ABSTRACT

In the past twenty years, Zimbabwe has witnessed an unprecedented upsurge in life writing. The prominence of the autobiographical narrative form testifies to the desire by black and white authors to reclaim intellectual space from which to authorize identities of the self and nation in the new political dispensation ushered by independence in 1980. The phenomenon of creating autobiographical works that questioned the legitimacy of dominant white narratives of Rhodesia and ZANU PF narratives of post independence come from within the white community and also from former ZANU PF political leaders, signaling the violent uncoupling of discursive cultural symbols of self and nation that previously provided myths of collective destinies. Autobiographical narratives composed by political figures not from ZANU PF also imagine a Zimbabwe on which their political parties could impose new forms of hegemonic controls in the future.