discourse about violence and memory, one needs to appreciate the effects of a hundred years of racial segregation.

Karin Alexander(2010: 194), a Zimbabwean, describes the construction of white identity and ideology formation in these terms: "White Zimbabweans have tended to live as colonialists…(and) missed the opportunity to refuse colonialism in its entirety in 1980 because they did not appreciate that 'the facts of colonial life are not simply ideas , but the general effect of actual conditions'. The result, she argues, is that white Zimbabweans "live off Zimbabwe, rather than in it, is that sectors of the white community have yet to rise above a colonial superiority complex, 'the outcome of a double process: - primarily economic, - subsequently, the internalization – or better, the epidermization – of this (superiority)'(partly quoting Fanon: 1986: 12) (ibid)"…the alienation felt by the white Zimbabweans surveyed is a function of the 'raced'

national biography that established Rhodesia. Racism phrased as nationalism underwrote an ideology of dominance that whites have found it difficult to shake…"(p.195) Evident in Alexander's thesis is the inability by white Zimbabweans to transcend race. Precisely because they attained a superior status because of legalized racism, the unwillingness to abandon ideas of racial supremacy make the dream of reconciliation after the war unattainable.

Geoff Feltoe's introduction to Angus Shaw's *Kandaya: Another Time, Another Place* makes this claim: "*Kandaya: Another Time, Another Place* is a disturbing account of how young white conscripts fought a vengeful war against an ever-increasing guerilla army. It relates how both sides in this conflict became hardened to the violence of war. This is what happened to our young men. It is a part of our history that we cannot ignore…(the novel) acknowledges the existence of revolutionary war as purifying war. But it is more concerned with the horror, the mental scars, the destruction, the evil and the distortions of war."(p.ix-x)

The narrative of *Kandaya* is entirely concerned with the white Rhodesian attempt to capture or kill a guerilla leader by the name of Kandaya. Kandaya is supposedly a recruit of Edison Sithole, a nationalist politician(p.22). The real-life commander of the Rhodesian military's fictional doppelganger, General Walls, announces very early in the narrative, "Two cases of beer to the man who kills Kandaya."(p.3) While the narrator feels "(Kandaya) wasn't worth more than two cases of beer", "we(the Rhodesian soldiers) were like crusaders, defending God's Own Country from the Marxist anti-Christ."(p.4) More than Fuller, Shaw's narrator takes the racialized rhetoric of to justify violence to a higher level; "The four gooks trapped in the river bed tried to fight their way out and lost. Five of them for one of us wasn't fucking good enough, screamed Captain Bruce. Ten for one was the acceptable ratio, they told us when they trained us.

..The Special Branch had cracked a few skulls and come up with some of the best intelligence they'd got for ages…"(pp.5-6)

True to the novel's self-avowed gritty style, Shaw has no qualms about using a whole range of racially insensitive terminology, one of which is "gandanga"[42]. (p.21) *Gandanga*, a Shona word for rebel, maligns the true status and stated goals of the African guerillas. Although the narrator's stated goal is to reveal the dark past of what was essentially a civil war in Rhodesia, the behavior of the soldiers once enlisted (or conscripted) still lays bare the extreme polarization of that society. It becomes difficult to view the narrator as a reluctant colonial conscript fighting in a war he does not believe in. The gusto with which the narrator brings his prejudice to the warfront is astonishing. The impression that the Rhodesian colonial army was staffed by conscripts must therefore be questioned. Wendy Wright's recent fictionalized biography, *This Promised Land*(2007), also dispels this myth when the narrator, Tessa, describes the delight with which her brother Nathan actually volunteers to join the army.(p.7) It is no surprise when the Rhodesian commander spouts extreme views: "Christ Almighty!" Fury exploded. "These kaffirs have been sticking the finger right up at us for too long and as a white man I don't like it." (p.13)

So immersed is the narrator in the prevailing mood in his camp that he doesn't bat an eyelid when he learns that some of his colleagues are not only involved in massacres of innocent black civilians but they are also collecting human trophies. The terse language reflects the sense of normative behavior,

> "We were buying biltong when a Vaseline jar came rolling down the bar from the regular soldiers who were drinking at the other end.

> "Wanna know what it is, jamstealer?" an RLI trooper called to me. "It's a floppy's big toe. See the nail? I nicked it off, just like that."(p.16)

Similarly, Wright's biography captures this callousness,

> In October, the Rhodesians took grim retribution for the massacre when an estimated ten thousand souls were killed in a raid on a ZIPRA base camp in Zambia…Green Leader, (leader of the Rhodesian attack) became a hero overnight in the patriotic eyes of the Rhodesian public. (pp.156-7)

Although both Fuller and Shaw's narratives reduce the large-scale massacres of mostly refugees to a few paragraphs such as the ones quoted above, it is also evident that they perceive the brutal mass murders as logical in the broader context of war. Wright, for example, bemoans the few hundred white lives lost when a commercial Rhodesian flight was shot down but brushes off the massacre of thousands of Zimbabwean refugees at in Zambia and Mozambique by the Rhodesian army. Wright's biography, whose introduction praises it for "illustrating that once both blacks and whites were hopeful about their future together," crows in honor of Rhodesia:

> Patriotism was high in those days. …Popular songs were written and broadcast regularly about all aspects of army life…to be in uniform was to be a hero and mass-produced T-shirts proclaiming "I'm Proud to be Rhodesian" were worn by six to sixty year-olds….Rosie and I avidly collected the albums of Troopie Songs as they went on sale…"(p.124)

Like Shaw's active duty soldier, Tessa's allegiances are not in doubt. Although all three authors are writing over twenty years after the demise of Rhodesia, their characters' selective amnesia of war-torn Rhodesia stands out. It is as if the self-imposed cultural laager requires them to edit their memories of this period. Similarly, the relegation of Africans to non-citizens is heavily suggested in the writing. The high spirit of "patriotism" that Wright celebrates above emanating from the massacre of 10 000 Zimbabwean refugees in Zambia is hardly shared across the races for example. If "Rhodesian" refers only to white settlers, it follows that black Africans, including the many who served in the Rhodesian army, are insignificant extras in these narrations of Rhodesian experience.

In Shaw's novel, the operation to capture or kill Kandaya and his guerilla group is waged in the Chiweshe and Madziwa area of northern Zimbabwe. Shaw romanticizes the British's use of "protected villages"[43] and admires how the prototype was reproduced "in South Vietnam, Mozambique and then Rhodesia."(p.19) The narrator's admiration for what were essentially concentration camps for Africans shows how deeply attached to the settler cause in the struggle. And yet he concedes that when stripped to its basics, the war was really over "the benefits of the good life, the pools, the braais, the servants."(p.20) While this is probably true of the settler and black elites leading the liberation movements, the more immediate needs of most Africans were far more modest than the enjoyment of "pools, braais and the servants" which the settler community had enjoyed for nearly a century.

The celebration of war's brutality is particularly striking. Shaw's narrator goes beyond mere narration and comes close to what one could describe as a glorification of violence against black civilians. The description of gory shooting encounters between Rhodesian troop units and

guerillas or even ordinary civilians carry an eerie edge that leaves little doubt about the emotional attachment of the narrator. In one instance, he describes the actions of his army unit:

> The *povo* here didn't have too many good things to say about the army, since a punch-up between Fire Force and one of Kandaya's predecessors as local sector commander left twenty-two civilians dead. You still could see holes the size of soup plates, made by our 20 mill. cannon, in the walls of the school. Even the little whitewashed church was pocked by machine gun-fire when the choppers happened upon the *pungwe.* A hundred villagers were listening to the sloganeering when Fire Force was unleashed. There was no escape from the crossfire. In panic, women and kids ran into the blazing guns." (p.20, italics mine)

The passage above, while not providing specific geographic locations of the battles, revels in describing otherwise horrific scenes of mass murder, mostly against non-combatants. The feelings of the victims are excluded and emphasis placed on the visual and aural effects of the Rhodesian army units' artillery on civilian and non-civilian bodies. The almost journalistic description of the Rhodesian army "happening upon the *pungwe*" shows the utter callousness of the narrator. Not surprisingly, the narrator seems to enjoy memories of torturing suspected guerilla captives. A typical incident is described thus: "This one wouldn't talk at first, but the cops repeatedly dunked his head into a tub of water, nearly drowning him everytime, until he eventually gave away the locastat of his pozzy. The regulars hit it next day, killing seven of his *shamwaris*. When they told him all the details, he must have felt like shit."(p.30 italics mine)

Similarly, racialized exploitation and inequality are accepted in a matter-of-fact manner that has the effect of diminishing their significance. In describing the loss of African land – itself a major long-term cause of the war - for example, Shaw writes:

> Farms were lush; beef, maize and tobacco were plentiful. The white farmers had their big cars and their kids at university Down South. …The TTLs, of course were buggered. You could see the boundary of the TTLs and white farms as a clear demarcation of fertile land abutting onto scrubby bush and tired, eroded soil. Kandaya no doubt would have been of the opinion that we, a handful of whites, grabbed the best land for ourselves. He would not have been completely wrong. My grandfather pegged out his good land at the turn of the century and it became his for the price of a sixpenny revenue stamp from the British South Africa Company, then the administrators of the colony. The stamp covered the cost of the title deeds and the red sealing wax. There was no need to consult anyone who might have been living on the land at the time. Our wisdom would make the land more productive and offer *tribesmen* the civilizing influences of the great British empire – Christianity, education and ennobling work. Wasn't it our moral duty to tame the natives so?"(p.49, emphasis mine)

It is hard to miss the arrogance of the narrator as he retells the story of land dispossession in what became Rhodesia. While he admits that while Kandaya, the guerilla, might be deeply offended by this historical abuse and dispossession, he has no intention of conceding any ground. Africans themselves are reduced to tribesmen, a curiously gender-insensitive designation that is suggestive of Africans' backwardness. In fact the narrator describes black heroes and heroines in terms of defeat, not in terms of their bravery in fighting colonial invasion and occupation, "When the natives first rose up in Chimurenga 1, they were easily crushed. Their leaders, Mbuya

Nehanda and Sekuru Kaguvi among them, were caught and stood, but not for long, before Hanging Judge Watermeyer." (p.50)

If, as the introduction suggests, *Kandaya* is meant to carry a touch of irony about colonial violence in Zimbabwe, the actual story often comes off as mean-spirited. When Shaw describes typical colonial relations, for example, it is hard to ignore this arrogance:

> Old Meikles Hotel was a magnificent colonial institution, complete with whitewashed verandahs, stone lions guarding the entrance and inside a Palm Court orchestra and subservient waiters in starched whites and red sashes. Kids had their fill of Canada Dry and Eskimo before going to movies at the drive-in. Leatherneck tobacco farmers met on the porch of the Causerie to exchange beers and to talk of the season's prices. *Above all, the black man knew his place*."(p.50, italics mine.)

The passage is significant not only in putting the war into perspective but it also shows exactly why the yearning for stasis in these and other Rhodesian narratives is so persistent. Admittedly, the novel offers intimate insights into the colonial Rhodesian mentality. However, going by the utterly insensitive portraits such as the one above, it is not surprising to note that attitudes such as those displayed above were carried over into post-Rhodesian society. It is also not surprising that these narratives invited enduring response by black authors as I will demonstrate in later chapters.

Beyond these codes of the Rhodesian master narrative, Kandaya is also a rich source of some of the contradictions within white Rhodesian society itself regarding both the war and the contested viability of the colonial state. If Shaw's protagonist seems to follow military orders

stoically and perhaps even enjoy the extensive killings, there is a certain awareness of the doom. The viability of the Rhodesian state is in fact mocked in the same paragraph that describes Rhodesia as a 'paradise', "…because of trade sanctions …you did see a lot of 1950s cars on the street to give you the feeling you were at another place in another time." (p.51) Even as he is busy fighting to keep the "terrorists" at bay, the narrator can not pretend that Rhodesia will last forever in that state.

In this chapter, I have used two Rhodesian texts to lay out some of the foundational issues encountered in discussing Rhodesian and Zimbabwean war narratives. The two texts, one a historical fiction and the other a fictionalized memoir, offer insights into the imagination of the white Rhodesian and specifically how that mind responds to armed conflict in the form of the second war of liberation or the Second Chimurenga. Alexandra Fuller's *Don't Let's Go to the Dogs Tonight* is clearly a coming of age story in which the narrator increasingly becomes cynical of her relatively rich, exclusive and racist society that literally rapes Rhodesia for profit even as it fortifies its cultural and economic laagers. Despite their rueful humor, arrogance and vigilante-style justice towards Africans, Alexandra's parents ultimately fail to establish an enduring spiritual connection with the continent and by the end of the story, they are shattered souls. To a degree, similar conclusions can be drawn about Angus Shaw's war-themed novel, *Kandaya: Another Time, Another Time*. His narrator barely questions a system that conscripts him and sends him to terrorize Africans precisely because that system promises to preserve narrow settler interests. Only when the Rhodesian army is losing does the narrator come to question the efficacy of war in addressing Rhodesia's multi-layered problems and escapes to Kenya, a country with strikingly similar historical tensions. Significantly, both Fuller and Shaw's narratives end with the narrators migrating when the settlers lose the war.

One is also struck by the rich ironies of these Rhodesian narratives which mock the stunted worldview of white Rhodesian society while simultaneously displaying the familiar features of the Rhodesian master fiction. As I have shown, this latter side of the narrative is especially evident in their seeming failure of evolve outside the Rhodesian master fiction whose chief features are the rampant use of stock African characters, allegiance to Rhodesiana, racially insensitive terminology and a shocking inability to appreciate African lives.

Chapter 2

Manning the Chimurenga: Edmund Chipamaunga's *A Fighter for Freedom* Charles Samupindi's *Pawns*, and Alexander Kanengoni's *Echoing Silences*

The previous chapter has used two texts, one a novel and the other a fictionalized autobiography by white Rhodesian authors to examine their portrayal of the liberation war in colonial Zimbabwe. In that analysis, I showed the potential and limits of narrating such a defining experience for white Rhodesian writers who were also part of the heavily-invested settler community. In this chapter, I use three novels; Edmund Chipamaunga's *A Fighter for Freedom*, Charles Samupindi's *Pawns*, and Alexander Kanengoni's *Echoing Silences* to illustrate three dominant perspectives by black male writers of the same historical experience.

In addition to the foundational issue of how these black male writers contest white narratives, - following Muponde and Muchemwa's[44] lead, I also seek to show how these black male writers figuratively man the struggle, that is, how they deploy patriarchal models to construct phallocentric and supremacist narratives of the impact of war as extreme violence and heroism within the black society, how the war itself was experienced at the level of the individual in the first place and how fiction mediates this history and brings it back to life. These novels' meaning is, of course, rooted in "liberation". Melber(2003) expresses this goal as follows:

> The goal of the struggle was national liberation defined as political independence in a sovereign state under a government representing the majority of the previously colonized people, who were excluded from full participation in society through the imposed

> Apartheid system. The power of definition concerning the post-colonial system of political governance was excercised during this process mainly by the national liberal movement…"(p.163)

These novels, I argue, are examples of a literary tradition which contest Rhodesian narratives about the war within a racial and class struggle commonly called the Second Chimurenga in Zimbabwe. I also argue that despite challenging ideological positions rooted in white Rhodesian writing observed in the last chapter, these black male-authored novels also betray limitations inherent in the male-dominated struggle itself, a *manning* of the historical struggle as it were. I suggest that Chimurenga narratives in these three novels reveal three major tendencies in representing the historical experience of war, namely the partisan, the cautiously patriotic and cynical.

Rooted in Chimurenga resistance ideology, the male-authored texts under discussion offer insights into what Ndlovu-Gatsheni[45] calls the "Chimurenga monologue" and perhaps the potential for articulation of alternative memories and counter-narratives of the struggle for Zimbabwe. The interface of historical creative fictions such as the novels examined here and the a monolithic nationalism dominated by one political movement suggests possibilities for these alternatives memories of war**.** Says Ndlovu-Gatsheni(2011)[46]

> Zimbabwean nationalism was predicated on this assumption that diversity of ethnic and racial identities had to be homogenized into a singular national identity and that successful nation-building and state-making was to culminate in eradication of diverse identities and projection of the identity of the group that dominated state power. The

> ideology of Chimurenga became the nodal point around which imaginations of monolithic had to crystallize.(p.2)

Tied to Ndlovu-Gatsheni's thesis is the question of who defines and represents Chimurenga in Zimbabwe? Equally significant is the difference between early Chimurenga ideology (the inclusive and even non-racial nationalism informed by universal values of human progress and modernity propagated by the educated Africans) and 'patriotic history' which articulates partisan ideology of nationhood.

Over and above these concerns, how does black war fiction anticipate the qualitative transformation from Rhodesia to Zimbabwe? Does the fact that the authors are products of the literate elite suggest that they are somehow implicated in the "betrayal" of the immediate post-war period? Political scientist Henning Melber(2003) speaks of transformations in post-war southern Africa in these terms:

> The social transformation in these Southern African societies shaped by a settler brand, however, can at best be characterized as a transition from controlled change to changed control and is hence similar to processes that took place elsewhere on the continent. The result is a ruling new political elite operating from commanding heights shaped and based upon the particular context of the post-apartheid societies by selective narratives and memories related to the war(s) of liberation and hence constructing or inventing new traditions to establish an exclusive post-colonial legitimacy under the sole authority of one particular agency of social forces. The mystification of the liberators plays an essential role in this fabrification.(p.163)

Evident in Melber's description of the qualitative nature of political change in South Africa is the worry that the political transition itself is somewhat stillborn and structured along the exclusive order that has previously served the interests of the few. Like the South African struggle for democracy, the subject of the war of liberation in Zimbabwe invites deeply-contested questions and divisive emotions. These contests are an inherent part of the historical baggage of contemporary Zimbabwean society because the political movements and groups that were engaged in the war remain part of the nation's socio-political culture. It is within this context that the on-going struggles for control and ownership of land, mineral and other resources by various factions, groups and classes should be understood.

Political theorists and historians such as Norma Kriger and Terence Ranger suggest alternative frameworks within which to conceptualize and remember the struggle. Instead of simplifying it as mere Chimurenga, a logical continuation of the failed 1896-7 Shona-Ndebele Uprisings against visible white settlers, they identify complex "struggles within the struggle" that is a web of conflicting allegiances and interests across race and class within the bigger struggle. Instead of presenting the peasants or rural villagers as ready receptacles for guerilla or nationalist ideology, Ranger[47] addresses recent research interests in informal, invisible, everyday resistance such as resistance to taxation in the context of peasant colonial history. By showing how everyday peasants, or rural villagers, resistance underpinned their more dramatic revolutionary input during the guerrilla war, Ranger challenges the standard image of passive peasants whose political consciousness is driven by external political leadership.

Whereas partisan, nationalist rhetoric prefers to speak in terms of a popular nationalist movement as a singular narrative directed by a dedicated elite, Kriger(1988)[48] proposes that there is a genuine space for "peasant consciousness" in the Chimurenga a struggle in which the peasants, fully aware of themselves as a class, articulate their grievances against the colonial order as opposed to merely parroting the ideologies of the elite. Their grievances, according to Kriger, relate to how white farmers and the state undermine their commitment to agricultural production and to defend this "peasant option" as best they could.

Says Kriger(1988):

> Revolutionary guerrilla wars are contradictory affairs. On the one hand, their ends are the capture of state power for a ruling class in the making, and on the other hand, they are a means by which the "people" are empowered to participate in radical new forms of democracy and equity. The tension between these ends is closely bound up with the balance achieved between coercion and consent, or violence and democracy, between at least two constellations of participants in such tension-ridden processes - processes which can structure both the form and the content of the new regime rising out of the war's ashes. These two groups - and they are far from separate from each other because what transpires in each has irreducible effects on the other - can best be conceptualized around the axes of the relationships between political-military leaders and guerrilla soldiers, and between guerrilla soldiers and "the people", among whom they are waging war against an opposing regime and its army. Within both nexuses of relationships the direction of the coercion necessarily brought into play for the dislodgement of a recalcitrant political and military regime is often reversed" (p.376)

Viewed in these terms, the contradictory interests of "the people" and the elite can be a prism through which the conflicts of Chimurenga can be understood, at least within the liberation movement itself. As the novels will demonstrate to varying degrees, it is the elite who popularize propaganda among the masses and have significant control of the direction of the struggle. As I will show, the fact that "the people" do no generate propaganda does not stop the leadership from speaking *for* the latter. This relationship between the masses and the leadership complicates the memories of the war that are told or, for that matter, not told. While the political propaganda spread by the guerilla fighters among the peasants at the *pungwe*[49] on behalf of the political elites conceptualize the Chimurenga in terms of "people power", these three novels present some of the contradictions emanating from participating in a struggle whose founding ideologies and goals are defined by a small elite and sold to the peasantry as a people's revolution. As my discussion of Kanengoni, Chipamaunga and Samupindi's fiction will show, this mismatch becomes a major sticking point for both guerillas and peasants who feel betrayed by the leadership.

Key to my analysis of these texts are these questions: While war is essentially an experience of danger and heroism, pain and inevitable loss, how is this violence, articulated, forgotten, denied or selectively remembered or celebrated by the guerillas, the peasants and by party elites in fiction? Further, how do the war narratives as presented in the three texts feed into popular political culture especially in a country in which officialdom formally recognizes political heroism associated with the liberation struggles? In other words, how are heroes and heroines manufactured, remembered, celebrated or contested in these fictions? In addition, how is the experience of war, particularly its pervasive brutality, remembered and how much of that

violence is erased from or inserted into the new nation's collective memory? Equally significant, how is blame apportioned in the aftermath of war? Linked to this last point, how do self-serving ideological interests such as the establishment of a socialist postcolonial society –which animated the Zimbabwean anti-colonial struggle because of its somewhat utopian promise for social equality- shape the experience of young people at the warfront and how are such ideologies contested by the harsh experience of war itself? Additionally, how do these fictions negotiate the myth of Chimurenga as the great equalizer across the social classes, races, ethnic groups and sexes – a people's revolution - and the struggle as a pragmatic process through which black elites seized the levers of power?

Edmund Chipamaunga's novel, *A Fighter for Freedom*(1983) brings some of these questions into focus without necessarily providing specific solutions to the obvious contradictions rooted in the goals of the Chimurenga as defined by the elite and prosecuted with the aid of the masses. The novel portrays the celebratory and somewhat euphoric mood of the immediate post-war years. It looks back at the troubled 1970s and finds a people resolved to dismantle settler authority. The book's cover is emblazoned with an image that bespeaks romantic heroism: A young black man stands in open spaces not usually associated with guerilla warfare, firing his AK47 assault rifle at what is presumably a Rhodesian Air Force helicopter even as bombs explode right beside him. It is a scene reminiscent of the legend of Joice Mujuru's downing of a Rhodesian Air Force helicopter[50]. The rhetorical power of the image is unmistakable; it is indeed a celebration of what Chipamaunga sees as the resilience and sheer bravery of Zimbabwean men at a defining moment in history. It is the courage of young men such as this one, the image suggests, that eventually delivered independence to the long-suffering black Zimbabwean masses.

While critics have expressed reservations about the imaginative quality of the narrative itself (Zhuwarara, 1985, Muponde, 2010), in its own way, Chipamaunga's triumphalist war novel squarely belongs to the immediate post-war years which were marked by a euphoric celebration of political victory following what was remembered as a heroic armed struggle in the collective imagination. Divided into three sections, "Under Authority", "With Authority" and "Authority," *A Fighter for Freedom* clearly seeks to trace the contours of Zimbabwe's historical experience with particular emphasis on the colonial repression and the settler occupation leading to the 1960s and beyond. These events form the backdrop to the violent confrontation and negotiated settlement of the late 1970s which give birth to the new nation of Zimbabwe in 1980.

Over and above its political intentions, the novel is a study in reclaiming black masculinity. A product of the very conditions that he writes against, Chipamaunga's creative energy seems to spring from a desire to subvert the ninety years of colonial domination, especially its claim to a superior Western civilization. Told through a series of character contrasts, the story centers on Tinashe, a young black boy who lives under the tyranny his highly-educated but feeble-minded father. By observing the conditions around him, Tinashe grows to understand the domination of his people by structures of colonial authority. Later, he joins a group of guerillas and, after receiving military training, leads his group into a series of spectacular raids against a number of Rhodesian army units. The novel ends with a strong suggestion that country-wide victory is imminent, thanks to the gallantry of young men such as Tinashe.

The novel's hero is sharply contrasted with his well-educated but weak-willed father, Gari. Father Truss, the priest and overseer of the school where Tinashe's father works, totally dominates the former that he routinely call him a "boy"(p.7), a reference to the infantilization of

Africans by Rhodesian settlers. Whereas Gari draws his authority from the colonial government and church which owns the school, Tinashe's robust energy is directed at resisting the strict regime upon which settler colonialism thrives. While Tinashe's father, whose "mind has been taken over foreign elements"(p.23) has been battered by a regime of humiliation and abuse by various structures of the colonial order, Tinashe maintains a strict physical fitness regime and is mentally detached from the abuse around him. In contrast to the father's greatest pleasures of drunkenly reciting Lord Tennyson's verse and terrorizing his family, Tinashe seems primed for more egalitarian things. His brother, Tapiwa, has already vanished and is presumed to have joined the liberation fighters.

Chipamaunga's portrayal of white characters contrasts sharply with what Fuller and Shaw have allowed in their narratives discussed in the last chapter. Truss, the priest-school overseer not only routinely humiliates blacks whose lives he dominates but he engages in sexual trysts with some of the women churchgoers. Very early in the story, Chipamaunga's message is established; Western cultural and political domination effected via settler occupation is what has destroyed black masculinity in colonial Rhodesia. Not surprisingly, Tinashe's defense and mantra in the face of harassment by representatives of the Rhodesian regime is "*Be Tinashe to yourself….first*". Being *himself* suggests a refusal to be crushed by the weight of colonial domination like his father as well as finding a path to his family history.

For Tinashe, the pathway to a rediscovery of black masculinity lies in finding his identity *in opposition to* the colonial order as well as an appreciation of traditional African cultures which Rhodesian has tried to destroy and suppress. In Tinashe's view, it is Rhodesian settler colonialism, coupled with its imposition of a Western-style education that has eaten at the roots of Africans' self-confidence. Instead of equipping Africans for meaningful roles in their

society's affairs, Western-style education seems, for Tinashe, to have reduced the indigenous population to wretchedness. Tinashe's own father is a prime example of what colonialism has done the colonized's psyche; he "went to a great deal of pain to avoid physical contact with his wife."(16) It is the pain of this self-alienation that drives Tinashe to seek self-affirmation from his uncle, Roro, a man steeped in traditional education, and learns the traditional ways of his clan even at the risk of punishment by his father.

It is through Uncle Roro that Tinashe reconnects with his great ancestor, Chaminuka Mufemberi, a key figure in the Shona-Ndebele Uprising of 1896-7. Inspired by the history of his ancestors' heroism, Tinashe eventually joins the current war against Rhodesian settler rule. Needless to say, his war experience is a catalogue of stunning battleground victories and almost no death or suffering, giving the novel the aura of a romantic thriller. Above everything else, it is the celebration of taking up arms and raising the possibility of driving out the colonial settlers that animates the rest of the narrative. Nowhere is this clearer than in the messages of the Chimurenga songs that the guerillas like Tinashe taught the masses to spread their political party's propaganda. One of these, called Mbuya Nehanda has become legendary in Chimurenga discourses(p.215):

Mbuya Nehanda kufa vachitaura shuwa	*Mbuya Nehanda spoke the truth unto death*
"Kuti zvino ndonofira nyika ino"	*"Even as I die for this country"*
Shoko riya ravakatiudza: "Tora gidi uzvitonge!"	*She said: "Fight and free yourself"*
Wasara muhondo!	*Come! Join the war!*

Shuwa here? Tomhanya-mhanya nemasango	*Yes? We, the fighters, here in the forests*
Totora anti-air kuti ruzhinji ruzvitonge	*We fire the anti-air gun for freedom's sake*

Having connected Tinashe to his heroic ancestor, Chaminuka Mufemberi, via the memory of Nehanda's pre-execution prophecy, the song above presents the Chimurenga of the 1970s as the logical continuation of that of his ancestors[51]. Nehanda's words which she reportedly spoke even as she stared death in the face are given prophetic force, urging later generations of Zimbabweans to rise up against colonial rule. It is Nehanda, the female warrior who apparently blesses Tinashe's revolutionary commitment. The reference to Nehanda, the martyr figure who was hanged by the Rhodesians in 1898, gives Tinashe's involvement in the Second Chimurenga a wider historical resonance and legitimacy.

Incredibly, Chipamaunga's hero and his fellow fighters find time to visit Dzimbahwe(pp.219-21), the symbolic heartland of the modern Zimbabwean nation, to familiarize themselves with its rich history. The struggle, for Chipamaunga's hero, does not just involve defeat of the enemy but reclamation of Shona history at Great Zimbabwe. It is here, in celebrating Shona ancestral legends such as Chaminuka and Nehanda that defines Chipamaunga's narration of the Second Chimurenga. Reading this war narrative, one is forced, like Zhuwarara(1987) to ask, somewhat rhetorically, "Why does Chipamaunga over-indulge himself in his romanticization of Tinashe and other black fighters?… Tinashe seems like a figure straight out of a romance tale and is much larger than life. Anyone familiar with the actual

Zimbabwean struggle will know that the liberation struggle was a slow, painful, and sometimes discouraging process fraught with perilous contradictions and costly mistakes."(p.143)

In response to his own rhetorical question, Zhuwarara argues that Chipamaunga's objective in *A Fighter for Freedom* is less about a credible Chimurenga narrative as it was experienced than a response "to some of the most pernicious myths about Africans which were assiduously spread and faithfully believed by some Rhodesian whites."[52] Condemned to irrelevance as a member of a race that is, according to prevailing white Rhodesian wisdom, "genetically flawed" and "congenitally incompetent", Chipamaunga's novel rises out of a desire to demonstrate the history of courage and organizational ability of black Zimbabweans. By rebelling against his emasculated father, Tinashe's fighting and organizational abilities, perception and keen interest in Zimbabwe's cultural history all point to a quest for "cultural nationalism" in Rhodesia.

Beyond the cultural nationalism that Zhuwarara sees in Chipamaunga's novel, one must also probe the ideological motivations of Chipamuanga's portrayal of such romantic heroism in the context of Chimurenga. What does such romantic representation of what was in fact a hugely complex and contradictory process say about the role of the black educated class in the narration of the Zimbabwean nation? How should one place Chipamaunga's fiction in light of political theory of African liberation such as Werbner's(1998) that calls for a critique of power in contemporary Africa through the prism of "theoretically informed anthropology of memory"?[53] Although *A Fighter for Freedom* was published after the Second Chimurenga itself, it is plausible that Chipamaunga sees his novel as celebrating the resilience of oppressed black Zimbabwe until eventual freedom. Viewed in this light, the folkloric elements that Zhuwarara

allude to above feed into Shona storytelling traditions where heroes sometimes breach the spiritual realm in their pursuit of communal heroism.

Charles Samupindi comes right after the "drought and hunger" generation associated with the early creative genius of Dambudzo Marechera, Shimmer Chinodya, Charles Mungoshi and others. Although he was not a combatant during the struggle, Samupindi's entire literary oeuvre is primarily shaped by a desire to understand what the Chimurenga meant for those who joined as guerillas. His novels also probe the experiences of those who led the struggle and those who stayed within the borders of Rhodesia and effectively got stuck between the two warring armies. Samupindi's *Pawns*(1993) presents an important dimension to the construction of public memory of the liberation war in post-independence Zimbabwe. What stands out in Samupindi's novel is an obsession with the figure of Robert Mugabe, then one of many senior nationalist leaders but by no means the most prominent, at least at the beginning. The figure of Mugabe is presented to the reader via the memory of a young war volunteer who happens to interact closely with the former. Incredibly, the figure of Mugabe enters the narrative and interacts with fictional characters, creating a delicate balance between Mugabe the historical figure and Mugabe the character in this historical fiction.

Published in 1992, *Pawns* spans the two vital periods in post-independence Zimbabwe; the euphoria of independence that Chipamaunga's *A Fighter for Freedom* hints at and the unrelieved bitterness characteristic of the fiction associated with the deterioration of the nation's economy towards the end of the last century. The novel's protagonist is a young man, Daniel, who is pushed by poverty into joining the liberation war. As the oldest son, Daniel is particularly tormented by his inability to help his mother, a vegetable vendor, care for his siblings in the absence of a father figure. Daniel's failure to fulfill his provider role as the heir apparent throws

his manhood into question as he watches helplessly while his family wallows in poverty. The boy's desperation is described in poignant terms which ultimately serve as the single biggest motivation for his joining the struggle (Samupindi, 1992):

> The horror that tonight amai will come back from the market where she sells vegetables and say, "It has been a tough day, children. Nothing was bought. ..There is no meal today. It had happened before. First it was "no school fees". Then, "no meal". Ever since that man, my father, made his cruel exit from our lives, when he was crushed off his bicycle while riding home one night…The loving father who chose to go about in tattered shorts so that we could go to school and have basic meals. Poor dad who, with a salary of $35 a month, nevertheless painfully managed to keep things afloat…I am the eldest and there is a string of others after me. Marble. Tendayi. Michael. Taona. God!(p.20)

Added to the anguish described above is the fact Daniel has to discontinue school and try to help his mother. It is from the paralyzing sense of failure to keep poverty out of the door described above that the boy feels "useless".(ibid) A measure of self-confidence is only restored when he seeks out Robert Mugabe, a local politician, "to understand what's going on,"(p.22) a reference to the failed talks to resolve the political situation of Rhodesia at the time. Mugabe tells the youth, somewhat incredulously given the dangers involved:

> We are not involved. We are not involved with what's going on with the so-called congresses. We are not involved. We still are ZANU, will remain ZANU and will work like ZANU. What we believe in is a war for liberation. Armed struggle. We might be seen attending these congresses but it's only for appearances." He pauses thoughtfully,

and then continues, "We have other more important plans. In the end, the hand of ZANU shall rule!...(p.23)

Although Daniel does not immediately cross the border for military training, he says, "I continued to see Mugabe. He sends me on party errands. Is this matter more important than dad being crushed under the wheel of a car? …Was my present course, one I had chosen, more important than amai, my brothers and sisters and their hunger? Something in Mugabe's eyes told me 'yes'…"(pp.23-4)

These passages which quote Robert Mugabe are significant to my reading of the novel's ultimate message regarding the memory of the Second Chimurenga: first, they introduce the dilemma of the Janus-faced Mugabe – at once a character and a historical figure in the novel. The difficulty of distinguishing Mugabe the person and Mugabe the character in a historical novel must be one that the author must have anticipated yet one that the novel does not resolve. At the time of the novel's publication – 1992 – Robert Mugabe was already into his twelfth year in power and a subject of a huge body of war-time myths. Mugabe's stature in the novel feeds into these widespread myths. Another problem associated with the novel's portrayal of Mugabe is that it treats him as the leader of the ZANU party from the beginning.

Equally problematic is the aura of mystique around the Mugabe of the novel. This Mugabe – supposedly emerging from ten years detention in 1976 – pauses meaningfully before declaring, "In the end, the hand of ZANU shall rule…!" By portraying a visionary Mugabe who prophesies the coming of independence with such certainty at such a period opens the novel to charges of mythmaking and revisionism along partisan lines. In a sense, the public memory of

the liberation struggle is, in this instance, reduced to the person of Mugabe when in fact he was one of many leaders of one of multiple nationalist parties within a fluid process. There is therefore a sense in which the novel panders to political cultism and the situational application of militant rhetoric. Not only is the novel dominated by the towering figure of Mugabe the historical man but other real-life Mugabe associates who later attained prominent government positions in post-independence Zimbabwe. Like Mugabe, his associates are also portrayed in unfailingly glowing terms.

For Daniel, the war's logic is primarily tied to his family's situation of material poverty and Mugabe's stated vision of an equitable future society. When Daniel is assisted by (Moven) Mahachi, a real-life Mugabe associate, to cross into Mozambique to join the guerillas, he(Daniel) justifies the sacrifices of the war in terms of what independence will bring to his poverty-smitten family:

> After the war, maybe I will mean something to her (his mother). At the very least I will be someone who has fought for the nation. I will be given a good job and a proper house and I will be able to fend for her and the children. She will no longer need to wake up at four in the morning to go and buy vegetables from Harare Musika to resell at Machipisa.(p.41)

By associating Daniel's seemingly revolutionary act of volunteering to fight for Zimbabwe's independence with Mahachi, a Mugabe associate, Samupindi conflates the memory of Chimurenga with the historical figure of Mugabe. Over and above the pragmatic expectations of the war's outcome for lower class black Zimbabweans, namely the eradication of poverty,

Daniel also hopes to be a hero of the war. Conflating active participation in the war alone with heroism also opens the novel to charges of endorsing the Mugabe government policy on heroism. Given the massive involvement of rural masses in this guerilla war of attrition, it is contradictory to suggest, as this novel – and Mugabe's ZANU PF - do, that Zimbabwean heroism is restricted to fighters who carried guns during Chimurenga and their political leaders.

To tell the story of his involvement in the war, Daniel winds up at Seguranza camp in Mozambique together with two of ZANU's leaders, Robert Mugabe and Edgar Tekere. Despite Daniel's initial enthusiasm, the refugee-cum-training camp shocks him by its extremely harsh conditions which are described in graphic detail:

> Goodness! If last night is going to be the pattern here we're going to die sooner than later. I fear Peter has already broken down. He whimpered throughout the night. I do not blame him, after all he had grown up in luxury. I pity him, but this is no place for babies. War is no place for babies. But then, is this war? Is this necessary?...Look at Peter, what will he say he died for, if he dies here? Down here in Seguranza where one never says goodbye.(p.55)

The hunger-ravaged and disease-ridden camp descends into "hell"(p.59) as help doesn't arrive from either the FRELIMO government of Mozambique or the president of ZANU, Ndabaningi Sithole. Mugabe's stature grows despite the hardships at Seguranza. Recruits steal away to Mugabe's posto[54] where he "gives them lectures and lessons."(p.56) Mugabe's commitment to the cause of liberation and his understanding of the war situation is presented as far superior to that of Ndabaningi Sithole, then president of the party. After sending a twenty-

page letter to Sithole detailing the challenges of the war recruits trapped in Mozambican camps like Seguranza were facing, Mugabe receives a one-liner from Sithole merely stating, "When going to Tanzania via Zambia, you should not stay for more than a day in Zambia…"(p.62) To this he asks the hungry and dispirited cadres, somewhat rhetorically, "Is this an adequate reply from the leader of a party to its Secretary General who is marooned in Mozambique with a group of starving recruits?"(ibid)

In this climate of confusion, starvation and general despondency, Mugabe is described as the "one rational voice that still spoke of and gave direction…"(p.63) While acknowledging that the other mass party, ZAPU, was also engaged in war, Mugabe expresses intolerance for ANC, an umbrella body engaged in a search for a diplomatic solution to Rhodesia, vowing the strategy is now "to crush the ANC". Another real-life senior ZANU party leader with whom Mugabe had trekked to Mozambique, Edgar Tekere, the man who would fallout with Mugabe early into independence, is described as overwhelmed by the situation, "Tekere had grown moodier by the day and there had been occasions when he suddenly exploded like a squib. Now he was beyond this. Now he keeps to himself. There is no support to be had from him in the present circumstances."(p.66) Evident in this contrast between Mugabe and other leaders is that the former is portrayed as a resolute cadre, one whose revolutionary commitment was never in doubt.

Over and above lionizing Mugabe and demonizing his political and ideological opponents, *Pawns*' portrayal of the Chimurenga forms a counter-narrative to white Rhodesian fiction of the same experience discussed in the last chapter. As such, the novel, like *A Fighter for Freedom*, brings forth a range of ideological positions that counter those of Rhodesian war narratives typified by *Let's Don't Go to the Dogs* and *Kandaya*. In addition to the usual

grievances behind the outbreak of the war, a number of ideologically-charged terms are mobilized to give legitimacy to the war. To this end, the Africans who volunteer to fight the Rhodesian regime are not terrorists as in white Rhodesian fiction but freedom fighters, *vana mukoma*, comrades or simply guerillas. In places, the terms are simply reversed to achieve the desired effect.

Liberation war fiction such as Samupindi's brings us to the contentious issue of histories of large-scale violence and their memorialization in postcolonial Africa. Drawing on oral history, wartime legend and mythologies generated by political victors, Samupindi's narrative identifies incidents of mass killings during the war as appropriate sites of social memory. Like visible manifestations of memory such as museums and other monuments preserved and celebrated elsewhere across Africa, Samupindi's narrative makes a symbolic pilgrimage to Nyadzonia, a major refugee-cum-training camp for Zimbabwean war recruits and refugees which was attacked by Rhodesian forces in 1976. For Samupindi, the Rhodesian attack at Nyadzonia is *the* prism through which the experience of the war of liberation is to be perceived and remembered. It is described as a "holocaust" which left "incomplete bodies; incomplete people, people so violated that they lost all sense of time, movement and direction." (p.68) While the viciousness of the attack which left thousands dead is never in doubt, the major question from attempting such a memorialization project is: What are the social and political conditions of remembering and forgetting such a moment of trauma and heroism. Put differently, how must the fiction writer deal with shifting interpretations and political manipulations of that very public memory? After all, it is a public memory that has already been colored by partisan and patriotic historiography dating back to the attainment of independence and beyond.

While the answers to questions of the conditions within which forgetting and/or remembering happen are debatable, what is not in doubt is that for both white and black communities in post-independence Zimbabwe, the historical memory of the war is often conflated with Nyadzonia, Tembwe, Chimoio, Victory Camp, Doroi and other guerilla camps where refugees and war recruits were massacred by Rhodesian forces. As I discussed in the case of white Rhodesian fiction, the memory of war is also associated with the death of a few hundred Rhodesian civilians when their commercial flight is attacked. While Samupindi presents the events of Nyadzonia in poignant terms, the same events are also presented as galvanizing moments for the nationalist sentiment, thus shaping how the collective memory of Chimurenga, colonialism, victimhood, heroism and related issues are publicly remembered and or celebrated in post-independent Zimbabwe at selected moments.

Samupindi also presents another face of war: the victimization of the recruits themselves at the hands of their leaders. No longer are they just patriotic volunteers but they have been reduced to conscripts. The recruits who can't stand the difficult camp regime and attempt to escape back to Rhodesia are captured and returned to the camps to face public humiliation and punishment. The procedure of punishment reads like a horror script:

> "Now Comrades, I greet you all in the name of the Revolution! As we all know, the Revolution may be protracted. It needs men and women who are determined and courageous. Amongst us are bad eggs. Nhunzvatunzva who are bent on ensuring that the struggle does not succeed. It is our duty, Comrades to weed out these elements before they undermine us all."
>
> *"Pasi nenhunzvatunzva!"* Down with misguided elements!

"Pasi navo!" Down with them!

"Pasi nevasinganzwisisi!" Down with those who don't understand!

"Pasi navo!"... Down with them!

The recaptured defectors emerge in Frolizi camouflage and proceed to the front.

"They are to be given 45 cuts each. Comrade Killer!"

Comrade Killer, the battalion commander, leaps forward – like a leopard to its prey.

"Comrades, prone position take!"

Mabhunu lies on his belly with the buttocks exposed. The ceremonial song begins in syncopation with the fierce beat of the strokes. (p.70)

The brutalization of war recruits described above brings us to the contradictions between the elite and "the people". "The people", often called by the Portuguese name *povo*, provide the bulk of the war volunteers who, in this case, fall victim to cruel treatment by camp commanders. While Samupindi is careful to couch such treatment as a standard discipline regime in force at the camps, there is no doubting the power imbalance between the two groups. The coercive power of the camp commanders ultimately defines what indiscipline is and the appropriate punishment. Samupindi's inclusion of such acts of brutality, even while couched in the name of military discipline, is still a powerful statement given the exclusion of such details during official ceremonies that also claim to honor the war.

While admitting that the stalling of the struggle as a result of the détente exercise and the attack at Nyadzonia "left many with a hollow sense of insecurity and hopelessness", the cadres who gather at Doroi, another refugee camp in Mozambique, are made to sing a revolutionary song:

Nyika yeZimbabwe	The nation of Zimbabwe
Ndimo takazvarirwa	Is where were born
Vanamai nadaba(sic) ndimo vanobva	That's father and mother's home
Tinobva Zimbabwe neupfumi hwayo hwose	We are from Zimbabwe the rich
Simuka Zimbabwe	Rise up Zimbabwe
Zimbabwe!	Zimbabwe!
Tinodawo nyika	We want that country
Zimbabwe!	Zimbabwe!
Tofira rusununguko-o-o!	We are dying for freedom!
Zimbabwe!..	Zimbabwe! (p.71)

As noted earlier, revolutionary songs such as the one above have deep roots in Shona and Ndebele peoples' resistance to colonial domination. Indeed, many of these 1970s songs reference the failed 1896-7 uprising against the British South Africa Company. In the 1970s, however, these songs are modified and become a medium for mass politicization of what was supposed to

be a socialist revolution which presumably required conscientized masses for effective change. Evident in the last song is the emphasis on Zimbabwe's supposed riches which are starkly contrasted with the dire conditions of the refugee and training camps.

The deeds of the legendary Mbuya Nehanda, Sekuru Kaguvi, Lobengula and other heroic figures from the failed 1896-7 uprising in the song are seemingly at odds with the apparently selfish behavior of the captured recruits. The captured recruits are thus pressed into martyrdom in the name of liberating the nation and its riches from settler control. The individual rights of the recruits are sacrificed for what the leaders argue is the greater good of the nation-to-be. While presented as a reasonable price to pay for the bigger burden of liberating the country, the brutal punishment unleashed upon the captured recruits also adds another dimension to the coercive power of nationalist movements in the making of Zimbabwe and in a way, shapes the nature of post-war government in Zimbabwe.

The memory of war itself is not free from manipulation in Samupindi's narrative. By choosing to trace Daniel's close relationship with Robert Mugabe – perhaps the single biggest beneficiary of the war - Samupindi essentially erases the memory of those who lost out in the faction fights for power. Daniel, a mere school dropout with no prior political experience, condemns the factions within ZANU - but only those opposed to Mugabe: "..the Vashandi and their allies have no experience of the diplomatic struggle in the international community. Can they convince the world that they are the real leaders of the Zimbabwean revolution? They might have managed to get some sympathy or support from a handful of countries such as Romania or East Germany but beyond that they are unknown. This is their weakest point…The diplomatic front is no place for a combatant from the bush…(p.76)

The Vashandi group, an ultra-socialist faction, is contrasted with the one Mugabe leads: "The ZANU forces are people's soldiers. They have to be disciplined. It is all in the song, the points of discipline as expounded by Mao Tse Tung!

Kune nzira dzemasoja	*This is the guerillas' code of conduct*
Dzekuzvibata nadzo	*How they conduct themselves*
Teverai mitemo yose	*Follow all the rules*
Yamunenge mapiwa	*That you are given*
Musanetsa vasungwa	*Don't torture captives*
Vamunenge mabata	*That you capture*
Tisave tinotora	*Let's not steal*
Zvinhu zvemass yedu	*Goods belonging to our masses*
Dzorerai zvinhu zvese zvamunenge matora	*Return all borrowed property*
Tisaite choupombwe	*Desist from adultery*
Muhondo yeChimurenga…	*In the war of liberation* (p.77)

Writing at this watershed moment in post-independence Zimbabwe, Samupindi returns to the seeming disconnect between the seductive theoretical foundations of the struggle and the gritty reality of the actual war and its aftermath. Clearly an admirer of Mugabe – especially the Mugabe of the 1970s – Samupindi seems unable to resolve the attractiveness of the war's ideals

and his fascination with one of its leaders with the extreme brutality of war itself. Nowhere is Samupindi's idolization of Mugabe clearer than when the ascendancy of Robert Mugabe is endorsed by the party's Chief of Defense and ZANLA Commander, Josiah Tongogara. Tongogara shocks the recruits by shouting "Pamberi naComrade Robert Mugabe!"(p.96). Up until this time, we are told, sloganeering, an effective tool for the diffusion of nationalist and/or partisan propaganda, had been restricted to chanting of the party name and its goals but strictly banned the chanting of leaders' names. At the same time, the legendary Tongogara condemns Mugabe's opponents within the party, the Vashandi faction which, according to Tongogara, is a counter-revolutionary wing, charging, "Who and what are Vashandi? Can anyone tell me what Vashandi represent? They have said, 'Pasi naTongo, pasi neZvigananda'. But who are they, these Vashandi? But let me you now quite clearly, I, Tongogara, have been missed by an enemy bullet many times. No bullet will ever kill me."(p.96)

According to David Moore(1995)[55]:

> The framework for this belief makes it impossible to say that the Vashandi were simply "Marxists" in either Soviet or Chinese straitjackets. Indeed, one of the more interesting aspects of their ideology was that it was informed by the interaction of Stalinist and Maoist thought that came about when ex-ZANU and ex-ZAPU cadres discussed what they had learned from their various foreign instructors: as one of the Vashandi leaders put it, when they had finished their sometimes bitter arguments, they agreed that they should "stop being the parrots of these giants" and use a creative Marxist framework to analyze their unique social formation and inform their praxis. But beyond the flexibility that this ideological fusion and indigenization produced, the group's practice forced them to take the notion of democracy very seriously..."(382)

Juxtaposed with Moore's intervention, the statements attributed to Tongogara clearly edit the public memory of the liberation war, choosing to remember the Vashandi group not as nationalists but rather as misguided counter-revolutionaries whose ideological position is unknown. The Vashandi group's attempt to indigenize socialist ideology that Moore describes above is ignored by Tongogara who elects instead to emphasize their apparent opposition to the party hierarchy. While popular legend holds that Tongogara, the military chief of the ZANU party, was opposed to Mugabe and other political figures who attained power in 1980, Samupindi's narrative suggests that Tongogara himself introduced the cult of personality around the figure of Robert Mugabe in Zimbabwe's political culture. A few lines later, the cadres are told, "ZANU is now a national, liberating party whose immediate task is to fight. As for ideology, this can be decided after independence. Robert Mugabe is now President of ZANU. His name is to be included in the slogans.(p.102) Put this way, the suggestion is that is that the ZANU leadership itself, including the legendary Tongogara, foreclosed dialogue about the future of post-independence Zimbabwe by refusing to question Mugabe's leadership style. Precisely because of Samupindi's use of real-life historical figures who apparently "speak for themselves," Tongogara's reputed views on the future of the nation-to-be are radically edited. His novel persuades the reader to believe that even if Tongogara had lived, he would have supported Mugabe anyway, thus delegitimizing the perception that Tongogara himself was betrayed.

Despite his seeming endorsement of Mugabe's leadership during the war, Samupindi is critical of the widespread abuse of both male and female recruits by their commanders and political leaders, a major theme for black female writers. In a brief departure from his prose style, Samupindi deploys the power of poetry to deliver this message:

Sex is prohibited, officially

It is not indulged, officially

But apart from Nehanda there's Osibisa

Another women's base, officially

Special women's base, officially

Expecting and breast-feeding women

Sex is not indulged in, officially(p.100)

The verse, juxtaposed with the Chinese rules of engagement discussed earlier, seems to mock the gulf between official propaganda on the roles of women within the nationalist movement and the sordid lives of many women cadres at Nehanda and Osibisa rear camps in Mozambique. The satire is especially caustic given the seeming honor of naming one of the camps after Nehanda Nyakasikana, the spiritual woman leader of 1897 Shona First Chimurenga against the British South Africa Company's Pioneer Column. The rampant sexual abuse of female cadres is apparently difficult to discuss openly because the victims are restricted to the two women's camps, away from public view as it were. As I will show in the chapter on black women's narratives of the war, many women escaped Rhodesia's racism only to fall victim to the patriarchy of the nationalist movements in exile.

Beyond the factionalism epitomized by the suppression of the Vashandi group, Samupindi's narrative also shows how the struggle for power within the nationalist movement

takes an ethnic dimension. Already broadly split between Shona and Ndebele in the ZANU and ZAPU camps respectively, the former is further fractured by Shona sub-group rivalries. Daniel, now trained in guerilla warfare takes Comrade Fangs – a reference to his supposed ferocity in battle - as his *nom de guerre*[56], becomes commander of his fighting unit and feels the weight of intra-ethnic fighting. One of the fighters in charge of logistics is fingered as a problem. According to Comrade Fangs, "Just as he had once been influenced by the Vashandi, so now he had become a tribalist. He could not think beyond Manyika, Zezuru, Karanga, Ndebele, Korekore, and so on.(p.120)

Despite the seeming heroism of Comrade Fangs and his group once inside Rhodesia, Samupindi highlights the sickening brutality of war. Despite the fighters' courage in disrupting Rhodesian authority and fighting some memorable battles, what Fangs remembers most is the loss of fellow fighters and the senseless killing of innocent civilians by both sides. In the novel, the murder of Mudhara Mhangira(p.160) by one of his own fighters is an instance of this aspect of Chimurenga that, until Samupindi's writing, had received little attention from writers of historical fiction. Still, one can not but notice that Samupindi presents the senseless murder of Mudhara Mhangira as an isolated aberration despite historical evidence to the contrary. Presented as such, Samupindi's treatment of the murder of civilians by nationalist guerillas sounds more like a belated apology than anything else.

It is the death his Comrade Fangs' girlfriend, Angela, in a crossfire that brings the personal element to Comrade Fangs war's experience:

> Fangs hunted for Angela. Bodies lay everywhere in varying and crooked postures of death. He tried to divert his eyes but everywhere he looked he saw a relentless field of the

> dead staring out over each other with unseeing eyes…Looking up he saw the skies glutted with vultures coming to scavenge on human insanity and folly…Half-blown heads and faces. Faces creased in moments of horror…Faces exuding blank terror. Screaming mouths, broken jaws….The whole day he searched through a nightmare of bodies to no avail. He found her on the second day…Her body was dangling from a tree…She must have died slowly, through loss of blood. Tears had dried on her cheeks. Her body was already beginning to decompose. He lifted the body carefully and laid it on the ground. Maggots wriggled in and out of the gash in her stomach…Then the weight of the reality hit him. His mind exploded and began to bark. "Angela! Angela! Angela…"(p.187)

The passage above brings the poignancy of war into sharp focus. Fangs' helplessness at the loss of Angela reminds us that war is also very much about the inevitable loss of life, a dimension so often forgotten in pursuit of heroism. For all his bravery, there is nothing that fangs can now do to bring Angela back and the grand goals of the struggle become rather meaningless in the face of such a personal loss. Even as Mayor Urimbo – another of Mugabe's real-life associates – brings the message of ceasefire from the Lancaster House Conference in London, all Comrade Fangs can think of is his personal loss from the war. Despite its apparently noble objectives, the war's capacity for destruction is clearly limitless. While Comrade Fangs' commitment to the nationalist cause is not in doubt, the results of his many sacrifices are dubious at best. He returns to newly-born Zimbabwe, like all guerillas and refugees who survived, triumphant only to be stumped by the news that his own mother had died in a landmine explosion. It is the news of his mother's tragedy that seems to break his spirit.

Alexander Kanengoni brings yet another dimension to the Zimbabwean war experience. Unlike many writers of who have written about the war experience in English, Kanengoni quit a career as a teacher to join the Chimurenga, fought at the front before going to university at the end of the war and later became a broadcaster and farmer. His novel, *Echoing Silences*(1997), should thus be approached as a fictionalized first-hand account of an former combatant. *Echoing Silences* is the story of Munashe, a young man who, initially inspired by the lectures of an Irish Catholic priest, drops out of a degree program to enlist as a guerilla fighter. Like Chipamaunga's Tinashe, Munashe is seemingly inspired by romantic notions of freedom and seems oblivious to the ugliness of war at this point.

Contrary to Chipamaunga and Samupindi's narratives, Kanengoni finds nothing heroic about war, including the liberation war in colonial Zimbabwe, at least at the personal level. Instead of remembering moments of heroism, what echoes in the protagonist's mind after the war itself is the extreme violence associated with life as a refugee in Mozambique and afterwards, as a disillusioned fighter at the front leading a group of demoralized fighters. Munashe's war experience reads like a tragic rite of passage; while he does survive the war itself, his traumatic post-war experience suggests that the war has seriously damaged him.

Whereas Mutasa and Chipamaunga write their novels during the euphoric immediate postwar years, Kanengoni took nearly two decades to publish *Echoing Silences*. As shown earlier, *A Fighter for Freedom* and *Pawns* primarily seek to celebrate the supposed bravery and single-mindedness of the guerilla fighters and their leaders. *Echoing Silences,* on the other hand, is inspired by totally different objectives. The most vivid memory of war that Munashe brings into independent Zimbabwe is that of his participation in the murder of a woman and her baby at a camp in Mozambique. Although he is hoping to receive military training and return home to

confront his real enemies, the Rhodesians, Munashe is reluctantly sucked into the faction fighting that creeps into the training camps. At the camp, Munashe learns that the military training and deployment to the front are seriously hampered by faction fighting, regional power struggles and at the mercy of whatever diplomatic offensive was going on at the time. The inactivity gives rise to abuse of power by camp commanders who can execute recruits at will. The condemned woman is identified as belonging to a faction that has just been crushed and as such must also die. The responsibility of killing her falls on young Munashe. The cold-blooded murder of the woman and her baby is a cruel highlight of Munashe's war experience and deserves to be quoted at some length:

> The security officer grabbed the automatic rifle from the female combatant standing next to him and let out a burst of automatic fire. The deafening sound echoed across the jungle, dying out a long time later, away in the scorching distance. One of Munashe's already painful memories about the war was the long journey from Chifombo to the war front; across the flat, monotonous Zambezi Valley, along the Zambezi River meandering lazily like a venomous snake, across a seemingly endless wilderness, through heavy forest, past the small forward base to which he never imagined he would he would have to return in such uncertain circumstances, only to be asked to kill a woman and her crying baby…Then Munashe tightened his grip around the broken hoe handle and whispered something to himself that he did not know and tears and sweat rolled down his face. And all the while, he looked away from the woman as if he was afraid that she might ask him to forgive her. He could also hear, above the noise of the crying baby, her faint, agonized breathing and he saw that she was shaking. He held the hoe firmly in both hands and its steel gleamed eerily in the sun.

> "I can't do it!" a scream broke from Munashe.
>
> "Can he not use the gun?" the base commander implored.
>
> "Shut up!"
>
> "Go on! Strike the fatal blow! Someone yelled
>
> The woman fell down with the first blow and the sound of Munashe's jarred and violent cry mingled with that of the dying baby as the hoe fell again and again and again until Munashe was spattered all over dark brown blood and the base commander held him back and he refused, shouting that he wished that someone had killed him because he could not live with such a memory…Then Munashe threw away the blood-smeared hoe and walked away blindly…All he could hear were the last cries of the baby as it died…He could not understand it, why it took the baby so long to die. Nightmare and war became interchangeable.(p.4)

It is this bloody event - in addition to being tortured into falsely confessing to be a Rhodesian agent(p.20), which defines Munashe's war experience. The story shows that the so-called traitors are being killed at the orders of the camp security officer in a chaotic environment. Even the camp commander is also apparently open to charges of being sympathetic to the so-called rebels' cause. No tribunal is held for the "traitors" and Munashe clearly has a very hard time bringing himself to perform the gory task of bashing the possibly innocent mother and child with a hoe handle. The major source of Munashe's shock seems to be the obvious injustice of callously murdering the very volunteers to the Chimurenga. In Munashe's reasoning, the near-

random killing of “traitors” seems to militate against the ultimate patriotic act of joining the struggle for an independent Zimbabwe. In Munashe’s view, the woman does not deserve to die, hence his “fear” of the woman’s gaze even as she is at his mercy.

At the by the security officer’s orders, Munashe batters the woman and her baby in a frenzy of rage and has to be pulled away. Strangely, it is the baby, the more vulnerable of the two victims, who apparently refuses to die quickly enough and keeps crying even as Munashe bashes away. The security officer’s insistence that Munashe use a hoe handle instead of a gun – the standard weapon of planned execution - to kill the woman and her baby makes the murder a disturbingly intimate experience. Whereas the gun demands that the killer stands a distance away from his victim before firing, the wooden hoe handle requires that the victim be literally at arm’s length.

Coupled with the injustice of the act, this intimacy shatters Munashe’s innocence for he must also observe at close quarters even as he bashes first the mother and then the stubborn baby whose endless cries haunt him to his early grave. Significantly, the woman doesn’t speak but torments Munashe by “looking at him through her swollen eyes”(p.20) even as he refuses to meet her gaze while the baby’s cry breaks his heart. Munashe’s murder of the two intimately ties him to the war’s brutality; his excessive use of force in executing the task seems to be directed at the senselessness of war itself where the difference between innocence and guilt is blurred. In a sense, murdering innocent civilians who have volunteered to fight for Zimbabwe destabilizes Munashe’s hitherto neat categories of enemies and comrades. In the absence of any kind of trial, the woman and her baby potentially belong to the very group that Munashe is supposedly fighting to liberate from Rhodesian oppression. It is here that the scope of Kanengoni’s war narrative is unprecedented in Zimbabwean writing.

If the training camps are places of distrust, senseless torture and mass killings, the warfront is a nightmare for Munashe's band of guerillas, mainly because of lack of support from the villagers and from the base camps in Mozambique. One of the guerillas, Bazooka, is driven to hallucination by extreme thirst, hunger and exhaustion even before the group crosses the border from Mozambique into Zimbabwe. Bazooka runs off into the jungle, shouting that witches are pursuing him. Shortly thereafter, half of the group dies in an attack by Rhodesian soldiers and all Munashe can ask is, "Was this war?"(p.10) Instead of engaging in fighting, Munashe's depleted group struggles just to stay together and survive random Rhodesian aerial and ground attacks. Not surprisingly, Munashe quickly loses all appetite for the original cause of liberating the country. When his group suffers heavy losses in battle and is hounded out of the villages and into the mountains by the Rhodesians, Munashe seems to lose interest in all human endeavors and takes to watching wild animals drink as if to escape the haunting cries of Gondo, a comrade who gets mortally wounded in a Rhodesian attack.:

> …Gondo's wound grew septic, and he thought of his home and the people whom he knew, loved and missed him: his mother, father, brothers, sisters, friends, every one of them and Munashe thought: what am I doing here? And he thought again: will I ever get out of this place alive? And he envied the animals, especially the lions, for their simple ways, and he hated himself for joining the crazy fucking war.(p.11-2)

It is hard to miss how the struggle is no longer a Chimurenga, a popular armed uprising deep with historical resonance for the Shona and Ndebele people of Munashe's country, to a "crazy fucking war."(p.22) At this point, the war has lost its appeal and wider significance to

Munashe, and indeed his fellow comrades. Sly, the young guerilla who is also the political commissar in the group who initially teaches the villagers revolutionary songs and delivers political lessons with zeal has begun to openly question the commitment of leaders who sent them to the front but forgot to provide them with sufficient logistics to fight the war. Instead of engaging the enemy, the guerillas find escape in drugs, specifically *mbanje* – or marijuana; "…*mbanje* had already intruded into their ugly life in the desperate war. They smoked it in the morning and in the afternoon and just before they trudged on during the night as they changed bases. It raised his spirits and it was the only thing that, Munashe realized reassured him that he could after all survive the routine killings, the unabated savagery and the dying."(p.23)

Whereas *A Fighter for Freedom* and to a lesser extent, *Pawns*, paint a romantic and almost nostalgic picture of the war, *Echoing Silences* shows a brutal face of war that many refused to remember in the euphoria of political victory in 1980. In the first two novels, villagers immediately accept and support the guerillas who arrive in their villagers from Mozambique. Kanengoni's village characters are as unpredictable and predatory as the guerillas themselves; they follow the line of least resistance; they would rather be left alone but where there is an opportunity, they do not mind profiting from the war itself. In Kanengoni's novel, villagers such as Mudhara Kachidza, show their predatory side by agreeing to poison the guerillas for monetary rewards from the Rhodesians:

> Mudhara Kachidza's case was just another example of brutality in a brutal war. It happened when their ammunition reserves had dwindled to a precarious level and so the Rhodesians, sensing victory, intensified their offensive. Indeed their entire section would have perished if one of the girls who had brought their food had not whispered that it had been poisoned. But she was not fast enough to save Paradzai and Zex. The two died the

following day, reducing the section to six because Sly, the section political commissar, had not yet deserted. …

"I set the old man alight!" Sly said, fidgeting with the gun on his lap.

"So what?" Munashe said mercilessly. "Who hasn't done that?"

"God, I can't bear it anymore. I still want to live." (p.24)

The pain in both Sly, the lead executioner, and Munashe, the silent observer, is palpable. While these young men have been trained to kill if necessary, it is obvious they can not get used to it even as they are forced to take harsh actions such as burning traitors alive. Even Munashe, the veteran of the bloody murder back at the camp in Mozambique, can not stand the sight of the villager's torture and grisly murder. Sly, the guerilla tasked with spreading the war propaganda among the villagers deserts soon after the gory murder of Mudhara Kachidza. The villagers' reaction to the guerillas' arrival is, evidently in clear contrast to some celebrated writings about the war.

Historian Terence Ranger(1975) speaks of the existence of a "nationalist peasant consciousness" produced a different balance between peasants, nationalist activities and ultimately guerrillas in Zimbabwe during the war. This dynamic, Ranger finds, "was highly conducive to mobilisation for guerrilla war..", and consequently, there was less "necessity for political education" by guerrillas than there had been in Mozambique. Compared with Mozambique, argues Ranger, radical peasant consciousness allowed for a "more direct input by the peasantry into the ideology and programme of the war."(pp.16-17)

While he speaks highly of Zimbabwean peasants, Ranger does not, in fact define exactly who they are in terms of their material interest in the war. Mudhara Kachidza is clearly driven by a material interest and has little time for the post-independence utopia that the young guerillas speak about. Evident in the torture and murder of Mudhara Kachidza is what David Moore (1995) calls the "tension ridden combination of coercion and consent" that was practiced during the war but largely unacknowledged by the nationalist leadership. Moore(1995) argues further:

> Contrary to Mao's unitary analogy, the "masses" constitute a disparate multitude of choppy waves, washing tides, and unseen undertows. Indeed, the guerrillas may be more akin to small and leaky boats riding the uncharted and ultimately unpredictable oceans than to fish comfortable with the familiar calm of the undersea. The waters of guerrilla war are hard to tame: coercion and consent make up a dialectical unity embracing peasants, proletarians, and potentially plebian-inspired praetorian guards alike, as well as the more classical and coercive contradictions inherent in a war against a monster state.(p.377)

While the party leadership and guerilla commissars conceptualize villagers as a uniform group whose loyalties "naturally" lie with the guerilla fighters, Kanengoni shows that the reality is radically different. Kachidza, the man accused of selling out, is in fact forced to contend with multiple loyalties; maintaining the safety of his village, reporting the presence of the guerillas as per the Rhodesian security requirements and throwing his lot with the guerillas.

Norma Kriger(1992) also clearly demonstrates that coercion was a key factor in the relationship between the guerrilla and Mutoko villagers in eastern Zimbabwe. Further, Kriger

finds that the war generated conflicts among classes, generations, and genders within the peasantry. Going by Kriger's findings, Munashe and his fighters are in fact closer to the coercive power or violence of the guerillas that Kriger(1988:310) distinguishes from the somewhat romantic "peasant consciousness" of Ranger.

Munashe, a strong believer in the nobility of the Chimurenga, at least at the beginning, is evidently turned off by grand narratives of emancipation and liberation that define the villagers as his natural allies in theory and yet betray him to the Rhodesians at the earliest opportunity. What the Kachidza incident demonstrates, in the final analysis, is that guerilla violence, and not political conscientization alone via the nightly *pungwe,* was a key influence of mass mobilization.

Significantly, Sly, the group political commissar, rejects any notion of heroism for his role in the struggle even before he deserts. Before vanishing into the jungle, Sly warns Munashe, "When this nightmare is over and you happen to be in Rufaro Stadium where everyone will be celebrating their victory, I shall be there, tucked somewhere at the back of the cheering crowd on the Eastern Grandstand. And if you happen to look my way and our eyes meet, what you think of me is your own damn business. Nothing can any longer shame me. My friend, I am not a hero and I don't want to be one. I am just a poor ordinary person trying to live."(p.26)

It is here that Kanengoni's view of the war is clearest. Himself a veteran of the war in question, Kanengoni is certainly not unaware of the importance of the war in ushering the independent nation of Zimbabwe after many difficult years of violent warfare. However, what one senses in these descriptions of senseless murders, desertions, rapes and betrayals is a keen awareness of what post-independence Zimbabwe has chosen to *forget* about the war. Sly, the

soon-to-be-deserter, believes the war has lost its nobility. And yet by identifying with the cheering crowd celebrating independence on a future date at Harare's Rufaro Stadium even as he desires the anonymity of that crowd, Sly recognizes the beauty of that momentous occasion even as he no longer wishes to participate in the struggle any further.

True to Sly's cynical remark, independence did come and was duly celebrated at Rufaro Stadium and other places around the country although Sly himself never made it to Harare after the Rhodesians capture him. Sly's fictional cousin is the unforgettable Edmund in Dambudzo Marechera's *The House of Hunger*.[57] Like Sly, Edmund formerly believed in grand narratives of African liberation and like Sly, joins the war only to reappear to his schoolboy friends as a picture on the front page of the Rhodesian newspaper, holding his unused gun and a distant look in his eyes. What Sly alludes to, of course, is the betrayal of the former combatants by their political leadership after the war. In the leadership's failure to provide support the group from the base camp in Mozambique, Sly reads something worse, that is, a pattern of betrayal that was to haunt the war veterans into the post-independence era. While the combatants who had fought at the front were initially acknowledged, they were quickly pushed aside and eventually dumped in the post-war period.

If the war has been a major source of trauma for combatants like Munashe, Fangs and Kudzi, the immediate post-war period does not offer a respite. As Chan(2005: 372, 378)[58] and others have observed, the immediate post war period, among other things, a time for the confrontation of the spiritual beliefs and the radical wartime actions such as the murder of possibly innocent civilians. Munashe's marriage suffers as the just-ended war torments him in his day and night. Specifically, Munashe is haunted by *ngozi*, the avenging spirit of the woman he killed at the base camp in Mozambique. The formal attainment of independence and the

ascendancy of a new black elite in the name of the masses, it seems, does not bring closure to traumatized war veterans like Munashe. His wife is badly shaken by her husband's nightmares:

> One night he is ambushed and he screams at his fellow comrades to take cover and return fire. On another he is pleading with his comrades not to kill an informer. Sometimes he is at Nyadzonia talking to his fellow comrades as they bury their dead. His dreams are all about killing and dying. The night is the most dreadful for both of us. It is as if the war has begun all over again.(p.29)

What Kanengoni alludes to here is the psychological trauma that former combatants continued to suffer after the war in the absence of any government program to re-integrate them into civilian society. Worse yet, Munashe's family, especially his brother, has little sympathy for his tortured soul while the new black government offers nothing in the way of rehabilitating victims of post war trauma. For Munashe, the tragedy seems to be his inability to articulate the nature of his problems. Indeed, when confronted by his wife, all he can say is "The war was a violent time when people thought of nothing else except killing or being killed…"(p.30) before walking away from her. In fact, he has become so paranoid that he is scared of mere darkness and can't stand the sight of blood. It is as if he didn't expect to outlast the war:

> To those of us who have been involved in the fighting for over seven years, the war was like a monster whose head and tail none of us could envisage: something with neither a beginning nor ending. It was almost impossible to imagine that we outlive the war. At Dzapasi, I met someone whom I had fought alongside in Mount Darwin. The man,

> shaking his head in disbelief, kept repeating that there was no way the war could ended because he was still alive. I too felt that way.(p.43)

Clearly, Munashe has failed to transcend the images of extreme brutality he witnessed during the war. Worse yet, he seems too tortured to think about how to exorcise his ghosts. The Nyadzonia massacre in particular stands out for him:

> …they were welcomed by the stink of decomposing bodies and Munashe could think of nothing but death. Corpses were littered everywhere. The tiny abandoned bodies of suckling babies ,made him think not of the young woman with the blood-smudged shawl, but also of the woman with the baby on her back. Whole bodies of little boys and girls, young men, old men and old women scattered amongst those with decapitated bodies, crushed heads, crushed, shattered faces, missing limbs and shredded stomachs. Flies, swarms of heavy, green flies hovered from corpse to corpse like helicopters during an attack: the worms had not yet appeared, they would come later.(p.55)

This encounter with mass death and Munashe's own torture by security details at base camps in Mozambique return to terrorize him at unexpected moments, making it almost impossible for him to work or live a normal life. It is only when his family comes round to begin a traditional ceremony to appease the war ghosts which haunt him that Munashe's mind remembers his decision to join the Chimurenga. Then, without communicating with his extended family, he had merely passed through his sister's house and told her he was going to fight for the country. Munashe's sister is no idealist and is incensed:

> But why? Why do you want to bring so much pain and suffering to us by abandoning your degree and joining something as risky as the liberation war? …And when you are eventually killed, who will mourn your loss? Who will cry for you? Who will bury you? Why should you carry the burden of the nation on your head? Just tell me, my brother. (p.46)

While Munashe's sister can be accused of selfishness, what is also evident in her rant is the nature of personal fears that are intimately connected with a struggle of this magnitude. Like Munashe, the sister probably yearns for an independent Zimbabwe and yet the notion of personal martyrdom is not something she can come to terms with. By voicing her concerns about burial rites of passage in the event of unexpected death, the sister brings the disruptive nature of war to the fore.

Echoing Silences' portrayal of the roles of women in the Chimurenga is also noteworthy. Samupindi and Chipamaunga, in their narratives, point to the historical figure of Nehanda as the galvanizing spirit behind the resistance movement of Zimbabwean women fighters, even as both writers relegate women characters to marginal roles in the Second Chimurenga itself. In Chipamaunga's *A Fighter for Freedom*, for instance, Tinashe's mother is completely at the mercy of violent males around her. In fact, her long-suffering disposition is treated as a virtue of sorts even at this critical historical moment that calls for radical choices. Similarly, Samupindi's Chimurenga narrative almost excludes women with the exception of Daniel's poverty-smitten and widowed mother who is later blown away by a landmine anyway. The overwhelming suggestion is that women were helpless victims of Chimurenga's violence who could only expect

protection from sensitive men. Kanengoni contests this pervasive image and yet doesn't escape the charge often laid against Zimbabwean black male writers of this period, namely their failure to recognize women's power of agency during the Chimurenga. What Kanengoni manages to show, however, is how young female Chimurenga recruits became both victims and perpetrators of abuse within that rigid war environment even as he also fails to paint a balanced picture of these women combatants as both fighters and leaders. The most vivid image of womanhood in *Echoing Silences* is that of the silent, condemned woman with a baby on her back. When Munashe is ordered to execute her, she has already given up on life. Not surprisingly, the woman doesn't utter a single word to protest her innocence and seems to "speak" only through her sad, swollen eyes. It is the murder of this woman and her child which destabilizes Munashe's life and sends him to an early grave.

Evidently, Kanengoni reduces Zimbabwean women's Chimurenga experience to this haunting figure with sad, swollen eyes who dies without uttering a word. The condemned woman's victimhood is not in doubt. Her only relevance to the main story is her role in Munashe's suffering as a result of her murder. In addition to the pervasive image of the woman with the baby on her back whom Munashe kills, two other women characters deserve mention. The first is the young guerilla who participates in Munashe's torture when he first arrives up at a guerilla training camp in Zambia. Apparently in the name of security, Munashe and other new arrivals are immediately accused as Rhodesian spies and tortured to force confessions. The female guerilla who has established herself as one of the sadistic torturers at the camp wastes no time tying Munashe's testicles with a piece of string, eventually forcing him to falsely confess to being a spy. Although this woman appears briefly in Munashe's story, her role as a major source

of terror at the camp casts her in the same light as guerillas who killed civilians without giving them a chance to defend themselves.

At the other end of the spectrum, Munashe briefly befriends yet another female guerilla, Kudzai, whose story of the liberation war reads like a horror script. Her exchange with Munashe right after the massacre at Nyadzonia succinctly captures this dimension of the war:

> "Who are you?"
>
> "The woman with the baby on her back inside the moon is crying," she whispered and he shook her up.
>
> "What are you talking about?" he asked.
>
> "Can't you see her up there?" she pointed at the full moon.
>
> "Why is she crying?"
>
> "Of course you don't know," she said dismissively. "Only a woman can understand that mystery."
>
> "Who are you?" he asked again.
>
> "Nobody."
>
> "What do you mean?"
>
> "What can you call somebody who has had three abortions in one year? My life in the war. What sort of credentials are these? I don't want to be considered anything. I am a nobody. I am nothing."

"What are you talking about?"

"I was raped by the bastard for over a year! I couldn't run away. I had no option but to abort. I *hate* men. I *hate* the war."

"Why didn't you refuse him?"

"Rape? Refuse? That was why you saw me in prison at Tembwe."(p.56, italics mine)

Kudzai's description of her personal experience of war resonates with Munashe at a different level: it relives the trauma of his murder of the woman and her baby. While Kudzai now "hates men," her touching story reminds Munashe of his own loss of innocence at war. It is Kudzai who comes closest to restoring Munashe's sanity when they share each other's stories right after the Rhodesian of Chimoio[59]. Kudzai is an amazing portrait of a black woman fighter who, traumatized through rape by male commanders she trusted, loses all faith in the goodness of man or indeed, in the nobility of the Chimurenga itself. Long before her eventual death in the Rhodesian attack on Chimoio, Kudzai is a walking grave, devoid of all hope or belief. She sums up black women's experience of Chimurenga when, in response to Munashe's question about her identity, she answers, "The woman with the baby on her back is crying."(p.56)

Although the myth of the moon's inside image resembling a woman carrying a baby on her back is familiar to the Shona people of Zimbabwe, Kudzai adds that the woman is crying. She appropriates this traditional myth to represent her own and other women's tragic experiences of war while for Munashe, it highlights his own role as both murderer and victim back at the camp. Kudzai's war experience also underlines the dark dimensions of Chimurenga that black

male writers like Chipamaunga, and Samupindi have ignored. Despite the overwhelming evidence of the abuse of women combatants at the rear bases and at the front, writers, especially those writing during the euphoric immediate postwar years understate or totally ignore the issue. As the chapter on black women's writing on the subject will show, a whole camp of pregnant or nursing women actually existed in Mozambique despite official silence or denial. Samupindi, writing much later than Chipamaunga, only throws hesitant hints of this abuse as noted earlier.

The significance of Kudzai's experience lies in questioning the supposed ideological foundations of the struggle as articulated by leaders of Chimurenga, specifically that the goal was to create a harmonious, socialist society where one's sex would be no hindrance to one's role in wider society. Despite Kanengoni's groundbreaking narration of the abuse of women combatants, one can not but marvel at their limited space in the context of Chimurenga. Beyond the women falling victim to callous murderers, sexual predators or mindlessly participating in torture of innocent volunteers, there is no further scope for female participation that Kanengoni remembers from his many years in Chimurenga. This is despite the well-documented historical cases accomplished female fighters and leaders. What is evident is that for Munashe – who dies mysteriously even as his family has begun the journey to exorcise the ghost of the baby-bearing woman – war has been one long nightmare. Significantly, the formal ending of the liberation struggle and the laying down of arms does not lift the blanket of emotional anguish.

In the final analysis, the three writers have presented three complementary and often contrasting narratives about the Zimbabwean Second Chimurenga. Chipamaunga's *A Fighter for Freedom* is clearly driven by a desire to subvert colonial domination and assert African agency. By declaring war on colonial structures of authority, Chipamaunga's superheroes refute the suggestion that black Africans are incapable of organizing themselves. Tinashe rises to become

something of a romance figure almost straight from Shona folklore to reclaim his masculinity. Significantly, Chipamaunga's narrative is one devoid of personal sacrifices on the part of the freedom fighters. Almost celebratory to a fault, the novel remembers that war as a time of cultural reclamation and brilliant military victories over the colonialists with the Dzimbabwe or Great Zimbabwe taking its rightful place in the grand myth of Zimbabwe's liberation.

I have demonstrated that Chipamaunga refuses to acknowledge the presence and contribution of well-intentioned white Rhodesians during the struggle. Father Truss, the pistol-packing priest-school overseer represents the worst of Rhodesian settler mentality as epitomized by his sadistic harassment of villagers. His character is portrayed as portrayed as representative of all white Rhodesians. In a sense, we begin to observe the manufacturing of a patriotic historical fiction that, a la Mbembe, creates its own world of meanings, a "social-historical world" that, in the name of celebrating itself, excludes other relevant experiences. It is not surprising therefore Chipamaunga's black war heroes, symbolized by Tinashe, are so perfect as to be folkloric figures.

Where *A Fighter for Freedom* wallows in euphoria, Samupindi's celebration of the struggle in *Pawns* is tinged by memories of horror that stalked the recruits, many of whom perished in Mozambique, Zambia and within the then Rhodesia. Samupindi's gritty picture does not, however, stop him from idolizing specific historical figures, especially Robert Mugabe. Indeed, Mugabe's presence in what is essentially a historical novel simplifies what was also a complex and extremely violent struggle for power within the nationalist movement itself. Most startling is Samupindi's decision to resurrect the late ZANLA commander Josiah Tongogara and have him endorse Mugabe's leadership and sing his praises. This flattens the otherwise rough contours of Zimbabwe's war experience in which many leaders died at the hands of their rivals.

If Samupindi over-indulges himself in Mugabe-worship, he seems to compensate for this with his grim images of former combatants in immediate post-war Zimbabwe. Indeed, Daniel, the one-time Comrade Fangs, has become a destitute while the new black political elites are keen to present the image of clean, orderly cities to visiting foreign dignitaries. This is the true strength of Samupindi's narrative; a recognition of utter disillusionment by former fighters-turned homeless scavengers who must be kicked out of Harare's streets because of an impending visit by foreign royalty.

Kanengoni, the former combatant, presents the war as he lived and remembers it; a necessary yet brutal experience that robbed young people of their sanity, lives and futures. Munashe, the college student who drops out to pursue romantic dreams of freedom soon learns that volunteering to fight does not exclude him from suspicion and outright torture. It is the brutality of torture, hunger, disease, sudden bombardments by Rhodesian military, the senseless murder of innocent civilians, the disillusionment, desertion and capture by Rhodesians of fellow fighters that bury the dream of a righteous war from Munashe's memory.

All in all, I have demonstrated that black male narratives of the Second Chimurenga are far from uniform. Rather, they betray class interests, patterns of political patronage during and after independence, exclude or marginalize the contributions of women and above all, are themselves implicated in the on-going construction and selective erasure of collective memory. The following chapter examines the contributions of black women writers to the same historical experience.

Chapter 3

Gendering the Chimurenga: Contesting Historical Amnesia in the Zimbabwean Film and Fiction: War and Memory in Yvonne Vera's *Without a Name* and Ingrid Sinclair's *Flame*

Reading the abundant Zimbabwean fiction about the Second Chimurenga, one would be persuaded to think of it as an exclusively masculine domain. The most prominent of these writers, namely Stanley Nyamufukudza, Alexander Kanengoni, Edmund Chipamaunga, Dambudzo Marechera and Charles Samupindi are, after all, all males. This chapter uses two texts, one film and the other a novel, to make a case for women's narration of the struggle. Yvonne Vera's novel, *Without a Name*(1994) and Ingrid Sinclair's film, *Flame*(1996) suggest ways in which we can account for black Zimbabwean women's war experiences as *les lieux de memoire.* Borrowed from French Jewish cultural studies to account for historical turning points and national identity, *les lieux de memoire* is described by Pierre Nora(1989, 7) as those moments where "memory crystallizes and secretes itself…at a particular historical moment, a turning point where consciousness of a break with the past is bound up with the sense that memory has been torn – but torn in such a way as to pose the problem of memory in certain sites where a sense of historical continuity persists."

In Zimbabwean cultural history, no other experience comes closer than the Second Chimurenga in terms of defining the nation's socio-political identity; Zimbabweanness is imagined as intrinsically tied to the then oppositional nationalism of the 1960s and 1970s of which the armed struggle against Rhodesian settler domination is the ultimate self-sacrificial demonstration to attain that identity. Not surprisingly, "the struggle," thus defined, becomes "the

foundation of the new postcolonial literature"(Muponde, 2010: 116) in often narrowly patriotic ways.

Raised and educated in Bulawayo, the cultural center of southern Zimbabwean, Yvonne Vera's has put an indelible mark on Zimbabwean writing in English in her relatively short life. Her contribution to Zimbabwean fiction is, according to Rino Zhuwarara(2001, 261) premised on her commitment to putting her art to "exploring (the) Zimbabwean experience from the point of view of black women." Muponde(etal, 2003) emphasize the taboo-breaking power of her fiction in the lives of black African women.

Partially set in rural Mubaira, *Without a Name* is the story of Mazvita, a young black woman who struggles to pursue her dreams in 1977, the height of the Chimurenga. Caught in the midst of an imploding, deeply-racialized society, Mazvita does not engage herself with trying to understand or confront the forces that constrain her life; rather, she seeks to escape the brutality of war to attain her individual dreams. By deliberately relegating the inflated discourse of nationalism to the margins, Vera invites us to "invent a whole new drama of female oppression."(Musila: 1997, 50) and witness how such a decidedly non-political black young woman experiences the violence of war. Mazvita's physical body is the primary site of violence; colonialism and patriarchy seek to impose themselves on her life by inflicting varying degrees on pain on that body. The scarred-body-as-metaphor for colonial violation works on two levels in *Without a Name* as it does in other Zimbabwean narratives dealing with the same historical experience; the scarred body mimics the original colonial intrusion of 1893 led by Cecil Rhodes and his mercenary Pioneer Column and it also draws attention to the violence that underpins the Rhodesian colonial order established after successful conquest of the indigenous people. Starting in rural Mubaira near the heart of the colony, Mazvita seeks to escape the raging guerilla war by

going to a commercial farm before proceeding to the colonial capital, Salisbury. By the end of the story, she is back to her burnt-down village in Mubaira. A story of rape, infanticide and an ultimately failed quest for closure, *Without a Name* opens with the rape of Mazvita by a soldier who apparently impregnates her. Unlike black male narratives of the previous chapter which often idealize the relationship between the land and the Chimurenga, Mazvita comes to associate it with the raging war and her own sense of victimhood.(Zhuwarara, 294)

Choosing to relegate the wider Chimurenga struggle going on to a background detail, Vera instead isolates the personal story of Mazvita in a painfully intimate fashion. Very rarely do we learn of Mazvita's convictions in relation to the larger mass political movement and armed struggle raging around her. It is as if her personal tragedy has overwhelmed her. It is, after all, 1977, the year when the guerilla war spread to virtually all rural parts of the country and the unarmed villagers are forced to negotiate a fine between the two armed sides to the conflict. The atmosphere is tense with tragic expectation:

> It was 1977, freedom was skin deep but joyous and tantalizing. Freedom was any kind of opening through which one could squeeze. People fought to achieve gaps in their reality. The people danced in an enviable kind of self-mutilation…. Mazvita felt the intense heat which encircled her with the simmering voices and brought the red glow of the but to her face. The ominous hue spread down her arms, and sought her fingers. She stood still. She stood near the bus shelter, but not beneath it, a metal roof held up by four high wooden poles. She stood still. She stood next to one of the poles, on the outside. She stood on the outside. She stood still. (p. 2)

Indeed, Mazvita is raped by Rhodesian soldier and it is this "frightful memory"(34) that consumes her. Completely outside the mass nationalist currents sweeping the country at the time, Mazvita metaphorically stands outside history, unknown and therefore insignificant to both sides. Her tragedy is not situated within the political struggle animating the conversations around her. Rather than perceive the soldier as a coercive instrument of the larger colonial hegemony, Mazvita connects the land itself – the earth upon which she lies as she is raped - with this act of violence. In her state of trauma, "it is the land that had come towards her. He had grown from the land…The land had allowed the man to grow from itself into her body. Mazvita gathered the silence from the land into her body."(p.37)

Instead of developing a militant consciousness and throwing her lot with the African masses clamoring and fighting for independence from the kind of abuse that has befallen her, Mazvita chooses escape from the scene of her trauma. Leaving rural Mubaira, Mazvita briefly stops at a white-owned farm before proceeding to her real destination: the colonial city of Salisbury, the seat of Rhodesian settler power. With escape on her mind, her relationships with men at the farm and in the city are transitory. She refuses to listen to Nyenyedzi, her farmworker boyfriend who seems keen to put the poverty of the farm laborers into some kind of historical context. In a veiled reference to white Rhodesian commercial farmers who had benefitted from skewed colonial land appropriation policies, Nyenyedzi lashes out in frustration, "…the strangers have taken the land (and) they have grown tobacco where we once worshipped and prayed."(p.40) "We must remain here or else join the fight, fight to cleanse the land…" Mazvita, on the other hand, is convinced that "the land has forgotten us."(p.39) Mazvita's resignation at this point is palpable, "It(the land) holds and claims you. The land is inescapable."(ibid)

Whereas Nyenyedzi is convinced the future lies in confronting and changing the material relations between the settlers and the wretched indigenous population, Mazvita, still traumatized by the memory of rape, clings onto "a strong desire for freedom". But hers is not a freedom grounded in the lived experience of her people; it is one premised on escaping to the colonial city where she hopes to attain anonymity. To her, the land "had no fixed loyalties" and it is this quest for personal salvation that drives her to seek anonymity in the colonial Salisbury.

In the city, Mazvita seems to attain her dream, the dream to become nameless and independent. Significantly, the anonymity she seeks is steeped in colonial and gender structures of oppression. Swept off her feet by Joel, a carefree city slicker who doesn't remember to ask her name, Mazvita pursues freedom in the material world of colonial modernity:

> It was 1977, freedom was skin deep but joyous and tantalizing. *Ambi.* Freedom was a translucent nose, ready to drop. Freedom left one with black-skinned ears. A mask. A carnival. Reality had found a double, turbulent and final.(p.26)

As Jessica Hemmings(2005: 174) argues, Mazvita's brief urban existence is marked by ambivalence. It is ambivalence to both the struggle raging in the countryside and her own relationship with a brutal, rabidly racist and capitalist city. Mazvita does not, after all, have any skills to trade for a regular income in Salisbury and her dream of financial independence remains a pipedream. As the quote above suggests, the colonial city has found other ways to channel the potentially revolutionary energy of restless young Africans in the colonial urban jungle. The most visible of these is the infiltration of commercial products and seductive consumerism into the discourse of political freedom, an attempt, as it were, to neutralize the latent revolutionary

fervor of young black urbanites like Joel and Mazvita. Mazvita feels the urgency of freedom but it is a freedom whose manifestation takes the form of essentially self-deforming consumer goods like Ambi, the notorious skin lightener with which African women bleached their brown faces to attain a skin whose color was supposed to be a shade closer to that of those oppressors. Instead of showing her beautiful black womanhood that Mazvita can recognize and embrace, the urban shop windows show Mazvita a black, poorly-clothed too-black body in dire need of lightening. Earlier, Mazvita fantasizes about what she will do when she escapes to the city. She imagines her skin as it "…peeled off, parting from her body. She had suffered so much that her skin threatened to fall pitilessly to the ground. It hung below her neck, from her arms, from her silent body."(p.2)

Evidently, Mazvita does not confront the system that oppresses her, the system that legitimizes her violent rape and displacement by burning down her home. While the city affords her relative safety from the direct violence of war, she easily falls for a colonial consumer culture which sells her a dummy. Ambi, the skin-lightener, promises her a whiteness she can never fully attain. By yearning for colonial products which promise to peel off her skin and give her a lighter one, Mazvita actively participates in her own double oppression. Like Joel, her Salisbury boyfriend who has become a formidable consumer of Western pornographic material, Mazvita has also become an accomplice to her own oppression. The skin lighteners which she yearns for are, after all, agents of superficial, skin-deep change which does not threaten the structural organization of power in colonial Rhodesia.

Clearly, Mazvita's trauma is traceable to the war in Mubaira. It is the war that makes it possible for armed men to terrorize unarmed women. For Mazvita, the rape is the traumatic *lieux de memoire* that propels her on a hopeless quest. Described thus, one can not escape the reality

that Vera frames black women's experience of war in terms of victimhood. Not only is Mazvita powerless to stop the Rhodesian soldier from raping her but she can do nothing to the soldiers who descend on her home and burn it to the ground.

In the colonial urbanscape, Mazvita falls victim to the guiles of both traditional black patriarchy in the form of Joel and the colonial regime which keeps her on the margins of its economy, only acknowledging her as a potential consumer of its self-demeaning products. Her relationship with Joel suffers a stillbirth; Joel is a cold, unimaginative man who is more interested in conquest than developing a mature relationship. More comfortable with pornography than women, Joel rejects Mazvita as soon as he learns of her pregnancy, ending all possibilities of a meaningful urban existence for Mazvita.

In the final analysis, Mazvita's story is one that deserves to be told. It is, after all, the story of millions of black Zimbabwean, poorly-educated, victims of both traditional patriarchy and the Rhodesian regime. Mazvita is far removed from the ideologically savvy characters encountered in similar fiction; the horror of colonial violence is literally seared on her body. As a black feminist text, *Without a Name* shows the intersections of the physical body's experience of violence within the contexts of a brutal colonialism and a patriarchal, oppositional nationalism. (Musila, 50)

From Mazvita to Florence and Nyasha, the heroines of Ingrid Sinclair's *Flame*(1996) is, to use a familiar trope of Zimbabwean literature, a season away. Teshome Gabriel1(1989:31-4), argues that Third World filmmakers mobilize film as an ideological instrument that popularizes social struggles giving rise to raised "personal consciousness" within the viewer. As the example of Sembene Ousmane's transition from written literature to film has demonstrated, the

visual mode offers a more democratic option at the level of consumption than the written word which remains inaccessible to the non-literate. Zimbabwean filmmaker, Ingrid Sinclair, could be considered as doing something similar to that with her 1996 film, *Flame*.

Third World cinematic texts such as *Flame* which negotiate history, memory, and trauma face the question of how best to explore possible correlations between aesthetics and the horrors of holocaust, broadly defined. African filmmakers grapple with forging an imaginative cinematic idiom to represent colonial and post-colonial genocide, mass-murder, and other atrocities in ways that reveal both the possibilities and limits of the cinematic form to historical fidelity. By definition, the violence spawned by colonial domination and postcolonial crises is unpalatable and it becomes the task of the filmmaker to represent these traumatic events in aesthetically appealing ways while also approaching a certain level of historical authenticity. In his examination of Cameroonian film as an instrument of social and political change, Ekema Agbaw(2000:89) borrows from Pierre Nova's notion of how Third World film develops and progresses around the notion of *lieux de memoire* or sites of memory or particular historical moment which eventually define a nation's cultural identity.

In the Zimbabwean experience, *Flame*, is a text that interrogates the Second Chimurenga and the aftermaths as definite *lieux de memorie* and the amnesia associated with these critical periods. Though Sinclair herself is neither survivor-victim nor heroine of the liberation struggle, I use her celebrated film to demonstrate the complexity of representing the war's violence on black women as well as the public memory associated with the liberation struggle. The film's narrative is itself born of the need to retell the story of the traumatic experience, to make it real to the victim, the community and to the larger public while appreciating the honor and heroism of the struggle. I seek to show ways in which we can begin to analyze the relationship between

black female identity and subjectivity that is the interplay between gender and class in terms trauma of the Zimbabwean liberation struggle.

The formal end of colonial domination in Africa has redefined African women's artistic roles especially given that one of the stated goals of the liberation struggles was to emancipate the black womenfolk. To this end, the arts such as fiction and film are modes that help the artist deliver new ideological messages. In *Flame*, the persistent masculinist public memory is contested, in particular the narratives of haunting memory of trauma and heroism associated with the war of independence as well as the pitfalls associated with such a project of reclamation. This struggle, which culminated in the negotiated settlement that eventually gave birth to independence, continues to be a critical point in Zimbabwean definitions of national sovereignty, and national identity. Importantly, *Flame* suggests that the dominant narratives woven by male writers and circulated in the public domain are flawed.

Because of well-known colonial practices that ensured black women had very limited access to formal education, the story of the anti-colonial struggle in Zimbabwe, at least as reduced to scholarly writing, is primarily a masculine domain. This popular reading, while encouraged by the status quo, is quite flawed and as such, the telling of a more balanced Zimbabwean story of anti-colonial struggle can only be achieved by focusing on women's voices within what essentially remains a stubbornly patriarchal society. Although a few remarkable writers and filmmakers have produced terrific works that seek to bring this balance, the fact remains that Zimbabwean women remain a marginalized group. Women's voices are important in that they challenge the male-ordained discourses that deform the society by excluding productive dialogue about the history and direction of the young nation. Ingrid Sinclair's *Flame* is a solid intervention in contemporary debates about remembering the recent past, specifically

how women in Zimbabwe have complicated and contributed to the process of memorializing national narratives with respect to the 1967-79 war of liberation.

In a country where male figures have acted as repositories of public memory through authoring state-sanctioned texts and generating state-authorized memories, Sinclair brings a critical gender element to the story of how Zimbabwe was born and thereby challenges the texture of postcolonial film practice. This is so because the Zimbabwean nation-state has displayed an ambiguous relationship with black women, in particular those women whose lives estimate heroism. Even more interesting is that the Zimbabwean state confers heroism upon certain individuals whose lives and works are deemed worthy of public celebration. In *Flame*, one encounters an irreverent challenge of the patriarchal creation and celebration of heroism in Zimbabwe as well as the state's curious tendency to ignore or diminish the contributions of black women to the armed struggle.

In terms of how the history of the liberation struggle is remembered and celebrated, historian Terence Ranger(2004) has blazed a trail by arguing that much of what has been presented as the national history of Zimbabwe's liberation war is more or less "patriotic history," that is a narrowly nationalistic version that excludes dissenting narratives that are perceived as destabilizing the dominant patriarchal model that has come to be associated with the image of Robert Mugabe. To quote Ranger(2004):

> There has arisen a new variety of historiography which I did not mention in my valedictory lecture. This goes under the name of 'patriotic history'. It is different from and more narrow than the old nationalist historiography, which celebrated aspiration and

> modernization as well as resistance. It resents the 'disloyal' questions raised by historians of nationalism. It regards as irrelevant any history which is not political.(p.10)

In Ranger's terms, "patriotic history" refuses to accept multiple interpretations of public memory but rather insists on singular narratives that legitimize ruling elite ideologies. Vera and Sinclair assume the duty of challenging the sanitized versions of the struggle that male political figures and male writers put forth as singular narratives. In the literary realm, most male writers have long presented a picture of the struggle of black women as incidental details. An example is Shimmer Chinodya's hugely popular *Harvest of Thorns*, a novel that casts a critical eye at the outcome of political independence. While the novel's critique of what Frantz Fanon(1963: 175) calls the "little, greedy caste, avid and voracious" is a favorite of many critics, few pause to mention that there are no female combatant characters in Chinodya's narrative and the few female characters who are there comprise a suspicious cast of heartbroken mothers whose sons have vanished to the warfront, longsuffering girlfriends and short-skirted urban women of dubious morality.

Robert Muponde and Kizito Muchemwa(2004:3) have recently argued that male historians, political figures and some writers generate and perpetuate a discourse that "mans" the nation. In their sense, male protagonists and their masculinist discourses figure prominently in the telling of the recent Zimbabwean history while women are essentially silenced by various structures of male or male-authorized systems.

With respect to South Africa and indeed many Sub-Saharan African countries, Sarah Nutall(1998:1) has observed that the past is often so steeped in controversy and pain that "many

are urging their fellow South Africans to forget the past and look to the future." But, one might ask, is it even possible to talk about forgetting the past when injustice and marginalization prevail? In exploring the place of public memory in South Africa, Nutall(2-3) further notes that there is need to investigate how "certain versions of the past get to be remembered, which memories are privileged, ad what the loci are for the production of memory." It is in the production of alternative but no less honest narratives of public Zimbabwean memory that Ingrid's film comes in.

In what is now a well-known critique, Florence Stratton(1994:26) charges that male writers like Chinua Achebe and Ngugi wa Thiong'o who first put Africa on the world literary map in fact betrayed the patriarchal biases of their own societies because "women are excluded from the male domain of community power." While this comment is made with specific reference to Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* which explores a fictional story of the Igbo's encounter with colonialism, in Zimbabwe, the place of females within the public spaces need further qualification. As Zimbabwean historians such as Ngwabi Bhebhe, Terence Ranger and more recently, Norma Kriger have demonstrated, the story of Mbuya Nehanda's the prominent position of in the First Chimurenga clearly shows that women did have powerful roles in defending their societies. One could also point to the role of Mbuya Nenhanda's spirit to the Second Chimurenga not just through her 1970s human intermediary but also through her legendary statements that galvanized the black community in taking up arms against the settler regime.

Equally significant is the fact that the two main nationalist movements, ZANU and ZAPU presented themselves as socialist and therefore committed to gender equality. Partly because of this ideological position, thousands of young girls crossed the border into

Mozambique and Zambia to be trained as freedom fighters to fight alongside their male counterparts. *Flame*, a 1996 film brings a new dimension to discourses surrounding the liberation war as well as the immediate post-war experience for black women. Its theme is the experience of black Zimbabwean women in the anti-colonial struggle. As if to underline the deeply-set masculinist anxieties at the heart of projects of national remembering, the production of *Flame* was disrupted by the arrest of its directors together with violent demonstrations by the male-dominated war veterans' body and some other ruling party activists.

Giuliana Lund(1998: 213) captures the urgent power and ideological orientation of this brand of post-independence Zimbabwean film when she says, "The new (Zimbabwean) cinema emphasizes the agency of the oppressed, particularly women, and strives to give voice in a popular medium to those silenced by patriarchal, authoritarian, and neocolonial interests."

Lund(p.214) adds that the most striking aspect of films such as Flame is "their foregrounding of gender issues, indicating a significant break with historical trends in the heavily male-dominated domain of African cinema." The power of such films, Lund(p.219) concludes, is that they " (are) Zimbabwean pictures … mainly written by Africans themselves and engage with local culture and everyday experience; they offer appealing plots that depict the struggles of common people, especially women, who strive to rise above oppressive circumstances such as poverty, abuse, illness, prejudice, and war".

Flame narrates the lives of Florence and Nyasha, two rural African girls who are forced by different circumstances to join the Chimurenga. Florence's father's long-running feud with another villager ends with him being 'sold out' as a supporter of the nationalist movement to the Rhodesian military authorities who descend on the village one day and shoot him in plain sight.

Distraught, Florence considers running to live with Nyasha's family but learns that the Rhodesians have already destroyed her friend's homestead. The two girls, who have already attended a few *pungwes* and spoken with at least one guerilla fighter eventually decide to go to Mozambique to join the movement although Florence's real passion is to revenge her father's murder. As luck would have it, they stumble upon Mozambican FRELIMO fighters who sneak them across the border and take them to a ZANLA guerilla camp inside Mozambique. Florence's war experience is particularly harsh as she is raped by a fellow guerilla, loses her partner and newborn child to a Rhodesian air raid and returns to a life of poverty and abuse when the war ends.

In *Flame*, made some fifteen years after the attainment of political independence in Zimbabwe, the female protagonist, whose *nom de guerre* is also Flame, returns from the war to face extreme poverty, gender and class discrimination. This is despite the fact that she, like thousands of other black Zimbabweans, has fought alongside her male compatriots for freedom from Rhodesian settler rule, one of whose cardinal sins is its hostility to black female recognition and equality. Equally prominent in the film is how Comrade Flame displays immense bravery which, despite the inherent gender discrimination in the training camps, enables her to rise to a senior position at the warfront. Jane Bryce(2005) has commented on Comrade Flame falling victim to sexual abuse as a new recruit at a training camp in Mozambique. It is hardly a coincidence that young Comrade Flame is tricked and raped by a senior commander whose nom de guerre is Comrade Che! In a sense, Comrade Che represents seemingly revolutionary fighters who exhibited all the trappings of revolutionary fervor while abusing the patriotic women who are ready to lay down their very lives to free the country. The rape scene itself is heavily edited but the haunting wail of Flame as she is overpowered hangs in the air. It is also the key scene

that roused the anger of the war veterans body resulting in angry demonstrations in Harare. This response by the war veterans might appear at odds with extensive reports of sexual abuse(*Zimbabwe Women Writers*, 2000: 74, 172-3). In this respect, one must treat with caution Tafataona Mahoso's conclusion(2000:206-7) that *Flame* lacks "solidarity" and that "An African woman combatant standing on African ground and accusing her male comrades of raping and abusing her will not fail to make those males recognize, identify with her, accept her motivation and even thank her for pointing out the abuse…". Mahoso's argument is dubious because Comrade Flame's ordeal brings to the fore the very black feminist dimension that has been absent from the Second Chimurenga narrative. Also, Mahoso conveniently forgets to mention that even as the newly-powerful Zimbabwe National War Veterans Association protested against the rape scene in the fist rough cut of the film, the organization's exclusively male leadership did not represent every opinion by war veterans.

Freedom Nyamubaya, a female former guerilla openly resented this attempt to suppress black female narratives when she argued, "I, Freedom Nyamubaya, was raped and that is the truth. A society which denies the truth cannot move forward." In fact, Nyamubaya, who first drew attention to this abuse in her poem "Osibissa" from her first collection, *On The Road Again*(1985), criticizes the rape scene for being "…no rape because in a rape, a jaw can get broken."[60]

While traditional Shona culture holds that sexual intercourse is not a matter for public consumption, the violent response of male veterans could be ascribed to their refusal to accept their war-time sexual conduct as criminal, a position that is in line with male-authorized texts generated and circulated as complete memory of war since 1979. On a purely political level, the cinematic dramatization of a black male authority figure apparently forcing himself on a black

female subordinate under the directorship of a white woman potentially poses questions about who can and cannot talk about the liberation struggle, especially those experiences especially dramatized in *Flame* which has been purged from official national memory.

Equally ironic is the twisted echo of Zimbabwean Vice President Joice Mujuru in the experiences of Comrade Flame. One of the heroic moments in the film is when Flame, the fearless detachment commander, fires a rocket that obliterates an enemy truck. The dramatic scene reminds viewers of Mujuru's legendary experience of having shot down a Rhodesian fighter plane albeit with a single rifle shot. Unlike Mujuru who was rewarded with a cabinet post at only 24 in 1980, Comrade Flame returns to the village where she marries a former combatant whose cruel treatment of her only adds to the trauma of war ranging from severe torture by guerilla security units and enemy aerial bombardments.

When she seeks to escape rural poverty by migrating to the city in search of a war-time friend, Flame is reminded by another male figure that she is coming to the city at the very time that government claims it wants people like her to be working to develop the rural areas. In a sense, the male government functionary and former comrade-in-arms echoes the masculinist notion inculcated by Shona patriarchy and endorsed by Rhodesian colonialism that relegates black women to the rural domestic sphere. While this man does make reference of rural development projects, the rural zone remains on the margins of Zimbabwean politics and needless to mention, underdeveloped.

For purposes of this analysis, two critical moments in the film illustrate the black women's experience of violent warfare and historical amnesia that characterizes official public memory in Zimbabwe. The first is when Flame abandons her abusive husband, the former

Comrade Danger, himself a former freedom fighter, to improve her lot in Harare. After linking up with Comrade Liberty, who has returned to civilian life as Nyasha, the two are in the Nyasha's apartment when a radio announcement mentions that preparations are being made for state celebrations of Heroes Day. In anger, Nyasha switches off the radio, much to Flame's surprise as the latter assumes the announcement speaks directly to them as former fighters. Another interesting dimension to the narrative is that while Comrade Liberty reverts back to her birth name, Nyasha, Comrade Flame doesn't go back to her real name, Florence, perhaps to signify how her struggle continues into peacetime. Where Comrade Liberty (Nyasha) has found a place for herself in the typing pool of a major corporate entity in Harare, Comrade Flame (Florence) has been stuck in rural poverty and an abusive marriage to an equally marginalized husband. An interesting exchange occurs between the two former combatants over the radio announcement:

Flame: "That's for us. Aren't we heroes?"

Liberty: "No, Flame, we are *just women*."(emphasis mine)

Liberty then launches into an angry diatribe against the persistence of gender imbalances even after the attainment of majority rule. The film itself captures this continuing imbalance such as when we first encounter Liberty in the post-war era when she is a mere secretary to a pompous black male boss who, like the political elites, appears very anxious to assert his authority. When Nyasha tells Flame that urban survival potentially encompasses compromising one's values, Flame shoots back, "What happened to the women who fought? What happened to Liberty? Remember the strength of women – *simba remadzimai*."[61]

In the first quote, Liberty's statement, ""No, Flame, we are just women" powerfully highlights how women like Liberty were still marginalized during and after the liberation war. While the war was ostensibly fought to do away with, among other things, gender imbalances which colonial settler masculinities actively promoted, Liberty clearly does not perceive herself as part of the change that she actually fought for. As such, Liberty does not consider former women fighters such as herself as heroines whose deeds are worth celebrating. The notion of *simba remadzimai*(women's power) is, for Liberty, a wartime myth that has no place in the post-war dog-eat-dog urban society in which she lives. In the context of the film, the suggestion is that it is also a grand fallacy cultivated to rally black female support to the liberation cause.

By referencing *simba remadzimai*, Flame appeals to wartime bonds of sisterhoods that seem to be grossly misplaced in a new dog-eat-dog society. Only Flame, who has been trapped in the irrelevant rural areas still considers such a notion as meaningful at a time when Liberty actually complains that other girls in the typing pool spread rumors that "all female former guerillas are loose." Even the relatively successful Liberty has already experienced discrimination as a result of her participation in the war and as such, appeals to a common Black sisterhood have no practical relevance in her post-war life.

This moment in the film is critical to reading the construction of Zimbabwean public memory because official narratives and patriotic historiography reduces black women to "mothers of the revolution."[62] This image, patronizing and patriarchal to the core, is the one that state propaganda and official narratives isolate and celebrate. Alternatively, the Mbuya Nehanda mythology is resurrected to locate women's contribution as largely spiritual and conveniently located in the deep past given that Nehanda was executed by British settlers in the late 19th century. Through the youthful figure of Comrade Flame, the film challenges the tendency of

remembering black female warrior - Mbuya Nehanda - figures - as old and primarily spiritual. Flame's intervention is critical in that it moves away from extreme and reductive tendencies by reminding us that there were in fact thousands of contemporary, young, black females who fought side by side with their male compatriots whose stories are buried by the tendency to deploy the extremes noted above.

The second scene in the film I have isolated for analysis is when Flame and Liberty eventually resolve to attend a private party with other former ex-combatants. The film cuts to an actual live state television coverage of the Heroes' Day event as Flame and Liberty enter the apartment. Not only are Flame and her former brothers-and-sisters-in-arms away from the actual celebration venue but the television narration is done by a white narrator who tells listeners that this is exactly how things were during the war. The scene is important in two critical ways. First, the televised mass celebration is clearly a sanitized made-for-television version of the struggle and more importantly, it celebrates a hypermasculinization of the struggle.

The first point is important because the whole act of historical memory is reduced to drills by the zealous and well-fed soldiers who have obviously found an economic foothold in the post-independence society while the narrator makes no reference to the acute hardships that real combatants faced which included Rhodesian aerial bombardments, rape of female combatants by their male colleagues(and by enemy soldiers), in addition to the well-known hardships of life as a homeless guerilla.

One female former guerilla notes, rather wryly, "It's so different now." Her husband, a former guerilla leader himself, who only moments earlier is praising this show of state virility, makes an about turn and admits, "What do you expect, my dear? These days it all belongs to the

state." The sight of all-male regiments of smartly dressed soldiers marching in straight lines, guns raised, bayonets at the ready captures the film's enduring message: That the Zimbabwean state itself has colluded with traditional patriarchy to erase women from the country's history. The symbolism in this scene is shattering; strong military men walking in a precise format while their guns remind the viewer of the phallic meanings encoded in the act of remembering a people's victory over colonialism. In this grand scheme of (re)membering recent Zimbabwean history, there is no place for women hence the all-male symbolism. As Mkondo, one of the former combatants, suggests on his encounter with Flame in the city, powerful male figures are anxious for female former combatants to go and stay (and ideally, remain) in the rural areas, far away from the national spotlight. In this concluding scene, the film winds down on an ambiguous note with the clearly marginalized group of ex-combatants singing a song to welcome Nyasha and Flame:

Mhoroi mose mose!	Greetings everybody!
Hona iwe jongwe	Look at the cockerel
Ha iye iye	Ha iye iye
Makadiniko?	How are you?
Haiyeye	Haiyeye
Hona mabhunu	Look at the Boers
Haiyeye	Haiyeye
VanaSmith matosara	The Smiths you are now history

Haiyeye	Haiyeye
Muchichema	(You are) crying
Tonosangana kuZimbabwe	We will meet in Zimbabwe

The celebratory song has Ian Smith, the last Rhodesian colonial ruler as its target of ridicule even as these ex-combatants are already in Zimbabwe though not the Zimbabwe of their war-time dreams. Indeed, in my opinion, one of the greatest flaws of Flame is its appropriation of war-time codes such as songs, slogans and ideologies and presenting them as unproblematic. While the film is supposedly grounded in black African feminist aesthetics, the cinematic signs through which this is done is not. When Flame and Liberty set out to join the liberation struggle, they don't go out as mere Zimbabweans. They are black female Zimbabweans. They are black women who are victims of the settler regime which sends its soldiers to raze down their homes and terrorize their parents. In addition, the two girls are also potential victims of a mostly male nationalistic fighting force whose power hierarchy estimates traditional patriarchy. How then is it even possible for Sinclair to throw in war song after war song without observing that almost all of them are masculinist and defeat some of the stated goals of the liberation struggle? Equally intriguing is the role played by the actual leader of the ZANU choir, Dick Chingaira Makoni, nom de guerre Comrade Chinx in the film. In retrospect, the inclusion of Comrade Chinx is disturbing because of his prominent role in an equally masculinist and narrowly nationalistic land reform program that resulted in the concentration of formerly white-held land in the hands of powerful political elites.

The song is as ambiguous as the one that concludes the film:

Tinofa tichienda kuZimbabwe	We will die going to Zimbabwe
Tinofa tinochiyambuka	We will die crossing
Nehanda komborera	Nehanda bless(us)

Like the rest of the well-known Chimurenga songs used throughout the film, it is hard to imagine the precise relevance of these songs other than a desire to lend an authentic feel to the film as a whole. In the last-quoted song, there is reference Mbuya Nehanda, the legendary female heroic figure that epitomizes the spirit of Chimurenga Chekutanga or First Uprising. Interestingly, Zimbabwean male nationalists did not invoke the name of Nehanda to acknowledge the long history of black *women's* contribution to the struggle; rather, Nehanda's name is mentioned in this song – and in many others – purely as a figure of general inspiration and sacrifice. Her death at the hands of the colonial administration in 1898 is therefore not framed within the black feminist struggle discourse but rather incorporated into the narrowly phallocentric framework of male-led anti-colonial struggle commonly called the second Chimurenga. Her resurrection through song some eighty years later by these mostly male fighters does not therefore question the heteronormative discourse preferred by the nationalist movement.

Writing about the history of the Shona protest song, George Kahari(1981:82) describes communally-performed music as the "newspaper of non-literate societies" whose power lies in both the lyrics and in its the power to move "which is embodied in onomatopoeic (haiyeye) sounds". With reference of Shona war songs themselves, Kahari(p.96) notes that they did not merely express disapproval of colonial rule but also mobilized and invigorated fighters and the masses who supported them. While Kahari's analysis is plausible, what he leaves is the fact that

these songs do not articulate black women's issues. It is also instructive that Alec Pongweni, an early scholar of struggle songs, does not specifically dwell on women's songs during the war.[63]

Equally hard to ignore is the fact that the film ends with Flame and Nyasha doing a war time slogan in a sentimental but ultimately problematic moment. The fist-raising "pamberi" slogan is not only the official ZANU-PF rallying call but also one that is replete with connotations of male virility even as it acknowledges that the struggle continues. In fact, Flame and Nyasha perform the same slogan as the film draws to a close. In the initial scene, while waiting for a bus to take them to the private party, the two ladies chant the slogan in response to a masculinist romantic approach from a black male. In response to Flame's "Aluta continua!"(The struggle continues!), Nyasha chants, "Vitoria acerta!"[64] While the film capitalizes on the emotional appeal of these hugely popular wartime slogans borrowed from FRELIMO's struggle against Portuguese colonialism in Mozambique, the facile transference of these maxims into postwar Zimbabwe requires closer examination. The fist is not merely associated with masculine political power and domination, especially of the ZANU – PF party but also with male sexual virility. In the end, then, while the struggle continues for Flame and Nyasha, slogans such as these mistake symbolic political independence for actual liberation that ideally involves self-determination at economic and social levels.

By presenting black women's experience of war in terms of rape, death and marginalization, *Flame* draws attention to the forgotten individual and collective histories of black Zimbabwean women who participated in various ways during the Second Chimurenga. Flame and Liberty's contributions are largely ignored by both their families and government, their sexual victimization remains a shameful scandal conveniently excluded from official memory[65] and after the war, there is little space for modestly-educated women. While the film

places heavy emphasis on these structures of black and white male authority in regimenting Flame and Liberty's lives, both women prove they are just as capable of fighting for Zimbabwe's independence as their male counterparts.

In the final analysis, *Flame* challenges traditional constructions of voice, character and representation in light of liberation struggles immersed in traumatic experiences. It's message estimates the elevation of critical consciousness that Teshome Gabriel speaks of in the Third Stage of Third World Cinema. However, the film seems to fail to suggest new ideological avenues for the oppressed black women who fought for the country's liberation. If anything, the film relies on the dubious slogans and symbols of male political power and traditional patriarchy that have colluded to marginalize black women within and beyond the Second Chimurenga. However, the film seems to fail to suggest new ideological avenues for the oppressed black women who fought for the country's liberation. If anything, the film relies on the dubious slogans and symbols of male political power and traditional patriarchy that have colluded to marginalize black women within and beyond the Second Chimurenga.

In the end, both Vera's *Without a Name* and *Flame* remember the Chimurenga largely in terms of women's victimhood. Mazvita, an ordinary black woman who does not join in the conflict, is not only raped by a soldier but she is exploited by white farm owners who underpay her. Her relationships with the three men in her life are defined by exploitation. Joel, the black city slicker who seduces her in colonial Harare does not even speak to her before carting her off to his lodgings on his bike.

Mazvita's urban experience is also one of unending trauma despite the flashes of consumerism that briefly seduce her. Firstly, she has no money of her own and must depend on

Joel for her upkeep. Not surprisingly, her urban sojourn is over as soon as she discovers she is pregnant. By killing the infant, Mazvita not only emphasizes her break with urban, colonial modernity which initially seduces her but mark a new beginning of sorts; she has no option but to return to Mubaira with the dead infant strapped to her back.

Mazvita's cyclic journey initially sounds like a new start. She is, after all, an older, wiser person who has experienced life at a farm, in the city and now, back in the rural areas. However, her victimhood continues to haunt when she discovers that her family home has been burnt down by soldiers. Like Flame who finds friendship in Liberty, a fellow victim, Mazvita returns to her mother's embrace. Besides Flame and Liberty's optimistic but rather hollow slogans and the embrace that awaits Mazvita in Mubaira, it is evident that there is little to celebrate for all four women. They are victimized by traditional patriarchy, the colonial authorities who burn down their homes and the male cadres who mistake for sexual spittoons.

Chapter 4

Articulating the Inarticulate: Dissident Narratives, Trauma and Memory in John Maxwell Coetzee's *Waiting for the Barbarians* and Tony Eprile's *The Persistence of Memory*

The previous chapters have attempted to show examples of the articulating the memory of violence within the context of war in colonial Zimbabwe by male and female writers and filmmakers of the two dominant groups; blacks and whites whose intersecting histories are marked by colonialism. This chapter examines two South African novels: John Maxwell Coetzee's *Waiting for the Barbarians* and Tony Eprile's *The Persistence of Memory* to situate what Monica Popescu(2010: 83) calls "the split allegiances of writers-as-citizens and writers-as-creators" in the articulation of the memories of war during apartheid South Africa. While *Waiting for the Barbarians* was published at the height of post-Soweto Uprising repression in 1980, Eprile's novel is written and published in post-apartheid South Africa. As I will demonstrate, post-apartheid South Africa, despite its acclaimed reconciliation initiatives, has a collective memory that is deeply scarred by violent history and, needless to say, is still grappling with the legacies of centuries of inter-racial oppression, marginalization and structural inequality.

The choice of the two texts is deliberate: *Waiting for the Barbarians* is a canonical text, its story an allegorical narrative that refuses to name its setting while *The Persistence of Memory* is a more recent text which is firmly grounded in apartheid South Africa's war violence and official, top-down attempts at post-apartheid nation-building, mainly in the form of public performance of memorialization and reconciliation. I am fascinated by how the two texts use

South Africa's violent history to weave dissident narratives that disrupt apartheid's order of truth and myths.

Born into an Afrikaans family in Cape Town, South Africa, in 1940 – eight years before the institutionalization of the apartheid policy - JM Coetzee's solid reputation as the most prominent South African English language novelist was confirmed by two Booker Prize awards and the 2003 Nobel Prize for Literature. The somewhat ironical status of the "white African" writer who, incidentally, formally leaves the continent three years after winning the Nobel Prize to take up Australian citizenship brings into sharp focus the untidy nature of theorizing the realities of descendants of colonial empires and their troubled relationship to Africa that *Waiting for the Barbarians* references but whose conflicts the narrative doesn't resolve. I touch on these tensions and ironies towards the end of the chapter.

What I seek to demonstrate here is the place of Coetzee's novel, *Waiting for the Barbarians*, within a matrix of collective remembering – or not remembering – apartheid violence given that the novel stops short of mentioning apartheid South Africa as its setting. As I will show, the processes of remembering or forgetting violent memory have implications for post-apartheid South African society burdened by the trauma of that history. The post-apartheid state enters the narrative as it anxiously sells the dream of a non-racial society to a non-white population that has known little more than deeply racialized politics for centuries.

Thematically, *Waiting for the Barbarians* is the story of an imaginary Empire, set in an unnamed place and time, yet recognizable as a "'universalized" version of apartheid South Africa. The story is told from the point of view of the Magistrate, an elderly man who administers an outpost at the edges of the Empire. Though a civilian administrator, the

Magistrate oversees the frontier town's military and police action to keep out undesirables, especially "the barbarians," a people who live at the margins of the Empire. Quite early in the story, the Magistrate is a fallen man by the Empire's standards; he has engaged a captured barbarian girl as a concubine. His somewhat half-hearted efforts at protecting the town against potential barbarian insurgency also leads to a confrontation with Colonel Joll, a ruthless bureaucrat sent by the Empire's secret service, "The Third Bureau." Weak and inefficient by the Empire's standards, the Magistrate is briefly thrown in prison on charges of "treasonously consorting" with the barbarians. He is imprisoned in the same barracks room where the barbarians were interrogated. He is reduced, through humiliation and torment, to a subhuman level. The novel ends with the Magistrate's emerging to take back his former position at the outpost as many residents abandon the frontier for the relative safety of interior of the Empire, fearful of possible barbarian attacks although none actually happen in the story.

As with colonial Zimbabwe, the multiple ironies of anti-apartheid writers of European descent in South Africa demand a brief note. Like fellow white anti-apartheid writer and Nobel laureate, Nadine Gordimer, who described herself as caught between "a desire to be gone – to find a society for myself where my skin will have no bearing on my place in society – and a terrible, obstinate and fearful desire to stay," Coetzee similarly described early South African writing by 'whites' as being 'generated by concerns of people no longer European, not yet African."(Helgesson, 2004: 32)[66] In both Gordimer and Coetzee's statements is a discernible desire to escape the burden of racially loaded discourse in a society where one's place is pre-determined by a violently oppressive minority government. It is therefore understandable that Coetzee's writing is radically different from European literature about Africa[67]. At the same time, while different from the stereotypical European novelists of Empire about Africa and

despite his anti-apartheid stance, Coetzee's place within the African literary canon is also compromised by the fact of segregated privilege within the South African colonial order. In other words, much as his writing has been praised to exploring the contradictions of state-imposed white supremacy in South Africa, the fact remains that his legal identity as a white person was an important signifier that was properly recognized by the apartheid government. That racial difference separates him from the people whose shattered lives he documents so beautifully.

While the larger question of whether –or the extent to which - a white, Afrikaans writer like Coetzee can "speak for" the marginalized non-white community within an apartheid setting is not the subject of this chapter, I propose here an examination of his novel as a dissident text that destabilizes apartheid mythology and structures of oppression within the implied context of anti-colonial war. Instead of merely conflating Coetzee's writing with European writing of colonial domination in Africa, I argue that *Waiting for Barbarians* is a profound novel that shakes the foundations of apartheid by narrating its violence and its selective amnesia.

Although *Waiting for Barbarians* was published during the apartheid era, Mengel, Borzag and Orantes' recent book(2010) is a useful starting point in accounting for the explosion of "trauma literature" in post-apartheid South Africa.[68] Stated simply, their thesis is that, "Twenty years after the fall of apartheid, South Africa is still struggling with the memory of its traumatic past. …(and) one way of coming to terms with a person's/nation's traumatic past is by transforming traumatic memory(hot memory) into narrative memory(cool memory) through the telling of a story."(p.vii) There are obvious echoes here to the post-apartheid Truth and Reconciliation Commission into apartheid crimes against humanity especially in the claim that "Every South African has to some extent been traumatized. We are a wounded people."

Set against the enabling mythologies of "nation-building," "reconciliation" and "equality" is the less palatable reality namely that some of which the TRC public testimonies themselves brought into the new nation's collective memory in the form of unresolved anger and unspoken traumas rooted in apartheid violence. Mengel, Borzag and Orantes' theory about the role of writing as therapy therefore brings us to fiction's role in reconciling South Africans with painful memory; essentially that through fiction, victims and aggressors in apartheid's violence can revisit the hitherto unspoken and unspeakable corners of their consciousness to articulate those memories and thereby "bear witness in a time of terror and trauma…"(viii) Through storytelling, Mengel, Borzag and Orantes suggest, both victims and perpetrators can transform "hot" traumatic memory into "cool" narrative memory and somehow come to terms with the historical trauma that shapes their contemporary realities. While the suggestion that storytelling alone can heal five hundred years of colonial domination is open to scrutiny, I still find the theory to relevant in my examination of the relationship between trauma literature and its subjects. *Waiting for the Barbarians* and *The Persistence of Memory* are both white-authored texts and the natural question to ask is: What kinds of memories do the writers and their texts recapture and which ones do they forget?

In *Waiting for the Barbarians*, the event that seems to prompt the subject of violence and memory is when the Magistrate, himself a long-serving dispenser of the Empire's justice, falls victim to extreme abuse at the hands of overzealous members of the Empire's "Third Bureau." And, as he later reflects, he thinks he has learnt the great lesson of the 20th century:

> "When (the torturers) first brought me back here ... I wondered how much pain a plump comfortable old man would be able to endure in the name of his eccentric notions of how the Empire should conduct itself. But my torturers were not interested in degrees of pain.

> They were interested only in demonstrating to me what it meant to live in a body, as a body, a body which can entertain notions of justice only as long as it is whole and well, which very soon forgets them when its head is gripped and a pipe is pushed down its gullet and pints of salt water are poured into it. ... They came to my cell to show me the meaning of humanity, and in the space of an hour they showed me a great deal."(p.57)

What the torture has taught the Magistrate is not, in fact, humanity but the *inhumanity* of the Empire's treatment of its oppressed subjects. The banal work of seemingly respectable people like the Magistrate is shown to be an integral part of a system that maintains domination over "the barbarians." In his official capacity, as a "whole and well" privileged high ranking officer, the Magistrate has chosen not to see himself as part of an oppressive system. *Waiting for the Barbarians* therefore allegorically raises important questions about the memory of colonial domination and violence in South Africa as well the literary authority to narrate that painful memory. Focusing on the novel's non-specific milieu, narrative voice and the "truth" of history, we can make a few tentative points about white writing and memory in South Africa.

Firstly, *Waiting for the Barbarians* is set in an unstated place and the Empire itself is also unnamed. On the one hand Coetzee's refusal to locate his story in a specific setting allows him to craft a dissident narrative about apartheid violence at the height of colonial repression in South Africa. Loosely based on the murder in police detention of anti-apartheid activist and Black Consciousness Movement leader, Steve Biko, the novel's refusal to name its setting or provide a familiar context provide the cover for the novel avoid the possibility of state censorship while still recognizable as an anti-apartheid text, at least to readers who are familiar with the story of apartheid in South Africa. By detailing the inhuman treatment of those designated as barbarians

and fisherfolk, the novel therefore exposes the horrors of the apartheid regime especially to outsiders.

On the other hand, despite its dissident impetus, that is, opposition to apartheid repression in the late 1970s, the non-specific setting also poses challenges about the novel's true character within the broader corpus of African writing. The non-specific milieu belies a form of ethical universalism(Attwell, 1993: 73) that makes the story applicable to similar historical situations around the world and perhaps deflect from its true target: the South African minority regimes which held nearly 50 million indigenous people hostage for nearly 500 years. Attwell argues that this was a "strategic refusal" based on the one(the writer's) immediate historical location, namely the conditions in late 1970s South Africa(73), the heavily-militarized South African apartheid state and its rigid censorship. Attwell posits that the story already bears similarities between one of the prisoners – the barbarian girl's father - and that of Black Consciousness Movement leader Steve Biko who was murdered by the police in 1977, three years before Coetzee published *Waiting for the Barbarians*. In the novel, the barbarian girl's father dies in police custody and the exact circumstances of that death similarly suppressed. Coetzee's reluctance – or refusal – to name the setting, while understandable, therefore tends to diminish the depth of emotion associated with the murder of Biko. The tendency to read the novel as a universal story deflects attention from its attack on how apartheid rule dehumanized Africans and other non-white groups.

Secondly, the question of who has the authority to represent histories of trauma looms large, not least because Coetzee, a globally acclaimed writer who is personally skeptical of apartheid, belongs to the same group that crafted the policy in the first place, at least going by apartheid South Africa's own racialized categories. This fact, of course, gives the novel's

dissident message an ironical character. Admittedly, 1970s South Africa was a hostile place for cultural activists opposed to the state policy of apartheid, including whites. The collusion of self-censorship and state censorship is an undeniable fact in *Waiting for the Barbarians*. Still, for readers familiar with southern African history, the allegory of the Empire resorting to torture and other extreme methods to maintain its stranglehold on indigenous populations is recognizable as apartheid South Africa. As I will show below, the theme of the right to narrate also becomes the Magistrate's last rite as he prepares reflects on his contribution to the Empire's power over the years.

Thirdly, Coetzee chooses to place the Magistrate, a loyal member of Empire at the center of his narrative. That the Magistrate, the Empire's right hand man, becomes a victim of torture in an apartheid-like context is not the norm; he only falls afoul of his superiors because his own inefficiency and personal obsession with the barbarian girl which is an aberration given the status of the barbarians in this society. The Magistrate is otherwise a loyal representative of the Empire and dutifully performs its duties by sentencing and imprisoning intransigent members of the barbarian community to jail, public works and even indulgent personal projects such as excavating ruins to search for barbarian artifacts. Only later in the story does the magistrate become disillusioned and protests Empire's extreme cruelty towards some of its subjects. Yet the almost banal use of demeaning labels seems to diminish the Magistrate's half-hearted stand against the Empire's treatment of its subalterns, the fisherpeople and the barbarians living at the edge of Empire's authority for example. His claim to victimhood is diminished by his essentially unchanged perception of the barbarians who are supposedly agitating for an undefined sort of violence from their bases in the mountains. Indeed he has not ceased to parrot the organizing sign of difference that the Empire has bequeathed him; he continues to call them "barbarians,"

(p.16) a term that that is pregnant with pejorative insinuations. Put differently, what does the deployment of such a term mean for apartheid opponents within South Africa and indeed, black Africans who read the narrative as a comment on apartheid's treatment of Africans who resisted it, including the thinly veiled reference to the murder of Steve Biko, a liberation icon and Black Consciousness intellectual?

Conversely, I suggest that the Magistrate's obvious banal use of the Empire's racial categories is satirical reflection of the moral corruption of the society itself, including those like the Magistrate who want to think of themselves as liberals. In this second sense, it is possible to argue that the narrative's dissidence lies not just in attacking apartheid's dehumanization of its non-white victims but also in exposing the false sympathy of half-reformed liberals such as the Magistrate.

Coetzee has argued elsewhere(Poyner, 2009, 8) that it is impossible to recapture the collective memory of trauma emanating from apartheid South Africa's violent treatment of non-white people precisely because any attempt to recapture that memory would amount to a distortion. In the place of efforts to recapture that memory, he has suggested an acknowledgement of South Africa's history of forgetting people as a kind of tribute to all those whose stories have been forgotten or excluded from that collective memory. Despite Coetzee's somewhat wishful proposition, the literary terrain in post-apartheid South Africa has actually shown writers' obsession with excavating and re-examining that very painful past. In other words, contemporary South African society itself is yet to transcend the legacy of centuries of violent repression and marginalization and this reality tends to be reflected in the fiction. *Waiting for the Barbarians, Disgrace, The Life* and *Times of Michael K* and other novels by Coetzee himself draw on this history of domination and violent marginalization of non-white people even

if the settings of some of them are not explicitly stated as such. His insistence that apartheid South Africa's subalterns cannot recover their voices, that the void created by apartheid's violence can no longer be filled is therefore not borne out by South Africa's literary canon. As both *Michael K* and *Barbarians* show, the forces that shape their narratives are to be found in apartheid South Africa.

Related to Coetzee's proposition on history and memory, the question is: Does the narrative itself display empathy and empower victims of apartheid violence? I argue that Coetzee's novel does display a certain level of empathy even though its conclusion refuses to resolve the issues it raises and is therefore disempowering in that sense. By describing in graphic detail the suffering of the barbarians who are held in captivity by the Empire, the novel clearly empathizes with them even if the narrator and every other state official seem not to know much about their personal lives. Readers familiar with southern African history will hardly miss the echoes of land dispossession, the creation of "native reserves" or "tribal homelands" and other contentious colonial policies that inflamed nationalist fervor.

Much as it destabilizes apartheid's myth by presenting the barbarians as victims of ignorance on the part of the Empire, *Waiting for the Barbarians* also fails to build a narrative that empowers them. In this respect, the novel's power is limited in two ways. First, the hazy identity of the barbarians in the novel makes it utterly impossible to understand their perspective. Their existence is restricted to the harsh environs beyond the desert near the mountains, literally beyond civilization, their grievances or motivations vague at best. In fact, besides the girl, the rest of the barbarians are hazy figures in the distance utterly lacking individual identities. The Magistrate, a long-serving officer of the Empire in the frontier town seems to have some understanding of barbarian culture and history as shown by his interest in their writing and

ancient artifacts. And yet he, as narrator, doesn't give us any concrete clues regarding the true status and grievances of the barbarians and fisherfolk. Unless this is Coetzee's way of saying the barbarians and their cousins, the fisherfolk, are unknowable to the Empire for as long as the latter treats them as non-humans, I argue that this incompleteness is a grave limitation on the power of the narrative to critique the true manifestation of European settler domination in southern Africa.

Understandable as it may be that the labeling of the Empire's enemies as barbarians is reflective of the Empire's own perverse ideology through which it justifies its oppressive power, Coetzee's narrative doubly oppresses the barbarians by failing to articulate their struggle in any significant way; it is as if the barbarians' struggle is outside history, irrational, excluded and the people themselves forgotten and without an enduring narrative of their own. Not surprisingly, the only "barbarians" with any semblance of character are the Magistrate's concubine and her late father, the latter of whom is passively spoken of after his murder in police detention. Indeed each description of the barbarians is an invitation to a discourse of primitivism, for example, Colonel Joll's first prisoners are described as "aboriginal"(p.20) at once giving them a vague claim to space and yet denying them full humanity. The Magistrate, the arbiter of Empire's morality and justice in the frontier town describes them as "strange animals and savages, filthy, a race of beggars,"(p.21) showing his own contempt for them.

The captives from Colonel Joll's punitive expedition whom the Magistrate describes as not quite barbarians are characterized thus, "For a few days the fisherfolk are a diversion, with their strange gabbling, their vast appetites, their animal shamelessness, their volatile tempers."(ibid) Their supposed lack of refined language, unnatural appetites and beastly behavior are what the narrator foregrounds. Their otherness is further emphasized when Coetzee via the narrator, makes no effort to show us their human side in its full complexity. Invisible

behind the glass, the Magistrate gazes at the detainees who are caged like wild animals, "I spend hours watching them from the upstairs window…I watch the women picking lice, combing and plaiting each other's long hair."(ibid) The Magistrate's supposed knowledge of the fisher folk is evidently ill-founded as he, like every other resident, draws perverse enjoyment from witnessing the gratuitous torture of the prisoners, if only from behind a glass.

Further, both the barbarians and the fisher folk are not endowed with a voice. The voicelessness of the barbarians curiously extends to the girl who seems incapable of articulating herself beyond the most basic utterances. Significantly, her infantile statements reveal nothing about the nature of the struggle her people are engaged in – if it is a struggle at all, what their grievances against the Empire are or her own opinion on these issues. Not surprisingly, the girl is described as half-blind from torture at the hands of the Third Bureau operatives. Doubly afflicted with lack of meaningful speech and clear sight, Coetzee presents the barbarian girl as a kind of perverted or eroticized narrative about the scarred memory of the undefined struggle between the Empire and its subalterns, the barbarians of the mountains and less hostile but no less marginalized fisher folk of the river valley.

Given the overtly political nature of African writing, one would expect Coetzee to provide a recognizable background to the struggle. Instead of giving the reader an insight into the circumstances of her father's death, the girl incredibly participates in further abuse her body – the scarred, tortured body just emerging from the Third Bureau's torture chambers – into a sexual spittoon for the perverse pleasure of same people who have rendered her an orphan. It was, of course, standard practice for apartheid South Africa to "separate the "other" from society and delete controversial points of view from its sanitized public memory through rejecting dissident voices from participating in the writing of a "comprehensive historical

narrative,"(Singh and Chetty, 2010: 115). The irony here, however, is that Coetzee himself repeats or mimics the same without presenting the oppressed as capable of contesting that narrative. Instead of presenting the Empire's victims as historically grounded figures with genuine grievances, the content of their stories are forgotten not just by the system but also by Coetzee even when post-apartheid South African writing has abundantly shown that the effects of five hundred years of colonial domination still weigh heavily on the collective consciousness of all South Africans. To be sure, *Waiting for the Barbarians* exposes the wilful blindness of the Empire as shown through the Magistrate's narrative which fails to provide an alternative, historicized perspective on the fate of the barbarians. The portrayal of the barbarian girl as devoid of agency also lends itself to this criticism of Coetzee's writing. She is, after all, in the Empire's logic, a member of the barbarian community which is characterized as being "lazy, immoral, filthy, stupid"(p.43)

On the ambiguity of the barbarian girl's physical torture and sexual exploitation, Singh and Chetty(2010) argue:

> The violation of the barbarian girl, which figures so centrally in the novel, becomes the absolute not through her torture but rather through the Magistrate's attempted rehabilitation. Through the torturers, the barbarian girl becomes the mutilated other; but it is the Magistrate who eternally defines her as such….His desire for her is to decipher her meaning, he wants "the traces of a history (that) her body bears."…Yet Coetzee also equates this desire to reading and translating, the desire to know and dominate a text. …in a sense, the complicity(of whether his treatment of the girl is different from the torture she has endured from her captors) questioned by the Magistrate is also a complicity in which both the reader and the author are involved.(p.109)

Reduced to a scar – or scarred memory - of the Empire's power, the nameless girl gives us no meaningful information about herself or her people with which to understand the historical context of the conflict between the Empire and its barbarian(ized) other. The narrative voice that shapes the kinds of stories that do get told firmly belongs to the unnamed, unraced Magistrate who is nevertheless portrayed as ethnically different from the fisherfolk who live near the river and the barbarians who live at the margins of the Empire. By refusing to probe the lives of the barbarians, the novel suggests that it is impossible to know the mind of the barbarians or, to use the language of contemporary African politics, the formerly colonized indigenous people. Not surprisingly, when Colonel Joll returns from his military expedition, the scene has echoes of African slaves being marched to the coast or worse still, slaves being thrown onto a slave market platform. The colonel brings a group of captured nomads, chained to each other by a wire running through their cheeks, terrified and mute. The magistrate tells a visiting junior army officer that, "The people we call barbarians are nomads, they migrate between the lowlands and uplands every year, that is their way of life…They want an end to the spread of settlements across their land. They want their land back, finally."(p.56-7)

Although the Magistrate protests that these are not barbarians but nomadic fishermen, the triumphant townspeople still torment them at will and enjoy their suffering. In the face of the suffering detainees, including the death of a small child, the Magistrate admits that "I did nothing" (p.22) Equally problematic is the Magistrate's historylessness; no concrete reference is made to his origins or to his relatives, dead or alive. Is he merely a representative of the human condition, the corrupted human heart and does the invocation of universal evil deflect attention

from the particular horror that Coetzee's 1970s South Africa was? The Magistrate himself chooses to be philosophical:

> We think of the country here as ours, part of our Empire - our outpost, our settlement, our market center. But these people, these barbarians don't think about it like that at all. We have been here for more than a hundred years, we have reclaimed land from the desert and built irrigation works and planted fields and built solid homes and put a wall around our town, but they still think of us as strangers, transients. There are old folks alive among them who remember their parents telling them about this oasis as it once was: a well-shaded place by the side of the lake with plenty of grazing even in the winter. That is how they still talk about it, perhaps that is how they still see it, as if not one spadeful of earth had been turned or one brick laid on top of another. They do not doubt that one of these days we will pack our carts and depart to wherever we came from, that our buildings will become home for lizards, that our beasts will graze on these rich fields we have planted."(p.58)

Without admitting to an invasion, the Magistrate does acknowledge that his people have only been here "for more than a hundred years." Despite his half-hearted claims to the contrary, the Magistrate eventually recognizes that he is merely a less violent version of the murderous Colonel Joll, "…I was not, as I liked to think, the indulgent opposite of the cold, rigid Colonel. I was the lie that Empire tells itself when times are easy, he the truth that Empire tells itself when harsh winds blow. Two sides of imperial rule, no more, no less."(156) If anything, this admission brings into focus a more crucial point about colonial violence and memory in African writing; that the suffering of so many was possible only because of the participation of seemingly cynical liberals like the Magistrate.

Accused of "treasonously consorting"(90, 96-7) with enemies of Empire, the magistrate is detained, dehumanized and tortured. Once released from detention, the magistrate recovers and in fact, begins to assume some of his old authority in the face of mass exodus by town residents fearful of a barbarian attack. The Magistrate concludes his narrative with a half-hearted attempt at writing a "memoir"(p.179) of the collapsing frontier town. As the remaining frontier people look in dread at a grim winter and rumored impending attack from the Barbarians, the Magistrate considers writing the story of the town for posterity. At the heart of the obsession to narrate the story is what Singh and Chetty(2010, 105) call the attempt to "interpret" narrative silence:

> It seems right that, as a gesture to the people who inhabited the ruins in the desert, we too ought to set down a record of settlement to be left for posterity buried under the walls of our town, and to write such a history no one would seem better fitted than our last magistrate. But when I sit down to my writing-table, wrapped against the cold in my great old bearskin, with a single candle(for tallow too has been rationed) and a pile of yellowed documents at my elbow, what I find myself beginning to write is not the annals of an imperial outpost or an account of how the people of that outpost spent their last year composing their souls as they waited for the barbarians.(p.178)

The Magistrate's desire to write a memoir naturally invites questions about authority and representation not just in this novel but across what has been canonized as African Literature, specifically writing in the former colonial languages of English, French, Portuguese and Spanish. "No one who paid a visit to this oasis," the Magistrate writes, "failed to be struck by the charm

of life here. We lived in the time of the seasons, of the seasons, of the harvests, of the migrations of the waterbirds. We lived with nothing between us and the stars. We would have made any concession, had we known what, to go on living here. This was paradise on earth."(p.178) For the magistrate, the myth-maker of Empire, history is History, the singular "informing narrative of Empire itself, partly constituting and partly legitimizing Empire's terrorism"(Attwell, p.72)

The dangers of distortion and misrepresentation are already apparent in the Magistrate's anemic memory which chooses to remember only "the charm of life" in this "paradise" since the full, complex lives of the barbarians are not part of this narrative. The idyllic, postcard picture peddled by the Magistrate stands in sharp contrast to the discovery of a mass grave just outside the town's walls(p.171) The magistrate's advice to the diggers who stumble upon the mass grave echoes his earlier selective remembering; "We must fill it in and start nearer the wall."(p.172) Evidently, the romantic narrative to be captured in the Magistrate's memoirs will not be spoilt by minor details such as the sighting of barbarian mass grave right next to where he enjoyed his best days. This, therefore, is the tension between language and story, that is language as medium that both expresses and oppresses certain narratives and points of view.

The Magistrate's story of paradisal days as the Empire's representative here is conflated with the story of the frontier town itself. His supposedly deep interest in the town is apparently shown by the fact that he gathers archaeological artifacts containing an ancient barbarian language. Needless to say, the artifacts amount to little more than pillage since he does not understand the barbarian language and can not therefore decode the artifacts. And yet the Magistrate seems obsessed by the two issues that demand interpretation: the murder of the Steve Biko figure and the foundational story of the conflict between the Magistrate's people and the

barbarians. It is, of course, the assumed violence of the barbarians which the Magistrate will blame for the eventual abandonment of the town.

To conclude, Coetzee attempts to account for the unspeakable violence immediately following the 1976 Soweto Uprising from the point of view of government functionaries such as the Magistrate and Colonel Joll who are themselves implicated in the broader repression of indigenous people. The silences surrounding the lived experiences of the oppressed Barbarians and fisher folk mirror the repressed memories of the violent marginalization of non-white South Africans in this period. The inability by South Africans to transcend the legacy of apartheid repression lies squarely at what South African writer Maxine Case(2010: 64) calls lack of "closure" which is exacerbated by a "disempowering politeness" typified by the state-sanctioned Truth and Reconciliation Commission under the aegis of the new post-colonial state. Far from transforming violent memory into narrative memory, the novel's conclusion suggests that any attempt at reconciling with those memories via any kind of narration amounts to distortion, at least for white South Africans who propped up the apartheid regime.

Tony Eprile's *The Persistence of Memory*(2004) presents the theme of writing and memory in an entirely different light; the struggle of a former apartheid soldier against forgetting. Much like Mirek, the character in Milan Kundera's *The Book of Laughter and Forgetting*[69], Eprile's protagonist who ironically fought apartheid's losing struggle, has hard time coming to terms with the organized amnesia of post-apartheid South Africa, thanks to apartheid murderers who literally rewrite history by submitting distorted testimonies to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. By Kundera's logic, the hero of Tony Eprile's novel has no choice but to contest the dishonest former apartheid operatives who take advantage of well-

intentioned mythologies and metaphors of nation-building to grossly misrepresent their roles during settler colonial rule.

While all around him, apartheid South Africa suffers from a "national dysmnesia," Paul Sweetbread, the protagonist can forget nothing. Growing up in the 1970's and 80's, the height of apartheid repression, Paul is fed the apartheid architects' narrative of the past, a sunny version that mythologizes the settlers' displacement of Africans, justifies the status quo and marginalizes millions of Africans to the so-called bantustans.[70] Paul's "picture-perfect memory" means that he is acutely aware of these distortions: all the inconvenient facts stick to the "flypaper" of his mind.

Unlike Coetzee's well-established literary output, Tony Eprile's main publications to date are *The Persistence of Memory*(2004), which was a New York Times Notable Book of the Year and a short story collection, *Temporary Sojourner & Other South African Stories*(1989). Born and partly raised in South Africa, Eprile's fiction revisits the dark years of apartheid to give different perspectives of that country's history of armed conflict and more specifically, the preservation, memorialization and/or burial of historical violence. Published ten years after the end of white minority rule, Eprile's narrative is "a mixture of indictment, therapy and confession."(Tait, 2008) While rooted in general apartheid repression of non-white South Africans, The Persistence of Memory primarily explores one of the Cold War's proxy wars: South Africa's military campaign in Namibia and Angola. As a young national serviceman, Paul Sweetbread becomes involved in this conflict, a foot soldier in what the apartheid regime calls the "total response" to the "total onslaught" of Communism. A shy, overweight Jewish boy from a wealthy, all-white Johannesburg suburb, Paul is posted to a unit full of hostile Afrikaners in Namibia.

The context of the story is clear enough; the cover of the American edition shows the lower end of a soldier's military fatigues and heavy, military boots and above that, a historical sketch of an early colonial South African map. The plot traces Paul's life as he goes through apartheid's rites of passage through periods of childhood, his time in the apartheid army and in post-apartheid South Africa. Dropping out of college, Paul joins the government army and fights in what were euphemistically called border wars; the military occupation of Namibia in an effort to thwart the liberation movement in Namibia and destabilize Angola, itself a subplot of the Cold War. While his motivation in joining the war is unstated, Paul clearly makes a poor soldier by apartheid South Africa's standards. Nevertheless, he participates in acts of aggression against unarmed villagers, township dwellers and children. Later, Paul transfers to the propaganda unit of the army, shooting documentaries to win "heart and minds" of those opposed to the South African army's presence in both Namibia and the townships of South Africa. Significantly for my purposes, after the war itself is declared over in Namibia, Paul is part of a unit that ambushes and kills a large number of unsuspecting Namibian guerillas returning from their bases in Angola. While the story speaks to the broader political violence that has shaped South African society as we know it, Paul's struggles with remembering or forgetting his role in the torture and killings is the crux of *The Persistence of Memory*.

To delve into the propagation of racial prejudice, Eprile's novel shows the deeply-embedded intolerance at all levels of South Africa's institutions that Paul interacts with from a young age. Though Paul attends an English language school, the novel shows that racial prejudice which later explodes as overt violence is already entrenched into white society's psyche. While the white society carefully propagates histories of the first Dutch sailors who settled at the Cape in 1652 and eventually colonized South Africa, the apartheid state's

institutions also actively edit and erase indigenous experiences of these changes from the society's collective memory.

Eprile reveals what different players in apartheid violence choose to remember. Among the whites, both English-speaking and Afrikaans, oppositional, selective remembering of the past is evident: they officially celebrate the defeat of the Zulu by European settlers at the Battle of the Blood River which emphasizes the violence through which their political and economic domination was established thanks to the mass slaughter of the Zulu people. Erased from their memory is the legacy of the violence visited upon indigenous Africans. For Africans, on the other hand, this holiday is a perpetual reminder of their loss of both life and self-determination. Formal education therefore represents the mobilization of state and social institutions in the canonization of certain memories and the elimination of others. Miss Tompkins, Paul's liberal class teacher, reminds the all-white pupils that "the settlers …barricaded themselves behind their ox-wagons and fired shot after accurate shot into the performers of what must been one of the great "mine dances" of all time."(p.17) From Miss Tompkins' statement, the relationship between indigenous Africans and white South Africans is predicated on the complete domination of one by the other, a relationship made possible by this large-scale violence. It is this mass violence which the white community remembers as heroism during annual celebrations such as Dingaan Day.

Despite being raised by English-speaking parents and attending English-language schools, Paul's initial contact with indigenous Africans is predicated on classic apartheid's terms; master-servant terms; "…when I was an infant… Mother was slim and fair and played tennis daily, leaving me to be rocked in the arms of vast, dark Miriam, an infinite expanse of warm flesh for a baby to love." (p.18) Much like slavery, colonial domination has normalized the

marginalization of Africans; the African nanny's entry into the cash economy via the labor dynamic is marked by a presumed inferiority, brutal exploitation, an expectation of docility and lifelong servitude on the part of the servant. The biggest shock is not the servitude masked as labor exchange but rather Paul's acceptance of the presence of his black nanny as normal.

Paul's childhood, his participation in war and post-war experiences give us an opportunity to interrogate the legacy of violence of war in apartheid South Africa. The novel suggests that white South Africans – English speaking ones included – remember their past largely in terms of opposition to the displaced and oppressed indigenous Africans. The protective circle of ox-wagons or laager from which the Boers and Voortrekkers shot African warriors becomes the organizing principle denoting enforced apartheid, the racial myth through which the "separateness" of the groups was to be maintained until its collapse towards the end of the 20th century. Not surprisingly, most of Paul's classmates are seemingly oblivious to South African reality outside their own self-imposed mental laagers, for example, after the liberal-leaning teacher, Miss Tompkins, gives an alternative interpretation of South African history, Paul observes, "I looked at Colin Goldberg's freckled face, Sedgewick Shwarz's fresh-scrubbed one, at Ophelia Birnbaum's blank gaze. So what? All the faces say. They have no objection to repeating their parents' histories: to be a lawyer or chartered financial accountant like Dad, to play tennis and attend afternoon teas like Mum. *History, memory,* is plastic here in the R.S.A. You remember it the way you would wanted it to be, not the way it was.(19, author's emphasis)

Similarly, Paul's father believes smart African children can only grow up to be "someone's garden boy"(p.43) and after Miss Tompkins leaves, Paul's new teacher, Mrs. Sanders, believes the only way of introducing her students to the country's history is with Jan van Riebeeck's arrival at the Cape(p.20) whose business in Africa is described as setting up a

"refreshment station"(p.31) By taking van Riebeeck's arrival at the Cape as the starting point in South African history, the implication is there was no valid history prior to Riebeeck's landing, a view amenable to the propagation of apartheid.

The Persistence of Memory shows that apartheid's violence is partly sustained by racial segregation based on false moral purity which is ritually legislated by the state. The hypocritical, largely unidirectional policing, or more specifically, banning, of cross-racial sexual activity is a popular battlefront where the apartheid state wages this war to maintain "white purity." What apartheid ignores, of course, is that a large portion of the so-called Colored community owes its existence to the wide prevalence of inter-racial relationships. Apartheid's refusal to face up to its hypocrisy doesn't spare the few dissident voices in this society; when Paul's insinuates that the original Dutch sailors-cum-settler men must have fathered some children with local African women, he faces heavy censure from all structures of white society. His new teacher swiftly marches him to the headteacher who whips him without daring to discuss the issue itself.(p.23) His own mother refuses to discuss the matter in any significant detail and ends up blaming him for the whipping. The whipping incident and the issues leading to it underscore not just apartheid's insistence on a singular narrative of its existence but also the viciousness with which it can crush dissent irrespective of the section of society from which it emerges. This, of course, points to violence as Africans agitate for freedom.

Evidently, apartheid enforces selective amnesia by active editing and erasing undesirable parts of its past. A literal example of enforced erasure of violent memory is that of the township of Sophiatown, a former township near Johannesburg that the apartheid government tore down, uncomfortable with its image of harmony in the multiracial community. In high school, Paul's liberal-leaning history teacher, Mr. Brenner, tells him that Sophiatown was "the multiracial

neighborhood that had grown up organically with the expansion of Johannesburg and its labor needs. This thriving, vibrant, crime-ridden place was then renamed, Triomf, the Afrikaans name for Triumph."(p.58) While well-meaning, the teacher neglects to mention that the white government violently tore down the people's houses before moving them elsewhere. When the boys decide to go "see living history firsthand," they are chased away by a large, white man who tells them "this isn't the Johannesburg Zoo," a reference to the largely black residents of Sophiatown before its destruction.(p.61) While Triomf, the new all-white suburb built on the ashes of Sophiatown is not, strictly speaking, "living history," the students' visit to the site represents an attempt by the English-speaking students to question the official story of racial relations as narrated by the apartheid state.

The random white man who chases the group out of Triomf, the physical location of the former Sophiatown, though not named, endorses the state-sanctioned repression of dissident narratives. In this case, the mere mention of Sophiatown by the boys is enough to stir his rage. The mention of Sophiatown reminds the man of his own people's history of unjustified violence against Africans that he has chosen to erase from his memory. While it is not clear if he represented any official authority, the man's description mirrors the no-nonsense apartheid state's intolerance for dissent. As far as the state is concerned, any unflattering, alternative narratives about how Jan van Riebeeck's descendants and other white settlers came to dominate indigenous Africans must amount to potentially treasonous activity and must be purged from the public sphere and collective memory.

With the sudden death of his father, Paul takes up the army call up as "an opportunity to forget, to finally become a good son, a good South African,"(p.64) itself a surprising turn given his hitherto budding anti-apartheid consciousness. As it turns out, his contribution to the war

effort against African nationalism is by way of helping in “administering” colonial Namibia while “protecting it and its peoples from the “Communist Total Onslaught.”(p.81) Despite his reasonable level of education, Paul does not question what “administering” colonial Namibia actually means or the morality of apartheid South Africa spreading its ideology and practice to another country.

Before enlisting in the apartheid army, Paul interacts with non-white people for the first time while looking after a friend’s property. He remembers a conversation he once had with his mother;

> When I was small, Mother and I had occasionally gone to one such resort, run by a devout Christian couple. ..I had slipped on a wet rock beside the lily pond and plunged my foot into the burbling runoff canal leading into the smaller pond below. My shoes were new, and Mother was quite annoyed that one of them was now sodden and smeared with green slime.
>
> “What on earth were you doing over there, Paul? She snapped at me.
>
> “Looking to see if I could find the baboons, Ma. I heard the owner say they get real baboons here.”
>
> “Oh, darling, honestly!” A fleeting smile appeared on her lips. “He was talking about how hard it is to get decent help around here. The natives are much more raw in this part of the country than in Jo’burg.”(p.68)

Namibia, where Paul fights for the apartheid South African army, becomes, in the soldiers' war code, "Nam", a throwback to the American experience in Vietnam. "We are quick to recognize the affinity we have with young Americans in Vietnam, a generation ago, and our language reflects this: when we leave South West Africa for the Republic, we are going "back to the States."(p.70) While some soldiers are resentful of having to do the dirty work of the apartheid state, there is no doubting the ease with which their register of war quickly categorizes the two sides into an "us" and "them" paradigm. The SWAPO, MPLA, ANC guerillas and all their supporters – presumed and real – are immediately cast as the devils who must be crushed for white South African civilization to survive. The very mentality of the soldiers echoes Coetzee's protagonist's initial obsession with being the last guarantor of civilization at a remote outpost of Empire. Paul expresses the same desire: "I remember from my reading that the town's name, Opuwo, means "the end," a term that is either descriptive of charms or refers to the fact that it's the last outpost of civilization before the Angolan border.(p.102) Angola, the setting for the proxy war between Cold War superpowers of which South Africa was an active participant, becomes the very epitome of a collapsed civilization and an example of what South Africa and the territories she controls must never become.

Curiously, Paul seems thoroughly ignorant of the violence which has shaped colonial Namibia: "I am at this point in my life, woefully ignorant of the vast and arid land that I would likely be defending. I know it to have been settled by the Germans – including Field Marshal Goering's father, Heinrich, who became the territory's first Reich commissioner and that is the size of Western Europe but with a population not much more than Johannesburg's. The colonial Germans had systematically eradicated most of the Herero people when the latter rebelled against being kicked off their land."(p.81) It is in Kaokoland, colonial Namibia that Paul first

participates in an act of extreme violence against the oppressed Africans, specifically an African child and his parents, an act which seals his tragic fate with Captain Lyddie, the group's leader. Suspecting that the local chief was collaborating with the nationalist SWAPO guerillas, Paul guards the Himba family while Captain Lyddie tortures the chief's only baby son by immersing him in a water tank until he loses consciousness. This mock killing of the Himba child before the parents' eyes is the first of Captain Lyddie's war atrocities. Paul, the observer-participant, describes the heart-wrenching episode:

> With a single smooth movement, Lyddie grabs the child around and hoists him into the air. The half-chewed gum drops into the dirt, a wad of mastic and white sugar. Lydddie marches over to rain barrel and dumps the child headfirst into the water. The child's legs kick frantically and we hear a bubbling and we can hear a bubbling rush of air coming out of the barrel. The chief stamps up and down, crying in frustrated horror, aghast, not daring to touch this white man who had injected so much terror into this quiet morning.
>
> "Please baas," he says. "Please. He's my only son."
>
> "Why does he look at me when he says this? It is Lyddie who is pressing the child's body deeper into the rain barrel. Then I realize that it is because I'm the one holding the rifle, gripped at the ready in both my hands.(p.136)

Afterwards, Captain Lyddie's demeanor is described thus: "He might as well be returning from a victorious rugby match, given his triumphal goodwill."(ibid) While Paul is a reluctant participant in the torture of the child, his personal aversion to the act remains unknown and irrelevant to the Himba chief and his family. He does, after all, hold his rifle towards them while

his colleague torments their child. For Captain Lyddie, the group leader, the legality of the action or the feelings of the Himba family do not come into it since he holds the Africans as sub-human. To ensure the future support and loyalty of Paul, Lyddie threatens to dump the former in the desert on the way back to camp. From this moment on, Paul's somewhat academic distance from the senseless violence of war vanishes. Effectively, Paul is now Lyddie's accomplice in committing crimes under the guise of legitimate warfare.

Contrary to the apartheid regime's justification of systematic violence, Africans' violent reaction is not explained or contextualized. Claude, Paul's mother's boyfriend, doesn't seem to know why the Africans of the urban townships have resorted to acts of violence of their own. When Paul briefly comes home, Claude simply says, "The Africans have gone quite mad. Burning. Killing. Necklacing. You know what necklacing is, don't you?...Mind you I feel for the older blacks. They just want to get on with their lives, but the kids are completely berserk… The Communists have taken over their minds."(p.169) Instead of speaking about the township violence in terms of the broader ongoing political struggles and objectives, Claude blames Communist influence for the Africans' reaction to state terror.

Despite the technical superiority of the apartheid army, the banal violence Paul and his group inflict on Africans in both colonial Namibia and the townships of South Africa begins to take its toll on the victimizer too; "We all say bizarre and random things these days, the vast emptiness punctuated by terror has unhinged the best minds of my division…"(p.163) Seemingly traumatized by the gross violence of war, Paul quits the infantry to join the army propaganda unit that produces film to counter the "Total Onslaught" for which they have "to make a Total Response" in which "every photograph ..is a weapon."(p.176) Paul's new colleagues such as Roelof, a fellow soldier who is also assigned to cooking meals for the unit, sensing the

impending failure of the bush war similar wishes to forget everything: "…let's forget about politics and have a proper *jol* ."(p.180, emphasis mine). Much as Roelof's frustration with war is understandable, his altogether wishful solution to ending the conflict is not; it is, infact, a wish borne out of Afrikaner amnesia, a refusal to remember the roots of the conflict.

Despite his transfer from the regular infantry to the propaganda unit, Paul is still plunged into the heart of urban warfare when he accompanies soldiers looking for propaganda pictures and video through staged football matches between themselves and African youths in the townships. On one particular day, the children refuse to play with the soldiers, as explained by the headmaster of the school they visit, "I do not want to offend, he says nervously, "…but you must go play your game somewhere else, please. The children are upset to see soldiers playing in their field."(p.186) Eprile skips the actual death of minority rule during the last decade of the 20th century, a period that represents a transformative phase for Paul. It is, after all, the decade in which apartheid policy was abolished and ultimately, both Namibia and South Africa gained their independence. The narration opens with the late US politician Robert Kennedy's speech given at the University of Cape Town:

> I come here this evening because of my deep interest and affection for a land settled by the Dutch in the mid-seventeenth century, then taken over by the British, and at last independent; a land in which the native inhabitants were at first subdued, but relations with whom remain a problem to this day; a land which defined itself on a hostile frontier; a land which has tamed rich natural resources through the energetic application of modern technology; a land which was once the importer of slaves, and now must struggle to wipe out the last traces of that former bondage. I refer, of course, to the United States of America.(p.187)

Kennedy's deliberate ambivalence in referencing the parallel histories of racial intolerance, slavery, colonization, oppression and struggles for freedom in the United States and South Africa also speaks to the trauma of trying to emerge from a culture of such violence. While the novel glosses over the actual proclamation of non-racial democracy for which post-apartheid South Africa has become synonymous, Paul, the former soldier and defender of apartheid is now taking a trauma management class with a group of other former soldiers. The dominant emotions are "emptiness and bottomless rage."(p.198) Though now afflicted with post-traumatic stress disorder(p.202), Paul is not a typical post-war mental case who "has trouble remembering anything, except for flashbacks"(p.203) but is in fact tormented by gruesome memories of extreme violence in which he participated. His confusion regarding his relationship to post-apartheid South Africa is also palpable:

> This being the new South Africa, perhaps I would be best off with a real African name: Jabulani, to celebrate the joy of our pristine freedoms. Or I could choose one of the great chiefs – but one has to be careful here, Dingaan has the wrong associations (the Battle of the Blood River, his assassination of his own brother, Chaka), Mpande was a sell-out, one of the first of the *impimpi* (on our school tour of the Voortrekker Monument, the guide told us: "Panda was a good sort of Native. He wanted to be the white man's friend.") Perhaps Makhana…or would it be seen as arrogance to claim resemblance to a hero of the Xhosa wars of liberation, a man betrayed by enemies who promised to treat him honourably; an undeafeatable fighter who drowned trying to escape from captivity on Robben Island?"(p.218)

For a former apartheid soldier to even pretend that he can buy his allegiance to the new nation overnight by simply taking an African name is not only laughable but also reveals Paul's general state of confusion. Besides Jabulani, a common name, Paul can only think of names of major historical figures, itself a commentary on his alienation from indigenous South African cultures. It is while mulling over the possibility of taking an African name that he comes full circle: "But who is Paul Sweetbread? A nice Jewish Christian boy, a liberal soldier in the army, a lousy good South African, *a ware* Zuid-Afrikaner English? Can such a person even exist?" (p.219) The real question that Paul is posing is this: how could a seemingly well-meaning individual have been party to the greatest crime in South African history?

While Paul himself has no answer to that question, the fact that an intelligent, well-intentioned non-Afrikaans person could have committed gruesome crimes against defenseless civilians points to the banality of evil under the apartheid regime. This is in fact, one of the major strengths of the novel; the fact that post-apartheid narratives have tended to simplify the complex nature of the war, often portraying the evils of apartheid as an exclusive preserve of the Afrikaner community. Paul, an English-speaking Jew, finds it hard to identify with his wartime persona hence his conflicted position regarding the government's commission set up to probe apartheid-era crimes. Paul informs us that Kannemayer, one of his new colleagues at college "…is of the opinion that the (Truth and Reconciliation) Commission does more harm than good…"(p.223) His own opinion of the Commission is even more ambivalent:

> "…I am not sure he is wholly wrong…especially about the Commission's assumption that the revelation of horrors is "healing." On the other hand, I am only too glad that the

> white South African should be forced to recognize what was done on his behalf, to see the human suffering that kept the swimming pool blue and provided his game-viewing holidays. That the neighbor seen leaving for his office job with the police was spending his day torturing some seventeen-year-old African about his connection to black youth organizations… I prefer not to share my own qualms with such as Kannemeyer, and choose instead to annoy him by pointing out that black policemen confessing their sins far outnumber the government ministers willing to admit that they might ever have been complicit in some wrongdoing. So right there we have a distortion of the past. A Martian or Betelguesian reading the hearings' transcripts would be justified in believing that apartheid was something enforced by a few rogue policemen and that blacks did to each other, while the honorable ministers shuffled their papers and picked their noses in Pretoria." (pp.223-4)

The challenge that comes with Truth and Reconciliation Commission-led restorative justice or what Kannemayer cynically calls the "revelation of horrors as healing" is quite stark: in the immediate post-war years, few apartheid operatives are willing to divulge the full extent of their activities and when they do, they are grossly outnumbered by their black assistants whose apartheid crimes are already well-known in the townships where they live and have no option but to seek the TRC's amnesty. The problem, suggests the novel, is not with the painful details that the black assistants gave to secure their amnesty but the uncharted territory of full accountability and possible forgiveness between the white community, apartheid's creators and ultimate beneficiaries, and non-white South Africans – including other Africans in the southern African region, apartheid's victims.

The envisaged conversion of (hot) emotional memory to (cold) narrative is barely achieved given the enforced or willful amnesia within the resentful and/or fearful white community and especially amongst former security personnel such as Paul and Kannemayer. If anything, the amnesty-seeking testimonies by apartheid-era black policemen and soldiers becomes something of a perverse performance as white apartheid officials give the process a wide berth. In the novel, post-apartheid South Africa is indeed a place of repressed memory for many white South Africans, especially those who had taken active roles in maintaining and defending apartheid. The former Captain Lydie, now Major Lyddie, Paul's wartime group leader in the border wars also applies to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission if only to avoid possible trial and certain conviction later. When Paul learns of this, he tells Lyddie that he would be testifying against him. The telephone conversation between the two men reveals the uneven terrain of violent memory, specifically what and how memories former apartheid operators can carry into post-apartheid South Africa:

> "I thought this was supposed to be about truth. You tell the truth; I tell the truth. What is this nonsense about testifying against, hey? Who said anything about that?"
>
> "Yes, Major. I will just tell what happened. Now I really must –"
>
> "As you remember it you mean? You will be saying what you remember, I say what I remember, and then we all go home and live happily ever after. That's what this is about, is it? Did you ever notice how in their public commentaries the Commission only ever mentions the "oppressor" and the "oppressed?" You're a student of humankind; do you really think that you can separate us so simply into two different species? Man the victim

goes into box A; Man the victimizer goes into Box B. Is that the sort of rubbish you have stuffed your mind with at the university?"

"Come on, Major Lyddie –"

"No Man. I had hoped you had learned something. Remember what I told you; never complain, never explain? That's part of being a man….but you, you have always been weak. So you will let your Communist friends put their words in your mouth, just as long as they pat you on the head and say they like you."

"I'm going to put the phone down now. I shouldn't be talking to you."

"Hey, I'm sorry, Sweetbread. Really, I'm not trying to intimidate you. Just think of this as one friend calling another, that's allowed, even in the new South Africa. I just wanted to tell you to be careful tomorrow…(p.228-9)

From their conversation, it is evident Lyddie attempts to enforce a perverse brotherhood code whose singular goal is to exploit the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's liberal, nation-building bias to escape possible punishment for acts that were criminal even under the former white regime, specifically his unilateral torture of African babies and the slaughter of Namibian combatants after the declaration of ceasefire in South West Africa. By saying "You will be saying what you remember, I say what I remember, and then we all go home and live happily ever after," Lyddie is not only issuing a veiled threat against Paul in case he exposes the former as a dishonest amnesty applicant but he is also attempting to erase certain events from Paul's memory and by extension, from post-apartheid South Africa's collective memory.

Paul's own thoughts as he prepares to testify before the Truth Commission are: "Perhaps white South Africans' dysmnesia is a kind of phobia – a horror at the thought of remembering – and the ultimate effect of all the daily broadcasts on radio and television and the newspaper stories of the Commission's hearings has been to flood that phobic response, to shut down memory once and for all in promise of a cure."(p.232) This failure or willful refusal to remember – dysmnesia – is evident in Lyddie's violent purge of incriminating war events from those like Paul who are troubled by their roles in committing apartheid horrors. Before the TRC itself, Paul attributes his postwar partial mental breakdown to his participation in a particularly gruesome attack on Namibian combatants returning from their Angolan bases after the announcement of ceasefire. This is in fact the attack for which the Captain Lyddie, as commander, has come to be absolved of by the Commission enroute to gaining his amnesty. To the question, "Can you be a bit specific about your breakdown, what do you think caused it to happen…?" Paul's initially unspoken response is "Although I have known this question would be coming, the lead-in for me to open up a box and pull out the stacked bodies of murdered black men Lyddie is responsible for, I am not ready despite all my preparation. I begin to sweat, to shuffle from foot to foot, to wring my hands. Finally I blurt out: "I couldn't get rid of the feel of those dead people. I just couldn't. I couldn't sleep. I smelled them on my hands and couldn't eat." I'm crying now and my words barely audible…(p.237)

It is in the ambush on unsuspecting returning SWAPO guerillas that Paul knowingly kills African nationalist fighters for the first time(p.244-5) The aftermath of the ambush is worth noting as it records Lyddie and Paul's reactions to what both know is illegal mass murder: "

> Lyddie takes me by the arm, his big strong fingers digging into my biceps, and leads me a few meters up the hill. He indicates a man lying on his back, a stitching of holes in his

> shirt, his cheek and eye missing. "You bagged this one," he says cheerfully. I just finished him off for you, but you put him out of the fight." He leans down, dips his fingers into the blood pooling beneath the man's head, then rubs it across my cheek.
>
> "That's what my oupa did for me when I shot my first buck," he said. "It was a klipspringer, hardly any meat on it, but I made a band for my hat with its hide and wore it until it rotted away. Now you can go back to Johannesburg and say you are really one of the *ou manne*, that you didn't sit out the whole war with your thumb in your arse."(p.246)

The easy parallel that Lyddie draws between his boyhood hunting expedition with the massacre of unsuspecting SWAPO guerillas is difficult to miss. Hunting, a traditional Boer rite of passage in the southern African savannahs, is apparently no different from ambushing and killing African guerillas. It is to this apartheid conception of white masculinity-as-murder that Lyddie appeals when he tells Paul of his first hunting kill right after the slaughter of SWAPO guerillas. While Paul's opposing testimony before the Truth and Reconciliation Commission exposes Lyddie's wartime crimes, there is little doubt that Paul himself is deeply troubled by his own contribution to the madness of apartheid-era South Africa. At the vital moment when he is supposed to narrate how Captain Lyddie violated the UN Convention on Namibia's Ceasefire Statute by waging a unilateral war after the declaration of ceasefire, Paul wrings his hands, breaks down and cries. His role as a reluctant participant in the killings in Namibia and repression in the townships of urban South Africa point to his own culpability. As such, his breakdown at the vital moment indicates his own ambivalence towards articulating and

memorializing criminal activities of which he was also implicated. His participation in a post-war trauma management class also point to his realization of this fact.

Finally, at a different level, the Tuth and Reconciliation Commission enters the narrative as an official attempt to bring closure to memory of apartheid-era violence by constructing a public, state-endorsed narrative about that recent tragedy. As noted earlier, the participants themselves are often conflicted about the benefits of contributing to a public process that revisits the recent past to tell about its horrors. Both the testimony of the fictional Captain Lyddie and the many pages of real-life TRC testimonies by apartheid operatives raise the question of how this public, state-supported memorialization of recent violence is deeply problematic: most white apartheid-era operatives distort or minimize or misrepresent the extent of their involvement if they care to attend at all, and on the other hand, the disproportionate representation of black South Africans as amnesty seekers gives the false impression that apartheid was, in fact, a case of black South Africans oppressing their kith and kin. More significantly for my purposes, the state-sanctioned ritual of memorialization is also a reopening of old wounds, as it were. The novel suggests that this (often well-rehearsed and distorted) performance does not necessarily lead to the post-apartheid state's desired outcomes: healing, non-racial (or multi-racial) harmony, permanent national stability and reconciliation.

Commenting on the strengths and weaknesses of the truth and reconciliation process in her country, writer Sindiwe Magona(2010) says:

> The TRC did a lot of good. What it did not do is be universal. It was for a small pocket of people, the 'stars of apartheid' as I call them. For the ordinary man in the street, it did absolutely nothing…Like freedom: freedom was a big thing in 1994. Everybody was

> optimistic and eyes were glowing, but for a lot of people it is still not there; not quite or not yet, because things… have a way of perpetuating themselves. If you were twenty in 1994 and you had only three years of school, how is your life going to change? It won't. And the way we have gone about it as a nation is doing a little patchwork here, patchwork there instead of systematic mending of the brokenness with which we came to our freedom…22 000 people testified out of a population of 44 million even though "millions of people were affected by apartheid. I would say millions of people in our country were affected by apartheid. Every one of us can tell you a story of how our lives were affected in this way. And many of us still sit with the impact of that on our lives…and that's something that needs to be dealt with."(p.76)

Evident in Magona's assessment of the TRC process is its sheer inadequacy, specifically the assumption that the tearful testimonies of a few victims and the caged admission of guilt and/or distortion by a few apartheid operatives would achieve the bigger objective of creating a stable, non-racial society. State-sanctioned testimony and forgiveness takes a perverse made-for-television character; the amnesty applicant admits his contribution to murder or other kinds of violence while simultaneously minimizing his or her role and the victim's family members tearfully accept the half-guilty plea.

A similar point is raised by another South African writer Don Foster(2010: 121) when he argues that "…the TRC was also pulling South African society apart. Whites were digging in their heels and saying "We don't want to remember and so on." Implicated in the amnesty application process but disguised as truth-telling for nation-building is the very real possibility of

retraumatization. The paradox of attempting an expensive "truth-telling" process when the material conditions of most black South Africans still mirror apartheid society is, of course, too painful for some of apartheid's victims to fathom . As the case of Captain Lyddie shows, the memory of apartheid violence within the victim, family and community is often compounded by an altogether appalling refusal to admit any contribution to violence by what Magona calls "the stars of apartheid." As Magona argues above, the fleeting aura of "freedom" was powerful in its symbolism in 1994 but for the majority of black South Africans, it remained exactly that; an illusion.

The reason for freedom's failure to transform lives across South Africa's rainbow society is, of course, to be found in the unreformed economy and the broken relationship between the institution of government and the vast majority of the formerly oppressed people. Given this perpetuation of some of apartheid's systems, the incentive to forgive and/or forget, while desired by the political and economic elites across the racial divide, is missing among apartheid's victims whose material conditions remain largely unchanged. As we will see in the next chapter on Colored South African fiction and film, the frustration emanating from such misery – compounded with incomplete and/or failed reconciliation - is often expressed in violent forms such as self-harm, drug abuse, hypersexuality, alcoholism, 'senseless' murders, rape, and more recently, xenophobic violence.

In the final analysis, both *Waiting for the Barbarians* and *The Persistence of Memory* point to the difficulty molding a collective memory in the aftermath of centuries of repression and violence. By using mild-mannered protagonists rather than typical apartheid-supporting Afrikaners, they also highlight the banality and extent of violence. While attacking apartheid repression, *Waiting for the Barbarians* specifically opposes apartheid's mythologies about non-

whites. As demonstrated earlier, its allegory of an Empire's struggle against feared Barbarian attack destabilizes apartheid's raison d'être. *The Persistence of Memory* speaks to the fears that *Waiting for the Barbarians* raises, namely the possibility of collective amnesia in the aftermath of violent conflict. Both novels propose that the reality as mirrored through this fiction is something quite different from Mengel, Borzag and Orantes's thesis that violent memory can, through narration, be articulated as cool, narrative memory. While speaking for and about white South African society, both novels show that the effects and memory of apartheid, while largely unacknowledged, are implicated in the prevailing conditions. The conditions perpetuate rather than disrupt or transform the trauma of both the victims and perpetrators.

In the next chapter, I examine black-authored texts that memorialize the violence of war, itself an acknowledgement of the traumatic impact of the anti-colonial struggle.

Chapter 5

Destabilizing the narrative in Colored Voices in South African War Literature and Post-war Film: Achmat Dangor's *Bitter Fruit* and Ian Gabriel's *Forgiveness*

Using one fiction and one film text, I examine the lingering and often far-reaching legacy of political violence within the Colored community in South Africa. Achmat Dangor's *Bitter Fruit(2005)* and Ian Gabriel's *Forgiveness(2004)* suggest ways in which colonial-era violence impact on the present within the Colored community. In both texts, the newly-independent nation of South Africa is presented as struggling to transcend the memory of a brutal colonialism; the individuals and families affected by that violence find it impossible to move beyond certain defining moments from the recent past. For this purpose, I explore the legacy of political violence at the level of the individual, the family and society as depicted in the two texts.

Theorizing about the emergence of the Euro-Western nation, Anderson(1983:5-6) describes it as an "imagined" community because it is defined largely by how these citizens interact and relate to each other. According to Anderson, it is imagined because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion. (Anderson, 5-6) Unlike the Euro-Western nations that Anderson had in mind, *Bitter Fruit* and *Forgiveness* explore the emergence of a new South Africa which defines itself only in opposition to what it was before the transition to democracy. As such, the notion of a shared culture does not necessarily exist and, as I will show, the nation-ness of post-apartheid South Africa is still contested because the

violence of the immediate past is largely unresolved. Put differently, many non-white South Africans perceive themselves as victims of apartheid state terrorism and its racial intolerance and, in the post-apartheid era, victims of a socio-political system that privileges narratives of the old white economic elites and the new black political class. The two texts challenge this dominant narrative by foregrounding the silenced traumas of war-time violence against the Colored people, a vibrant, in-between community that suffered marginal status during and after apartheid.

Achmat Dangor's *Bitter Fruit*, first published in South Africa in 2001, is set in late 1998, just as the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission's(hereafter called the TRC) Final Report is being drafted for presentation to President Nelson Mandela, the anti-apartheid icon.[71] 1998 is also a transitional moment in another sense; anti-apartheid icon and first president of democratic South Africa, Nelson Mandela, is retiring and handing over power to his deputy, Thabo Mbeki. Dramatizing the personal and collective traumas of the years of the South African transition and somewhat disrupting the seductive facade of official reconciliation in post-apartheid South Africa, the power with which the book captures the relevance of its themes to contemporary southern Africa is not in doubt. Its status as a major African literary text is underlined by making the Man Booker Prize shortlist.

Composed of three acts under the headings of Memory, Confession and Retribution, the main narrative explores the lives of three members of one family, Silas Ali, his wife Lydia Ali and their son, Michael(Mikey) Ali. Categorized by both the apartheid and post-apartheid administrations as Coloreds, the Ali family occupies an ambiguous and yet quintessentially South African position in the country's history and memory. While they are not the original inhabitants of the territory, their presence has been registered since the mid-1650s. Silas's

liberation struggle credentials are impressive; he is a veteran of the uMkhonto we Sizwe underground resistance movement. While the new South Africa's Rainbow discourse celebrates – is indeed built on - this kind of hybridity, Silas himself has grown disillusioned with the slow pace of real transformation and the demands of routine mid-level government service.

Dangor, who describes his goal as "…writing about societies that find it difficult to delve beneath the skins of their lives, of their national lives…",[72] shows the unforeseen repercussions of violent political violence and memory, that is the individual and society's struggle with 'historical memory'(p.32) At the center of the Ali family crisis is the memory of Lydia's rape by Francoise Du Boise, an apartheid-era policeman. Although the tragic event itself happened nearly twenty years ago, neither Lydia nor Silas has transcended its memory. A chance meeting between Silas and Du Boise at a mall precipitates the novel's drama that eventually sees the total collapse of the Ali family.

After hearing about her tormentor from her husband, Lydia deliberately steps on broken bottles, badly hurting her feet and is hospitalized. Already stuck in a emotionally-anemic marriage – a marriage borne more out of anti-apartheid struggle solidarity than love – Lydia watches her family disintegrate. Her son, Michael, a bright Wits University student, stumbles upon a shocking family secret and is consumed by hate and blind faith. Even though Lydia recovers and starts on a new job, her spirit is badly shaken and eventually divorces Silas.

Above all, it is the inability to find the language with which to speak about the violent event and its psychological after-effects that smothers the family and strains the relationship between the three family members. After running into Du Boise(p.7), Silas comes home and tries to express his shock at actually running into the apparition that has hovered over Lydia and

Silas's relationship. In the strained conversation below, it becomes evident that not only is Lydia unwilling/unable to talk about her tormentor but she is also uncomfortable with the memory of her violent encounter with him:

> Silas, I had forgotten…"
>
> 'I'm sorry, I didn't intend to run into him.'
>
> 'You chose to remember, you *chose* to come home and tell me.'(author's emphasis)
>
> 'You know I couldn't hide anything from you.'….It's not something you easily forget, or *ever* forget.'
>
> 'All these years we never spoke about it.'(p.16)

While Lydia has counted on burying her pain and unremembering the memory of the rape, she finds it impossible to ignore once her husband brings up his chance encounter with Du Boise, the rapist. Lydia's rape, the story's main catalyst, is no ordinary criminal act; it occurs within the context of the nationalist armed struggle in South Africa. At the time – 1978 - Lydia's husband belongs to the African National Congress's underground movement, the uMKhonto we Sizwe. It is the uMkhonto we Sizwe that organized major underground operations against the apartheid state, bombing targeted positions within South Africa in an ever-growing guerilla warfare that partly forced the white minority government to abandon apartheid in 1991 and engage the nationalists in the dialogue that eventually led to the democratic transition of 1994. Du Boise is part of this repressive state apparatus, a member of the police team that arrests Silas;

he proceeds to assert the system's violent power by raping Lydia in a veld – within her husband's earshot.

The centrality of the rape scene deserves close attention as it underpins the story's major developments. First, it needs to be pointed out that the sexual violence directed upon Lydia's person typifies apartheid South Africa's endemic use of terror as an instrument of control. While long jail terms are usually reserved for prominent male nationalists, Lydia, a Colored woman who is not herself an activist, and, as the rapist calls her, a "terrorist", (p.128) falls victim to the apartheid system's masculinist power. Despite the complete silence surrounding the rape, we later learn that Lydia herself has struggled with it in writing from 1978, when the rape happened, to May 1994. The last entry in her personal diary which coincides with the transition to South Africa's non-racial democracy does suggest Lydia's own uncertainty about the relationship between the memories of apartheid violence and the pressures of the present.

In her diary, Lydia gives her reasons for not speaking about the rape, stating:

> I cannot speak to Silas, he makes my pain his tragedy. In any case, I know that he doesn't want to speak about my being raped, he wants to suffer silently, wants me to be his accomplice in this act of denial. I also cannot speak to my mother and father. They too will want to take on my pain, make it theirs.... They will also demand of me a forgetful silence. Speaking about something heightens its reality, makes it unavoidable. This is not human nature, but the nature of "confession" that the Church has taught them. Confess your sins, even those committed against you - and is rape not a sin committed by both victim and perpetrator, at least according to man's gospel?-but confess it once only. There

> true salvation is to be found. In saying the unsayable, and then holding your peace for ever after. (p.127)

Evident from this diary 'confession' is that Lydia is caught between the unending trauma of the past – a violent, colonial, masculinist and racialized past – with a post-apartheid present whose buzzwords are reconciliation, forgiveness and compromise. Lydia's own husband is the very symbol of this uncertain present - itself a transitional phase between the presidencies of Nelson Mandela and his successor, Thabo Mbeki. Lydia correctly observes that her position mirrors that of the majority non-white South African population that was badly affected by apartheid policies and actions; she is caught between the 'forgetful silence' and 'speaking about …(the) reality'.(ibid)

While Mandela's new South Africa encourages dialogue about the past, Lydia observes that it is only interested only in a certain kind of dialogue – the quasi-religious confessional model that urges (but does not require) the perpetrator to come forward, on his own free will in recognition of his sins, to narrate his misdeeds. If the perpetrator does, in fact, come forward, so this slightly altered Catholic model holds, the victim should similarly find it in her heart to forgive and forget. In the popular imagination that the Truth and Reconciliation Commission hearings spawned, South Africans, specifically non-white South Africans are likened to wounded bodies. In this sense, willful confession or truth-telling is presented as the logical step towards not just healing apartheid's wounds but eventual reconciliation. As suggested earlier, reconciliation itself was the bedrock upon which the post-apartheid South African nation was built. Implicit in this political compromise is the fact that both sides in the conflict are keen to see the perpetuation of South Africa with a minimum of disruption.

The novel's central narrative – Lydia's rape by a white policeman some nineteen years earlier, and the silenced memory of it – seem to point towards different ways in which the war and general political violence of South Africa's liberation struggle was experienced by non-white women, in this case Colored women. Put differently, the government seems to celebrate public displays of forgiveness via the TRC process while ignoring private voices such as Lydia's.

Lydia's diary helps us understand the bitter ironies of freedom in South Africa. In a sense, the diary, at once private, silent and yet a valid living record, allows Lydia a veneer of "self-containment" (p.158). Also, it is the diary that reveals Lydia's own struggle with repressed memory of trauma. On the one hand she recognizes the necessity of recording her personal experience of apartheid state terror as Silas's partner. On the other, she has nothing but contempt for the TRC process, seeing no value in victims' narration of pain and humiliation. The question therefore is: Is this essentially private narration of pain capable of liberating a victim from memories of war-time violence? By pouring her pain on paper, she demonstrates a desire to document the historical fact of it as well as to free herself from the trauma and memory of the rape. And yet the new South Africa and her family situation do not afford her space to narrate her story. She proceeds to hide the diary itself, preferring instead to observe what is, to her, a faulty reconciliation process where the Forgiveness with a capital 'F' must have the last word.

It is the rape, after all which initially silences Lydia, robbing her of the power of speech. Her vocal skills reduced to screams and moans, Lydia fails to articulate her suffering well into post-apartheid South Africa. While the secret, personal narration in the form of the diary initially promises a desire for truth, emotional release and perhaps satisfactory closure, the refusal to confront Du Boise in a TRC-mediated process and her eventual flight by road through the desolate Karoo desert suggests Lydia's inability to make a break with her traumatic past. Not

only has she lost all affection for Silas but she has also failed to dissociate her son, Michael, from the fact of her violation by Du Boise. Indeed, Lydia's earliest memory of Michael's birth is that of smelling him as if to detect the presence of Du Boise, Michael's natural father, the "stench (of) the premature decaying of a man who harbored some dreaded disease. A kind of cancer, she thought, something that would one day eat away at his core" (p.120).

Part of the bitterness of the "miracle" that is post-apartheid South Africa, the novel suggests, is the burden that characters like Lydia must bear, often unacknowledged. Unable to go through with a proposed closed session TRC hearing, Lydia is also unable to separate Silas from the rape and develops a coldness toward him. Lydia describes in her diary how she "crossed a divide" (p.128) when she was raped; but it is Silas's reaction, his inability "to reach out and touch" her, his "icy unspoken revulsion," that drives her "into a zone of silence." She sees Silas's inability to touch her as "revulsion" to a contaminated object; he is more preoccupied with his own "affronted manhood" (p.129) In the end, Lydia is deliberately unfaithful to Silas, abandons her home and runs off to the other end of the country.

Silas Ali offers us another dimension to the horrors that the apartheid state machinery was capable of inflicting on captured nationalist activists. Unlike the icons of the struggle such as Walter Sisulu and Nelson Mandela, for whose government he now works, Silas did not serve a long jail term for his underground activities. The question that Silas must face way beyond 1994 is: What does it mean to be a witness to the rape of his wife, a rape that goes unacknowledged even in his own family circle for nearly twenty years? Perceived as such, the rape of Lydia is, for Silas, more than a physical act of violence against his wife; it serves as an instrument of political torture which potentially sets in motion family disintegration. The shame and stigma associated with the rape refuses to leave the Ali household even though no one speaks about it as such.

Silas is reminded of his own weakness vis-à-vis the apartheid state apparatus whose officer violates his wife. Lydia reminds him when Silas himself dares to mention it, "He took your woman, he fucked your wife, made you listen to him doing it. I became his property, even my screams were his instrument. Now you are a man and believe in honor…"(p.19) Evident in Lydia's emotional outburst is the emasculation of Silas himself by Du Boise and his team, the all-conquering dogs of the apartheid state. Silas himself needs no reminding as he has also been tormented by memories of being shackled to a police van while close by, his wife is being violated.

Silas' initial response to his wife's violation, summarized in the words, "(t)here was no need to" (p.16) (talk) about the rape exposes not only his inability to reconcile with the trauma of the past but his appropriation of his wife's narrative. While clearly well-meaning, Silas essentially suppresses the expression of Lydia's major source of trauma by conniving to silence it. In his present role as a senior lawyer advising, first the TRC and then a cabinet minister who works closely with President Mandela, Silas, represents two contrasting faces of non-white people in the new South Africa. In his advisory role to the TRC, he must invest in the Rainbow concept out of which sustainable peace will supposedly emerge following the highly-publicized reconciliation process.

Despite of the trauma he carries, Silas has fully embraced his new role as a negotiator in the new South Africa, one of the backroom 'fix-it' men necessary in South African political transition now that that the old days of public debate have been replaced by a cynical but efficient pragmatism. While struggling with the personal effects of the struggle upon his own family, Silas concedes, "Being in government is different from fighting for freedom. Things have to be *managed* now!"(36) (emphasis mine). Coming from such a senior civil servant, the obvious

implication is that the new South Africa, including its government, is not really interested in hearing about stories such as the one Lydia and Silas struggle with. Telling such as story outside of the state-sanctioned TRC is, it seems, tantamount to a failure to appreciate the difficult work of *managing* the present.

With Archbishop Desmond Tutu, the Nobel Laureate, at the TRC's helm, Silas's public functions require that he becomes one of the 'managers of the miracle', that is one of the pragmatic government functionaries who must ensure the peaceful transition not just from apartheid to multi-racial democracy but from the administrations of Mandela to Mbeki.. This, then, is the masculinist, self-serving nationalist narrative that his wife, Lydia, can not come to terms with. She feels tragic experiences such as hers have been appropriated by a post-apartheid political discourse which idolizes reconciliation and peaceful transition at the expense of individual, *gendered* narratives of the struggle. When Silas suggests that she might find release by giving her testimony to the TRC, perhaps in a closed session, Lydia lashes out, "The difference is that he'll(Archbishop Desmond Tutu) never understand what it means to be raped, to be mocked while he's being raped, to feel inside of him the hot knife – that piece of useless flesh you call a cock – turning into a torture instrument(p.18) Here Lydia is not only highlighting the role of sexual violence against female anti-apartheid activists but also protesting against the easy accommodation that a compromise deal affords apartheid state operatives while essentially leaving the victims to deal with the consequences after their tearful fifteen minutes on the made-for-TV TRC hearings are over.

Silas himself is aware that rape of the kind that befell Lydia is not a mere act of criminality; it is symptomatic of the extreme violence of the apartheid state in the post Soweto Uprising period. In an interview in which he says the TRC testimonies prompted him to write

Bitter Fruit, Dangor notes, "These are the dregs of what our society sunk to during the apartheid years. Descriptions of an older woman saying how a young policeman would say to her, he just wanted to feel what the inside of a black cunt felt like, so he pushed his hand up her, just to *feel*. And it didn't end there."(emphasis in original)

At the immediate level, the rape shatters all possibility of romantic congress between Lydia and Silas. "The memory of being raped" (p.119) overshadows Lydia's sexuality. Sex does not bring them together but drives them even further apart. Lydia's inability to dissociate sex with her husband from the memory of rape worsens when Du Boise is thrust back in her life, first by the Silas himself and later, by the TRC. She is clearly overwhelmed by vivid memories surrounding that event. Unable – or unwilling – to confront her demons, Lydia directs her anger towards Silas, even though much of it is not actually unarticulated verbally: "You should not have brought my rapist home. I can't rest peacefully with both of you around, your bodies, your smells, even your sounds have become all mixed up" (p.123). For Lydia, Silas himself has become a symbol of what the society can not allow her; to tell the story of her sacrifice her own way.

The climate of general violence of the immediate post Soweto Uprising makes it easy for apartheid operatives like Du Boise to impose themselves on female, non-white bodies such as Lydia. For Dangor therefore, Lydia's violated female body and womb are sites from which to re-imagine gendered post-apartheid identities in a country whose most seductive myth is Rainbowism. Silas, while vital to the survival and perpetuation of this new South Africa, ironically represents a discourse that relegates the country's interrelated histories of political, racial and sexual violence to footnotes. By foregrounding the personal impact of apartheid violence on a Colored woman, Bitter Fruit suggests that the stability of the new South Africa is

also dependent on weaving more complex, representative narratives such as Lydia's into the broader national narrative(s).

The struggles of such a Colored family under post-1994 pressures to forget and/or remember the past bring into focus the multi-layered tensions shaping the new South Africa. While the Alis are a respectable, middle class family living in some comfort in Berea, a suburb of Johannesburg, the wounds of shame and humiliation has persisted. For Silas in particular, the memory of his wife's is interwoven with of his own sense of inadequacy. His memory of anti-apartheid activism for Umkhonto we Sizwe is therefore displaced with memories of himself as the passive victim of rape: "He remembered how the police had made them 'tauza,' squatting with their legs wide open and frog-jumping, so that anything they had concealed in their anuses would drop out or hurt them enough to make them scream out loud" (p.17).

Lydia's predicament and Silas' unease reveal that rape and race remain key issues in the constructions of Colouredness in this period of the Mandela-Mbeki transition. Although Silas works for both the Ministry of Justice and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission"(p.59), he finds it impossible to find justice for his wife and resolve his own traumatic memories of the struggle. In the novel's first section, aptly-titled "Memory", Silas's "inevitable" encounter with François du Boise, the white security policeman who raped his wife, Lydia (p.7) some nineteen years earlier forces Silas to recall waking to the sound of Lydia's voice,

> "…hoarse and rich, vibrating like a singer's voice too deep to be played so loudly through a set of worn-out speakers. 'N*** her, n*** her good!' another voice said, …and then Lydia's voice was sharp, ascending into a scream, before fading into a moan so removed it seemed to come from his dreams (p.14)."

Still clearly shell-shocked by the brutal events of the struggle, Silas muses over his own new role as a government spin doctor of sorts, watching the passing of his own life marginalised on TV, "as if it was foreign, fictional". His public life seems fictional precisely because it does not delve into the specifics of the trauma that individuals like his wife suffered. For someone whose day job is to literally negotiate between the conflicting versions of the "truth" between the TRC commissioners, "the old security people" (p.257) and the African National Congress (ANC), Silas symbolizes the shaping of national memory, the compromise on which the new South Africa is based, and the slippery nature of truth. Failing to handle the brutal truth of his family's trauma, Silas chooses instead to settle for the highly-compromised politically-negotiated memory whose only goal is peaceful transition at all cost. A lawyer trained by the new government to find consensus, Silas buries his own hurt and emotions in preference for the law and yet continues to ponder: What would happen if he broke his own golden rule and delved into the turmoil of memories that the events of those days would undoubtedly unleash? (p.63)

Whereas the Silas's TRC is interested in uncovering a statement of facts of abuses by the apartheid government operatives, Silas's private live as a failed lover and distant father figure reveals the complex short and long term effects of political violence experienced at the individual level. The emotional hurt itself is in fact just under the seemingly placid surface; - when told by Lydia what Du Boise called her while he raped her ("a nice wild half-kaffir cunt, a *lekker wilde Boesman poes*" (p.17), Silas responds by physically grabbing and shaking her. In the end, Silas is as much a shaper of the new South Africa as he is a victim of its selective amnesia.

Mikey(Michael), the only child in the Ali household demonstrates another tragic dimension of apartheid's half-told horrors. Initially a brilliant, mixed race student of Literature at Wits University, Mikey is a model child of the "new South Africa". When Lydia, his mother, is hospitalized after her self-harming act upon hearing of Du Boise's existence, Mikey stumbles upon his mother's secret diary which reveals that he was, in fact, born of rape by a white policeman. His mother's diary runs from December 1978 – the rape by Du Boise - to May 16, 1994, six days after President Mandela takes office - after which "it stops abruptly."(118)

Reading his mother's diary, Mikey figures "She must have been eighteen then, his age, a student nurse, destined for nothing more than humble service in a noble profession. Because she was black, …"(p.114) The relevant entries themselves read, "Three nights ago I was raped. By a policeman, in a veld, flung down on the grass, the darkness above his head my only comfort. I will never recover from the physical act of that rape. But I also know I'm pregnant. Inside of me is a rapist's seed. My child will be a child of rape." (p.114)

Reading this deeply personal family history forces Mikey to confront the fact that "he is the child of some murderous white man,... a Boer,... who worked for the old system, was the old system" (p.131)

Mikey's response to the discovery of his tortured origins is utter shock; the truth of it fragments him; he literally barricades himself inside his room, almost immediately withdraws himself from university and eventually leads him towards a murderous search for his biological father. Racialized violence, rape, murder - the fruits of apartheid as it were – return to torment the Ali family. While throwing some light on his biological origins, the diary also becomes the source of Mikey's pain. From this point in the narrative, Mikey directs his energy away from

formal education, adopts a criminal mentality, becomes a seducer of older women, affiliates with PAGAD, the Colored Muslim vigilante group, becomes obsessed with his "beginnings"(168) and seeks what he imagines to be personal justice.

Mikey's visit to his uncle's house to learn more about his family seems to confirm his own worst fears, namely that his own family does not consider him one of their own. His reaction upon arriving at Uncle Amin's house confirms his ambivalence towards "his" people:

> Michael is introduced, his presence is acknowledged, he is peeked at curiously, but the discussion is overtaken by the mundane talk about the state of cars, minor illnesses suffered, plans for the evening, the routine trials of lives lived as well as possible, all in the glorious babble of music accents that lend a gathering a beguiling warmth. The purpose of his visit, his "search for his roots", seems pretentious to Michael now.(p.170)

Although Michael learns about his step-father, Silas Ali's roots among India's Muslims, the nascent pride in self is shattered when Vinu , his Colored girlfriend reveals how she was raped by her father, an Afrikaner who supported the nationalist cause during the struggle. It is the knowledge of the incestuous abuse of his girlfriend by her father that sends him into a murderous rage. Already troubled by discovering that he is not, after all, a descendant of proud Indian immigrants on his paternal side but rather a child of an Afrikaner rapist, Mikey's self-confidence is deeply shaken. He just might be what Silas had in mind when he too begins to lose faith in the achievements of the struggle, "He looked around at the clientele. What traumas were they going through, he wondered, apart from agonizing continuously over how they weren't white enough

in the past, and how they weren't black enough now? The existential dilemma of every bastard in the world."(p.192)

Although Mikey has been an idealist at best, the discovery of his compromised conception brings the worst out of him. The dreamer in him is replaced by an intense dislike for what he perceives as a flawed transition as he reflects on the failings of his parents' generation: "The struggle sowed the seeds of bright hopes and burning ideals, but look at what they are harvesting: ordinariness." (p.167) To this new Mikey, the post-apartheid order has already failed to deliver justice for people like him. Avoiding state-managed processes such as the TRC, Mikey seeks his own version of justice, first shooting dead his girlfriend's father Johan Viljoen– himself a veteran of the nationalist struggle – before similarly shooting his own biological father, Francoise Du Boise. His plan of escaping to the Alis' ancestral village in rural India represents a somewhat wishful return to innocence that his "bastard" or mongrel Colored identity has denied him in pre-and post-apartheid South Africa.

The final question to consider in light of this family disintegration is the relevance of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission process, the major avenue through which the majority of non-white South Africans – victims of apartheid state actions – approached the post apartheid state to seek audience. First, being a special commission outside the country's formal justice system, the TRC wields no power to summon anybody. By its very mandate, that is to hear testimonies of victims and confessions by perpetrators and grant amnesty where applicable, the process meant that some of apartheid South Africa's major human rights violations were left untouched. Francoise Du Boise, Lydia's tormentor, for example briefly approaches the TRC with a view to seek amnesty but later ditches the process.

Evidently, the question of Colored identity looms large for the Ali family; Lydia has nothing but contempt for the masculinist discourse that selectively appropriates female experience only to suppress their gendered voices – in her own words, she refused to be "contained" - , Silas is ill at ease with the Mandela-Mbeki transition, hoping but failing to get an ambassador's post in France than continue to be a civil servant while Mikey's frustration with unreconciled pasts takes a violent turn. In spite of the pervasive gospel of Rainbowism in the air, members of Silas Ali's family are constantly reminded of the enduring legacy of race, color and ethnicity in the new South Africa. By definition, the Rainbow ideology acknowledges the existence of multiple identities even if it claims to attach special rank to any of them.

Mikey, 'the seed of rape', a biracial child officially recognized as a Colored is ultimately consumed by the hatred that these contradictory legacies of apartheid produce; he can not begin to understand how Du Boise – or, for that matter, Vinu's father – can get away with crimes of rape even though they were committed before the transition to democracy. Mikey's shocked response to learning about his true conception forces him to confront the shame associated with miscegenation, an issue already implicit in Colored identity in South Africa. His pilgrimage to his uncle and later to the mosque also brings the painful issue to the surface. Imam Moulana Ismail explicitly tells Michael about the rape of Silas's father's sister Hajera in India by a British colonial lieutenant. The curse of inheriting unwanted genes and appearance of yesterday's enemy – the white Boer colonizer - is echoed in which Mikey's physical appearance; has long blond hair like Du Boise's. Mikey's discovery of the uninvited birthright haunts the family and is experienced as wholly traumatic by Mikey, Lydia, and Silas. Mikey's rejection of the short name 'Mikey' in preference of Michael seems to be an ineffectual attempt at self-renewal at best. If

anything, he becomes an ironical angel of death whose murderous actions do not in themselves shape events around him.

Mikey's violent murder of the two rapists also puts the TRC process into question. Quite simply, who confesses and who doesn't? The TRC, while presenting a hopeful face to those struggling for another South Africa, buries the extreme cruelty of some 500 odd years via a neat public performance of confession and testimony. By only electing probing 7,112 crimes against humanity committed between 1960 and 1994, the commission already excludes a huge number of cases. Lydia's extended suffering seems to suggest that the attempt to categorize and therefore contain traumas in this way borders on wishful thinking.

The TRC, formed on the concept of religious confession that would lead to absolution/amnesty for perpetrators does not take into account the fact that some women such as Lydia would rather maintain control of their narrative. In this sense, Lydia's quest for release should be understood as an attempt to reclaim female agency against the overwhelming constraints of political expediency. Her diary, an extremely private affair that she locks away, represents her own failed attempt to wield some control over how traumatic narratives such as hers are told in a new South Africa whose male leadership is often fascinated by grand statements than genuine healing.

Further, for Lydia, the TRC itself is insufficient or, at worst, undesirable as an avenue for healing because it has a specific framework through which testimonies and confessions are presented, often with a large live audience in attendance. Clearly designed to offer a kind of mass healing, the public setting is unsuitable for Lydia whose story is also one of shame and humiliation. Rape, by its very nature, constitutes a humiliating experience, making its public

narration potentially problematic more so in an African context where it is not unheard of for the community to shun the victim for her tragedy. While Lydia's rape by the apartheid policeman has a specific political context, there is no denying the fact that rape has remained the commonest crime in contemporary South Africa, often going unreported. While *The Persistence of Memory* shows the struggles of a economically privileged former victimizer to reconcile with his past, what Dangor presents here is a major question on the 'truth' of testimony and/or confession alone. Lydia's choice to keep her trauma a private matter puts the notion of mass therapy via testimony as envisaged and practiced by the TRC into question. Additionally, Lydia, a Colored individual, belongs to a community whose economic fortunes are barely improved by the ending of apartheid rule.

Clearly, Lydia dismisses the TRC's efficacy because she understands it as an instrument designed for the "containment of history."(p.140) Conscious of the marginalization of gender in postcolonial narratives of political trauma, Lydia observes, "Nothing in her life would have changed, nothing in any of their lives would change because of a public confession of pain suffered. Because nothing could be undone, you could not withdraw a rape, it was an irrevocable act, like murder."(p.140-1) Lydia's refusal to be "contained by history" (p.155) by testifying in a closed TRC session so as to "get on with life" (p.121) should therefore be read in the context of her rejection of both the masculinist biases and the religious, specifically Catholic basis of that process, namely that one can put a burden in their past by merely speaking about it before a sanctioned, higher authority. Her inevitable break with Silas, the new government's functionary whose brief is to "contain" the past is captured in Lydia's own words: "It was good to have a rule to live by, but how little his rule-if you make a law, then apply it, to the letter, there is no other way-had helped all those 'victims' who had told their stories before the Commission. The

brave victims and the wise Commissioners, the virtue of both defined as if by divine decree" (p.155-56). Lydia has a dim view of the notion that confession and contrition pave the way for forgiveness and reconciliation. The presumption that testimony facilitates healing, reconciliation, and moving on from the past – the assumed therapeutic value of testimony/confession – is therefore questioned.

Over and above the overriding theme of exploring the nature and legacy of wartime trauma on both victims and perpetrators, Bitter Sweet is significant in that it problematizes the Manichean representations of South Africa's recent history in terms of black and white. In an ironical acknowledgement of Rainbowism, Dangor presents Colored characters do have complex ancestries that cut across the country's racial and ethnic identities. The Colored identity itself is powerful in terms of its incorporation of various strands of South Africa, the region and the world at large; many of the Cape Coloreds, after all, trace their ancestry to Malaysian slave and indentured labor immigrants while some trace theirs to sexual unions between Dutch settlers and African communities. In this sense, their genetic codes embody the positive Rainbowism that Mandela's post-apartheid nation supposedly represents.

Beyond the inadequacies of the state-sanctioned healing noted above, the manner in which South Africa's historical trauma is handled as dramatized by the Ali family suggests broader challenges of seeking nation-building through state-brokered reconciliation. The process itself, as noted above, is quite rigid, requiring the victim to narrate the often shameful and painful details of abuse and violence against her person as a non-white while the perpetrator, often white and economically privileged even in the new South Africa, seeks protection from prosecution. There is, of course, the question: Who has the power and the ability to interpret trauma? How is trauma supposed to be translated to others? As Lydia bemoans, Archbishop Tutu "has never been

fucked up his arse against his will" (p.16) Put differently, Lydia's trauma must remain hidden, or once expressed, her narrative must be appropriated by her husband's hegemonic discourse of male dishonor or figured as a metaphor of male conquest. While both husband and wife suffer apartheid state terrorism, Silas understands his wife's violation as symptomatic of his own powerlessness, his own inability to protect her. The white policeman's rape of Lydia is, for Silas, less an attack on Lydia herself than it is of the state's total domination of him, an affront to his "manhood'(p. 117). The image of Silas, handcuffed and helplessly pounding at the police van while his wife is being raped in a nearby veld(p.115) does indeed tend to give this age-old impression as do reports of mass rape in contemporary conflict zones. Lost in the battle between the males from both camps is the perspective of the female victims themselves who, like Lydia, must carry the traumatic memory forever, perhaps unable to articulate it.

The true power of Bitter Fruit therefore lies in revealing the legacy of apartheid-era violence on Colored women, a major feat given the near total domination of the discourse by mostly black male figures. It also critiques the testimony/confession model as a path towards reconciliation in a country populated by such diverse communities. The TRC's own apparent inability to listen to Colored women victims' voices is complicit in the silencing of historical trauma.

To conclude this part of the discussion, *Bitter Fruit*'s refusal to offer an easy resolution to Silas's place in the new government, the lasting psychic effects of the rape on Lydia nor any straightforward answers to Mikey's quest for a place of racial and cultural belonging is significant. It acknowledges the huge challenges of post-conflict resolution, the fears and entrenched interests of the privileged classes and invites reflection on questions on the legacy of South Africa's nation-ness, its inevitably racialized bodies and identities they take and the

politics of those identities. The novel's deliberate focus on the so-called Colored identity of the Ali family invites us to theorize on the contested histories and vocabularies of *colouredness* and *hybridity* in the new South Africa. Should Mikey embrace or denounce his 'Colored" identity and all it implies? Silas, for instance, for whom the cultural incompatibility of his white Afrikaans mother and his Islamic father remains a source of unease, is plagued by feelings of illegitimacy and by stereotypical concerns about "not being white enough in the past, and not black enough now" (p.215)

Both Mikey and Vinu Viljoen, his girlfriend, are clearly unable to reconcile their mixed race identities and their place in the new South Africa. Both are disgusted by what they perceive as a corruption of their very blood: both have white Afrikaner fathers both of whom are also rapists. For Vinu, "Bastard people are beautiful, bastard names are not." She further laments, rather wishfully, "Why don't they marry their own kind? That way they won't have to discover, years after they have brought children into the world, that they are culturally incompatible, and the children won't have to suffer."(p.147) Clearly, the language of discussing mixed-race identities even the Rainbow Nation is in itself far from stable. There is, of course, the unsettling statistic that most Coloreds, Mikey and Vinu's people tended to align themselves with the political objectives of the white Afrikaners, the group with which they share a language, rather than black Africans. What Vinu voices is essentially this: Despite the Rainbow Nation's singular gospel of non-racialism, does the society itself escape the curse(or blessing) of racial embodiment and pigmentation upon which apartheid inequality was constructed? Vinu's yearning for a form of racial purity for the Coloreds is, of course, a contradiction in terms given the origins of this group as discussed earlier in this chapter.

Mikey is also beginning to question his political citizenship and his role in a society where, according to him, the "bright hopes and burning ideals" of the struggle made way for "an ordinariness" (p.168) that made South Africa like any other nation, pragmatic and bureaucratic, selling out its ideals and becoming like other liberal-democratic nations. Mikey's self-destructive path – his murder of Viljoen and Du Boise - seems to question the somewhat the premature celebration of public, made-for-television narratives of political reconciliation epitomized by the TRC and its singular emphasis on restorative justice.

Bitter Fruit questions what happens to human lives when a nation chooses reconciliation over justice. heterogeneity of experiences and responses to trauma – brings into focus the specific historical, social, cultural, and personal contexts of trauma. By examining the personal struggles of three non-white individuals – each affected by apartheid in a different way – Bitter Fruit is an important interpreter of the new South Africa, a young nation that essentially defines its being, its nation-ness, by making reference to a specific past whose traumas for specific racial and ethnic groups are documented in the memory of those affected by it.

Where *Bitter Fruit* focuses on exclusively on the struggles of a Colored family with memories of apartheid violence, *Forgiveness*(2004), Ian Gabriel a film featuring an all South African team, explores the legacy of apartheid from a dual perspective; that of a former apartheid police officer and that of his victim's family.

As Botha, 1992)[73] observes, despite the small number of South African films that enjoy commercial success, there is a long tradition of indigenous film making and consumption. Outside of the slapstick-humor films associated with Leon Schuster and Jamie Huys, and other white-made films for black audiences ('Bantu Films'), there is another tradition of less

commercially successful but more complex and ideologically-driven feature films which exploit the country's rich history to produce riveting films. A visual-aural medium, film is a powerful medium which engages the viewer and influences the way a country views itself and is viewed by the world.

Forgiveness is, like most post-apartheid films, pre-occupied with reminding South Africans of the all too real history of violent colonialism. Ideologically opposed to the Bantu films whose slapstick humor "entertained" black people throughout the ghettoes of southern Africa during colonial rule, *Forgiveness* is a thoughtful film that seeks to draw on the legacy of apartheid violence on the lives of ordinary, non-white citizens and their former oppressors.

After giving evidence and being granted amnesty for his involvement in human rights violations – specifically the killing of some anti-apartheid activists - before the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, Coetzee retires. The film itself opens with Coetzee driving into the town of Paternoster on the West Coast of South Africa, enquiring about the Grootboom family. Later, he engages a local priest as a go-between between himself and the Grootbooms, a Colored fishing family whose eldest son, Daniel, was killed during the struggle to end apartheid. The father (Hendrik) is a fisherman, barely able to support his wife (Magda), eldest daughter (Sannie) and youngest son (Ernest). Much as they can't stand the memory of Daniel's violent death at the hands of the police, the family does show an interest in knowing how he died.

Magda, Hendrik Grootbroom's wife, brings the questions of narrating the traumas of apartheid's victims into focus. She has, after all, lost her oldest son, an engineer-in-training in a country where such opportunities are extremely rare for people of his race, color and social class. Not surprisingly, she is closely associated with tears throughout the film; crying when Coetzee

reminds her of the loss of her son all over again and crying when Ernest bashes Coetzee's head with a heavy teapot, crying over her daughter's brief flirtation with Coetzee, crying because she has always wanted to have a headstone on her son's grave and finally, crying because at the murder of Coetzee by Llewellyn and his friends. Although Coetzee does provide her son's headstone, Magda represents what the "political miracle" – the negotiated political transition from apartheid to democracy – can not mask. Her mourning bring to the fore the very issues that restorative justice can not fully address: emotional damage, broken community/family, damaged physical health, lives lost, no concrete guarantee against future injustice and more significantly, lost potential earnings. It is, after all, the lost potential earnings from Daniel that make Magda yearn for such small things as a headstone. While Magda needs the catharsis that sincere reconciliation potentially brings, what she needs most is deliverance from her grim material condition.

Ernest, the young man who has joined his father in the family fishing business, illustrates another dimension of how the memory of apartheid-era violence is experienced at the personal level. Not only is Ernest traumatized by the shocking details of his brother's gruesome death; he is also acutely aware of the economic impact that the loss of Daniel has had on the Grootbroom family. His reaction to Coetzee's peace overtures reveals his frustration with the unreformed class/racial structure in post-apartheid South Africa. While Coetzee, his brother's murderer, is interested in securing the forgiveness of the Grootbroom family - a crime he has not acknowledged before the Truth and Reconciliation Commission – Ernest asks Coetzee if he has a million rands to give to the family; Daniel was, after all, an Engineering student when Coetzee killed him.

While the Grootbroom family continues to scrap by on the harsh dark shores of Poternorster as simple fisherpeople, Coetzee, the retired civil servant, continues to enjoy a privileged lifestyle. His violent reaction to Coetzee speaks to a transition to democracy whose symbolic gestures generally leave apartheid's socio-economic hierarchies untouched and, more importantly, reveals the limits of reconciliation in the new South Africa. In Ernest's towering rage, one reads the frustrations of people like him - millions of non-white South Africans, the victims of three centuries of oppression, historical trauma and misery. When Coetzee visits the Grootbroom family and finally talks about the details of Daniel, Ernest loses it completely and bashes Coetzee with a teapot.

While people like Ernest embrace the gospel of Rainbowism, they also find that the "political miracle" of 1994 has not transformed their material condition. It is because of this realization that he demands about one million rands from Coetzee in lost potential earnings to the family. By asking Coetzee to literally convert his confession to the family into bankable cash, Ernest is giving vent to a reconciliation process that maintains pre-democracy structures. The government's inability to bridge the socio-economic inequality – which follows the familiar racial fault line – is in fact what Archbishop Tutu bemoans in an interview years after waxing lyrical about the new South Africa as "the Rainbow People of God." In the cautionary statement which Archbishop Tutu made well after the euphoria of democracy had waned, he addresses concerns similar to Ernest's: "But you can kiss reconciliation and forgiveness goodbye, unless the gap between the rich and the poor — the haves and the have-nots — is narrowed, and narrowed quickly and dramatically."

Sannie, the late Daniel's sister offers us a glimpse into the unresolved emotional trauma of apartheid violence on Colored families. Sannie was, after all, a cheerful young lady in love

suddenly pulls out of the marriage proposal when the news of her brother's death reached her. Like her mother, Sannie's character is as much defined by her emotional response to the overwhelming sense of loss of Daniel as by her growing ambivalence towards Coetzee. By withdrawing from a marriage proposal at the news of her brother's death, it becomes evident that Sannie can not transcend the tragic event; she can not indulge in the simple joys of life until she can learn about what happened to her brother. Sannie speaks for both herself and the family when she asks tearfully Coetzee, "Can you tell us truthfully how Daniel actually died?" While the priest who acts as a mediator assumes this private confession could be a pathway to reconciliation, the details of how Daniel was abducted on the way from university, driven to a farm outside Cape Town, tortured, half-drowned and eventually killed are too much for the both Sanee and the family. The cold details of the abduction and murder occupy an ambivalent position in the Grootbroom family. On the one hand, this is the one event that has reduced everybody to a kind of stoic silence, an event that requires to be explored and understood before it can be transcended. On the other, the specific details of savage torture – beating, burning, electrocution, drowning and eventual murder – are too graphic for the Grootbroom family, in particular the women. Given the cruel circumstances of Daniel's death, Sanee feels she is justified to call Daniel's former comrades to take revenge.

While Sannie's anger is understandable, her reaction to Coetzee's unwavering commitment to reconciliation moves her to begin to admire him. Where she has harbored pain before, Sanee seems to see a window of opportunity and it is in this spirit that she unsuccessfully tries to call Llewellyn to ask him not to go ahead with the planned revenge killing of Coetzee. Coetzee himself, now divorced, seems to desire a deeper connection with the Grootbroom; he gradually warms up to Sanee and takes a walk on the beach with her, holding her hand at some

point. Coetzee also fulfills Magda's wish for a headstone from Vredenburg for Daniel's grave. The last major scene before Coetzee and the Grootbrooms leave for the gravesite also deserve particular attention; Coetzee invites the Grootbrooms to come and dine with him at a local hotel at his expense. Although apartheid is now over, it is not lost on the guests that hotel formerly entertained only white patrons, in fact, the Colored catering staff at the hotel laugh at seeing the first ever non-white guests because the hotel still serves only white clients, this time through force of tradition.

The film's ambivalence extends to its portrayal of Coetzee. While his conduct during the apartheid era is now a matter of public record, thanks to his confession before the TRC, he is also a man who has concealed his murder of Daniel from the Commission. His willingness to buy the headstone for Daniel and his desire to connect with Sanee tend to suggest that he has begun to appreciate the errors of his ways. Indeed, after the lunch at the hotel, Coetzee walks Sanee in the crisp night air, their arms touching and Sanee herself behaves as if she is ready to forgive him any minute. Indeed, she only runs away to try and call Llewellyn, hoping to cancel the revenge mission. When is dawns on her that Llewellyn and his comrades are still coming to kill Coetzee, Sanee does run back to his lodgings, tells him about the planned revenge, kisses him and begs him to run away. This confession on Sanee's part, odd as it is, seems to redraw the nature of their relationship: Coetzee has confessed to murdering Sanee's brother and now Sanee has confessed to tipping off Llewellyn about Coetzee's presence in Paternoster. Coetzee himself refuses to leave until the headstone has been delivered.

The shooting of Coetzee by Llewellyn and his two fellow former activists brings us full circle. Coetzee has, after all, appeared before and confessed some of his apartheid-era crimes there, gone to the Grootbrooms to do the same, bought his victim's headstone and is now shot to

death by the three angry men. On the face of it, it would appear his murder is unjustified since Hendrik Grootbroom and his family have accepted Coetzee's gesture of contrition. The priest's gravesite prayer about forgiveness, made while Llewellyn and his comrades have arrived and waiting in plain sight seems to ask us to pause and wonder if revenge is the best way forward. Indeed, upon noticing the revenge-seekers, Sannie doesn't want to leave the gravesite but Coetzee tells her everything is as it should be. Not surprisingly, she leaves in tears, leaving Llewellyn and his friends to each fire a bullet into Coetzee. The epitaph on the headstone reads: 'He died that we may be free' is, in this sense, open to interpretation. For the Grootbrooms, particularly Magda who has requested for these exact words, the words memorialize her son's unselfish contributions to the struggle for independence. For Coetzee, the message seems to be that he deserves to die so that the Grootbrooms can find closure. His refusal to escape and the symbolic last meal at the hotel seems to suggest that for all his well-meaning gestures, Coetzee does not belong in post-apartheid South Africa.

If we accept Frederic Jameson's claim that all third world texts are allegorical, registering a strong political and social presence and that the film medium is a powerful tool for instigating national dialogue then we must accept that *Forgiveness* attempts to start a dialogue around the limits of reconciliation and restorative justice in South Africa. It shows us what beautiful speeches about the Rainbow Nation can not begin to articulate, namely the unspoken traumas of apartheid violence for those who experienced it or whose lives are shaped by it.

Forgiveness asks us to pause and ask about the basis of nation and nationhood given the histories of state terrorism, racial exclusion and the generational poverty that exists awkwardly alongside the beautiful ideals of Rainbowism and hybridity. By dramatizing a failed, private reconciliation, the film exposes what the state-sanctioned, public and often televised TRC

process obscures. Although Forgiveness is about the private struggles of a Colored family, its treatment of confession/testimony and forgiveness echo the publicly-staged TRC hearings which were conducted immediately after the transition in 1994. The basis of that process, as suggested above, is the Catholic practice of confession followed by repentance and absolution. Another dimension also brief consideration: the concept of Ubuntu as articulated by the TRC chairperson, Archbishop Tutu. Explaining away the "political miracle" of 1994, Archbishop Tutu[74] says:

> Ubuntu is a concept that we have in our Bantu languages at home. Ubuntu is the essence of being a person. It means that we are people through other people. We can't be fully human alone. We are made for interdependence, we are made for family. Indeed, my humanity is caught up in your humanity, and when your humanity is enhanced mine is enhanced as well. Likewise, when you are dehumanized, inexorably, I am dehumanized as well. As an individual, when you have Ubuntu, you embrace others. You are generous, compassionate.

Without a doubt, Archbishop successfully sold the policy of reconciliation partly because he reminded – or convinced – the non-white people of South Africa that harmony, forgiveness and compassion were at the Ubuntu, a concept familiar to all southern Africans. As Archbishop suggests above, the victim is also implored to find emotional release by remembering to be compassionate towards the perpetrator. Citing Kay Pranis's assessment of how restorative justice works to empower, justice scholar Braithwaite(2002:564) notes that one way of assessing an individual's power is to see how many people listen to him, giving the two contrasting examples

of a prime minister giving a speech at a podium and a pauper muttering at a street corner. Archbishop Tutu's gospel of restorative justice, complete with it quasi-religious references and Ubuntu, finds audience not just with the victims of apartheid who seek catharsis but especially with the perpetrators and their former supporters who are both surprised and excited by the forgiveness. Braithwaite observes, "…part of the genius of restorative justice is that many of its ideals are invulnerable to state power." The transition to multi-party democracy is indeed marketed as only possible in a climate where it's theoretically feasible for former enemies to embrace in the greater of societal harmony which, of course, is what the new South African state requires.

Asked by the interviewer, who himself grew up in apartheid South Africa, as to the "lack of resentment, bitterness and the ability to forgive by the people who suffered so much under that brutal regime", Tutu[75] responds,

> There's a deep yearning in African society for communal peace and harmony. It's for us the summum bonum, the greatest good. For in it, we find the sustenance that enables us to be truly human, to have Ubuntu. Anything that erodes this central good is inimical to all, and nothing is more destructive than *resentment and anger and revenge*. In a way, therefore, to forgive is the best form of self-interest, because I'm also releasing myself from the bonds that hold me captive, and it's important that I do all I can to restore relationship. Because without relationship, I am nothing, I will shrivel. Reconciliation and forgiveness have deep roots in African political *thought and spirituality*. Anger, resentment and retribution are corrosive of this great good, the harmony that has got to exist between people. It's reflected in the concept of Ubuntu. … Ultimately you discover, as Mandela did, that without forgiveness, there is no future. Forgiveness is not nebulous,

> impractical and idealistic. It's thoroughly realistic. It's real political in the long run. And that's why our people have been committed to the reconciliation where we use restorative rather than retributive justice.(ibid, emphasis mine)

While the seductiveness of Archbishop Tutu's words – with their emphasis on an assumed common future which supposedly requires the victims' willingness to forgive - is not in doubt, the question that the Grootbroom family, in particular Ernest and Sannie whose lives are still ahead, is, will the confessions, including those conducted privately, repair emotional damage, restore their community/family, restore damaged human relationships, restore health restore property lost, prevent future injustice and perhaps foster a new sense of citizenship?

For Sanee, the beautiful young lady whose whole life fell apart when she heard about her brother's death, and Ernest, a poor fisherman who can not but imagine measure his brother's murder in terms of lost family income, the specter of justice deficit(Gibson 2002:540) is all too real. The challenge, for both the Grootbrooms and their society at large is to live with the unresolved traumas in a new South Africa where "…the ANC traded amnesty for peace; the leaders of the apartheid government accepted freedom from prosecution for human rights abuses"(Gibson: 2002: 540) The beautiful words of Archbishop Tutu, those of the priest who acts as a mediator and even the murder of Coetzee do not, after all, *restore* Daniel Grootbroom back to life. Restorative justice is, according to Tutu:

> …a system of justice that focuses on repairing and building the relationship among perpetrators, victims and society. It draws upon traditional forms of justice practiced for centuries in Africa. We seek to do justice to the suffering without perpetuating the hatred aroused. It's a kind of justice that says, "We're looking to the healing of relationships,

> we're seeking to open wounds, yes, but to open them so that we can cleanse them and prevent them from festering; we cleanse them and then pour oil on them, and then we can move into the glorious future that God is opening up for us." To pursue the path of healing for our nation, we need to remember what we've endured. But we must not simply pass on the violence of that experience through the pursuit of punishment.

No matter how integral restorative justice is to southern Africa, it clearly is not suited to heal the gulf between impoverished victims and relatives privileged perpetrators. What incenses Ernest in particular is that Coetzee's confession does not improve his lot in a new South Africa whose wealth and access to wealth is still largely defined by race and class. The film thus challenges South Africa, the most unequal society on earth, to think about another kind of justice, perhaps distributive justice which avails material compensation to victims of apartheid state terrorism.

In the end, what the collective and personal traumas resulting from wartime violence do is insert a missing narrative in South African discourses.

Conclusion

This research has discussed the film, fictional and semi-autobiographical representations of violence associated with the nationalist struggles in South Africa and Zimbabwe. Central to this discussion is the desire to reflect on the legacy of large-scale politically-motivated violence or war in the two young nations. It is no secret that both Zimbabwe and South Africa have struggled to reconcile with the legacies of such extreme violence. More than cold historical data, film, fiction and semi-autobiographical representations bring out the raw emotions of characters involved in various situations in these struggles.

Angus Shaw's novel, *Kandaya: Another Time, Another Place (1993)* and Alexandra Fuller's memoir *Let's Don't Go to the Dogs Tonight* (2001) represent the trend by "neo-Rhodesian" 'post-millennium' writers whose writing cling onto Rhodesian nostalgia even as they claims for space and belonging in post-war Zimbabwe. The narratives, I have argued, whether fictional or not, reproduce a colonially-rooted ambivalence towards notions of Africa, home and belonging.

By critically analyzing the two as examples of thriving literary tradition, I have shown that 'Rhodesian' texts which imaginatively map the origins and trace the nature and impacts of colonial violence within colonial Rhodesian society during the period of black resistance to colonial rule establish the on-going struggle over claims to space and political legitimacy in postcolonial Zimbabwe. Fuller's narrative is populated by "happy natives" whose supposed happiness apparently gives credence to Rhodesian settler claims. While Shaw's war novel does not resort to this stereotype, it also fails to treat the indigenous people's foundational grievances

which give rise to the brutal violence it describes in such graphic detail. Significantly, the Rhodesian families in both texts ultimately fail to establish an enduring spiritual connection with southern Africa. For both Rhodesian families, emigration becomes the alibi for a holistic engagement with on-going struggles over resources, their place in post-Rhodesian society and the negotiation of new relationships with Africans. Shaw's war hero eventually finds solace in Kenya where he works as a commercial pilot while Fuller's heroine goes 'home' to Great Britain, her parents' roots. As shown in the discussion of these texts, the African characters are not accorded much of a voice. The unfinished nature of the Rhodesian or white Zimbabwean story is a recurring theme in both narratives.

Edmund Chipamaunga's *A Fighter for Freedom,* Charles Samupindi's *Pawns,* and Alexander Kanengoni's *Echoing Silences* illustrate alternatives to the white Rhodesian war narrative. In addition to the foundational issue of how these black male writers contest white narratives, I also show the impact of war as an uneasy combination of extreme violence and heroism within the black society, how the war itself was experienced at the level of the individual who often volunteered to fight in the first place and how fiction mediates this history and brings it back to life in post-war Zimbabwe.

The analysis reveals the memory of war is complex; it is at once a painful, dangerous experience which results in the deaths of many as well as an opportunity for heroism for some. For male writers writing well after the event itself, the memory of war is also an opportunity to ignore, deny or selectively remember and celebrate the real and imaginary roles of certain historical figures, some of whom remain part of the postcolonial political elite. They are, after all, writing in a new, post-war nation in which officialdom formally recognizes and rewards heroism associated with the war. Not surprisingly, Edmund Chipamaunga's novel, *A Fighter for*

Freedom(1983) carries a celebratory tone and euphoric mood of the immediate post-war years. It looks back at the troubled 1970s and finds not defeated and misery but a people resolved to dismantle settler authority. Over and above its political intentions, the novel is a study in reclaiming black masculinity. A product of the very conditions that he writes against, Chipamaunga's creative energy seems to spring from a desire to subvert the ninety years of colonial domination, especially its claim to a superior Western civilization. Chipamaunga's hero proudly volunteers to march across the border into guerilla camps in Mozambique, returns to rout the enemy in spectacular battles and remains committed to the nationalist cause right into independence. Needless to say, Chipamaunga's hero witnesses no atrocity against the masses by the guerillas themselves, witnessed no rape of women fighters and finds no blemish on the records of the nationalist leaders.

Charles Samupindi's *Pawns(1993)* presents a different dimension to the construction of public memory of the liberation war in post-independence Zimbabwe. What stands out in Samupindi's novel is an obsession with the figure of Robert Mugabe, at the time just one of many senior nationalist leaders but by no means the most prominent, at least at the beginning. Incredibly, the figure of Mugabe enters the narrative and interacts with fictional characters, creating a delicate balance between Mugabe the historical figure and Mugabe the character. *Pawns* spans the two vital periods in post-independence Zimbabwe; the euphoria of independence that Chipamaunga's celebrates and the unrelieved bitterness characteristic of the fiction associated with the deterioration of the nation's economy towards the end of the last century. Drawing on oral history, wartime legend and mythologies generated by political victors, Samupindi's narrative identifies incidents of mass killings during the war as appropriate sites of

social memory at par with visible manifestations of memory such as museums and other monuments preserved elsewhere across Africa.

The memory of war itself is not free from manipulation in Samupindi's narrative. By choosing to trace one character's close relationship with Robert Mugabe - the single biggest beneficiary of the war - Samupindi essentially erases the memory of those who lost out in the faction fights for power. The dissident element in the narrative is vital; Samupindi concedes that war volunteers and recruits lose their individuality once they land at guerilla-training camps. Reduced to pawns is wider power games way beyond their control, the cadres in Samupindi'd novel show their ambivalence towards a long, violent struggle by sometimes trying to desert. Unlike Chipamaunga, Samupindi also reveals the widespread abuse of female recruits by guerilla commanders in violation of the struggle's principles as if to point out the roots of the disconnect between the political elites and the masses.

Alexander Kanengoni *Echoing Silences*(1997) brings a totally radical dimension to the Zimbabwean war experience. Unlike many writers of who have written about the war experience in English, Kanengoni himself an ex-combatant, brings the often gut-wrenching nature of daily struggle in the bush. I therefore approached as a fictionalized first-hand account of a disenchanted former combatant. Contrary to Chipamaunga and Samupindi's narratives, Kanengoni finds nothing heroic about war in general, including the liberation war in colonial Zimbabwe, at least at the personal level. Instead of remembering moments of heroism, what sticks to the protagonist's mind after the war itself is the senseless violence associated with life as a refugee in Mozambique and afterwards, as a disillusioned fighter at the front. Munashe's war experience reads like a tragic rite of passage. While he is lucky to survive the war itself, his traumatic post-war experience suggests that the war has seriously damaged him. In my analysis

of the three novels, I find that widely divergent positions. Second Chimurenga are far from uniform. Rather, they betray class interests, patterns of political patronage during and after independence, exclude or marginalize the contributions of women and above all, are themselves implicated in the on-going construction and selective erasure of collective memory. The following chapter examines the contributions of black women writers to the same historical experience.

Choosing to ignore the wider Chimurenga struggle going on, Vera instead isolates the personal story of Mazvita. Very rarely do we learn Mazvita's convictions in relation to the larger struggle around her. It is as if her personal tragedy has overwhelmed her. Rather than perceive the soldier as a coercive instrument of the larger colonial hegemony, Mazvita connects the land itself with this act of violence. Ingrid Sinclair's film, *Flame*, interrogates the Second Chimurenga and the aftermaths as definite "lieux de memorie" and the amnesia associated with these critical periods. Though Sinclair herself is neither survivor-victim nor heroine of the liberation struggle, I use her celebrated film to demonstrate the complexity of representing public memory associated with the liberation struggle, itself born of the need to retell the story of the traumatic experience, to make it real to the victim, the community and to the larger public while appreciating the honor and heroism of the struggle. I seek to show ways in which we can begin to analyze identity and subjectivity (i.e., gender/race or ethnicity/class/nationality) in connection with trauma of the Zimbabwean liberation struggle. In the final analysis, *Flame* challenges traditional constructions of voice, character and representation in light of liberation struggles immersed in traumatic experiences. It's message estimates the elevation of critical consciousness that Teshome Gabriel speaks of in the Third Stage of Third World Cinema

John Maxwell Coetzee's *Waiting for the Barbarians* and Tony Eprile's *The Persistence of Memory* attempt to articulate the universally depressing memories of the South African war during apartheid repression. While *Waiting for the Barbarians* was published at the height of post-Soweto Uprising repression in 1980, Eprile's novel is written and published in post-apartheid South Africa. As I demonstrate, post-apartheid South Africa, despite its world-acclaimed reconciliation initiatives, possesses a fragmented collective memory that is deeply scarred by violent history and is still grappling with the legacies of centuries of divisive inter-racial oppression, marginalization of large communities and deliberate, state-enforced inequality.

The choice of the two texts is deliberate: *Waiting for the Barbarians* is a canonical text, its story an allegorical narrative that refuses to name its setting while *The Persistence of Memory* is a more recent text which is firmly grounded in apartheid South Africa's war violence and official, top-down attempts at post-apartheid nation-building, mainly in the form of public performance of memorialization and reconciliation. I show how the two texts use South Africa's violent history to weave dissident narratives that disrupt apartheid's order of truth and myths.

Waiting for the Barbarians shows that the processes of remembering or forgetting violent memory have complex implications for post-apartheid South African society burdened by the trauma of that history. The post-apartheid state enters the narrative as it anxiously seeks to sell the dream of a non-racial society to a non-white population that has known little more than deeply racialized politics for centuries. The eventual compromise is not particularly interested in opening old wounds, as it were, but in controlling the tone of public narratives of reconciliation in order to attain both legitimacy and stability. The broader question of who has the authority to represent histories of trauma looms large, not least because Coetzee, a globally acclaimed writer

whose novels and critical works are clearly skeptical of apartheid, inherited – by default – the benefits of apartheid policies.

This question extends to Coetzee's representation of the oppressed communities in *Waiting for the Barbarians*. Coetzee himself argues that it is impossible to recapture the collective memory of trauma emanating from apartheid South Africa's violent treatment of non-white people precisely because any attempt to recapture that memory would amount to a distortion. In the place of efforts to recapture that memory, he has suggested an acknowledgement of South Africa's history of "forgetting people" as a kind of tribute to all those whose stories have been forgotten or excluded from that collective memory. Despite Coetzee's proposition, the literary terrain in post-apartheid South Africa has actually shown writers' obsession with excavating and re-examining the past, perhaps as a way of reconciling with that recent history.

Coetzee attempts to account for the unspeakable violence immediately following the 1976 Soweto Uprising from the point of view of government functionaries such as the Magistrate and Colonel Joll, an army officer, who are themselves implicated in the broader, structural repression of indigenous people who are essentially demonized as 'barbarians'.. The silences surrounding the lived experiences of the oppressed, the so-called barbarians and fisher folk, mirror the repressed memories of the violent marginalization of non-white South Africans in this period. The inability by South Africans to completely transcend certain legacies of apartheid divisions lies squarely at a lack of closure which is exacerbated by the disempowering politeness typified by the state-sanctioned Truth and Reconciliation Commission under the aegis of the new post-colonial state. Far from transforming violent memory into narrative memory, the novel's conclusion suggests that any attempt at reconciling with those memories via any kind of

narration amounts to distortion, at least for white South Africans who were emotionally invested in the apartheid regime.

Tony Eprile's *The Persistence of Memory*(2004) presents the theme of writing and memory in an entirely different light; the struggle of a former apartheid soldier against forgetting. Eprile's protagonist who ironically fought apartheid's losing struggle, struggles to come to terms with the organized amnesia of post-apartheid South Africa, thanks to apartheid murderers who literally rewrite history by submitting distorted testimonies to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. The hero of Tony Eprile's novel has no choice but to contest the dishonest former apartheid operatives who take advantage of well-intentioned mythologies and metaphors of nation-building to grossly misrepresent their roles during settler colonial rule.

The novel suggests that white South Africans – English speaking ones included – remember their past largely in terms of opposition to the aspirations of displaced and oppressed indigenous Africans. The protective circle of ox-wagons or laager from which the Boers and Voortrekkers shot African warriors – the *laager* - becomes the organizing principle denoting a fiercely regimented apartheid, the racial myth through which the "separateness" of the groups was maintained until its collapse towards the end of the 20th century. The novel suggests that the racial garrisons that apartheid so elaborately legislated and the ideology behind them are very much part of South Africa's collective memory.

The Persistence of Memory also shows that apartheid's violence is partly sustained by racial segregation based on false moral purity which is ritually legislated by the state. The hypocritical, largely unidirectional policing, or more specifically, banning, of cross-racial sexual activity is a popular battlefront where the apartheid state wages this war to maintain white purity.

The novel's hero, by starting a romantic relationship with an African woman, seems to revel in defying this aspect of apartheid, albeit after the segregationist policy itself has been scrapped.

While the novel glosses over the actual proclamation of non-racial democracy for which post-apartheid South Africa has become synonymous, Paul, the former soldier and defender of apartheid takes a trauma management class with a group of other former soldiers. The dominant emotions are emptiness and bottomless rage. Though now afflicted with post traumatic stress disorder, Paul is not a typical post-war mental case who has trouble remembering anything, except for flashbacks but is in fact tormented by gruesome memories of extreme violence in which he participated. His confusion regarding his relationship to post-apartheid South Africa is also palpable when he briefly considers assuming an African name.

The challenge that comes with Truth and Reconciliation Commission-led restorative justice or what one of the characters cynically calls the "revelation of horrors as healing" is quite stark: in the immediate post-war years, a disproportionate number of white apartheid operatives are willing to divulge the full extent of their activities; they are grossly outnumbered by their black assistants whose apartheid crimes are already well-known in the townships where they live and have no option but to seek the TRC's amnesty. The problem, suggests the novel, is not with the painful details that the black assistants gave to apply for their own amnesty but the uncharted territory of full accountability and possible forgiveness between the white community, apartheid's creators and ultimate beneficiaries, and non-white South Africans – including other Africans in the southern African region, apartheid's victims.

The envisaged conversion of (hot) emotional memory to (cold) narrative is barely achieved given the enforced or willful amnesia within the resentful and/or fearful white

community and especially amongst former security personnel. If anything, the amnesty-seeking testimonies by apartheid-era black policemen and soldiers becomes something of a perverse and grotesque performance as white apartheid officials give the process a wide berth. In the novel, post-apartheid South Africa is indeed a place of repressed memory for many white South Africans, especially those who had taken active roles in maintaining and defending apartheid.

In the final chapter, I use one fiction and one film text to examine the lingering and often far-reaching legacy of political violence within the Colored community in South Africa. Achmat Dangor's *Bitter Fruit(2005)* and Ian Gabriel's *Forgiveness(2004)* suggest ways in which colonial-era violence impact on the present. In both texts, the newly-independent nation of South Africa is presented as struggling to transcend the memory of a brutal colonialism; the individuals and families affected by that violence find it impossible to move beyond certain defining moments from the recent past. For this purpose, I explore the legacy of political violence at the level of the individual, the family and society as depicted in the two texts.

Dangor, who describes his goal as "…writing about societies that find it difficult to delve beneath the skins of their lives, of their national lives…" shows the unforeseen repercussions of violent political violence and memory, that is the individual and society's struggle with historical memory. At the center of the Colored family crisis is the memory of rape by an apartheid-era policeman. Although the tragic event itself happened nearly twenty years previously, neither husband nor wife has transcended its memory. A chance meeting between the rapist and the victim's husband at a mall precipitates the novel's drama that eventually sees the total collapse of the family.

While Mandela's new South Africa encourages dialogue about the past, some members of the society such as the rape victim observe that it is only interested only in a certain kind of dialogue – the quasi-religious confessional model that urges (but does not require) the perpetrator to come forward, on his own free will in recognition of his sins, to narrate his misdeeds. If the perpetrator does, in fact, come forward, so this slightly altered Catholic model holds, the victim should similarly find it in her heart to forgive and forget. In the popular imagination that the Truth and Reconciliation Commission hearings spawned, South Africans, specifically non-white South Africans are likened to wounded bodies. In this sense, willful confession or truth-telling is presented as the logical step towards not just healing apartheid's wounds but eventual reconciliation. As suggested earlier, reconciliation itself was the bedrock upon which the post-apartheid South African nation was built. Implicit in this political compromise is the fact that both sides in the conflict are keen to see the perpetuation of South Africa with a minimum of disruption. Part of the bitterness of the "miracle" that is post-apartheid South Africa, the novel suggests, is the burdens that victims of apartheid violence must bear, often unacknowledged. Such discoveries also impact harshly on members of the victims' family; the victim's son turns from being an idealist to harboring an intense dislike for what he perceives as a flawed transition as he reflects on the failings of his parents' generation. For him, the post-apartheid order has already failed to deliver justice for people like him. I also consider what this family disintegration means in light of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's stated objectives.

The basic question of Colored identity also looms large for the Ali family; Lydia has nothing but contempt for the masculinist discourse that selectively appropriates female experience for its own purposes while suppressing specific gender concerns – in her own words,

Lydia refuses to be "contained". Her husband is also ill at ease with the Mandela-Mbeki transition, wishing for a diplomatic position than continue to be a civil servant. Their son's frustration with unreconciled pasts also takes a violent turn. In spite of the pervasive gospel of Rainbowism in the air, he is constantly reminded of the enduring legacy of race, color and ethnicity in the new South Africa. He is, after all, a product of his mother's rape by an apartheid agent. He can not find a space for himself in the new South Africa who TRC hearings reveal as much as they conceal. The ascendancy of a new crop of black elites clearly shows that the Rainbow ideology acknowledges the existence of South Africa's recent history. As with apartheid policy, the identity and position of *coloredness* remains somewhat vague.

Where *Bitter Fruit* focuses on exclusively on the struggles of a Colored family with memories of apartheid violence, *Forgiveness*(2004), Ian Gabriel a film featuring an all South African team, explores the legacy of apartheid from a dual perspective; that of a former apartheid police officer and that of his victim's family. *Forgiveness* is, like most post-apartheid films, pre-occupied with reminding South Africans of the all too real history of violent colonialism. Ideologically opposed to the so-called Bantu films whose slapstick humor "entertained" black people throughout the ghettoes of southern Africa during colonial rule, *Forgiveness* is a thoughtful film that draws on the legacy of apartheid violence on the lives of ordinary, Colored citizens and their former oppressors.

While the Grootbroom family continues to scrap by on the harsh dark shores of Poternorster as simple fisherpeople, Coetzee, the retired state security operative, continues to enjoy a privileged lifestyle. Ernest, brother to Coetzee's late victim is totally incensed by the harsh reality that the democratic transition to a non-racial democracy has barely begun to touch on material relations between the races. His violent reaction to Coetzee's sudden appearance in

Poternoster speaks to a transition to democracy whose symbolic gestures generally leave apartheid's socio-economic hierarchies untouched and, more importantly, reveals the limits of reconciliation in the new South Africa. In Ernest's towering rage, one reads the frustrations of people like him - millions of non-white South Africans - victims of three centuries of oppression, historical traumas and widespread misery. When Coetzee visits the Grootbroom family and finally talks about the details of Daniel, Ernest shows his utter frustration by physically attacking Coetzee.

While people like Ernest embrace the gospel of Rainbowism, they also find that the "political miracle" of 1994 has not transformed their material condition. If anything, the whites have been joined a tiny black and Colored elite to a life of privilege. The death of Daniel, a brilliant college student, at the hands of Coetzee snuffed out the family's chances of ever making it into a life of comfort. This is the absence of structural change that infuriates Ernest. It is because of this realization that he demands one million rands from Coetzee in lost potential earnings to the family. By asking Coetzee to literally convert his confession to the family into bankable cash, Ernest is giving vent to deeper frustrations over a reconciliation process that maintains a disturbing resemblance to pre-democracy society, especially in terms of wealth distribution. The government's inability to bridge the socio-economic inequality gap – which follows the familiar racial and class faultline – is in fact what Archbishop Tutu bemoans years after chairing the TRC and praising the new South Africa as the Rainbow People of God.

All in all, I have demonstrated the deeply-felt, often conflicting passions associated with the wars for independence in Zimbabwe and South Africa. The novels, fictionalized autobiographies and films chosen here all dramatize the nightmare of large-scale violence spawned by these wars. While the material and political imperatives behind the wars are fairly

well documented, what traditional scholarship has tended to ignore is the impact of these struggles on the fictional and cinematic imagination in these two young nations. This critical analysis of the chosen texts revealed no single way of remembering the period in question; rather there is a range of emotion depending on one's status at the time. White Rhodesian and apartheid South African texts betray deep commitment to minority ideologies and to regimes that legitimize violence against the marginalized indigenous groups. This explains why some of the fiction actually celebrates the brutality of colonial regimes in suppressing the nationalist and pro-democracy movements. In the case of Zimbabwe, large white émigré communities have also enjoyed a literary revival of sorts by providing the market for historical war fiction that celebrates their defense of project Rhodesia. The failures of the post-independence to redistribute wealth in a more equitable manner has also given white émigré writers to celebrate the 'success' of Rhodesia, including the brutal suppression of nationalist movements.

Black writers, on the other hand, have written war fictions that largely bemoan the outbreak of the war itself. Black war recruits' stories are presented as tragedies marked by extreme material deprivation, grave personal danger, unnecessary of life and often, the pursuit of a somewhat exilic dream, especially by the less educated characters. Still, some black and Colored writers celebrate the heroism of those Africans who committed themselves to the war effort. In the case of Zimbabwe, my analysis has shown that there is tendency by male writers to imagine the war as male domain, perhaps a reflection of the post-independence political power structure itself.

Female writers began to add their voices to the body of war fiction in towards the end of the last century, laying claim to the reality of black women participation. The tragic heroism of such women is acknowledged and celebrated in both film and film. Similarly, film and fiction by

the so-called Colored writers and filmmakers revealed the same fascination with their place in South Africa's collective memory. Both texts show the suffering of Colored families in intimate detail. The memory of such suffering and loss is sits oddly alongside the largely unchanged material structures in post apartheid South Africa. Viewed in this light, the sacrifices of these people appear to be in vain.

While Zimbabwean texts do not address the issue directly, the South African texts are clearly fascinated with the reconciliation between the various races, classes and ethnic groups that apartheid deliberately set against each other. What Zimbabwean texts reveal is a complex, unresolved postcolonial identity based on armed resistance to Rhodesian settler rule. The female-authored texts are especially invested in balancing the narrative by showing the gender dynamics of Chimurenga.

By examining the printed word and moving images on both sides of the Limpopo river, this study has attempted something different in southern African scholarship. While there are major differences between the two nations' histories, I have shown that the film and fiction of both nations are grounded in violent armed struggles of the recent past.

Going forward, I would be interested in fictions and films that discuss the memory of violence by relegating the racial category altogether and emphasizing the class dimension. Governments in both Zimbabwe and South Africa tend to use as a race as shorthand for unequal economic access even though

The scope of my research did not allow me to fully explore the implications of not conducting a formal reconciliation process in the aftermath of war in Zimbabwe. The political

tensions of the past few years in Zimbabwe did not allow for a proper study of this dimension of research. It would be fascinating to discuss film and fiction that speculate on what it means to try and contextualize unresolved tensions two decades or more after the formal cessation of war. Cathy Buckle, Ben Freethe and others have written both fiction and made films that discuss what it means to live in southern Africa as members of the formerly privileged elite.

Going forward, I would be interested in fictions and films that discuss the memory of violence by relegating the racial category altogether and emphasizing the class dimension. Post-independence governments in both Zimbabwe and South Africa tend to use as a race as shorthand for unequal economic access even though there is clear evidence of new black economic elites. In both Zimbabwe and South Africa, the vast majority of black people have remained poor despite the attainment of independence or, in the case of South Africa, the attainment of democracy.

I would want to examine narratives that draw attention to poor people's responses to unrelenting poverty in fresh ways. In both Zimbabwe and South Africa, often contradictory notions of indigeneity and foreignness have been used to explain and/or justify economic exclusion and redefinitions of nationhood. Such redefinitions have, of course, challenged and destabilized the dominant principle of reconciliation as a nation-building platform discussed here. I am also interested in exploring narratives of violence and their memorialization in the so-called Colored (of Zimbabwe), Indian and Ndebele communities.

I am also fascinated by narratives of Africans who were recruited by colonial armies and perpetrated in the name of the colonial authority. The dearth of scholarship around this issue belies the stark reality that the repressive colonial state apparatus in both Rhodesia and South

Africa were dominated by indigenous Africans. Newly-released British colonial archives also offer a fresh window to examine the soul of the colonial state's repressive apparatus in southern Africa.

Endnotes

[1]As the compilers of this compendium acknowledge, the challenge has been to decide what to include in collections such as these. See, Winterbottom, Irina. "Towards a Bibliography of South African Literature in English." *English in Africa*. 3.1 (1976): 49-52. Web. 12 May 2011. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40238347>.

[2] With a few exceptions, the tendency in southern African universities is to study African literature as either continental or national cultural products. The richness of regional considerations is usually lost in the process.

[3] See Chennells, Anthony. "Imagining and Living the Exotic: A Context for Early Rhodesian Novels." *Journal of Literary Studies*. 19.2 (2003): 137-158. Web. 9 June 2011.

[4] The description appears in an American geographical journal, suggesting that the information is targeted at Americans interested in colonial African affairs. See, Tawse-Jollie, Ethel. "Southern Rhodesia: A White Man's Country in the Tropics." *Geographical Review*. 17.1 (1927): 89-106. Web. 22 May 2011. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/208135>.

[5] Werbner, Richard. "Beyond Oblivion: Confronting Memory Crisis." *Memory and the Postcolony. An African Anthropology and the Critiques of Power*. Ed. Richard. London: ZED, 1998. 1-17. Print.

[6] See, Kriger, Norma. "The Zimbabwean War of Liberation: Struggles within the Struggle." *Journal of Southern African Studies: Special Issue on Culture and Consciousness in Southern Africa*. 14.2 (1988): 304-32. Web. 28 May 2011. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2636634>.

[7] Moore argues for a more complex history of Chimurenga 2 than "patriotic historiography" has allowed by, for example, showing the violation of ZANU's war principles. See, Moore, David. "Democracy, Violence, and Identity in the Zimbabwean War of National Liberation: Reflections from the Realms of Dissent." *Journal of Southern African Studies*. 14.2 (1988): 304-322. Web. 29 April 2011. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.2307/486015>.

[8] Nora compares the impact of political struggles to other historical changes such as the sharp decline of peasant farming in the Western world. Such moments, Nora suggest, are sites of memory that ultimately shape society's self-perceptions. See, Pierre, Nora. "Between Memory and History: Les Lieux de Mémoire." *Representations: Special Issue: Memory and Counter-Memory*. 26. (Spring 1989): 7-24. Web. 26 Jan. 2011. <www.jstor.org/stable/2928520 >.

[9] Mengel, Ewald, First , et al. *Trauma, Memory and Narrative in South Africa: Matatu Number 38*. New York: Rodopi, 2010. 24. Print.

[10]At its most .basic level, the Rhodesian discourse is simply any narrative by or about white Rhodesian settlers and/or their descendants which is "aimed at gratifying the sentiments of a

colonially-minded readership…" Primorac, Ranka. "Rhodesians Never Die? The Zimbabwean Crisis and the Revival of the Rhodesian Discourse." *Zimbabwe's New Diasporas: Displacement and the Politics of Survival*. Ed. Ranka Primorac and Ed. JoAnn MacGregor. London: 2010. 202. Print.

[11] Cooper, Frederick. "Conflict and Connection: Rethinking Colonial African History." *American Historical Review*. 99.5 (1994): 1516. Web. 1 Sept. 2011. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2168387>.

[12] Spivak, Gayatri. "Subaltern Studies: Deconstructing Historiography." *Selected Subaltern Studies*. Ed. Gayatri Spivak and Ed. Runajit Guha. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1988. Print.

[13] Robert Muponde and Kizito Muchemwa's groundbreaking study of the strategies of a hegemonic masculinity is particularly useful to this aspect of my study. Muponde and Muchemwa examine the collusion of patriarchy and a violent masculinity whose 'legitimacy' lies in fighting Rhodesian colonialism to marginalize all other histories or indeed other narratives of Zimbabwe's birth. See Muchemwa, Kizito, and Robert Muponde. *Manning the Nation: Father Figures in Zimbabwean Literature and Society*. Harare: Weaver, 2007. Print.

[14] Five years after the war, the protagonist of *Echoing Silences* is described as wearing the clothes he wore during the war, has not married, wanders from place to place and still talks about his war experiences, something deeply resented by his younger brother. In fact the younger man says his brother mad. p. 57-8. In Shona culture, a man who fails to keep a job, marry and raise a family is called a *rombe*, a complete failure who brings shame to manhood.

[15] Joyce Nhongo-Simbanegavi, an historian, has done significant research on (black) women's participation in the struggle. By interviewing women who now occupy senior government and party positions such as Deputy President Joice Mujuru, Simbanegavi's study tends to echo a kind of top-down "patriotic historiography" model of interrogating Zimbabwe's dark past which mistakes specific political figures for historical currents. Joice Mujuru, for example, was already a highly-accomplished individual during the war, had powerful connections and was already married to ZANU's Defense Chief, Solomon Mujuru. See Nhongo-Simbanegavi, Joyce. *For Better or Worse? Women And ZANLA In Zimbabwe's Liberation Struggle*. Harare: Weaver, 2000. Print.

[16] Musila, Grace. "Embodying Experience and Agency in Yvonne Vera's Without a Name and Butterfly Burning." *Research in African Literatures*. 38.2 (Summer, 2007): 50. Web. 2 Oct. 2011. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4618373 >.

[17] Following black students' 1976 revolt mainly against an inferior "Bantu Education", the apartheid state's was brutal, forcing thousands of youth into exile, mainly in Botswana, Lesotho and Swaziland. These swelled the ranks of Umkhnto we Sizwe (MK) and the Pan Africanist Congress's APLA. Many who joined MK were sent into training camps in Angola and Mozambique. See, "Organisations invloved in Youth and the National Liberation Struggle 1894-1994." *South African History Online* n.pag. *Organisations invloved in Youth and the National*

Liberation Struggle 1894-1994. Web. 8 Nov. 2011. <http://www.sahistory.org.za/topic/organisations-invloved-youth-and-national-liberation-struggle-1894-1994>.

[18] Although most African nations have mixed-race minorities, South Africa is an exception in that it has a huge, visible mixed-race community. While some descended from inter-racial marriages between the Dutch settlers and African women, many more were shipped to South Africa from Dutch colonies such as Madagascar, parts of India, Ceylon (Sri Lanka) and the Dutch East Indies (Indonesia). For a brief history of the Cape Malay, see, "The Cape Malay." *Community histories of Cape Town*n.pag. *South African History Online* . Web. 2 July 2011. <http://www.sahistory.org.za/people-south-africa/cape-malay>.

[19] Chennells, Anthony. *Settler myths and the Rhodesian Novel*. (unpublished thesis). University of Zimbabwe, 1982. Print. See also "Rhodesian Discourse, Rhodesian Novels and the Zimbabwean War ." *Society in Zimbabwe's Liberation War*. Ed. Ngwabi Bhebhe and Ed. Terence Ranger. Harare: University of Zimbabwe, 1995. 102-129. Print.

[20] Terence Ranger argues that the post-independence government of Zimbabwe has enjoyed unbroken dominance(at least until the elections of 2000) because it suppressed conflicting histories of the Chimurenga while promoting its own partisan history through school syllabi, cultural performance via broadcast media and public commemorations of the history of Chimurenga. See Ranger, Terence. "Nationalist historiography, patriotic history and the history of the nation: the struggle over the past in Zimbabwe." *Journal of Southern African Studies*. 30.2 (2004): 215-234. Web. 5 Feb. 2011. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.2307/4133833>.

[21] Chennells, Anthony. "The White Rhodesian Novel." *New Statesman* [London] 1979, n. pag. Web. 12 May 2011.

[22] _____. "Imagining and living the exotic: A context for early Rhodesian novels." *Journal of Literary Studies*. 19.2 (2003): 137. Print.

[23] Bertelsen, Eve. "Doris Lessing's Rhodesia: History into Fiction." *English in Africa*. 11.1 (1984): 15-40. Web. 7 Feb. 2011. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40238528>.

[24] Williams, Paul. "White Rhodesia was not Africa it was England in the Tropics." *Mazwi: A Zimbabwean Literary journal*. Interview by Tinashe Mushakavanhu. 11 Nov. 2011. Web. <http://www.mazwi.net/interviews/interview-white-rhodesia-was-not-africa-it-was-england-in-the-tropics>.

[25] Black and white literary traditions are routinely studied as separate phenomena in Zimbabwe's colleges and universities.

[26] Williams, Interview.

[27] For a discussion of Rose of Rhodesia as colonial romance, see Helgesson, Stefan. "The Rose of Rhodesia as Colonial Romance." *Screening the Past: Special Issue: Colonial Africa on the Silent Screen: Recovering The Rose of Rhodesia (1918)*. 25 (2009): n. page. Web. 7 Jun. 2012. <http://www.latrobe.edu.au/screeningthepast/25/rose-of-rhodesia/helgesson.html>.

[28] Fuller, Alexandra. *Let's Don't Go to the Dogs Tonight*. New York: Random House, 2003. Print.

[29] Chimurenga is the Shona equivalent of Uprising. The word itself originates in the Shona ancestor Murenga Sororenzou, a fabled hunter and fighter. Vambe , Maurice. "Versions and Subversions in Chimurenga Musical Discourses of Post-Independence Zimbabwe." *African Study Monographs*. 25.4 (2004): 167-193. Print.

[30] Williams, Paul. "White Rhodesia was not Africa it was England in the Tropics." *Mazwi: A Zimbabwean Literary journal*. Interview by Tinashe Mushakavanhu. 11 November 2011. Web. <http://www.mazwi.net/interviews/interview-white-rhodesia-was-not-africa-it-was-england-in-the-tropics>.

[31] Fuller, Alexandra. *Let's Don't Go to the Dogs Tonight*. New York: Random House, 2003. 5-6. Print.

[32] Kaarsholm, Preben. "From Decadence to Authenticity and Beyond: Fantasies and mythologies of War in Rhodesia and Zimbabwe, 1965-1985." *Cultural Development and Struggle in Southern Africa*. Ed. Preben Kaarsholm. Harare: Baobab, 1991. 37. Print.

[33] In colonial Zimbabwe, as in other settler colonies such as Kenya, Namibia and South Africa, the creation of white owned commercial farmland was preceded by the forced displacement of whichever African group lived there. In the case of Rhodesia, this resulted in the creation of what became known as native reserves, dry and infertile outposts which became cast labor pools for mines, farms and factories. For a recent study that examines the flaws of successive Rhodesian colonial governments with respect to land tenure, see Chitiyo, Knox. "Land Violence and Compensation: Reconceptualising Zimbabwe's Land and War veterans Debate." *Demilitarisation and Peace-building in Southern Africa: National and Regional Experiences*. 2. (2004): 46-73. Print.

[34] Most towns, recreational centers, mining and farming areas were renamed during the approximately 90 years of colonialism. The colonial capital, Salisbury, was, for example, named after Lord Salisbury, an English nobleman.

[35] As in many parts of colonial Africa, the Africans themselves could not, barring special circumstances, be citizens. In Rhodesia, Africans bore the legal title of natives which denied them civic participation ordinarily given proper citizens. According to Papers relating to the Southern Rhodesia native Reserves Commission, 1915(1917: Cd. 8674), the Native Affairs Committee of Enquiry, 1910-11, expressed the view that the so-called reserves were adequate for the farming needs of the African population. This was later formalized via legislation such as the

Land Husbandry Act, 1931 and Land Tenure Act, 1951. For contemporary justifications for denying the Africans civil and political rights, see Hone, Percy. *Southern Rhodesia*. 1909. 365-66. eBook. <http://www.archive.org/details/southernrhodesia00hone>.

[36] Curnow, Robin, prod. "African Voices." *Zimbabwean Authors*. CNN: 16 Aug. 2009. Television. <http://youtu.be/DsbdZKmkQJ8>.

[37] It must be noted that there is a different, thriving genre of writing by neo-Rhodesians. These writers do not pretend to have any intellectual depth nor any ambivalence towards their readership. Their novels and war narratives are therefore replete with overt racism. See: "Bushveldt." *Books of Zimbabwe Store*. Books of Zimbabwe Online, n.d. Web. 2 May 2011. <http://www.bushveld.net/store3/erol>.

[38] See Chennells, Anthony. ""Where to touch them?" Representing the Ndebele in Rhodesian Fiction ." n. page. Web. 27 May 201. <www.up.ac.za/ dspace/ bitstream/ 2263/ 3049/ 1/ Chennels_Where(2007).pdf 70>.

[39] See Phimister, Ian. "Discourse and the Discipline of Historical Context: Conservationism and Ideas about Development in Southern Rhodesia 1930–1950."*Journal of Southern African Studies* . 12.2 (1986): 263-275. Web. 22 Apr. 2011. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2636746>.

[40] Fredrikse, Julie. *None But Ourselves. Masses Vs. Media in the Making of Zimbabwe*. Harare: ZPH, 1983. Print.

[41] Kaarsholm, Preben. "From Decadence to Authenticity and Beyond: Fantasies and mythologies of War in Rhodesia and Zimbabwe, 1965-1985." *Cultural Development and Struggle in Southern Africa*. Ed. Preben Kaarsholm. Harare: Baobab, 1991. 37. Print.

[42] Gandanga, when used self-referentially, carries the honorable history of black Zimbabweans' armed resistance to colonialism. Used by Rhodesians, the term equates to black fighters' supposed savagery.

[43] Protected camps were large semi-concentration camps where Zimbabwean villagers were enclosed as part of the Rhodesian scorched earth policy. See Rupiah, Martin. "The history of the Establishment of Internment camps and Refugee Settlements in Southern Rhodesia." *Zambezia: Journal of the Humanities*. 22.11 (1995): 137-52. Print.

[44] The essays in this collection suggest that Zimbabwean masculinities are constructed as rigid and dominant. This dominant masculinity suppresses or excludes other versions of masculinity from coming to the surface when they do exist in society. See Muchemwa, Kizito, and Robert Muponde. *Manning the Nation: Father Figures in Zimbabwean Literature and Society*. Harare: Weaver, 2007. Print.

[45] Gatsheni-Ndlovu, Sabelo. "The Construction and Decline of Chimurenga Monologue in Zimbabwe: A Study in Resilience of Ideology and Limits of Alternatives."*Contestations over*

Memory and Nationhood: Comparative Perspectives from East and Southern Africa at the 4th European Conference on African Studies (ECAS4) on the theme: African Engagements: On Whose Terms?. 15-18 June 2011. Uppsala: 2011. 1-2. Web. 22 Sept. 2011. These novels' divergent points of view show that there is no singular monologue but multiple, conflicting narratives of Chimurenga.

[46] Gatsheni-Ndlovu. 15-18.

[47] Ranger, Terence. *Peasant Consciousness and Guerrilla War in Zimbabwe*. Durham: University of North Carolina UP, 1992. 62. Print.

[48] Moore, David. "Democracy, Violence, and Identity in the Zimbabwean War of National Liberation: Reflections from the Realms of Dissent." *Journal of Southern African Studies: Special Issue on Culture and Consciousness in Southern Africa* . 14.2 (1988): 304-322. Web. 4 June 2011.

[49] Pungwe or all-night mass meetings between guerillas and villagers was the major platform for political mobilization in the rural areas where the war itself was mainly fought. Guerillas gave lessons in the country's history and the objectives of the war, mainly through lectures but also through song and drama. The obvious power imbalance between the armed young men and women and unarmed villagers tilted coercive power in favor of the former. Villagers branded sell-outs or supporters of the Rhodesian regime were also punished at pungwes.

[50] See Lamb, Christina. *The House of Stone: A True Story of a Familly Divided in War-torn Zimbabwe*. London: Lawrence Hill, 2007. 116. Print.

[51] Legend has it that Nehanda Nyakasikana, the female spirit medium who coordinated Shona resistance to settler occupation during the First Chimurenga, prophesied at her hanging that her "bones" would rise. For African nationalists looking for historical legitimacy of their struggle in the 1960s and 70s, Nehanda's prophesy resonated with their aspirations. According to oral tradition, she was defiant when captured and, before being executed, predicted that her bones would rise again. In time, Nehanda (the name is usually accompanied by the respectful title Mbuya) became a powerful nationalist symbol of the inevitable. Chenjerai Hove's *Bones*(1991) and Yvonne Vera's *Nehanda(*1993) both take their titles from this historical figure.

[52] Zhuwarara, Rino. "Edmund Chipamaunga's A Fighter for Freedom." *Zambezia: Journal of the University of Zimbabwe*. 14. (1987): 140–43. Print.

[53] Werbner, Richard. "Beyond Oblivion: Confronting Memory Crisis." *Memory and the Postcolony. An African Anthropology and the Critigues of Power*. Ed. Richard Werbner. London: ZED, 1998. 1-17. Print.

[54] Posto – from the Portuguese for position, a commander's house within a guerilla training camp.

[55] Moore, David. "Democracy, Violence, and Identity in the Zimbabwean War of National Liberation: Reflections from the Realms of Dissent." *Canadian Journal of African Studies / Revue Canadienne des Études Africaines*. 29.3 (1995): 375-402. Web. 23 Aug. 2011.

[56] Charles Pfukwa, alias Comrade Bazooka Chivhuno, himself a former combatant, has written extensively about the tradition of assuming war names within the Chimurenga. He observes that all black freedom fighters assumed "war names" during the war. According to him, freedom fighters used war names to project their ideology, provide a layer of security and express their aspirations. See Onomastic innovation in Zimbabwean *noms de guerre.* See Pfukwa, Charles. "Onomastic Innovation in Zimbabwean noms de guerre." *Language Matters*. 34.1 (2003): 13-23. Print.

[57] While acknowledging the need for change in Rhodesia, Marechera's fiction persistently focuses attention on the corruption of the struggle itself, in particular the possibility of dictatorship. *The House of Hunger* deliberately presents black heroes who are seriously flawed. Edmund, the bullied boy who quits school for the armed struggle, for example, does not achieve anything before he is captured. See Marechera, Dambudzo. *The House of Hunger*. London: Heinemann, 1978, 63. Print.

[58] Chan, Stephen. "The Memory of Violence: Trauma in the Writings of Alexander Kanengoni and Yvonne Vera and the Idea of Reconciled Citizenship in Zimbabwe." *Third World Quarterly*. 26.2 (2005): 369-382. Web. 12 June 2011. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3993733>.

[59] Chimoio Camp, just outside the Mozambican town of the same name, was one of the major refugee-cum-training bases in Mozambique for ZANU during the war.

[60] Freedom Nyamubaya is one of a small number of women former combatants who have published their war experiences. Nyamubaya speaks about her war experiences in this interview with the NPR: Quist-Arcton, Ofeibia, prod. "From Zimbabwe, One Voice of 'Freedom'." NPR: 8 Apr. 2007. Radio. <http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php? See also, Lyons, Tanya. *Guns and Guerilla Girls*. Trenton: AWP, 2004, p. 267. Print.

[61] "Simba remadzimai" is Shona for the power of women, a reference to the power that women enjoyed during the war. Despite the inequality, the socialist doctrine that the two major nationalist movements espoused also acknowledged the need for gender parity.

[62] Irene Staunton published a collection of female former combatants' memoirs in a collection titled Mothers of the Revolution, itself a common allusion to all women who contributed to the struggle. See Staunton, Irene. *Mothers of the Revolution*. Harare: Baobab, 1990. Print.

[63] Pongweni's seminal *Songs that Won the Liberation War* discusses the function of struggle songs within the first and Second Chimurenga and while acknowledging some songs' reference

to Mbuya Nehanda, does not dwell on how those songs articulated women's experience of war. See Pongweni, Alec. *Songs the Won the liberation War*. Harare: College, 1982. Print.

[64] Portuguese for "victory is certain!", a borrowing from the FRELIMO war against Portuguese colonialists in Mozambique.

[65] Zimbabwe celebrates both Independence Day(18 April) and Heroes Day(12 August). On these occasions, the president delivers speeches which remind people of their sacrifices during the war. Of the dozens of speeches delivered so far, not one has made reference to the sexual exploitation of women cadres during the war. See, for example, then Prime Minister Robert Mugabe's inaugural speech: Mugabe, Robert. "Address to the Nation by the Prime Minister Elect." Zimbabwe's Independence. Government of Zimbabwe. Rufaro Stadium, Harare. 4 March 1980. Address. <http://adamwelz.wordpress.com/2009/06/04/robert-mugabes-first-speech-in-the-parliament-of-zimbabwe-4-march-1980/>

[66] Helgesson, Stefan. *Writing in Crisis: Ethics and History in Gordimer, Ndebele and Coetzee*. Scottsville: University of KwaZulu-Natal, 2004, p. 32. Print.

[67] Any discussion of African literature in the former colonial languages of English, French and Portuguese presupposes an acknowledgement of another body of writing, namely the writings of Africa by white settlers, explorers and travelers whose audience is the settler community and perhaps, the West, broadly defined. Popular writings by Karen Blixen, Wilbur Smith, Rider Haggard, Alexander McCall Smith and many others are often blockbusters within the white community and in the West but don't gain the same canonical status within Africa.

[68] Mengel, Ewald, Michela Borzaga, et al, ed. *Trauma, Memory and Narrative in South Africa: Matatu Number 38*. New York: Rodopi, 2010, p. 24.Print.

[69] Kundera, Milan. *The Book of Laughter and Forgetting*. New York: Harper Collins, 1996. Print.

[70] The bantustans were pseudo-national homelands for South Africa's black African populations who then required special documentation to venture beyond the Bantustan. By emphasizing supposed ethnic differences, the bantustans were designed to make it difficult for various South Africans communities to confront apartheid as a united force.

[71] Some live sessions of the TRC were aired on public media and the eventual report published. See *The South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission Report* http://www.info.gov.za/otherdocs/2003/trc/ Web. 7 Mar. 2011

[72] Eprile, Tony. *Writers on Writing*. 08 24 2004. Radio. <http://www.artscapemedia.com/audio/eprile.mp3 >.

[73] Botha, Mike. *Marginal Lives and Painful Pasts: South African Cinema After Apartheid and Images of South Africa: The Rise of the Alternative Film*. Cape Town: Intellect, 1992. Print.

[74] Gibson, James. *Overcoming Apartheid: Can Truth Reconcile a Divided Nation?* Washington, DC: Rusell Sage Foundation, 1996. Print.

[75] Gibson, ibid.

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