

Abstract

This chapter critiques post-2000 Kenyan novelists' counter-narratives that reinterpret as they unsettle mis/uses of traumatic pasts reinforced through fiction. Pioneer post-independent Kenya Mau Mau War narratives reconfigured the war into a larger than life phenomenon. The counter-narratives appear motivated by presents fractured by problematic associations with, invocations and narrations of, traumatic pasts. Novelists' competing and conflictual insights on Mau Mau War signals the war memory's socio-political potency in contemporary Kenya. The chapter highlights the novel's traction to transfigure histories but, at the same time, flags lived experiences in Kenya to demonstrate intrinsic pitfalls in uncritical glorifications of violent memories. While pioneer post-independent Mau Mau novelists – in tandem with the critical race theory – engage in an ideological correspondence with settler novelists, the new millennium novelists offer counter-narratives by problematizing the very ideologies that reconstructed Mau Mau into the ultimate embodiment of national heroism/patriotism and proceeded to carve it into a Kikuyu ethnic pride.