BRIEF ENCOUNTERS

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'I Looked and Beheld a Country': Home Movies, Homesteads and the Family Archive

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Opening the Family Archive

'Life went on in all its gauzy, cinematic glory'.[1]

Archives operate both as sites of knowledge and of power. As institutions, often coupled with the authority of an architectural dimension, they are significant in the formation of national identities.[2] The basic processes of selection and omission mean that an artefact found within an archive is 'not a piece of data, but a status', as Achille Mbembe points out.[3] This status thus informs a sense of understanding of the past, a historical construction that speaks both to what is present and what is not. This process is replicated at more personal levels in the development of family archives, the collections of photograph albums, heirlooms and assorted items that form a family's image of its history and heritage. Critically, these sources can be analysed to locate these personal histories and patterns of identity-formation within broader sociocultural and historical contexts.

This essay focuses on a collection of home movies acquired from my own family, depicting my mother's family and their life in Southern Africa during the 1950s and 1960s. All thirteen 8mm film reels had been digitised before the passing of my grandparents. Using these films as material for a critical investigation marks a process that, as Mbembe has written, brings archival material to the 'end of a period of closure', allowing it to be 'woken from sleep and returned from life'.[4] It is this awakening that allows them to be (re)viewed not only as documents of personal history but also as sources that reveal the attitudes that underpinned the formation of white settler identity at the time. By engaging with critical literature examining the use-value of home movies as an archival source and critical writings related to whiteness and postcolonial studies, this essay examines how these films both articulate and disrupt the white settlers' identities and senses of belonging. This essay therefore examines the construction and deployment of familial narratives within the racialised political economy that underpinned society in the waning years of British-ruled Southern Africa.

On its own, the footage depicts a readable history of a family. Beginning with Peter and Wendy Clayton's wedding, the films show the life of a young couple, capturing key moments in their marriage, from their honeymoon to playing with their children in the garden between 1956 and 1964. The footage also features aspects that situate it within the context of settler society of Southern Africa, from military parades to numerous shots of farms across the region.[5] Some segments record impromptu get-togethers,

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[1] Alexandra Fuller, *Cocktail Hour Under the Tree of Forgetfulness* (New York, NY: Penguin, 2011), ebook, chap. 8, para. 11.

[2] Achille Mbembe, 'The Power of the Archive and its Limits', in *Refiguring The Archive*, ed. by Carolyn Hamilton, Verne Harris, Jane Taylor, Michele Pickover, Graeme Reid and Razia Saleh (London: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 2002), pp. 19–25 (p. 19).

[3] Mbembe, p. 20.

[4] Mbembe, p. 21.

[5] *Clayton Home Movies* (Johannesburg: Video Memory Productions, 2010).

while others are more carefully edited, such as the one depicting a fishing trip along the Zambezi river, which included home-made title cards.[6] The total run time was over two hours, with segments ranging from 4 to 18 minutes. There is an element of repetition to the films, with similar events playing out again and again, with a clear shift of focus to the children after they were born. As Roger Odin points out, '[t]he same ritual ceremonies... the same daily scenes... the same vacation sequences appear across home movies. With such repetitions, discouragement and lassitude sometimes overtake spectators, weakening informational value'.[7]

Fig. 1: The opened tin of films. Photographed by Tracy Clayton and Daniel Rathbone, 2016.

To better engage with the content of the videos, it was important to further contextualise them. At a personal level, there was some familiarity with the subject matter; but as most films were without audio, there were limits to what I could understand, such as particular locations and the identities of people. It was important to connect the digitised footage with the original film reels, because the running order of the DVD did not reflect any chronology or particular structure. Examining the reels with a magnifying glass and matching up events in the footage with the titles on the tins (such as 'Zambesi 1959' and 'Wedding' – see figures 2 and 3) allowed me to begin piecing together the events depicted. My mother's assistance in narrating some of the events helped me to expand on what was happening in each of the films. Having grown up watching these films during family gatherings, her narration provided an important context, indicating the names of people and relaying anecdotes. While helpful, it did reveal the limitations of oral history, as she often struggled to remember details. The potential to recollect the past was there, but the result was imperfect. The process of remembering family history through familial archive material reveals the risk brought on by potential holes in memory; compounded by the fact that both Peter and Wendy had passed away, this limited how much I could learn about the movies. Thus, attempts to open up this archive and analyse it became implicated in a broader process of remembering and maintaining family history, an attempt to preserve the narratives from further degradation. The risk of forgetting is what, for Jacques Derrida, compels the process of the Archive: '[t]here would be no archive desire without the radical finitude, without the possibility of forgetfulness which does not limit itself to repression... there is no archive fever without the threat of the death drive'.[8] As an act of

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[6] *Clayton Home Movies*.

[7] Roger Odin, 'Reflections on the Family Home Movie as Document: A Semio-Pragmatic Approach', in *Mining the Home Movie: Excavations in Histories and Memories*, ed. by K. L. Ishizuka and Patricia R. Zimmermann (London: University of California Press, 2008), 225–271 (p. 261).

[8] Jacques Derrida, *Archive Fever* (Chicago, Ill.: University of Chicago Press, 1998), p. 19.

preservation, the Family Archive seeks to preserve family memory and heritage. The re-awakening of this footage and its associated memories became a part of maintaining the personal significance of these films. Being committed to digital format was part of this process that helped protect, as it were, family heritage from the threat of loss.

Figs 2 and 3: Labelled film reels, 'Zambesi - 1957' and 'Wedding'. Photographed by Tracy Clayton and Daniel Rathbone, 2016.

Watching these films becomes a way to look at unofficial narratives – those not contained in official archives but which still highlights the power of the archival process. 'The traces of the deceased, elements that testify that a life did exist', are, for Mbembe, why archives exist, 'born from a desire to reassemble these traces'.[9] The films thus become an important part of revealing, both directly and indirectly, life in the latter days of British colonial Southern Africa. They form a recollection of memories, which provide telling clues about life for the Clayton family, and the world they inhabited. In *Mining the Home Movie*, Patricia R. Zimmerman argues that '[t]hese home movie images cannot be viewed as inert documentary evidence, but need to be reconsidered as mobile constructs, activated in different ways through different historiographic and artistic strategies'.[10] The films are a valuable source material, exposing how the family is framed as well as exploring the British settlers' connections to the landscape that they had come to recognise as home, but which was soon no longer to be.

Framing the Family

'For memory to exist, there first has to be the temptation to repeat an original act'.[11]

Film footage, as a visual medium, draws attention to what *is* filmed, and how this is framed and narrated; both what is seen and what is not. Film, like photography, serves to capture a moment, to record and document. The inherent bias in this, however, should not be ignored. The conscious process that underscores film making, even for amateurs, involves the deliberate framing of the camera and the setting up of a scene to be filmed (even if the result appears spontaneous). As Sian Barber points out, '[i]n only permitting the audience to look at part of the action, by refusing to let their gaze wander to anything outside the sight of the camera, the filmmaker deliberately and consciously determines the focus of the audience'.[12] Home movies are created with the purpose of recording family life, preserving

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[9] Mbembe, p. 22.

[10] Patricia R. Zimmermann, 'Introduction: The Home Movie Movement: Excavations, Artefacts, Minings', in *Mining the Home Movie: Excavations in Histories and Memories*, ed. by K. L. Ishizuka and Patricia R. Zimmerman (London: University of California Press, 2008), 1–28 (p. 16).

[11] Mbembe, p. 24.

[12] Sian Barber, *Using Film as a Source* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2015), p. 31.

critical moments in time to be recalled when viewed later on. The content of the Clayton home movies thus repeatedly focuses on images that highlight the very personal yet also manufactured way in which a narrative is built of the family as a seemingly cohesive entity.

If the films are arranged chronologically, they can articulate a family story, from its inception with the wedding in 1959 to sometime after the youngest child was born in 1964. It develops a narrative of a family growing up, seeking to capture the key moments for those involved in the family unit. Indeed, the *idea* of the family is central to home movies, being the 'idealised amateur cinematic subject... created to capture moments of social and familial values, depicting an almost positive conception of family and community'.[13] As Roger Odin points out, the making of the 'film produced an effect *before* its exhibition. Each family member's performance is spotlighted'.[14] Each family member can be viewed as playing a role in front of the camera: the newlyweds, the 'proud grandmother'; the children standing for the camera, the eldest acting up to take the attention away from his younger siblings.[15] Thus, the films are both about and for them. It supposes to document the family, yet also requires everyone to act up their part. The position of each person becomes clearly marked in the footage, framing their sense of place in the family. Zimmerman argues that home movies like this map the private sphere from the point of view of the participants, collapsing the borders between subject and object.[16] The purpose of the film is to preserve memory and shape the associations surrounding this particular time in the family's life.

The performative nature of viewing home movies is also vital in maintaining their significance to the family, of fixing those memories within a broader family history. The re-viewing of these films becomes important in maintaining the life of them and the family bond. As Odin points out, 'interaction infuses the projection of a family film. Each family member reconstitutes a common past'.[17] As long as the films are re-watched, they help to preserve a part of familial memory and identity. Watching the films with Tracy Clayton helped to provide a contextualisation that would have otherwise been inaccessible, repeating the stories that are not seen but recalled. For example, the story of a young Wendy Clayton having her dress eaten by a goat on the Murray family farm, requiring a re-hemming which made the outfit 'scandalously short' for the time.[18] It is not just the content, but also the power of recollection that is enabled through the viewing of the home movie, connecting various generations of a family together with stories shared and passed on. For Odin, the 'extraordinary force' of the home movie is that it 'condenses and *crystalizes* thousands of analogue images'.[19] The home movie, as an archive, draws attention to the intersection between the source and memory, the constant resurrection of moments of family life that become a part of a broader sense of family identity. The act of watching these films *as a family* seeks to preserve them and the implicated associations: to archive, as it were, that particular strand of history and embed memory into something physical. To return to Derrida, '*There is no archive without consignation, without a technique of repetition, and without a certain exteriority. No archive without outside*' (emphasis in original).[20] Forgetfulness, or indeed inattention, is always a risk which

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[13] Marsha Orgeron and Devin Orgeron, 'Familial Pursuits, Editorial Acts: Documentaries After the Age of Home Video', *The Velvet Light Trap*, 60 (2007), 47–62 (p. 49) <https://doi.org/10.1353/vlt.2007.0023>.

[14] Odin, p. 257.

[15] Interview with Tracy Clayton (London, 2016).

[16] Patricia R. Zimmermann, 'Morphing History into Histories: From Amateur Film to the Archive of the Future', in *Mining The Home Movie: Excavations In Histories And Memories* ed. by K. L. Ishizuka and Patricia R. Zimmermann (London: University of California Press, 2008), p. 278.

[17] Odin, p. 259.

[18] Clayton interview.

[19] Odin, p. 261.

[20] Derrida, p. 11.

might jeopardize this family archive – the result of repetitive viewing without maintaining interest. As Tracy Clayton says 'I probably should have listened, but I, of course, didn't. We had to watch these movies and then listen to everyone blathering on'.[21]

This personal reading, even without its potential gaps in information, still only offers a limited interpretation of what the films themselves can reveal. Indeed, examining what is shown implicitly – that is, outside of the family narrative – tells a deeper understanding of the colonial context in which these videos were taken. The ever-present black labourer is always in the family scene; not merely as a passing character but actively filmed. One scene, in particular, shows an unnamed black woman holding Murray Clayton as a baby.[22] Her life is inaccessible outside of the film, yet she is featured within the family narrative. While she is not quite a part of the family, she is also not separate from it, which relates to Zimmerman's point that:

> Amateur film marks both social and psychic relations. It is an open text in a dialectic with historical context. It writes the body into representation. Amateur film imagery functions as a nodal point where history, memory, the nation, the local, power, and fantasy condense. As visual texts, amateur films operate as traces rather than as evidence. They visualise historical contradictions. Rather than inert and mythologized national imaginaries, amateur film is always forming.[23]

The presence of the young black woman, tasked to look after the baby, becomes a silent but visible figure. This disrupts the *ideal* of the settler nuclear family, and clarifies the realities of life in Southern Africa: the racialised political economy which supported white minority rule in what was then Northern Rhodesia, Southern Rhodesia and South Africa. Tracy Clayton's comments that her parents were 'deeply conventional' and pro-Empire situate her parents within this colonial framework and speak politely to what would have been ingrained racism.[24] The films reveal the contradictory nature of the Clayton family's lifestyle and society; not questioning the divisive politics of the time, yet also readily exposing it. There is very little that can be known about the black woman featured in the films, as relevant as she is to the life of the baby; but her presence helps to disrupt the assumed familial story and allows viewers to consider what other narratives reside within the footage.

Farms and Homesteads

'The garden is the smallest parcel of the world and then it is the totality of the world'.[25]

Related to the articulation of the family is the production of its spatial aspect: the home. In much the same way that family life is framed and produced within the film, so too is the association with specific places, sites that serve to ground the idea of the family and its broader sense of belonging. Indeed, though the films present a scattering of locations from across what was then British Southern Africa, there exist nodes of connection between them. The familial association creates bonds that see Northern and Southern Rhodesia and South Africa take on an association of home. These films reveal a shift that sees the Southern African landscape become integrated into a collective settler imagination.

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[21] Clayton interview.

[22] *Clayton Home Movies*.

[23] Zimmermann, p. 276.

[24] Clayton interview.

[25] Michel Foucault and Jay Miskowiec, 'Of Other Spaces', *Diacritics*, 16 (1986), 22–27 <https://doi.org/10.2307/464648>.

The landscape and space take central roles throughout the films, capturing different parts of the region from the Eastern Cape coast in South Africa to the banks of the Zambezi River: sites that form the backdrop to the family narrative that is central to these home movies. In the film depicting the newlyweds on their honeymoon, they come across a statue dedicated to the imperialist Kingsley Fairbridge (1885–1924). The plaque on it reads 'I looked and beheld a country, well fit for the Birth of a Nation'; the camera then cuts to a sweeping shot of the mountains and valleys stretched before it.[26] There is, in this shot, a sense of authority and ownership, the perspective of the camera's panorama laying claim to the Southern African landscape.

This claim is bolstered by the plaque dedicated to Fairbridge, which articulates the formulation of white settler identity within the continent that arose through British colonialism. Fairbridge was responsible for setting up a series of farm schools to bring British children to the colonies to further settle the region; the goal was to have a 'collection of farms having a central point for the corporate life of the community'.[27] This connection between Britain and Southern Africa develops a particular diasporic sense of belonging, drawn both to a broader idea of empire and a more localised one that articulated the attitudes of the ruling white minority. As Jeremy Foster argues, the 'national identity could not be understood separately from the larger-scale British Imperial identity that both covered and divided its territory'.[28] It is a type of 'diasporic whiteness' that allowed the settler minority to associate itself with the broader structures of power and privilege that came with being white citizens of the Empire.[29]

Fig 4: Kingsley Fairbridge's Memorial. Still from the Clayton home movies (unknown photographer, c. 1956–64; digitised by Video Memory Productions, 2010).

This also draws attention to the centrality of the farm as an institution which developed and entrenched settler identity, the site of settlement and cultivation that enforced their claim of ownership over the Southern African landscape. Four farms are shown in the Clayton home movies; two in the Eastern Cape of the Republic of South Africa (Bloukrans and Stourport) and two in unknown locations in what is now Zambia.[30] The footage captures certain pastoral scenes and visual signifiers of farm life: fields of pineapples; chickens leaving the roost; the 'ubiquitous windmill' by the farmhouse; and a 'valley-famous' bull named Justice.[31] Again the family is integrated into these scenes as well, such as the Clayton

[26] *Clayton Home Movies*.

[27] Kingsley Fairbridge, *Kingsley Fairbridge: His Life and Verse* (Bulawayo: Books of Rhodesia, 1974), p. 229.

[28] Jeremy Foster, *Washed with Sun: Landscape and the Making of White South Africa* (Pittsburgh, Pa: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2008), p. 17.

[29] Melissa Steyn, '"White Talk": White South Africans and the Management of Diasporic Whiteness', in *Postcolonial Whiteness: A Critical Reader in Race and Empire*, ed. by Alfred J. López (New York, NY: State University of New York Press, 2005), pp. 120–126.

[30] *Clayton Home Movies*.

[31] Clayton interview.

family posing in front of the farm house in the 1940s, or of grandfather Jack Clayton fixing his car.[32] The farm house becomes a site of family interaction, a site of familial heritage and belonging that seeks to normalise the assertion of ownership over the land. It points to the idea that 'family productions are deployed for a local or identity claim context'.[33] The footage produces a narrative of possession and interconnection amongst white Southern Africans, rooting the *idea* of home even if the sites shift and the family moves. This is, at least on an immediate reading, how the films operate; they record and evoke a sense of identity that locates the white family at the centre of Southern African life in the 1950s and 1960s.

Fig 5: Murray and Russell Clayton, c. 1964. Photograph in author's possession; photographed by Peter Clayton; scanned by Tracy Clayton.

Indeed, it is important to connect this footage to critical discourses on the Southern African farm as a settler institution. J. M. Coetzee's analysis of literary representations of the farm in *White Writing* indicates that it as something out of place in the African landscape; it is an 'unnatural imposition on a doggedly ahistorical landscape' and 'pettiness amid vastness'.[34] The farm is read as problematic, the precarious negotiation between European settlement and the African landscape. It is segregated and made distinct from the land it surrounds to assert a colonial space, where the 'pastoral solution to the question of how the white man shall live in South Africa is that he should retreat into rural independence'.[35] For Jennifer Benninfield, the farm represented a segregated and patriarchal institution marking the topography of the land:

> The first 'dream topography' is that of an impenetrable and ancient landscape in which the bones of dinosaurs are embedded; the second a patchwork of farms, '*koninkrykies*' (little kingdoms) in which the pastoral and patriarchal could be lived in solitary isolation.[36]

This independence was enabled by a supportive state, with policies such as the 1913 Natives Land Act restricting black ownership of land, allowing possession to be dominated by white people.

The underlying assumption of the farm is that it is an isolated and alien institution from the rest of the African landscape. Indeed, the very colonial nature of white settler farms draws attention to the division inherent in their creation. However, it is crucial to consider that there are alternative narratives, which the Clayton home movies highlight. As Caroline Rooney argues; '[I]t is important to attend to

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[32] *Clayton Home Movies*.

[33] Odin, p. 267.

[34] J. M. Coetzee, *White Writing: On the Culture of Letters in South Africa* (London: Yale University Press, 1988), pp. 65–66.

[35] Coetzee, p. 81.

[36] Jennifer Beningfield, *The Frightened Land: Land, Landscape, and Politics in South Africa in the Twentieth Century* (London: Routledge, 2006), p. 9.

the particularity of experience that defies the reduction of ideologies that would, one way or another, retrospectively render the settler farm as foredoomed to failure of non-belonging or non-integration'.[37]

Indeed, the footage points to an idea of the landscape as being integrated into a collective imagination, becoming a familiar home-scape. The dilemma of British settlers, according to Coetzee, was that the English language lent itself to the 'moistness of English conditions', unable to integrate the dry African landscape into its vocabulary. The films, however, show a level of imaginary integration in its readiness to draw attention to the countryside around it and the more violent demarcation of land. The best example is the footage of the homes of the Clayton family, particularly of the gardens. It is easy to see the division that exists between the cultivated spaces of the garden with the wild landscape outside. Footage of the family's home at Tug Argen Army Barracks in Zambia from 1958 shows the green, manicured lawns of the garden separated by a line of stones from the dry African landscape beyond.[38] The garden space clearly consolidates the idea of ownership of the land, the cultivation of the area marking a dominant white settler culture over a 'wild' African one. This division of inside/outside highlights the racial segregation of the region, drawing the 'boundary between white and black'.[39] Even their home in Howard's Close in Southern Rhodesia is described by Tracy Clayton as 'an English country garden in Salisbury', privileging British sensibilities over indigenous nature.[40] The garden is an assertion of power and ownership, and the filming of it replicates the narrative that the land belonged to the settlers. What is not meant to be acknowledged is the implicit violence that these boundaries denote, the ignored histories of dispossession and forced removal that allowed these gardens to flourish.

It is important to note that the presence of the black *other* features again to disrupt this claim. Black labourers appear throughout the film, drawing attention to the unrepresented majority cultures of Southern Africa. It is a disruption of the pastoral scene more overt than described by Coetzee which seeks to erase the presence of black people from the farm:

> Pastoral in South Africa therefore has a double tribute to pay. To satisfy the critics of rural retreat, it must portray labour; to satisfy critics of colonialism, it must portray white labour. What inevitably follows is the occlusion of black labour from the scene: the black man becomes a shadowy presence flitting across the stage now and then to hold a horse or serve a meal.[41]

However, as with the woman who looked after the child, black men and women are present in the films. One of the most striking scenes depicts a group of Xhosa women working in Gordon Clayton's (Peter Clayton's father's) farm harvesting pineapples.[42] While he stands by his truck, the women work to bring in the pineapples from the field. This racial and gendered division of labour reveals the economic realities of colonial Southern Africa, where the assumed white ownership is always supported by a foundation of exploited black labour. Black Southern Africans are marginalised within the context of society at the time, and indeed in the development of the Clayton family narrative, yet their presence is still critical to understanding the notions of white identity. As Toni Morrison's own critical examination of the role of 'Africanist presences' in American literature determines, where 'one can see that the real or

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[37] Caroline Rooney, 'Narratives of Southern African Farms', *Third World Quarterly*, 26.3 (2005), 431–440 (p. 438) <https://doi.org/10.1080/01436590500033693>.

[38] *Clayton Home Movies*.

[39] Benningfield, p.22.

[40] Clayton interview.

[41] Coetzee, p. 5.

[42] *Clayton Home Movies*.

fabricated Africanist presence was crucial to their sense of Americaness.[43] Within the context of these films it becomes clear that there can be no white settler identity without an obscuration of black Africans despite their necessity in the very functioning of that society.

The whiteness of Southern Africa is taken for granted in these films. Reading into subtext beyond just the familial depictions of the footage reveals the ever-present racist political economy that underpinned every white-owned farm. Like the family scene, it disrupts the assumptions of ownership and presumed possessiveness. The presence of the colonial Other, those not included in the idea of the family farm and thus broader country, is revealed. The nature of home movies are, as Zimmerman argues, 'fragmentary, vast, infinite' in their meanings, never quite settled. Home movies unwillingly draw attention to 'often invisible cultures', expanding on their use-value as an historical source.[44]
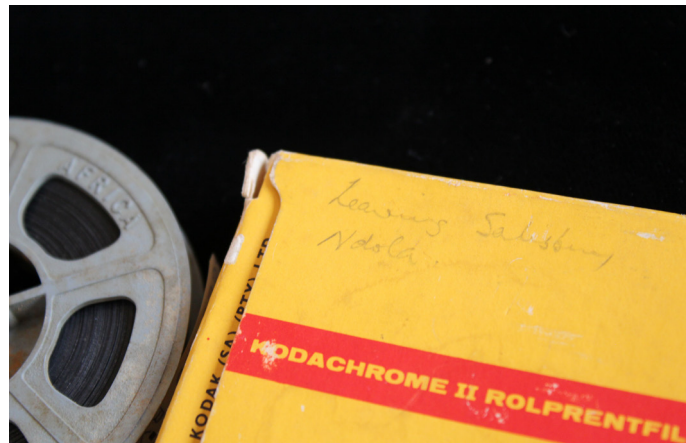

Fig. 6: Labelled film reel, 'Leaving Salisbury/Ndola'. Photographed by Tracey Clayton and Daniel Rathbone, 2016.

The timeframe of the films crosses over with a period of instability around assumptions about settler dominance. The last date present on the reels is 1964, the same year in which Zambia became an independent state and when the Clayton family moved to the United States of America. If the home movie is an attempt to construct an ideal reality, to lock in a rose-tinted view of the past, then it becomes necessary to challenge this and to consider what happens outside the camera frame. The growing resistance of British colonialism and white minority rule is an ever-present reality, occurring just off screen but still hinted at. The threat of violence, though not explicit, is felt. When referring to the films, Tracy Clayton points out, 'It all looks very peaceful here, but it wasn't particularly peaceful. No one quite knew what was going to happen'.[45] One of the film reels is labelled 'Leaving Salisbury' and depicts the family packing up to move from Howard's Close to Ndola in what was still Northern Rhodesia. Peter Clayton was being returned to the Northern Rhodesian Territorial Army to oversee Zambia's upcoming independence.[46] As Tracy Clayton comments, the 'days of white minority rule are coming to an end'.[47] So too are the home movies. Though the Clayton family would move back to and settle in South Africa in 1967, there are no more home movies after 1964. While we cannot ask the person filming why they did not continue to make more movies, the silence seems to speak to a sense of loss that this disruption in the political order caused; the days of settler society that had shaped the world as they knew it became a memory captured on film.

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[43] Toni Morrison, *Playing in the Dark: Whiteness and the Literary Imagination.* (New York, NY: Vintage, 1993), p. 6.

[44] Introduction, p. 18.

[45] Clayton interview.

[46] *Ibid.*

[47] *Ibid.*

These home movies present a valuable source with which to look at how white settlers in Southern Africa came to develop a sense of belonging by the end of colonial rule. Family films serve as a way to articulate ideas of the family and preserve familial memory. The footage highlights the attempt to create a family narrative by the Claytons, revealing the ways that they situated themselves as a family within the spaces that they occupied. This in turn serves as a useful historical artefact, one that allows viewers to read into assumptions and attitudes that underpinned settler society in Southern Africa. The footage becomes imbued with associations of memory that preserve a family heritage, connecting different generations together through shared memory. This becomes intertwined with the *idea* of Southern Africa that is articulated within colonial narratives of ownership. The films root the family into an idea of belonging within Southern Africa, articulating a sense of home throughout. Yet this narrative of belonging is also disrupted by the footage itself, the contradictions of the racial socio-economic system that supported white minority rule revealed throughout the films. Though silent, black people are present, hinting towards a bigger picture not captured on camera, unsettling the normalising assumptions made by the film's narrative. It is similar to how Alexandra Fuller describes her mother's memory of growing up in Kenya as something make believe, where the 'violence and injustices of colonialism seem... to have happened in some other unwatched movie, to some other unwatched people'.[48] The Clayton home movies echo this sentiment, reflecting a broader attempt to create a narrative of Southern Africa as a 'white' home. What is missing from this main narrative, just caught in frame, are the contradictions that underscore the world that white settlers inhabited, but never seemed willing to acknowledge.

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[48] Fuller, chap. 8, para. 6.

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