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Generic Blurring in Contemporary South African Literary Journalism

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The Longest March

FRED KHUMALO, 2019

https://www.penguinrandomhouse.co.za/sites/penguinbooks.co.za/files/styles/author_photo/public/Fred%20Khumalo_Copyright.jpg?itok=4svWgJ-m

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Brink, Elsabé 1899, *the Long March Home: A Little-Known Incident in the Anglo-Boer War*. Cape Town: Kwela Books, 1999.

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The Longest March: synopsis & sources

- The Second Anglo-Boer War (1899-1902)
- 7,000 Zulu miners
- Johannesburg → Natal and Zululand
- John Sidney Marwick
- (Umkhosi Wezintaba)
- A « white man's war »

- Nduku
- Philippa
- Xhawulengweni
- Qwabe
- 1899: from Sep 30 to Dec 10

Historical fiction?



Pair work

- How are fiction and nonfiction woven together?
- What questions related to the genre of historical fiction do these texts raise?
- Which writing techniques do you identify?
- Can Fred Khumalo be considered a literary journalist?



Caption reads:

This fragment of a photograph of the men who represented the Natal and Zululand Native Affairs Department on the Reef, shows Marwick, seated, with an unnamed assistant standing behind him

(Courtesy Killie Campbell Africana Library)

Picture from *1899: The Long March Home, A little-known incident in the Anglo-Boer War*, Elsabé Brink, 1999, p. 63

Historical fiction

- Realism / historical romances / crime fiction
- National identities & ideology
- Ethics & responsibility?
- A present fictional gaze onto past events
- History as a narrative

The Longest March as a ‘metahistorical romance’

The metahistorical romance (one can see the influence of Hayden White on my own work here) continues this **oxymoronic tradition that sees history as romance and romance as history**—that is, that sees the truth in both ways of looking at history without feeling the need completely to subordinate either to the other. (164)

Elias, Amy J. « Metahistorical Romance, the Historical Sublime, and Dialogic History ». *Rethinking History* 9, n° 2-3 (1 juin 2005): 159-72.



Genre blurring in
post-apartheid /
post-transition
South Africa

“post-transitional” South African literature

We have chosen the term ‘post-transitional’ South African literature to suggest something of the character of this **new wave of writing**, which is often unfettered to the past in the way that much apartheid writing was, but may still **reconsider it in new ways**. Equally it may ignore it altogether. Other features include **politically incorrect humour and incisive satire**, and the mixing of genres with zest and freedom. All of this often renders nugatory traditional markers like nationality, race or ethnicity. (2)

Frenkel, Ronit, et Craig MacKenzie. « Conceptualizing ‘Post-Transitional’ South African Literature in English ». *English Studies in Africa* 53, n° 1 (1 mai 2010): 1-10.



THANK YOU!

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