

ABSTRACT

Title of Document: SCREAMS SOMEHOW ECHOING:
 TRAUMA AND TESTIMONY IN
 ANGLOPHONE AFRICAN LITERATURE

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Postcolonial literary critics note persistently recurring representations of colonial violence in post-independence Anglophone African novels. I suggest that complex psychological and political processes of colonial trauma compel this narrative repetition. This dissertation juxtaposes postcolonial and trauma studies in order to analyze literary representations of colonial violence in terms of race, gender, identity, and the post-independence nation-state. To do so, I engage with black feminisms, African history, Subaltern Studies, and Latin American *testimonio* studies.

I contend that, despite variations in aesthetic mode, melancholia, haunting, and mourning recur in realist and postmodern Anglophone African and diaspora novels with interesting variations beyond the usual stylistic differences. This tendency spans sub-Saharan Africa, the Atlantic, and generations. My work suggests that we use the vocabulary of psychoanalysis to fruitfully read post-independence literature as testimony representing the trauma of colonial occupation.

Trauma and justice studies teach that testimony is the route to surviving productively after an experience of traumatizing violence. While mine is not the first analysis of Anglophone African literature to employ the vocabulary of psychoanalysis, it is the first to suggest doing so in the context of traumatic testimony.

I explore three modes of telling—testimonial bodies, censored testimony and its ghosts, and trans-generational testifying wounds—represented in Ayi Kwei Armah's *Fragments* (Ghana, the United States, and France), Tsitsi Dangarembga's *Nervous Conditions* (Zimbabwe), Nuruddin Farah's *Maps* (Somalia), Moses Isegawa's *Abyssinian Chronicles* (Uganda and the Netherlands), Meja Mwangi's *Carcase for Hounds* (Kenya), Helen Oyeyemi's *The Icarus Girl* (Nigeria and Britain), and in Zoë Wicomb's *David's Story* and J. M. Coetzee's *Disgrace* (South Africa). Modes of telling crisscross the continent, suggesting that traumatic suffering binds different communities together.

Read as traumatic testimonies, the texts critique the intersected, normalizing discourses of globalization, trans-Atlantic migration, women's rights, and decolonization. They demonstrate that moments of national birth mark historical sites of potential for the collective to revise the past, create a national citizenry, and chart a socially progressive future through transformative mourning processes.

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Dedication

To Bryan, for everything.

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Chapter 1: Introduction: Reading Anglophone African Literary Testimony

Decades after independence, Anglophone African novels continue to represent themes of colonial violence and postcolonial traumatic accounts of national independence. These representations are often bound up with the twin tropes of illness and healing as metaphors for (neo)colonialism and socially responsible decolonization. These pairings illuminate the close relationship between colonial history and traumatic processes. The literature thus illuminates larger questions about the relationship of violence to history and memory, and how these in turn can function to dismantle or reinforce neocolonial power. I suggest that post-independence African literature's insistent representations of past violence are a means of navigating the complex psychological and political processes of colonial trauma and recuperation. This dissertation examines eight post-independence Anglophone novels from across sub-Saharan Africa, all of which were written in response to troubled decolonization processes and all of which repeat representations of colonial violence. In Ayi Kwei Armah's *Fragments* (set in Ghana, the United States, and France), Tsitsi Dangarembga's *Nervous Conditions* (Zimbabwe), Nuruddin Farah's *Maps* (Somalia), Moses Isegawa's *Abyssinian Chronicles* (Uganda and the Netherlands), Meja Mwangi's *Carcase for Hounds* (Kenya), Helen Oyeyemi's *The Icarus Girl* (Nigeria and Britain), and in Zoë Wicomb's *David's Story* and J. M. Coetzee's *Disgrace* (South Africa), I find that, despite variations in

aesthetic mode, melancholia, haunting, and mourning recur in both realist and postmodern novels with interesting variations that transcend expected stylistic differences.¹ This tendency spans the continent, the Atlantic, and generations. In so doing, it demonstrates that traumatic suffering is fixed in neither time nor place.

The psychoanalytic vocabulary of traumatic suffering and recovery provides a way of discussing these literary representations of colonial melancholia, haunting, and mourning. The texts analyzed here suggest new ways of understanding mourning on a social scale as collective recuperation and a crucial component of postcolonial nation building. The texts thus demand both theoretical consideration and political action. Geoffrey Hartman theorizes the social politics of traumatic representation in literature, arguing that in both literature and in the preverbal context of trauma, knowledge is a fantasy: of either of having knowledge or creating it.² Both literature and traumatic testimony attempt to represent that which is unexpected in the language of negativity—by explaining the boundaries of, or that which is outside, the subject matter (Hartman 540). The resulting, and necessary, embrace of the unknown is a direct refusal of what Étienne Balibar calls the colonizer’s “violent *desire for immediate knowledge*” (19, emphasis in original) and renders the marriage of trauma and post-independence African literature in service of social transformation appropriate.³ The literature studied in this dissertation demonstrates, as testimony, its potential to initiate postcolonial processes of mourning. In the novels, collective mourning leads to individual and social transformation.

In psychoanalytic theory, “trauma” refers to the experience of surviving a life-threatening incident, which creates the sense of having missed the event. The

traumatic moment is a lapse between the life-threatening event, which occurs before the ego is prepared to handle such unexpected and disturbing stimuli, and its recognition of the injury. This traumatic slip is an informational lack. Testimony, in its curative capacity relative to the traumatic slip, is a continually repeated verbal search for lost knowledge of the traumatic event. Traumatic suffering is to live without knowledge of what has been survived. To be traumatized is to be doubly haunted by two realities: that of the violent event and that of not fully knowing that violence. “Trauma,” then, is a psychic lapse between the traumatic event and the potential for knowledge. Cathy Caruth characterizes this lapse as “the breach of the mind’s experience of time, self, and the world” (4).⁴ Jacques Derrida conceptualizes it differently, in terms of the temporal or as an existence in time that is “out of joint” (18).⁵ For the purposes of this study, I find it useful to read the traumatic “breach” as an informational lapse which the sufferer seeks to rectify through language: either by testimony or encryption.⁶

For an exemplary scene that captures the topic of this dissertation, I turn to *David’s Story*, set in 1991 in South Africa on the eve of apartheid’s demise. In this scene, the novel’s unnamed female narrator is transcribing the memoirs of the title character, a former anti-apartheid guerilla named David Dirkse. She probes him for more information about his apparently important relationship with his comrade Dulcie Oliphant, about whom he has been ambiguous and secretive. David responds by reciting the biographical details from Dulcie’s military dossier, and the following conversation ensues during which the novel’s reader discerns the mounting frustration of both fictional speakers:

But she didn't tell you this herself, I venture. He glares at me suspiciously.

It's no use, I say. I give up. This is a task for someone addicted to your cloak-and-dagger struggle stuff.

I suppose, David confesses, that I don't see the need to flesh her out with detail, especially the kind invented by you. You see, she's not like anyone else; one could never, for instance, say that she's young or old or middle-aged. I think of her more as a kind of—and he has the decency to hesitate before such a preposterous idea—a kind of a scream somehow echoing through my story.

A scream, I laugh, a scream? You won't get away now with abstracting her. Besides, Dulcie herself would never scream. Dulcie is the very mistress of endurance and control. Dulcie knows that there is only a point to screaming if you can imagine someone coming to your rescue; that a scream is an appeal to a world of order and justice—and that there is no such order to which she can appeal.

And since when do you know so much about her? He asks.

David knows nothing of the art of inferencing, or perhaps he doesn't realize how much he has told me, even if it is somewhat opaque. (134)

I introduce this scene early in the dissertation because it illuminates the intersections among the larger questions I want to address in the study. In this scene, and in post-independence Anglophone African literature, I find that gender shapes and is shaped by nation building and history making; that traumatic testimony takes many shapes including inference, invention, and absence; that traumatic testimony echoes repeatedly until it reaches a willing witness; and that the landscape of traumatic suffering is fenced in, preventing an easy path to mourning and the potential to end traumatic suffering. I take the title of my dissertation from this scene because it illuminates my thesis that the testimonial representation which echoes through post-independence Anglophone African literature unleashes its political potential. In this chapter, I will illuminate the ways in which the psychoanalytic vocabulary that

underpins trauma and justice studies informs my reading of representations of trauma in contemporary Anglophone African novels. I will suggest that pairing these discourses with African cosmologies of personhood and community provides the potential for avoiding intellectual imperialism. I will trace the dissertation's interdisciplinary contributions to postcolonial, trauma, feminist, and gender studies. Finally, I will summarize the dissertation's chapters and suggest avenues for further research.

While writing my M.A. thesis on women healers in Armah's novels, I noticed that his literary depictions of African "healing" practices were very similar to contemporary Western counseling techniques. Healing in these novels is performed on the individual body, the psyche, and the community, all of which are traumatized by both colonialism and neocolonialism depending on the novel's historical setting. "Healer" women and men are also represented in Armah's fiction in equal numbers. When Armah later spoke at Drexel University in 2003, I asked him at length about his healing/counseling scenes at a dinner party in his honor after the event. He said the depictions were based on his extensive historical research of various African healing practices across the continent and were not derived from Western psychological practice.⁷ Armah noted that his research revealed that pre-colonial healing communities were egalitarian and were not gendered. However, I could not help but see a connection between Armah's representations of indigenous healing practices and Western counseling techniques. Frantz Fanon links colonialism with psychic pathology and is a major influence on Armah's writing. I wondered if Armah had drawn from Fanon's published case studies for his own literary representations.

Regarding the similarities between pre-colonial African healing and contemporary Western psychological counseling practices, however, Armah suggested that we cannot speculate on the direction of influence if, indeed, any exists. Armah is not the only writer studied in these pages whose literature includes representations of and references to psychoanalytic and counseling practices. *Nervous Conditions*, *Maps*, and *The Icarus Girl* also feature psychoanalyst characters whose consultations with other characters yield drastically different results, and Dangarembga studied both medicine and psychology at university.⁸ The literature's analyst characters provide models for bringing the discourse of psychoanalysis to the practice of reading African literature. The most striking example is in *Maps*, in which the protagonist Askar's Uncle Hilaal is writing a book on children survivors of war trauma. Hilaal's wife Salaado admonishes him when he turns his analytic lens on their nephew who has just migrated from a war zone to live with them. "Please don't psychoanalyse us" (145), Salaado asks Hilaal. She means that Hilaal should avoid repeating psychoanalysis's earlier penchant for universalization by ascribing set meanings to Askar's trauma before hearing the child's specifically individual testimony.

Outside fiction, many of the leading African thinkers on race and colonialism employ the psychoanalytic vocabulary of traumatic suffering to discuss colonialism and its imprint on the neocolonial nation-state. Fanon's inclusion of case studies of survivors of colonial trauma in *The Wretched of the Earth*, while rarely commented on, underlines the necessity of Africanist decolonization and puts the entire project into a psychological framework of pathology versus health so that decolonization is rewritten as a matter of life or death.⁹ Uzoma Esonwanne's reading of *Nervous*

Conditions argues that investigating psychoanalysis and African literature concurrently can help us identify heretofore unexplored desires represented in the literature that precipitate and address the colonized individual's repressed identity, a nervous condition that Simon Gikandi calls "crises of the soul" (qtd. in Esonwanne 142).¹⁰ Juliana Makuchi Nfah-Abbenyi compares and complicates the psychological implications of colonialism's reliance on gender difference in Francophone and Anglophone African literature.¹¹ Françoise Vergès examines the lie of colonialism's rhetoric of benevolence in Mother France's family romance with her colony off the East Coast of Africa, the island of Réunion whose mixed-raced population marks its colonial history of plantation slavery and gendered violence.¹² Vergès argues that the island's history of slavery informs its contemporary discourses of *métissage* (miscegenation), assimilation, and emancipation, as well as the ways in which masculinity is constructed. Moroccan psychoanalyst, activist, and artist Rita el Khayat has written psychological studies of Maghrebian women, and Senegalese psychiatrist Bougoul Badji writes about psychopathology in Dakar.¹³ Finally, Achille Mbembe's groundbreaking *On the Postcolony* decries the continuation of colonial violence long past the formal end of colonialism in psychoanalytic vocabulary.¹⁴

My project's theoretical framework of trauma theory arose from my reading of Nicolas Abraham and Maria Torok's *The Shell and the Kernel* on traumatic representation and encryption as these relate to testimony, mourning, and melancholia.¹⁵ Three other texts augmented and rounded out my thinking. First, Ifi Amadiume and Abdullahi An-Na'im's *The Politics of Memory* connects trauma and justice studies in the African context of decolonization.¹⁶ Social justice theory is

based in the psychoanalytic vocabulary of trauma and is concerned with themes of reparation, testimony, memory, and the law. These themes in black literature are linked with images and metaphors of health and pathology. In post-independence Anglophone African literature, justice and healing are defined in terms of traumatic testimony and recovery. Second, Anne Cheng's *The Melancholy of Race* augments Fanon's precedent for discussing the psychic harm that racism effects on the racially marked individual. Finally, Caruth's *Unclaimed Experience* links trauma, testimony, and literature. The testimonial process is an impulse toward justice and cure (which, in cases of traumatizing violence, may be the same thing). I find that the contemporary Anglophone African novel continues the widespread African *griot* (or *griotte*) tradition first by blending the political, historical, and literary and second by keeping secrets.¹⁷ Reading postcolonial Anglophone African literature that represents colonial violence *as traumatic testimony* allows a discussion of these larger critical concerns: the pathology of racism, the speaker-griot linked to the community, social justice or healing, and gender.

This final concern surfaces in the literature as a link between the physical and psychic health of the mother figure and the processes of postcolonial nation building. Colonialism gendered African females as "women" in order to create rape cultures that deployed patriarchal gender norms as cultural control (in already-patriarchal communities, gender stratifications were exacerbated). In post-independence Anglophone African literature, African female characters use their raced and gendered bodies to wrest symbolic control over their communities away from the colonizer. By repeating images of gendered violence and its aftermath in terms of

pathology and health, the literature critiques the colonial reformulation of the African female as woman and the African family as a gendered hierarchy. In such a reading, it appears that when Anglophone African literature attempts to imagine postcolonial alternatives to the patriarchal nation-state, it continues to express possibilities through representations of the maternal (albeit not necessarily biological). In light of African cosmologies that consider the health of the community to be predicated on the symbiotic relationship among all of its members regardless of age or gender, this dissertation questions the persistence of the literary emphasis on the maternal to gender a “healthy” nation. Rather than suggest that Anglophone African literature cannot imagine postcolonialism outside the gendered paradigm of domination it seeks to escape, I explore the possibilities of what this literary persistence might suggest.

I was initially interested in the multiple layers of reading and readers the texts represent and initiate. In these particular literary texts, certain literary characters “read” other characters in various ways. These reading characters in turn model for the novels’ readers how to and how not to read. Stanley Leavy advises that the best analyst is an untrained one, much as the best reader of a traumatic testimonial text is an untrained witness.¹⁸ At best, the reader has no literary, historical, cultural or other preconceptions, only a “focused and gentle attention to the text at hand and rigorous self-discipline in order to meet it” (Andrade 240).¹⁹ Reading African testimonial narratives has the potential to dismantle our existing notions of African literature, of colonial trauma, of testimony, and of recovery, and to illuminate possibilities for reconceptualizing these notions. I neither advocate psychoanalytic training for readers of post-independence Anglophone African literature nor argue that we should

categorize the literature as traumatic narrative. The text is set and the reader-as-witness possesses the potential for transformative action based on the variability of her relationship with that text. This understanding recasts reading as a potentially political act with the possibility for social change. Responsibility and, thus, possibility, resides wholly within the reader. This expansion of the reader's task links her to her community, of which she is a microcosm, and to its potential for transformative change as a result of her own transformative contact with the traumatic narrative.

For me, the potential breakdown of productive reading is the possibility for reader misunderstanding, whether intentional or not, of the text's message. Dori Laub warns that the lack of a qualified listener "annihilates the story" and prevents either judiciary or curative responses (68).²⁰ Hearing traumatic testimony changes the listener by entrusting her with juridical responsibility. The changed listener who has been able to productively hear the testimony is then qualified to explore with the trauma survivor a means to transcend suffering. An unqualified listener bears no burden of responsibility to the trauma survivor and thus offers no response to the testimony. The crucial relationship in this scenario is that of the reader-witness with the text-testimony. The reader bears a responsibility for continuous reevaluation of her position vis-à-vis the text in light of her perceptions of who speaks it and what it represents. This responsibility calls attention to representation as a political act of control and challenges the reader to acknowledge and interrogate her historical indebtedness to and participation in collective networks of hegemonic control or justice. The cross-cultural reader must remain cognizant of the fact that any lens she

trains over the text may taint or obscure its political potential and the culture it represents. Such misapprehensions can create or reinforce false constructions of reality and thus be a detriment to the reader's relationship with the literature.

The relationship between the readers within a fictional world and the readers of the fictional representations of said worlds demonstrates the notion that any literary text's readership is fragmented by gender, race, class, identity, age, and other factors. Each reader brings a particular lived experience to a text that mediates that reader's reading of it. This fracturing of the novel's readership, coupled with the fact that much post-independence Anglophone African literature defies easy categorization, means that the processes of reading these particular traumatic literary representations are as fragmented and as fraught with interpretive possibilities as the processes of crafting and reading traumatic testimony.

Literary characters learn about themselves and their worlds through the processes of reading other traumatized characters. Simultaneously, the reader of the literary text learns about herself and her world through her own processes of reading the text's representations of both traumatized characters and those characters' intra-textual readings of each other. Shoshana Felman likens the productive study of testimony texts to both a *performative* and a *transformative* experience for the reader.²¹ When the reader approaches a testimonial text as a witness, the text teaches her about the nature of trauma and testimony. Learning transforms the reader-student by traumatizing her. In fact, Felman argues, nothing has "truly" been taught unless the act of reading pushes the reader into crisis, breaking down her accepted representational structures and frames of reference for both the testimonial material

and life (53). This breakdown of the reader's sense of understanding represents a traumatic crisis and is the only way she can learn from (and work through, or introject) the subject matter of the testimony text. Reading these novels as traumatic testimonies traumatizes us as readers and thus shatters our conceptions of the Real.

In this context, the literary representation of trauma functions as a dual witness to trauma: as both observer of the trauma (the witness who *sees* what happens) and as a testimony of it (the witness who *speaks about* what happens). While trauma and justice studies both speak of a witness who listens to and is transformed by traumatic testimony that is spoken, I suggest that a literature which represents traumatic testimony thrusts its reader into the role of a testimonial witness. The witness's ethical position is the one which Derrida suggests Hamlet unwillingly assumes when the ghost of his father appears and demands vengeance.²² The ghost similarly implicates the reader of Shakespeare's play by haunting her as well across the space between herself and the page, and across time. Both psychoanalysis and the novels I examine in this dissertation benefit from this interactive interplay between the reader and the implications for reading. Both the practice of the discourse as a theoretical paradigm and the literary texts themselves benefit from such a mutual give and take.

How do I avoid imposing my own cultural lens on the literature if I argue that we should read it in a certain way? I keep Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak's advice before me, that cross-cultural literary study requires that we as teachers and readers constantly interrogate our own subject and cultural positions in relation to the text and its author, and that we attempt to adopt a learning position in relation to the text rather

than an imposing one.²³ Recent scholarship in Latin American *testimonio* studies is instructive in this regard. The *testimonio*'s positioning of itself as history inverts the claim of fiction to know the other. *Testimonio* is a community voice inviting the reader to become an ally in the text's healing work. The realist and postmodern novels examined in this dissertation position themselves similarly. The function of *testimonio* is less about the relationship between the individual and his community, which is assumed to be of paramount importance, and more about the political potential embedded in the act of testifying. The potential for politicization of the testimonial process resides in the space between speaker and reader. The *testimonio*'s appeal to the cross-cultural reader, who cannot occupy the writer's subject position, is to situate herself next to the writer as an ally.²⁴ Many readers of post-independence Anglophone African literature are cross-cultural, and I suggest that such readers would do well to follow the *testimonio* reader's example and read as a testimonial witness, or ally.

To study trauma is to study response. The survival of a traumatic event demands a response from the survivor, and the potential for cure demands a response from both the survivor and a witness. Reading these novels as traumatic narratives implicates not only the colonizer as perpetrator but also the reader as listener in the form of a demand for reader response. When a testimony is made, the listener is part of the creation of knowledge about the traumatic event. After hearing the testimony, the witness moves forward with the trauma survivor to, in effect, write the future. In the case of *David's Story*, the narrator literally rewrites his story and those of his subjects. "This is and is not David's story," she begins the novel: "I took liberties

with the text and considerably revised sections that he had already approved” (1, 3). As Wicomb’s narrator does with David in *David’s Story*, the reader of the testimonial literature studied in this dissertation moves forward with the fictional characters to author an alternative notion of postcoloniality. Time thus becomes a crucial buffer between the literary character’s experience of trauma and that trauma’s later representation as the testimony to be read or witnessed by both other characters and the reader of the novel. For example, in *Maps, Nervous Conditions*, and *David’s Story*, which are framed as traumatic testimonies, the narrator indicates that time has passed between the traumatic events narrated and the setting down of the narrative, and again between that writing and its presentation in novel form to the reader. While literature converts traumatic testimony from spoken to written form, the sense of passed time is the crucial element that transforms the reader into a responsible testimonial witness. Time operates thusly for both readers *in* the literature and readers *of* the literature.

When the reader of testimonial literature joins the testimony-speaking character in a search for justice, the notion of worlding as an act of postcolonial cultural inscription comes into play. The literary texts inscribe a new version of postcolonialism through their testimonial impulse toward individual and social justice, or transformation. Spivak first introduced the notion of “worlding” into postcolonial discourse in *A Critique of Postcolonial Reason*. Homi Bhabha and Ranjana Khanna have since illuminated the ways in which the notion of worlding informs and is informed by psychoanalytic usage.²⁵ I have suggested that the trauma sufferer creates a transformed future through her act of testimony. In a testimonial

context, worlding is the creation of a narrative that bears the strife of its creation. This strife is the tension between the sufferer's competing drives toward creation (narration/testimony) and concealment (silence/melancholic attachment to the lost object). The trauma sufferer will always be marked psychically and/or physically by the traumatic event, but the life lived after surviving and accepting the traumatic event is also markedly different because it is built by the survivor out of a changed reality. Worlding, like testimony, is thus the act of saying the unsayable. In post-independence Anglophone African literature, speaking the unsayable is a testimonial act that names the lost object of subjecthood. For the postcolonial writer, speaking the unsayable engenders a national literature, which Fanon argues is the prerequisite of any postcolonial culture. The novels' representations of testimony do the same work. By representing determined African subjects who read and make histories of trauma, the literature engenders the potential for authoring a post-independence African culture that exists outside the parameters of "nationhood" as defined by colonialist and imperialist frameworks of global community.

Two critical decisions shaped this project: first, I chose post-independence Anglophone African novels that represent various modes of testimonial transmission; and, second, I chose a critical framework that allows me to discuss representations of traumatic testimony in that literature. I analyze novels that engage with testimony in three different ways. First, *Fragments*, *Carcase for Hounds*, and *Abyssinian Chronicles* depict moments or scenes of testimony. Second, *The Icarus Girl* and *Disgrace* represent an absence of testimony and the ways in which the censored, traumatized body makes its trauma known nevertheless. Third, *David's Story*,

Nervous Conditions, and *Maps* are framed as testimony. The novels also depict three different testimonial modes, and my chapters reflect these groupings: first, *Nervous Conditions* and *Maps* depict the changing native body as visual testimony; second, *David's Story*, *The Icarus Girl*, and *Disgrace* portray the spectral ramifications of censoring testimony; and third, *Carcase for Hounds*, *Fragments*, and *Abyssinian Chronicles* depict the wounded character who voices the trans-generational testimony of a traumatized community. These modes of telling crisscross sub-Saharan Africa, illuminating the notion that traumatic suffering links otherwise seemingly disparate communities together. The cross-continental testimonial patterns dictate my choice of texts, allowing me to consider decolonization and traumatic testimony as simultaneous and crucially linked developments.

We can read other post-independence Anglophone African novels according to the template I propose: as traumatic testimony. South African Lauretta Ngcobo's *And They Didn't Die* depicts the delayed spoken testimony of a black woman, Jezile, and her son's white body which bears witness to her employer's crimes of rape and miscegenation.²⁶ In Ghanaian Amma Darko's *Beyond the Horizon*, an African prostitute in Germany, Mara, is bereft of witnesses to her testimony of traumatic coercion into human trafficking. She narrates the novel to her own "virtually naked" reflection in a mirror (1).²⁷ This template can also work with Francophone African literature: Senegalese Mariama Bâ's *So Long a Letter* is framed as Ramatoulaye's letter to a friend, a testimony of the trauma of cultural genocide through Islam's gendered reconfiguration of the African family.²⁸ And, finally, the trauma of slavery and the crossing of the Atlantic have produced traumatic African diaspora

communities and writers in the Americas at large (for example, Paule Marshall, Jamaica Kincaid, and Gayl Jones, among others) whose writing also functions as testimonies of the past traumas of displacement from the homeland and the family via the Middle Passage.²⁹ Toni Morrison's *Beloved* is the most prominent example, for its engagement with ghosts and Sethe's frequent testimonial observations of "rememories" of the past traumas of plantation slavery in the United States South.³⁰ *Beloved* is the subject of a growing body of scholarship on literary representations of traumatic repetition, memory, and history. In the Caribbean, Haitian Edwidge Danticat's *Breath, Eyes, Memory* depicts the twin traumas of migration and sexual abuse that repeat across the lives of Martine Caco and her daughter Sophie.³¹ Sophie's first-person narration is a testimony that also attempts to reconstruct Martine's traumatic narrative against her wishes.

I work with psychoanalysis for several reasons. Most importantly, psychoanalysis allows us to scrutinize widely accepted postcolonial readings of African texts to excavate thematic elements that have been overlooked by a traditional focus on racial subordination or nationalism. Contemporary trauma studies have grown out of Sigmund Freud's conceptualizations of mourning and melancholia, and justice studies in turn relies on the psychoanalytic vocabulary of trauma. Psychoanalysis thus provides a powerful vocabulary for discussing the literature's representations of trauma and testimony and its themes of repression, loss, fantasy, desire, and personality development. This last criterion is especially important when we note that so much postcolonial literature appropriates the *Bildungsroman* genre, a point to which I will return later in the dissertation.

While this dissertation brings to the forefront the way that African postcolonialism is described in terms of trauma and testimony, I do not suggest that trauma operates similarly across all postcolonial or all African literature. Trauma is not exclusive to colonial and immediate postcolonial imaginings. Contemporary writings in some post-independence nations (in Africa and elsewhere) are no longer concerned with colonialism and its continuing ramifications, but with other forms of trauma.³² The term “postcolonial” is thus fraught by its etymological focus on colonialism as *the* signifier of any community of people who were colonized, regardless of how recently or strongly—or not—the imprint of colonialism lingers on the contemporary cultural imaginary.³³ I suggest that a theme of what we might call “traumatic postcolonialism” repeats across post-independence Anglophone African literature and elsewhere. This thematic continuity provides a way of talking about trauma and testimony.

Psychoanalysis also allows us to examine the ways in which racialized and gendered violence function in the texts to create psychic and material loss. It allows us to further examine the ways that loss pairs subversively with themes of nationalism, gender transgression, and motherhood to generate new definitions of postcolonial “nation,” and to articulate new definitions of personhood in place of those obscured by colonialism. Psychoanalysis thus allows us to read literary representations of violence as testimonial calls to begin processes of mourning and justice which, in the colonial condition, may be the same thing. At the same time, however, pairing Anglophone African literature with psychoanalysis demands an awareness of the discourse’s earlier history of racialized and gendered application.

We must therefore scrutinize any engagement with the historical mythologies of psychoanalysis that does not apply to African cosmologies of social and familial organization (two primary examples of which are the Oedipus complex and certain constructions of gender difference).

Within the rubric of psychoanalysis, I use Freud's work because it helps me to articulate the ways that mourning and melancholia manifest in literary representations of the individual and the social. Freud's "Mourning and Melancholia" is the foundational text for discussing the essay's two title categories of response to a traumatic event: mourning is the transformative path toward existing productively after a traumatic event; melancholia is the state of stasis into which the traumatic sufferer becomes entrapped by her compulsion to cling to the idea of the object (literal or figurative) which was lost in the traumatic incident.³⁴ Fanon set the precedent for discussing colonialism in psychoanalytic terms using Jacques Lacan's mirror stage, and numerous other postcolonial and feminist critics have since employed Lacan to discuss difference as foundational to networked systems of domination.³⁵ Lacan's notion of the birth of the ideal self and the differentiating other is useful for elucidating the psychic split that results from internalized racism. I use Freud to investigate what happens in the literature *after* we acknowledge difference.

To me, the crux of Fanon's discussion of Lacan is that the black man learns to see himself in terms that differentiate *him* from *whiteness* (of course, we have to add gender back into Fanon). To Fanon, the colonized Antillean's ideal sense of self is framed in terms of having "no color" prior to encountering his blackness when he

meets a white person and begins to idealize whiteness (*Black* 162, note 25). But the colonized child describes his “no color” in terms of whiteness, as when he remarks that going on vacation gives him “rosy cheeks” (*Black* 162, note 25).

Freud’s theories of mourning and melancholia diverge at this point from Lacan’s, as do Fanon’s. For Lacan, mourning and melancholia are linked to desire which is born of a lack brought about by the initial separation of the infant from the mother. This lack manifests in various forms throughout the life of the self and dooms the individual to suffering. The individual can never regain the imagined experience of being one with—a part of—the mother. At the end of *Black Skin, White Masks* Fanon suggests two ideas: first, he argues that “freedom requires an effort at disalienation” and, second, that developing an ability to explain the other to the self may usher in a world of harmonious cohabitation (231). While this ending vision has been described as perhaps excessively utopic, I suggest that Fanon points toward the potential for social and individual transformation through communal and testimonial bonds forged across racialized divisions. Fanon’s hope for “freedom” challenges Lacan’s discourse of futility because Fanon’s hope is couched in terms of traumatic testimony. Fanon thus appropriates Freud’s conception of mourning as transformative in his own call for social change. I read testimonial representations in postcolonial Anglophone African literature as similarly challenging the discourse of futility by insisting repeatedly, as does Fanon, that community building and history making are essential in order to “create the ideal conditions of existence for a human world” (*Black* 231). The literature repeatedly extols the potential for transformational success rather than the inevitability of human nature to exploit imagined differences.

The discourse of trauma studies teaches us that the search to transcend trauma (which I conceive here as a form of mourning) can not eradicate the past experience of trauma. David Eng and David Kazanjian suggest that mourning is a stage reached *after* melancholia, but only after repeated unsuccessful attempts.³⁶ Mourning may in fact be a series of repeated attempts to relinquish a melancholic attachment and move beyond the traumatic loss. Mourning is thus bound up in melancholia even as it attempts to move beyond it, and the notion of cure is similarly fraught and contested. In Nicholas Rand's conception, "cure" is analogous to "mourning processes," rather than an isolated stage reached only after mourning is complete.³⁷ Mourning may never be complete and, in this light, we can view cure *as the process of* mourning.

The process of learning to accept one's past is an acknowledgment that a transformed self and future are worth working toward. In this light, I see trauma and justice studies as aligned with Anglophone African literary representations and cosmologies through their mutual concern for the health of the individual as crucial to the health of the emerging postcolonial community. I thus attempt to align my critical practice with the cultural cosmology that the literature represents. I hope to make African literature accessible to metropolitan readers in a way that does not intellectually colonize the subject texts and the experiences they represent. I take very seriously Armah's caution to the literary critic of non-African descent to navigate cultural difference carefully in order to avoid replicating, through literary scholarship, colonial appropriation of African literary labor.³⁸

The dissertation's central and organizing principle is best adumbrated in chapter two, "Testimonial Bodies," because it positions the native body as both

repository for *and* manifestation of colonial trauma. The literature demonstrates that while the testimonial text can function as a testimony, testimony—and therefore, social transformation—is grounded in the character’s body. Chapter two lays the theoretical foundation for reading the literary character’s body as testimony. Chapters two through four then elucidate the various ways in which the native body articulates the testimony of trauma through physical change, spectrality, and emanating a historical voice.

This dissertation contributes to four disciplinary discourses: postcolonial, trauma, feminist/women’s, and gender studies. While interdisciplinary scholarship is becoming more valued in the twenty-first century, transgressing institutional boundaries is still a fraught endeavor. The multi-faceted, networked nature of colonial trauma, however, demands an interdisciplinary hermeneutic approach. Using the psychoanalytic vocabulary of traumatic testimony to study Anglophone African novels that are themselves hybrid (in terms of genre, aesthetic mode, and literary form) suggests that one could read the literature in a fashion that helps to dismantle disciplinary, generic, and discourse boundaries.³⁹ The act of reading can transform the reader’s understanding of the real by disassembling culturally-specific social institutions that are considered universal. I suggest that reading post-independence Anglophone African literature can allow us to conceive new ways of thinking about history, nation, and postcolonial personhood. Because history is referential and trauma is not, the novels examined in this dissertation demonstrate that the study of trauma requires us as readers to revise our conception of what constitutes a viable history: to consider the notion that history may be able to exist where understanding

does not. By dismantling the notion that history, memory, and literature exist in mutual exclusion, the literature demands a revision of the reader's relationship with it, with sub-Saharan Africa, and with postcolonial, trauma, feminist/women's, and gender studies.

Post-independence Anglophone African literature is conventionally studied under the rubric of postcolonial studies, and scholarship on it has been concerned with issues surrounding self-definition. These discussions attempt to navigate the forced hybridization of African modes of personal, literary, and cultural expression as mediated through the colonial experience.⁴⁰ Themes of loss stemming from dislocation pervade African literature, and Carole Boyce Davies suggests that marginalization can become a site of creative subversion because forced relocation begets the necessary recreation of the self and of the nation.⁴¹ This notion, that location may embed political potential, informs the trope of forced migration in post-independence Anglophone African literature. My work extends the reach of postcolonial studies by suggesting a new way to examine the wide-ranging effects of dislocation and cultural genocide *as traumatic loss* for the colonized individual and community. This mode of reading literary representations of loss as testimony shifts critical focus away from the literature's litany of past abuses and toward its attempt to conceive a transformed future.

While mine is not the first analysis of African literature to employ the vocabulary of psychoanalysis, it is the first to suggest reading post-independence African novels as traumatic testimonies. The dissertation contributes to the discourse of trauma studies in two ways. First, it demonstrates engagement with the field's

challenge to disciplinary boundaries because postcolonial Anglophone African literature and studies of trauma and justice all juxtapose literary representation, history, traumatic experience, and testimony into a single narrative whose function is also political. Second, my work bridges the gap between trauma and postcolonial studies because postcolonial Anglophone African literature and studies of trauma and justice are all based in the postcolonial moment but use the vocabulary and theoretical framework of psychoanalysis.

Finally, this dissertation opens new lines of discussion within feminist/women's and gender studies discourses by bringing the gender-inclusivity of African feminisms and literature to the fore of post-independence Anglophone African literary studies.⁴² Anglophone African literature represents cultures that overwhelmingly do not relegate men and women to spheres of influence and activity based exclusively on biological determinations. This African conception of humanity is predicated on valuing the necessity of all the members of both the family and national units. Post-independence Anglophone African literature grapples with the imposition of colonial gendering in ways that reconfigured pre-colonial cultural matrices. African(ist) scholars like Amadiume, Oyèrónké Oyěwùmí, M. J. Daymond, and Andrea Rushing (among others) and artists with an anti-colonial social agenda seek to destroy these oppressive matrices and to create and institute non-oppressive postcolonial ones.⁴³ The literature studied in this dissertation is part of that project.

In my attempt to read African literature as representing and representative of African cosmologies of humanity, I read novels written by both men and women, and which represent the experiences of men, women, and children. This cross-gender

focus is imperative in order to illuminate the dialog between male and female writers as they explore the larger questions addressed in this dissertation. I take very seriously Lois West's warning that while the discourses of gender, domination, family, and nation intersect, scholarship in these areas has conventionally assumed that men and women operate in wholly separate spheres.⁴⁴ African literary studies have been gendered based on these underlying patriarchal assumptions. To Florence Stratton and other Africanist literary critics, African men's and women's writing are meant to be read together.⁴⁵

My analysis expands the reach of gender studies and feminist criticism in two key ways through its engagement with post-independence Anglophone African literature. First, the dissertation demonstrates that Anglophone African literary interplay between genders unhinges gender in provocative ways, for example, by divorcing gender from the body in *Maps*, using gendered literary representations to critique gendered histories, nationalisms, and nation building processes in *David's Story*, *Nervous Conditions*, *The Icarus Girl*, and *Carcase for Hounds*, and by prescribing gender-inclusive, egalitarian notions of postcolonialism in *Fragments* and *Abyssinian Chronicles*. Second, this dissertation shifts the vantage points from which the metropolitan scholar approaches contemporary Anglophone African literature: away from a focus on exclusively masculine or feminine realms of inquiry and toward considering the trauma of the entire community in order to identify both systems of oppression and systems of valuation of figures previously devalued by patriarchy (for example, women, mothers, and girl children).

The dissertation is organized around three modes of testimonial telling in eight Anglophone African novels from across sub-Saharan Africa which engage with themes of colonial and neocolonial violence and traumatic suffering. These novels represent the testimonial moment for a colonized people, which is the moment of revolution and the subsequent birth of the postcolonial nation. In this postcolonial moment during which the global metropolitan center seeks to “modernize” Africa in its own image, literary self-fashioning is important, Fanon tells us, because it underpins the articulation of the national, cultural, and individual selves. In an increasingly homogenized global community, localized self-fashioning is a crucial testimonial exercise in narrating a traumatic history of occupation and charting a locally-defined indigenous future. I argue that the literature represents various modes of testimony to dismantle the structural hierarchies of neocolonialism and initiate processes of postcolonial mourning.

Chapter two, “Testimonial Bodies,” traces the ways in which damaged bodies function as readable traumatic testimonies of gendered and racialized colonial violence in *Nervous Conditions* and *Maps*. The novels represent traumatic suffering in images of bodily illness and mutilation to signify hypochondriacal responses to the psychic violence that accompanies the physical violation wrought by colonialism. Colonized bodies transgress patriarchal gender role boundaries, undermining the construction of knowledge about the nature of colonialism, the colony, the colonized, and the colonizer.

Chapter three, “Censorship and Testimonial Ghosts,” considers the testimonial censorship of and the subsequent haunting by the ghostly female body as symptom

and signifier of the traumatic loss of the ideal native space through enculturation and migration. I explore the ways in which *David's Story* and *The Icarus Girl* employ postmodern narrative tactics to critique and reject both the Western novel form as a mode of transmission of testimonial literature and patriarchal constructions of nation and family as pathological.

Chapter four, "Testifying Wounds," examines the ways in which the wounded body releases a voice that testifies of the collective's traumatic history. *Carcass for Hounds*, *Fragments*, and *Abyssinian Chronicles* represent characters who mourn the loss of a collective African identity by insistently responding to the physical and psychic wounds this loss inflicts. The characters repeatedly bear witness to traumatic histories they not have lived and call for postcolonial justice that may be impossible to achieve. These postcolonial *Bildungsromane* all end in either the realm of the ancestors or in an inverted reality, suggesting the need to reconfigure postcolonial citizenship and cultural construction.

Chapter five, "Who is Writing (in) Africa? Reading Anglophone African Literature," examines the confluence of postcolonial and trauma studies in the figure of the metropolitan reader as witness to Anglophone African testimonial narratives. I suggest that international reading practice dictates the potential for social repression or transformation through its identification of the progenitors of "African" literature. I juxtapose the speeches announcing Coetzee's 2003 Nobel Prize in Literature, the responses of the African National Congress, the international press, and academe.

Through this study of reading literary representations of traumatic testimony in post-independence African literature, I have attempted to contribute to our

understanding of the global cultural production of “Africa” through reading practice. I hope to have created a space for interdisciplinary dialog to continue on the related questions of how trauma and testimony inform decolonization, nation building, and reformulation of anti-patriarchal notions of family predicated on revising colonial articulations of personhood.

The area of non-patriarchal post-colonial formation of families is a rich one that I touch on briefly throughout the dissertation. The field extends beyond the scope of this project, however, and is one that requires more scholarship. In particular, literary representations of transnational adoption and transracial families like those portrayed in *Maps* and *The Icarus Girl*, and the formation what Hazel Carby calls “subversive” communities of women like those we see in varying permutations in *Nervous Conditions*, *Abyssinian Chronicles*, and *Fragments*, would yield fruitful scholarship but remain largely unexamined.⁴⁶ I suggest that these literary representations of anti-patriarchal formations of family illuminate a means of navigating the postcolonial realities of a native population transformed by genocide, detention, migration, and rape. Alternative postcolonial “families” transgress borders that biology cannot cross and will not acknowledge. These transracial, transnational, re-gendered families are living histories of colonial trauma and so undermine the myth of a heterosexist, homogeneous postcolonial community. These literary scenarios suggest a means for postcolonial populations to grapple with questions of social inclusion that challenge hegemonic models. I read these families, formed as part of post-traumatic recovery, as metaphors for the post-independence nation in tension. The new nation struggles to negotiate the competing demands of delivering

on revolutionary promises and embracing modernity's expanding global network of exploitative socio-cultural and economic structures.

Chapter 2: Testimonial Bodies

Introduction

All colonized bodies are marked by traumatic suffering. In this chapter I examine two novels, Tsitsi Dangarembga's *Nervous Conditions* (1988) and Nuruddin Farah's *Maps* (1986), which represent traumatic suffering in images of bodily illness and mutilation.¹ First, I will summarize the novels' plots and explain how a psychoanalytic framework illuminates the narratives' political potential. I will then analyze the tropes of illness and bleeding in the novels and demonstrate the ways in which these bodily disfigurements tie the figure of the mother to postcoloniality by divorcing both from patriarchal notions of the "nation." I will conclude with implications for reading *Maps*, *Nervous Conditions*, and African literature.

In *Nervous Conditions* and *Maps*, colonized characters' changing bodies signify hypochondriacal responses to racialized and gendered psychic violence. I refer to these changing bodies as testimonial bodies because they are visible testimonies of colonial occupation. *Nervous Conditions* and *Maps* are about exploding boundaries and remapping terrains—geographic, ideological, and biological—that the discourse of colonization and the colonized subject previously considered stable. Both novels are set in a moment of remapping the nation through struggle, and they depict changes to geographic and ideological perimeters as reshaping the contours of the native body. The novels thus illuminate the crucial relationships among language, the colonized body, and the land.

In both colonial Rhodesia (later Zimbabwe) and Somalia, land occupation and ownership are contested terrains because both nations are crucially positioned for trade and regional domination.² Somalis and natives in Rhodesia consider land occupation a necessary element of national identity, and in each novel the fight over the land marks the native body. The diseased or mutilated body is both a metaphor and substitute for the diseased colony of Rhodesia and for the mutilated nation of Somalia. The body maps the narrative of these social and individual illnesses on itself.³ At the same time, however, changing testimonial bodies explode physical and conceptual boundaries of the notion of “native body” and introduce alternatives. These alternatives do not seek pre-colonial models, but they do seek to abolish imposed colonial ones. *Nervous Conditions* and *Maps* represent bodily testimony in the psychoanalytic language of introjection, which is the healing process of acceptance of and growth beyond traumatic injury. The bodies and the processes they signify allow us to conceive ways of being native outside those defined by colonial discourse.⁴

Postcolonial discourse has already theorized the relationship between the colonized individual and his or her community.⁵ I examine what Dangarembga and Farah have contributed to this dialog through their representations of diseased or mutilated individual bodies as metaphors for the colonized community, and through their choices of which bodies to represent in this way. The novels use female and male bodies to different ends, signifying their differently gendered relationships with the putative independent nation. Spivak famously argues that any critical discussion of representation in ideology, subjectivity, the nation, the state, and the law must

acknowledge the gendered nature of these discourses to avoid repeating patterns of textual violence.⁶ Sangeeta Ray suggests that responsible discourse analysis requires an expanded understanding of gender that subverts the heterosexist “cultural matrix” of postcolonial national identity (*En-Gendering* 4).⁷ As we read, we must remind ourselves that despite the novels’ representations of marked male and female bodies, their textual presences function critically to delineate cultural sites which are marked as either “feminine” or “masculine.” Feminist critics like Ray and Tovi Fenster suggest that such spatial gendering underlies the national myth of inclusion.⁸ Sallie Westwood adds that even as gendered inequality undermines the nation’s fictional unity, the “national story” is equally implicated in its heterosexist production and reproduction of inequality.⁹ Such national inequality derives in part from gendering bodies and their access to spaces in order to legitimate patriarchal power.

Dangarembga’s and Farah’s texts critique colonialism’s masculinization of the subject under the guise of universalism. Ray argues that this removal of the figure of the woman from cultural participation reassigns “the feminine” essence to the land, which is in turn gendered as the “motherland” (*En-gendering* 30-31). Feminized bodies in the novels who transgress culturally-determined gender boundaries thus find themselves in uncharted relationships with the “motherland.” They are forced to reconstitute their understandings of femininity as it relates to the creation of a postcolonial community. Their own gendered subjectivities come into play as well because the collective fiction of the nation hinges on its articulation of the (subject) position of women.¹⁰ The male state protects its feminized national purity against

foreign infiltration. Metaphorically speaking, the national father protects the “motherland” from the rape of the outsider/Other.

It is through metaphors of rape that the discourse of colonialism explodes native gender stratifications and remaps their relationships to the land. Anne McClintock notes the manner in which colonial discourse equates blackness with degeneration and conflates primitivism, lack of intelligence, immaturity, and femininity into a single trope and condition.¹¹ Progress is symbolized in “the white father” who feminizes the black man by forcing him to work the land (234). The type of labor the native performs is less important than the fact that black labor itself is feminized. The colonial power re-imagines the colonized male body *as* labor and thus denies the colonized body ownership of the land he works. The male body’s labor supersedes and, in colonial discourse, subsumes the labor of the female body which is re-imagined as the land. Even as labor is perceived as performed by black men, the discursive imagery of colonial labor thus coalesces into an ideology of heterosexual penetration of the black female body.¹² Mbembe corroborates McClintock’s progress/degeneration paradigm when he notes that the colonial European’s discursive “process of brutalization” of the African is a means of phallic domination (*Postcolony* 14). By equating blackness with the subordinated feminine and whiteness to the dominating masculine phallus, colonial discourse feminizes not only the black African but African-ness as degenerate and, in the context of civilization, invisible. To Mbembe, invisibility is the literal and symbolic death—often by suicide—of the native self.

The citizen body is the figurative terrain on which the nation is built. In *Nervous Conditions* and *Maps*, changing bodies mount political resistance by using the “the terrain of the nation” as a blank slate on which they record their marginalization from societies built on the “national story” of inclusivity (Westwood). As colonial subjects, the nature of these claims is grounded in the future—in struggle and in decolonization. As such, their influence contributes not only to the dismantling of the colony but also to the formation of post-independence nationhood. Although both male and female colonized bodies are visible markers of colonial violence, the texts suggest that only the testimonial female body is capable of initiating the process of social mourning and, thus, healing of colonial trauma. Her damaged testimonial body demands witness to the trauma she has suffered and a response of justice. By representing the colonized native remapping herself, *Nervous Conditions* remaps the condition of postcoloniality. In its representation of changing bodies that blur distinctions between nations, genders, and ethnicities, *Maps* suggests that justice for the colonized individual is a postcolonial condition devoid of gendered and racialized subordination. The colonized male body, in contrast, can expose but cannot help heal the problem of national mutilation. In the patriarchy, the colonized man wields the mutilating phallus.

By aligning the native body on the verge of independence with the land, the novels remap patriarchal notions of gender and nation. *Nervous Conditions*’ allusions to Black Nationalism and *Maps*’ representations of armed struggle—both of which nationalist discourse genders male—challenge the colonizer’s discursive representation of Africa as exotic and feminized. Reading these novels together

explodes and remaps the way we read postcolonial African literature, requiring the reader to explode and remap her own ideological boundaries. In order to recognize and acknowledge the textual bodies' politicization of global discourses of African-ness through individual and collective testimonies of colonial trauma, the Western reader must break her ethnocentric reading lens.

Trauma studies has benefitted from a growing body of scholarship on Latin American testimonies of colonial and neocolonial violence called *testimonio*, which are extended first-person narratives by survivors of or witnesses to traumas of repression, poverty, abuse, or struggle.¹³ Unlike trauma study, *testimonio* study is not grounded in psychoanalysis. Nevertheless, both trauma and *testimonio* scholars are interested in the political potential and efficacy of texts that recount cultural domination and violence in a politically repressive environment. Traumatic suffering binds different communities together via survivor response. *Testimonio* studies informs this study of postcolonial African literature because scholarship on both the *testimonio* and traumatic testimony find that the narratives have the potential to instigate collective healing by functioning as histories of unspeakable traumas, thus revising monolithic institutions of language, literary mode, and genre.

Subversion, and Subverting Literary Mode

Read as testimonial literature, the realist *Nervous Conditions* and postmodern *Maps* remap Western literary conventions. If we expand our understanding of what postcolonial realist and postmodern representations can do, then we can read the novels as transcending the boundaries set by modernism's progenitors. Kwame

Anthony Appiah and Ray both argue that post-independence literature which indicts neocolonial structures necessitates the creation of analytic modes that do not derive from colonial discourse.¹⁴ Appiah denies the possibility that postcolonial African literature that is also realist or postmodern can “reject the Western imperium” because its modal roots are modernist (152). Appiah maps literary mode to a colonialist/anti-colonial binary that places cultural boundaries around the post-independence African writer’s potential project. This reinforces the colonial discourse of the world as limitless and without boundary for the colonizer and limited to the point of nothingness for the native. Appiah draws new boundaries for postcolonial definitions of modernist modes, like “post-realist,” but these merely reinforce colonial discourse as a basis for analysis. In contrast, Ray expands the ways we conceive postcolonial literary modes to transgress colonial limits and, in so doing, opens up new “explicitly subversive” possibilities for the postcolonial writer’s project (“Through” 6). While Ray’s essay does not specifically address Appiah’s complaint about postmodernism, her response to his argument about realism’s presumed failure is transferable. She explodes the boundaries of colonial discourse, expanding the conceptual territories of realism and postcolonial studies to accommodate previously unconsidered readings of realist, postcolonial literary representations. Rather than accept Appiah’s creation of new critical categories, Ray suggests that we remap existing modal boundaries to accommodate postcolonial literary representations that are either realistic or postmodern *and* which indict the neocolonial state.

As postcolonial traumatic testimonies, *Nervous Conditions* and *Maps* indict bourgeois ideology as well as advance subversive agendas. Their appropriations of

realist and postmodern literary conventions suggest that mode alone cannot determine literature's political capability: function is equally important. These realist and postmodern testimonial narratives have the political potential to redraw postcolonial discourse boundaries around notions of "native" and "national identity." *Nervous Conditions* realistically represents the traumatic nature of the daily life of colonized female bodies. *Maps* also does this, but in a fragmented postmodern narrative style. Both novels' literary representations thus transcend the discourse of modernism to re-imagine realism and postmodernism in the psychoanalytic vocabulary of introjection. The novels' framing as testimonies of colonial occupation not only indicts the colonial state but also envisions a postcolonial reality beyond and unlike colonialism.

In their depictions of colonized children growing toward national and adult identities, *Nervous Conditions* and *Maps* establish a parallel between the colonized adolescent's developing nationalism and the nation's transformation through struggle. Both novels could be read as *Bildungsromane*: they depict the search for a postcolonial self by characters whose alienation places them in a "condition of 'transcendental homelessness'" (Cheah 242-43).¹⁵ *Nervous Conditions* and *Maps* alter the genre to accommodate the postcolonial condition. The novels pair the trope of illness with the process of decolonization: the native society, a social organism sickened by the pathology of colonization, must reform itself into a postcolonial entity. In each text, the protagonist's narrative of development also represents the narrative of postcolonial nation building. Dangarembga's and Farah's adaptations of the traditional *Bildungsroman* genre is consistent with Joanna Sullivan's contention that the twentieth-century African novel differs from the "Western novel" in part

because its central focus is the community rather than a “heroic individual” (182).

Dan Izevbaye suggests that, as in Sembene Ousmane’s *God’s Bits of Wood* and Ngũgĩ wa Thiong’o’s *Petals of Blood*, the “communal hero” as a literary technique is typical of African communities that view the collective as the source of social change (20-21).¹⁶ As postcolonial *Bildungsromane*, both *Nervous Conditions* and *Maps* depict individual characters, Nyasha and Askar, whose searches for identity “frequently mask[] greater quest[s], plumbing the integrity, fault lines, and features of the communal identity through the symbolic identity of the individual” (Sullivan 183).

For Pheng Cheah, the *Bildungsroman* genre is “imperative” for decolonization: the national *Bildung* parallels that of the novel’s protagonist who symbolizes the nation’s “first patriot and ideal citizen” (239). These decolonizing *Bildungsromane* are early post-independence novels that call for the creation of anti-colonial post-independence social structures. New structures may incorporate any progressive elements of but cannot of necessity replicate or maintain pre-colonial models since those were instruments of cultural subjection. As depicted in the novels, the national *Bildung* that seeks not to replace but merely to overlay “the foreign prosthesis” in the formation of a neocolonial state are doomed because colonial models cannot generate postcolonial freedoms (Cheah 246). The ghosts of colonialism haunt the post-independence nation and its repetitions of a traumatic past. The ghost’s presence questions the new nation’s still-forming and stalled incarnations of freedom, the idea that the people can transcend the finality of bondage in the midst of postcolonial government corruption and lingering subordination to the former colonial power. The ghost originates in the temporal as a specter of the past which haunts the present and

exposes the impossibility of a transformed future. The impossibility of a national formation that does not replicate colonial models means that the post-independence nation is doomed to remain inhospitable to its native population. The homeland becomes, instead, *unheimlich* to a portion of its inhabitants and thus challenges the national *Bildung*'s fiction of a homogeneous national family.

In both novels, the subject of the *Bildung* is literally absent at the end of the narrative, at the moment of testimonial telling. Both authors of the testimonies we read are removed from the events recounted by the passage of time. At the testimonial moment, the moment of telling which occurs at the end of both novels, we realize that both *Nervous Conditions* and *Maps* are the testimonies of not one but of at least two people—the text's narrator and another—recounted retroactively. *Nervous Conditions* is Tambu's "account" of her escape from both poverty and mission education, and Nyasha's rebellion against false privilege (1). *Maps* is a transcript of Askar's repeated testimony to various entities of the judicial system—the hopelessly intertwined "story of (Misra/Misrat/Masarat and) Askar" (259). The novels thus explode the conventions of the *Bildungsroman* genre first by doubling the genre's conventional number of protagonists to two, and second by representing *Bildungs* of key feminine and feminized characters. The novels prescribe a gender-inclusive postcolonial citizenry through ungendering the narrativization of the national *Bildung*. *Nervous Conditions* ends with the hospitalization of a gravely ill young black Rhodesian girl Nyasha and Tambu's future confession that while Nyasha's rebellion "may not in the end have been successful" (1), she has changed as a result. *Maps*

ends with the imprisonment of a young black Somali man Askar after the murder of his Ethiopian mother Misra in Mogadiscio.

Although all of their struggles with choice are gendered, Nyasha, Tambu, Askar, and Misra finally resist the narrative of the nation. Nyasha ends her participation in her father Babamukuru's colonial mimicry, and Tambu rethinks her colonial education. Askar validates Misra's claim to motherhood despite ethnic difference, although he is too late to tell her so. While Misra is dead at the end of *Maps*, she transgresses national and ethnic borders in service of motherhood while she is still alive. At the end of the novels, the narrators Tambu and Askar realize that the narratives of Nyasha and Misra are inextricably entwined with their own. Their narratives of symbolic repetition are delivered to the reader as *Nervous Conditions* and *Maps*.

Nervous Conditions and *Maps*: Summaries

Nervous Conditions outlines the trans-generational violence of colonial mimicry on Nyasha's increasingly skeletal body on the eve of the Zimbabwean independence struggle. Colonial mimicry is the native's participation in her own death by internalizing the colonial idealization of whiteness or mimicry to the point of eradicating herself from existence. To Bhabha, native mimicry is doomed to fail and so enables and elevates the colonizer. Nyasha's father Babamukuru repeatedly and futilely attempts to identify with the white racial ideal, a mutual obsession Fanon calls "dual narcissism" (*Black* 10). But Babamukuru complicates Bhabha's claim in that even as Babamukuru's mimicry ultimately reinforces white supremacy, it enables

him to achieve economic and social supremacy over his less imitative family members and former neighbors who remain mired in poverty.

Nervous Conditions opens in 1968 with the death of narrator Tambu's brother Nhamo, but immediately flashes back to 1965, months before real-life Rhodesian Prime Minister Ian Smith announces a unilateral declaration of independence (UDI) from Great Britain in order to continue white minority rule as an independent state.¹⁷ While Nyasha's story is part of Tambu's, the novel is framed as Tambu's later recording of an incomplete version of Nyasha's story. In the novel, Tambu's cousin Nyasha has returned after five years in England where the latter's parents earned Master's degrees. As a result, Nyasha's father Babamukuru is promoted to headmaster of the local mission school, the highest rank an African can reach in the colonial education administration. After Smith's declaration, Britain negotiates to regain control of its former colony and the African voices of Black Nationalist rebellion arise. In the novel, Nyasha lends her own voice to this call while Babamukuru futilely attempts to curtail her individuation in order to protect his professional position. In tandem with her frequent arguments with Babamukuru, Nyasha's endocryptic identification with Babamukuru's failed racial assimilation manifests as her frequent refusal to eat. She often purges when she does. Nyasha both takes on and takes in—even as she resists by purging—her father's unaddressed grief over his failure to racially assimilate. Her eating “disorder” emaciates her adolescent female form.¹⁸ Having offloaded his failure onto Nyasha, Babamukuru's male body remains unmarked. Nyasha's femininity, however, prevents her from

bolstering Babamukuru's quest for racial identification through gender. Nyasha's secret, of the father's repeated failure to assimilate, eats her gendered body alive.

Nervous Conditions depicts Nyasha's struggle with the narratives of maturity offered to her. The breakdown of her body is a metaphor for the necessity of making a choice. Nyasha's struggle against the narratives of maturity her gender, class, and racial position offer doom her to fail in all forms of mimicry as not quite. Nyasha's diminishing body is a visual testimony of her struggle to negotiate two narratives of maturity, that of the colonized native of privilege and that of the emergent postcolonial nation.¹⁹ In contrast, Tambu's family's poverty insures her survival. She has no chance at class, racial, or gender identification; Tambu's multiple positions as outsider allow her to tell Nyasha's story.

In turn, Nyasha's decline and hospitalization instructs Tambu—it plants the “seed of doubt” in her mind about the deleterious psychic effects of her convent education (203). The haunting “seed” of doubt is Nyasha's ghostly body, a catalyst to Tambu's development as the postcolonial citizen Nyasha may or may not become. Tambu's maturation allows her to process what she has seen of colonialism and what it does to the native body. Nyasha's and Tambu's mother's wasting bodies tell her that “our Government was not a good one” (103). When the real-life Smith bans all Black Nationalist political activity in the late 1970s, rebels launch *Chimurenga* (guerilla warfare for national independence).²⁰ The independent nation of Zimbabwe, established April 18, 1980, is built on the graves of twenty-five thousand freedom fighters.²¹ I read Nyasha's skeletal body, her broken crypt, as a metaphor for the struggle and rebirth of the postcolonial nation.

Maps traces the native's embrace of neocolonial nationalism in blood on the bodies of Askar and on his multiple black mother figures in the Ogaden and in Mogadiscio during the Somali-Ethiopian war. Askar's birth and early childhood are set against the historical backdrop of the Somali state's support of ethnic Somali rebels in the Ogaden region demanding independence from Ethiopia.²² In the novel, as anti-colonial tensions in the Ogaden slowly coalesce into an organized armed independence struggle, Askar's growing nationalism increasingly compromises the unconditional nature of his love for Misra, an Ethiopian immigrant who adopts him at birth. Askar has episodes of hypochondriacal bleeding for both the actual wounds inflicted on Misra throughout the novel and at crucial moments in Ethiopia's occupation of the Ogaden where Askar lives. Askar repeatedly demonstrates his growing conviction that his nationalist desire to return the Ogaden to the Somali motherland invalidates Misra's claim of inter-ethnic and transnational motherhood. Askar's attempt to privilege nation over mother metaphorically wounds him and is destructive to Misra until he recognizes that the Somali cosmology of nation as clan is a cultural identification rather than a biological imperative. Askar's attempts to father a nation by denying the mother gender his vision of postcoloniality. His inability to repair either the mother or the nation (which, to him, come to be the same thing) is destructive to both until he is able to mourn both losses and accept his role in nation building as ally and not savior. The absence of wounds on his bloody body signifies his inability to gender the new nation as male.

In both the novel and in history, Somalia invades the Ethiopian-held Ogaden in 1977. Ethiopia expels the Somali forces in 1978 with assistance from the Soviet

Union. At this moment of losing the Ogaden so conclusively, the dream of an intact motherland seems lost to many Somalis in both the real and fictional worlds. Askar's malaria and Misra's kidnapping and murder by evisceration during this weekend symbolize the real national loss and subsequent collective mourning.²³ In the novel, Misra's mutilated body is washed clean of its blood by the water in which it is found. I read Misra's mutilated but unbloody body, paired with Askar's bleeding but unwounded body, as a metaphor for Somalia's struggle for rebirth as an ungendered postcolonial nation.

The *Bildungs* of Nyasha and Misra are nested within Tambu's and Askar's. Nyasha's incomplete story is part of Tambu's narrative, and Misra's unfinished story is embedded in Askar's. Tambu's trauma thus complicates Nyasha's because Tambu, as narrator, obscures some evidence of Nyasha's narrative of maturation with her own immature bumbling. Likewise, Askar's trauma complicates Misra's because he obscures elements of her narrative through his own immaturity. In *Maps*, Misra's is the transnational body that serves as a metaphor of individual and national struggle for postcolonial identity. Nesting multiple *Bildungs* that represent different nationalisms within the same *Bildungsroman* creates what Joseph Slaughter calls intertextual "reading genealogies" that transport the protagonists into an international rather than national imaginary (1418).²⁴ As the narrating *Bilds* of *Nervous Conditions* and *Maps*, Tambu and Askar learn from Nyasha's and Misra's narratives of maturation during their own individual development. While Nyasha is in recovery and Misra has not survived at the conclusion of their respective national liberation struggles, Tambu and Askar both continue to develop as mature adults, it is

suggested, after the new nations emerge. At the moments that they relate these narratives, Tambu and Askar are poised with wisdom gained of experience and observance to be ideal postcolonial citizens. In this sense, Nyasha's and Misra's testimonies of colonial trauma—of trying to survive colonialism—become primers to Tambu and Askar for surviving into postcoloniality.

Testimonial Bodies

Although *Nervous Conditions* and *Maps* hail from different geographical and cultural spaces, I examine them together because both represent individual testimonial bodies in service of social healing. Similar testimonial modes in East and Southern Africa suggest a cross-cultural relationship between colonial history and traumatic processes. Trauma and justice studies teach us that testimony is the route to surviving productively after having experienced traumatizing violence. Because *Nervous Conditions* and *Maps* are framed as traumatic testimonies of colonial occupation, psychoanalysis helps us understand both the form and content of these African representations of traumatic suffering and mourning. The vocabulary of trauma uncovers this testimonial literature's political potential: to initiate processes of social mourning. The texts engage with Fanon's questions of colonial subjectivity and his edict that discussing the traumas of the colonial encounter initiates recovery. But the representations also illuminate the limits of psychoanalytic potential for change: Tambu's refusal to hear Nyasha's testimony and Askar's rejection of his mother Misra symbolically kills them.

For me, the psychoanalytic vocabulary of trauma marshals the literary tropes of illness and mutilation in *Nervous Conditions* and *Maps* to illuminate the centrality of trauma, melancholia, and mourning to the postcolonial condition in a way that postcolonial criticism has not addressed. For Claudia Tate, psychoanalysis fills a void in black literary scholarship by examining the ways in which black individuals internalize racialized experience to make “personal meaning” out of the tensions between the social “protocols of race” and individual desire—particularly when individual desires conflict with the collective’s national plot of “racial/social protest or affirmation” (Tate 15, 13, 14). While postcolonial readings of *Nervous Conditions* and *Maps* do accommodate racial and social protest, they do not accommodate the complex melancholic and testimonial desires of Nyasha, Tambu, Misra, and Askar that are rarely *only* about race and sociality. As an interpretive framework for reading black literature containing content that may not fit the traditional models, psychoanalysis opens up possibilities for new definitions, interpretations, and (social, generic) change. In other words, psychoanalysis provides a vocabulary to discuss complexes of black desire in the context of racialized psychic trauma. Clare Counihan argues that the field of postcolonial studies frames its questions of nationalism and identity by replacing racial with sexual difference so that the question of female desire is erased in the contexts of mourning and melancholia.²⁵ Spivak echoes this concern, arguing that the discourses of patriarchy, imperialism, subject constitution, and object-formation obscure the figure of the woman, violently trapping her into a constructed “third-world woman” figuration “caught between tradition and modernization” (“Subaltern” 306). Counihan asks: What does the woman

character's presence or absence in the text "enable or prevent?" (162). *Nervous Conditions* and *Maps* benefit especially from a psychoanalytic reading because tracking the figures of Nyasha and Misra helps us as readers to map the presence of female desire onto the ideological and epistemological terrains of the emerging postcolonial nation.

I propose that we read *Nervous Conditions* and *Maps* for the changing figure of woman—Nyasha, Tambu, her mother Ma' Shingayi, Misra, Askar's Aunt Salaado, and feminized Uncle Hilaal—because the primary testimony in each text is "hers" despite its mediation through a narrator. In the novels, all relationships to traumatic testimony are fraught, and the reader must read behind the testimonial representations of Nyasha, Misra, and other feminized characters to determine not only what Tambu and Askar reveal as narrators, but also what they attempt to conceal. Tambu and Askar create Nyasha's and Misra's stories as they tell them, and so *Nervous Conditions* and *Maps* are representations of worlds created—or worlded—within the texts. In her commentary on "worlding" the so-called Third World in nineteenth-century British novels, Spivak warns against underestimating the critical role that literature plays in cultural production and representation.²⁶ Spivak's notion of worlding, or writing a new world "on uninscribed earth" draws on the idea that the strife of creation is a detectable element in a text, and that representing this strife is the work that art undertakes (*Critique* 211; 115, note 4).²⁷ European imperial expansion and colonization required adherence to the fiction of an uninhabited, "uninscribed" Africa, open to the inscription of a British version of "Africa" over the existing one. The European's worlding of Africa reinscribes the native as

nonexistent. No longer a subject, the native must now view herself as other. *Nervous Conditions* and *Maps* demonstrate the potential to world Africa again through their depiction of testimonial bodies. In so doing, the literary representations make native bodies explicitly visible as texts marked by the strife of colonial occupation and violence. Reading *Nervous Conditions* and *Maps* in a psychoanalytic context allows us to understand that in the novels, colonized testimonial bodies suggest the potential for a transnational, trans-gendered identity as the postcolonial re-inscription of Africa.

The Cryptophore's Secret in Nervous Conditions

The colonial project of civilizing the natives presents the native racialized body as only and always partially assimilable through colonial mimicry, and guaranteed to fail. When Tambu wonders if her uncle Babamukuru's apparently successful mimicry, evidenced in his appointment to headmaster of the mission school, was in part facilitated by "unspeakable forces" (64), she may be asking: did Babamukuru achieve his position in a manner about which he is unable to speak because that manner is incorporated mimicry?

Bhabha suggests that the purpose of colonialism's civilizing mission is to train the native to mimic the colonizer. And, indeed, colonial education stressed colonial mimicry not as a means of grooming new colonial citizens, but as a means of training the native "mimic men" as a labor force.²⁸ In *Nervous Conditions*, missionaries want to train certain Africans "to be useful to them," thus framing "becoming" British as tantamount to becoming civilized and climbing up the Family Tree of Man toward

whiteness (48, 14). The goal of colonial mimicry is thus not to produce sameness but to highlight difference in the fact of repeated attempts at sameness.

The native's mimicry negates the self by affirming the other, appropriating racist attitudes toward herself in the form of illness that manifests as a preemptive strike against dismissal by the dominant culture. Babamukuru's employment of a black African servant, Anna, who must kneel in the family's presence and serve its English meals, simultaneously affirms and mimics British colonial domination of the African. When the desire to achieve a racial ideal meets guaranteed failure, and the lost fulfillment is not mourned productively, the failure can produce racial narcissism, or melancholia. Cheng's notion of "racial melancholia," or the simultaneous incorporation of the other, is based in Freud's notion of melancholia (73).²⁹ For Cheng, colonial mimicry is the incorporation of a failed bodily ego of an ideal other: the white body "it has been told it has forever lost and never had" (53-54). In colonial discourse, the black body is so alien to ideal whiteness that "the black body is formed by deformation" (Cheng 53-54). While Bhabha and Fanon's language on this point refer solely to colonized men, Cheng suggests that the black woman could also respond hypochondriacally to melancholic incorporation of the racial other.

Traumatic suffering is characterized by a lack, an unmet desire, and Dangarembga's characterization of Babamukuru illustrates this idea. Although he is the headmaster of the mission school, Babamukuru receives inferior housing accommodations and he will never advance "beyond a manageable level" of "good" African (19, 107). Unfulfilled desires produce unintended outcomes that, left unattended, can manifest in the individual as schizophrenia.³⁰ Schizophrenia is a

diagnosable, “marked social or occupational dysfunction” (“Schizophrenia” 274),³¹ and the schizophrenic cannot couple with other entities. She is thus marked as dysfunctional within the social system and may develop the fantasy of hyper-functionality within that same social system. The native’s attempt to exist in the colony’s patriarchal society is marked by physical and social schizophrenia. Tambu’s cousin Nyasha is also thusly marked. Nyasha cannot, try as she might, perform the colony’s behavioral expectations for black women. She attempts to compensate in other ways, like over-studying.

Louise Demers writes that inattention to unfulfilled desires is unproductive mourning. This melancholia contributes to the formation of a narcissistic personality disorder clinically characterized by “a grandiose sense of self-importance” and preoccupation with “fantasies of unlimited success, power, brilliance, beauty, or ideal love” that elevates the sufferer to a position of privilege (658).³² This is Babamukuru and Nyasha, but the psychic wounds manifest differently for the two characters.

The ineffectually mourning parent, Babamukuru is an ectopic mourner.³³ He addresses his loss through unproductive or unhealthy mourning processes, which are masking or distancing strategies designed to hide the lost object within the sufferer’s psyche, away from his consciousness, in order to avoid knowing about or feeling the pain of that loss. Babamukuru functions as if he has not suffered the loss of bumping the glass ceiling of racial division. As his wife Maiguru points out, he runs his home and his family as the exemplary patriarch, imposing Christian observances under the guise of familial benevolence by financing two-week Christmas celebrations and Tambu’s parents’ wedding. He even finances the celebration party honoring his

return from Europe. In these acts, Babamukuru performs the role of one whose economic status exceeds that of his peers. They are a series of repeated attempts to erase the racial division that separates mimicry from being. Babamukuru's mimicry is all-encompassing: he appropriates English table customs, home décor, and fastidious attention to proper Western dress, evidenced in the household's emphasis on bleaching his white shirts. Like his displays of wealth and piety, the shirts are white masks with which Babamukuru repeatedly attempts to cover his black skin, metaphors of repeated and futile attempts at racial identification.

In psychoanalysis, the ectopic parent unconsciously designates a child as a repository and mask for his grief. He thus escapes having to address his grief directly. The child designated to act as both crypt and cryptic for the parent's (or a previous generation's) unresolved grief is a cryptophore. I mean to use both "crypt" and "cryptic" in their psychoanalytic contexts to evoke metaphors of the tomb (crypt) and that which cannot be defined (cryptic). For me, both terms emphasize that the incorporating self has both buried the object in a tomb (crypt) and obscured any awareness of the lost object's existence (encryption). Both the entombed object and its tomb are obscured and buried—both are encrypted.

The arrangement is unhealthy to the child who is compelled to unknowingly carry the parent's crypt, "a rejected and unmanageable part" of the parent's ego (Demers 31).³⁴ The cryptophore struggles with her unconscious relationship to an unnamed ghost, the crypt of her parent. In *Nervous Conditions*, Nyasha is a cryptophore for her father's unresolved mourning and subsequent incorporation of his failed attainment of the white racial ideal. Nyasha is Anglicized as a black African

woman can be. But Anglicization during her preteen years has replaced and thus robbed her of a Shona cultural education during her formative period. Babamukuru's offloaded crypt is built on "the narcissistic importance" of his failed racial identification and on his guilt over the "secret misdemeanor" of negating his African self in this racially melancholic incorporation of the white ideal (Demers 36). He has "ingested" English letters, or education, and he glories in the adoration he receives as a "been-to" even though valuing his Westernization delegitimizes Shona culture (Dangarembga 36).

Even as trauma itself is unspeakable, its presence in the psyche creates a language, or cryptology, as a means of representing the event to the survivor.³⁵ Cryptic mourning moves from the psychic in the first generation to the somatic in successive generations. The incorporating ego marshals the resources of the self—language, behavior, bodily states, or several of these simultaneously—to support its magical fiction of compensation. Thus, the encryption of the object obscures the presence of that object in its crypt. Yet, as much as incorporation attempts to obscure the accurate representation, or meaning, of the object and of its repression, the fact of its repression is actually an accurate and timeless representation. Incorporation is characterized by the tension between the lost object's proximity and invisibility. This is the basis of racial melancholia, which is the incorporation of the ideal, unracialized self. The entombing crypt is in turn engraved with the markings of the object's interment.

Babamukuru's failure to identify with the white racial ideal is entombed within Nyasha so that he can avoid admitting to and grieving for his failure. His failure

engraves itself on her body, which marshals its resources in a hypochondriacal enactment of her father's melancholia. Nyasha's incorporative bond with the lost object has redefined her desires, but her incorporating body's new desire for secrecy is ambivalent. In psychoanalysis, the cryptophore wants desperately to tell a listener of the intergenerational crime she carries, but to put the unnamable into words would explode her reason for being and kill her. To protect her parent's crypt, argue Abraham and Torok, the cryptophore exchanges her own identity for a "fantasmic," endocryptic identification with the "life" that the parent has lost "as a result of some metapsychological traumatism" ("Lost" 142).³⁶ Nyasha thus incorporates and encrypts Babamukuru's failure to become English through her own hyper-mimicry of Englishness in the two areas of Babamukuru's own greatest exercises of mimicry: education and eating. She tells Tambu she is "on a diet" "to discipline" her body and mind, internalizing the trauma and broadcasting it hypochondriacally as an eating disorder (196-97). She zealously replaces food with studying for the Form Three entrance examinations to avoid capitalizing on the admission guaranteed by her father's status as a "good African" headmaster (107). Babamukuru's position is based, of course, on his incorporation of the English other. Nyasha's compulsive studying despite guaranteed academic advancement masks her anxiety: she tells Tambu that to stop working is to start worrying. But her body testifies her secret: "she [looks] drawn and [she has] lost so much of her appetite that it show[s] all over her body in the way the bones cre[ep] to the surface" (107). Nyasha says her nervous condition is about more than food but that she does not know why she purges it. She only knows that she is "not coping very well" (189-90). She studies obsessively for

academic advancement which will, she hopes, garner Babamukuru's approval of her perceived success at mimicry and thus prevent her from being haunted by the specter of failed identification.

Abraham and Torok have noticed that the cryptophore uses her body rather than her voice to testify her parent's encrypted secret crime, acting out the entombment of the lost object.³⁷ The changing body performs the testimony of trauma that the repressing ego encrypts. The body and the ways it changes through its use of illness to mask repression simultaneously performs a traumatic testimony. The endocryptic body is both mask and marker of the crypt in which the ego hides the object. Nyasha's bodily illness belies the simultaneous ambivalence of the cryptophore's competing attempts to mask and broadcast Babamukuru's unresolved grief. Nyasha is "too svelte:" her body testifies her traumatic suffering because her mouth cannot (197). In three months, Nyasha shrivels from too thin to "skeletal" and withdrawn, with diminished cognitive ability and motor skills—she weaves when she walks (198). Nyasha's struggle is writ on her body so clearly that Tambu notices her weight "drop[s] off her body almost hourly" (199). Nyasha's body has become "grotesquely unhealthy" because she vomits her "vital juices" down a Western toilet (199), literally purging her own life force into that of Western industrialization.

Endocryptic identification marks Nyasha's cryptophore body with the history of Babamukuru's psychic pathology. Babamukuru's colonial mimicry is Nyasha's parasite, literally starving her body. Her eating disorder begins when Tambu's brother Nhamo arrives to live with her family in order to attend the mission school as part of Babamukuru's plan to educate representative family members. Babamukuru's plan

believes not only his own efforts at mimicry, but also his hope to create additional “mimic men” in the family. Soon thereafter, we see Nyasha’s body growing “a little duller and dimmer,” as though she is “directing her energy inward” in an incorporative gesture (52). Nyasha’s wasting body is a manifestation and symptom of her ego trying to protect Babamukuru’s secret misdemeanor, and a symptom and manifestation of her simultaneous attempt to expose it. Nyasha’s marked body names Babamukuru’s crime, and Tambu’s mother Ma’Shingayi correctly reads mimicry’s pathology on it: “‘It’s the Englishness,’ she sa[ys]. ‘It’ll kill them all if they aren’t careful’” (202). Ma’Shingayi “wo[n]’t say much about Nyasha. ‘About that one we don’t even speak. It’s [Nyasha’s body] speaking for itself’” (203). Critics typically read Nyasha’s illness as evidence of her own realized attempt at mimicry. To an extent this may be true, but I believe that Nyasha’s illness is much more complicated.

Abraham and Torok observe that the incorporative fantasy is predicated on an impulse to symbolically repair the actual injury to the ideal object: “the [cryptophore’s] fantasy of incorporation reveals a utopian wish that the memory of the affliction had never existed or, on a deeper level, that the affliction had had nothing to inflict” (“Mourning” 134).³⁸ The root cause of Nyasha’s eating disorder is located in Babamukuru’s self, not Nyasha’s. She is trapped into mourning his unmourned failed racial ideal in addition to her own. Nyasha’s hypochondriacal relationship with English food is a bodily manifestation of her psychic suffering. Nyasha’s condition is less a product of racial identification than of economic and social privilege which enables both her encounter with the assimilative mandate (of colonial mimicry) and her hypochondriacal response to it. Tambu, whose poverty has denied her access to

the economic “opportunities” which Nyasha has encountered, recognizes that Nyasha can afford to be choosy about whether to seize or refuse “opportunities” because she is affluent (179). The poor, like Tambu, instead have to “take whatever chances c[o]me” (179). Nyasha’s illness stems from a complex nexus of racial and gender subordinations intertwined with economic privilege and unattended grief. Looking at the illness from only one of these perspectives ignores the other contributing factors. The text suggests two ways Nyasha might escape the burden of Babamukuru’s failed racial identification. First, she might achieve Babamukuru’s failed racial identification with the ideal other in his place. To do so, she must repeat her father’s incorporation of the white racial ideal through her own performance of white femininity. Second, Nyasha might remove his need to mimic whiteness through her own embrace of Black Nationalism.

Cheng suggests that white feminine beauty is part of gendering the construction of the ideal national subject.³⁹ The girly girl who values the white male protector is the sign of Western national femininity and the gendered other who emphasizes through difference the white masculine ideal. Where whiteness sets the standard for beauty, the body which is not white has two choices: distance itself from whiteness or strive toward it. For the female racialized other, conformity to white femininity is the height of mimicry in a white dominant culture. The racialized woman’s performance of gender identification creates the fantasy of racial identification. The beautiful black woman who performs a fiction of ideal beauty convinces no one that she is white. She relocates the question of identification to the realm of fantasy, thus erasing the problem of addressing racial disparity in reality.

The fact of performance both highlights and erases the question of difference. In certain ways, Nyasha repeats Babamukuru's incorporation of the white racial ideal so successfully that Tambu's early impression of her equates "Anglicized" with "glamorous" (76).

Understanding the difference between notions of performance and performativity clarify the difference between Nyasha's and Babamukuru's relationships to femininity. Race and gender shape the nature and experience of both trauma and cure, and Judith Butler demonstrates that Western conceptualizations of both race and gender are performances based on cultural representations that they in turn reinforce.⁴⁰ She asks whether the female body is the source of cultural-political systems of gender, or if these forces in fact *shape* the female body. Behavior suggests a certain type of identity, Butler suggests. The behavior marks or contorts the body's surface to suggest a particular internal essence to onlookers. This essence is a fiction sustained by cultural signs and discourse. For Butler, the performative element of gender is the social fiction that assigns arbitrary "gender" to a set of behaviors and social cues. Performance is the individual's acting out the agreed-upon social cues and in turn being understood by onlookers as a particular gender based upon the set of cues enacted.

John Noyes suggests that performance can function as an act of representation that subverts a repressive social infrastructure by de-literalizing the violent actions upon which the structure is based.⁴¹ Noyes examines what he regards as an emerging awareness of sadomasochistic (s/m) sexuality and sexual imagery in post-apartheid South African culture. Noyes sees a crucial distinction between simulated s/m

performance and the actual practices of racialized and gendered sex and violence which South African s/m participants, black and white, reenact. South Africa remains marred by high incidences of sexual and other violence and, to Noyes, the performative nature of s/m provides a means of eroticizing the navigation of gendered and “racially coded power relations” (148) via representation rather than literal action. The political effect of representation allows black-white s/m interactions to reenact and transgress racialized and gendered prohibitions and hierarchies. The performances thus play out fantasies of access to and wielding social power that is unavailable in reality. Performing the prohibited undoes the prohibition, particularly if the performance is a fantasy representation and not a literal act in the realm of reality. Fantasy performance of the prohibited fills the void created by adherence to that same prohibition in reality. Performance based on fantasy thus conceptualizes—in other words, names—that which is named only in the prohibitive (i.e., negative). Fantasy, in its invocation of language and awareness, represents a potential for cure. Nyasha’s performance of Western beauty from the space of the other ungendered and unraces her because she becomes both seer and seen, gazing at her own performance of womanliness while simultaneously being the woman who performs beauty. Her perceived conformity to white beauty is so successful that her black female classmates resent her for it: “she thinks she is white,” they “sneer” (94).

Gendered and ungendered bodies experience racial melancholia in dissimilar ways; therefore their diseased bodies function differently in the colonial social structure. Gender difference disrupts the magic perfection of Nyasha’s incorporation. She has internalized the Western beauty ideal of thinness through dieting to prevent

growing “fat” to the extent that she has incorporated and fears conforming bodily to the racist stereotype of the African woman’s “large backside” (91).⁴² The dinner table, and specifically the act of eating, is the site of Babamukuru’s greatest show of colonial mimicry and of Nyasha’s greatest endocryptic display of her role as Babamukuru’s designated cryptophore. The entire eating process in Babamukuru’s home is Anglicized. It is thus the site of Nyasha’s greatest clash with Babamukuru. When Babamukuru says, “you’ll eat the food we bought you!” (189-90), it unleashes a series of struggles manifested in Nyasha’s vacillating relationship with food. While her family eats English food at the English dinner hour, says English “grace” prior to the meal, uses English tableware, and is served by an African servant, Nyasha struggles with the question of eating European food. Nyasha frequently refuses to eat and then binges and purges. The binge is obedience; refusal and purge are resistance.

Her refusal to digest Babamukuru’s food is the heart of Nyasha’s endocryptic identification because it belies her preoccupation with female white ideals of beauty. Nyasha’s eating disorder is an ambivalent navigation between embracing British food and dieting to achieve the European ideal of thinness as proof of British-ness. The problem is that, in a patriarchal system, men and women have different relationships to food. The male is head of the house and family, provider of the food, and authority at the table. The female’s relationship to food in that system is to receive it as provision from the male as well as to avoid excess consumption of it in maintenance of thinness as beauty. Because Nyasha’s body is gendered differently than Babamukuru’s, her relationship to the food on his table is in part contradictory to their shared task of mimicry and encryption. The site of Nyasha’s greatest endocryptic

identification is also that of Babamukuru's greatest need of her as crypt, and this is the source of their greatest clash.

In a last, desperate bid to maintain Babamukuru's crypt, Nyasha embraces Black Nationalism, but the crypt is already cracking, undone by patriarchal gendering. She attempts to remove Babamukuru's failure and his crime by removing the need for mimicry and thus racial suicide. Eventually, she can no longer incorporate Babamukuru's racial melancholia if doing so means continuing to internalize racism against herself. Her body echoes her words as "she beg[ins] to rock, her body quivering tensely. 'I won't grovel. Oh no, I won't. I'm not a good girl. I'm evil,'" she says, acknowledging her refusal to aspire to her father's position of "good African" (200). Nyasha calls British literature "fairy tales," turning instead to histories of racialized trauma in search of solutions in the "facts" (93). She sees and draws attention to "things you'd rather not talk about" and "exposes frivolity we think we need" (97). When Babamukuru gets Ma' Shingayi's sister Lucia a job as a cook at the mission, Nyasha refuses to join the others' admiration of his benevolence, arguing instead that, "based on history," Babamukuru's status in the colonial administration obligates him to help poor blacks like Lucia (159). Nyasha has begun to view Babamukuru and other influential blacks who help those like Lucia out of familial obligation rather than racial solidarity as "historical artifact[s]" of colonialism (160), impeding the potential for postcolonial social transformation. While Tambu and Nyasha's entire family busily emulates the "beautiful" whites, Nyasha busily watches Tambu's very un-English family, rehearsing Shona and studying their social rules "with an intensity that ma[kes] her uncomfortable" (104, 52). Later, Nyasha becomes

obsessed with making clay pots, but neither as play or as water carriers, their primary utility. To Nyasha, making pots is a serious “hobby” of crafting pen holders (149-50). Nyasha’s attempt mimics the purpose of the pots as holders, but fails to replicate their full practicality. In the end, as with her claywork, Nyasha’s illness is a manifestation of her unfulfilled desire to become Shona, not her failure to achieve the racial ideal of Englishness.⁴³ Her attempt to become Shona is a reparative attempt to resuscitate the African self that Babamukuru has killed in his incorporative embrace of colonial mimicry, to try to achieve the white racial ideal.

This particular body, Nyasha’s, and its marking (emaciation) is used as testimony to illuminate the notion that the testimonial body must die when the crime is named and the end of secrecy begins. Her search for an analyst is her first attempt at exposing Babamukuru’s secret: in psychoanalysis, cryptophores go to the analyst to give themselves up. Typically, the cryptophore protects her self and the secret by enlisting the analyst as an accomplice in secrecy. In the novel, when Nyasha’s white analyst dismisses her diseased body because “Africans [do] not suffer in the way we had described” (201), he refuses to see her body’s testimony of the historical pathology of colonial mimicry. He also refuses to help Nyasha protect Babamukuru’s secret and so, in effect, sentences her to death in three ways. First, he negates the story that is her bodily testimony.⁴⁴ Second, he guarantees that Nyasha will attempt to reveal Babamukuru’s secret to another witness even though confession will kill her reason for being. Finally, he invalidates the reality that is the confluence of Nyasha’s African body and its visible marking by a disease he associates only with the white

feminine ideal. Excluding Nyasha from white femininity returns her to African-ness, removing her from the world and symbolically killing her.

Nyasha's parents bring her to the psychiatrist after she has an episode that, she assures Tambu, is only the beginning: "There's a whole lot more," she says. "I've tried to keep it in but it's powerful. It ought to be. There's nearly a century of it" (201). Nyasha's outburst is her final endocryptic display, writing the unspeakable onto her body:

shredding her history books between her teeth ("Their history. Fucking liars. Their bloody lies."), breaking mirrors, her clay pots, anything she [can] lay her hands on and jabbing the fragments viciously into her flesh, stripping the bedclothes, tearing her clothes from the wardrobe and trampling them underfoot. (201)

But this time, Nyasha speaks with her voice as well as with her body. Before her explosion, she tells Tambu, "I don't want to do it, Tambu, really I don't, but it's coming, I feel it coming" (200). Then, "her eyes dilated," she confesses the secret she can no longer protect: "'They've done it to me,' she accuse[s], whispering" (200, 201). Nyasha continues: "They did it to them too. . . . To both of them, but especially to him. They put him through it all. . . . Daddy grovels to them. We grovel to him" (200). If groveling is Nyasha's term for mimicry—for failed assimilation—then she traces the genealogy of shame from colonizer to colonized adult, to colonized child.

Unburdening her self of Babamukuru's secret, Nyasha opens the crypt. Her bony body is now both testimony and metaphor for the shattered crypt. Nyasha releases the lost object and opens the path for herself, if not for her father, of working

through intergenerational traumatic suffering. The social nature of testimony—and in particular the fact that the testimony changes the responsible witness—implies the potential for social transformation born of the suffering of the victim. The task for Nyasha is to find not only a witness, but a responsible one as well. “I’m afraid,” she tells Tambu, “It upsets people. So I need to go somewhere where it’s safe. You know what I mean? Somewhere where people won’t mind” (201). Tambu, Nyasha’s chosen witness, is eventually able to read, see, and hear Nyasha’s testimony but it is so much later, the text suggests through Nyasha’s example, that, ultimately, the most visible testimony of colonialism is the native Nyasha’s skeletal, almost spectral body. While Nyasha’s individual rebellion “may not in the end have been successful” (1), the text suggests that Nyasha’s part in the collective rebellion may have succeeded.⁴⁵

Nyasha’s body, emaciated, scarred from her cutting episode, is a microcosm of the larger written recording of her story and that of her community. The novel *Nervous Conditions*, we learn at the end, is itself Tambu’s later recording of the events narrated. Perhaps the near-death experience of Nyasha’s testimonial body is necessary to instruct the reader. After all, Freud tells us that the price of melancholia is suicide. Nyasha’s self-induced starvation is, at the very least, part of a slow, painful suicidal gesture. The novel that ends long after the near-death experience of its primary character can serve as a testimony of that character’s suffering in life; it can also illustrate the severity of unsuccessful mourning. If the character is a metaphor for the community, then the ambiguity surrounding Nyasha’s survival sends a formidable message to the builders of postcolonial Zimbabwe: a message of the necessity for social mourning as alternative to the death of the community.⁴⁶

Bleeding for the Mother(Land) in Maps

I have shown that Nyasha's diminishing colonized female body testifies of the multigenerational pathology of colonial mimicry in *Nervous Conditions*, leaving the colonized male body physically unmarked. I will now read representations of bleeding in *Maps* as the ambivalent relationship between motherhood and national independence. In *Maps*, both male and female colonized bodies display the pathology of colonial domination in varying degrees of severity. In the novel, the colonized male body bleeds from symbolic wounds in the mouth and on the groin. Colonized feminized bodies also bleed, but this blood appears at sites of actual wounding, most often from reproductive malady and excision. That blood marks both male and female bodies in the novel speaks to the Somali cultural significance of blood. In Somali cosmology, blood's role is primarily reproductive, and the power of reproductive blood is revered. It is the vehicle for and marker of female reproductive capacity, casting a woman of child bearing age as the embodiment of the life force. Farah tells an interviewer, "from the earliest times, the magic of creation was seen as residing in the blood of women retained in the womb and which was thought to coagulate into a baby" ("Conversation").⁴⁷ In many African communities, women's reproductive power affords them special status among both women and men who have respected the fertile woman's crucial role in preserving the health, well-being, and longevity of the community since before colonial intervention.⁴⁸ In Somali cosmology, reproductive blood also denotes and symbolizes familial, clan, and national belonging. Somali nationhood is predicated on the ideology that all ethnic

Somalis descend from a common ancestor, Samaale, and that all of those descendants belong to one of six clan families. “Blood is where we all began,” Farah says, “blood our ancestor, blood our kinship, blood, the thicker the better, our immediate family unit” (“Conversation”).

In Somali cosmology, clan *is* nation. In the novel and in the Somali belief system, to wound the mother is to wound the nation. Motherhood and nationality are unstable terrains in *Maps*, exploding colonial definitions of both notions and demanding new conceptions of both. In Somali mytho-reality and in the novel, motherhood and nationality are cultural rather than biological identities. In a culture predicated on bloodlines that are often symbolic, *Maps* represents motherhood and nationality as divorced from the biological moorings colonial discourse imposes. The only mother with whom Askar shares a biological tie is his birthmother Arla who dies immediately after giving birth, possibly even before putting the infant to breast. Because Askar is given many other mothers in the novel, motherhood is represented in *Maps* as divorced from biology. Misra, Askar’s family maid, is allowed to informally adopt the newborn whom she discovers near his birthmother’s corpse. Akar’s maternal Uncle Hilaal and Hilaal’s wife Salaado later formally adopt Askar to secure his safety from the worsening violence in the Ogaden by documenting his Somali citizenship and establishing Mogadiscio residency. Motherhood is also ungendered and disconnected from genealogical precedent in the person of Hilaal who “live[s] in the contradictory roles of ‘Mother’ to [Askar] and Salaado” (156). Later, Hilaal and Salaado also formally adopt Misra to sponsor her Somali citizenship and capitol residency for reasons of safety as well. That Hilaal is a mother figure to his

wife, son, and to his son's previous mother further disrupts generational difference as a precursor to parenthood and produces interesting conversations on traditions of genealogy. The novel's representations of multiple adoptions both subvert and critique the state's attempt to regulate the family unit as a means of protecting national solidarity and security.

In *Maps*, the boundaries of both motherhood and motherland Somalia are repeatedly attacked and eviscerated. David Laitin and Said Samatar find that as long as any Somali-inhabited territory belongs to neighboring nation-states, Somalis feel like a "dismembered nation" (67).⁴⁹ The national project is to rejoin dispersed ethnic Somalis, now nationals of Ethiopia, Kenya, and Djibouti, into one state. To some members of the African community and in particular to Somalia's neighbors, the Somali compulsion to reattach the three excised constituencies onto the Somali national body "borders on the obsessive" (Laitin and Samatar 67), and former Ethiopian Emperor Haile Selassie garnered a generous share of international sympathy for his beleaguered Eastern border. But more so than obsession with kinship and borders, practicality drives Somali nationalism. In part because of a deep ideological sense of clan, ethnic, and national brotherhood, and in part because of the fragile material balance Somalis have reached with the desert's scarce resources, mutilation of the national body erodes the potential for individual survival and the health of the entire pastoral community.⁵⁰ Somalis share a communal work ethic, so the division of communities of workers via state borders results in alienation from the African community, economic crisis, and famine. Psychic and somatic traumas follow in the forms of loss and alienation.

Of particular concern to many Somalis is the return of the Ethiopian-held Ogaden which lies between Somalia and Ethiopia and is home to about four million ethnic Somalis. Many Somalis view a Somalia without the Ogaden as a mutilated motherland, a symbolic mother figure cut off from her child. On late twentieth-century Western maps of Africa, Ethiopia juts sharply into Somalia, forming a wide-angled point that opens Somalia into a long, thin crescent. Somalia looks more like a border strip along Ethiopia's edge than a neighboring nation. The visual effect is one of mammoth penetration, almost bisection. *Maps* describes the territory penetrating into Somalia's opened curve as the "Ogaden/child separated from her" (101). It is then used to penetrate her. In the novel, Askar draws maps of Somalia as a hobby. He marks the Ogaden "Western Somalia" because, to him, "the Ogaden was always an integral part of Somalia" (227). Interestingly, Askar does not describe the Ogaden's occupation in terms of geographic rape. Instead, he divests Ethiopia of its phallic power over the Ogaden. Askar describes the region's shift in ownership in passive terms like "wrung out of Somali hands" and "returned to Ethiopian hands," terms that relocate the power of the transaction from Ethiopia to its Soviet backers (21, 182).

The novel represents the fractured native body as the individual's ideological and metaphorical loss of identity when the integrity of the national body is compromised. It does so primarily in the figure of Misra, but also in its representations of news reports of mutilated war casualties and survivors. The news stories of mutilations mark the dissolution of national unity: cannibalism, torture, and war wounds tell stories of "fragmented bodies" as much as the "fragmented bodies"

themselves tell stories of individual and social trauma (160-61). As the nation is a symbolic mother to the Somali individual, Misra's increasingly mutilated body—through mastectomy, abortion, beating—suggests that the loss of a healthy mother is tantamount to losing the ideal, or unified, nation. In Somali culture, the son-to-mother bond is of paramount importance. In a cultural context in which mother-son and intra-clan bonds define individual identity, *Maps* depicts Askar, for whom wholeness of the mother and nation are continually threatened and compromised. In psychoanalytic theory, these repeated threats to wholeness could presage the potential for the individual to develop a narcissistic attachment to one or both of these entities in an attempt to preserve or reinstate the lost ideals. The individual's inability to release and mourn the loss of the imago—the image—of an ideal self linked with that of the ideal mother can inhibit his ability to individuate, or to develop separately as an individual. In *Maps*, Askar's sense of self is tied up in his expectations of a unified Somalia *and* a physically intact mother. Psychoanalysis tells us that when the ideal self is symbiotically tied to the ideal mother, the individual strives to preserve both images. He cannot substitute more practical representations.⁵¹ In *Maps*, Askar's inability to mourn the linked lost ideals of self and mother sometimes prevents him from viewing Misra as anything but foreign and himself as anything but motherless. He becomes dually obsessed with his mother(s). First, he suspects that his birth precipitated Arla's death. Second, he is precociously conversant in Misra's sexuality, which binds Askar to her in an eroticization of their earlier mother-son bodily bond. Misra's sexuality also repels Askar. This revelation is most evident in the scene in which Askar, a child, awakes during a storm of both rain and bomb blasts and sees his

toy “rifle” lying “astraddle on his own bed” and pointing at Misra’s head as she sleeps, supine, in her own bed (121). Misra’s genitals are exposed in an unintended suggestion of sexual invitation. Appalled, Askar chooses to “leave her *be*,” literally leaving the room (121, emphasis in original). His reading of this scene as a violently erotic tableau and then leaving it behind illustrates his struggle between familial loyalty to Misra and the perceived threat of her sexual and ethnic difference.

Askar’s discomfort with ethnic difference takes on the additional tenor of race. Fanon refers to the trauma of racism in the context of being a black man in a white-dominant culture. In the world depicted in *Maps*, however, the notion of “race” operates differently because the colonial conflict involves communities that are both black. When referring to post-independence black African states, the global discourse community typically substitutes the term “ethnicity” for “race” to distinguish among ethnic groups or clans. In the context of colonial occupation, however, regardless of the lack or presence of racial difference, colonizers and the colonized are divided. Immanuel Wallerstein argues that in the world community, skin color is irrelevant because the term “race” really means “class,” and racism maintains the global class hierarchy (199).⁵² The international class system racializes competing ethnic Ethiopian and Somali nationalisms depicted in *Maps*. The Ethiopian-Somali divisor of “race” in the novel is grounded in both ethnicity and class, but Hilaal and Askar frequently take pains to situate the Ogaden war in an international context which aligns Ethiopia with the West and Somalia with Africa. Internationalizing the conflict also racializes it in the global class system, effectively *whitening* Ethiopia and *blackening* Somalia. Askar’s traumatic complex, which stems from Ethiopian claims

to the Ogaden, is thus racialized. The only possible result of enforced racial identification which results in racial melancholia for the black man is “self-objectification” and mutilation (Cheng 53-54). Fanon laments: “I took myself far from my own presence, far indeed, and made myself an object. . . . What else could it be for me but an amputation, an excision, a hemorrhage that spattered my whole body with black blood?” (*Black* 112). In the tradition Fanon relates, the colonized black man in the novel, Askar, acts out external and internalized racism, unknowingly and symbolically wielding the mutilating knife even as he bleeds for his mutilated mother’s wounds.

In a psychoanalytic context, I read the bleeding on Askar’s body in *Maps* as the hypochondriacal expression of the symbolic colonial mutilations of the mother and the nation. His wounds are metaphorical. As a child, Askar distances himself from his immigrant mother Misra while training to “die and kill for his mother country,” symbolically trying to give birth to the new nation by “doing whatever it [takes] to be a man who [is] ready” (110). Intent upon augmenting his masculinity in order to take the place of his father, a fallen freedom fighter for Ogaden liberation, Askar mimics the male-dominated rebel guerilla training exercises. When he awakes one morning with a bloody groin, Askar is horrified that his own body may have “misbehaved” by functioning as female (110). He misses, of course, the irony of his ambivalent, hyper-masculine appropriation of the female reproductive act, indicative of his attempt to father a unified Somalia by jettisoning his mother. When Misra later divines from raw meat that Askar will travel to the coast and that “death and distress and disaster” await, Askar is elated by the promise of adventure, but then he “senses

something weird had taken place” and he tastes blood (119). Although Askar does not understand it at the time, Misra has foretold her death and the fall of the Ogaden to Ethiopia. Askar tastes the future bloodshed of Misra and Somalia’s would-be liberators.

Elaine Scarry finds that pain’s relationship to knowing is based in the body.⁵³ A wound’s visible transgression of the body’s boundary renders the experience of pain sharable. Witnessing pain, therefore, is social. A visible weapon or bodily wound represents pain to the witness by association. Non sufferers must see the weapon or the wound in order to believe that the sufferer is in pain, as if the object that creates the wound is the entity that carries the pain and not the body which has been invaded. In this way, even though a weapon enters the body to produce pain inside it, the witness conceives of pain as external to the body. In contrast, the unmarked, intact body that suffers an internal wound does not communicate the bodily experience of pain to another. For the witness who is not in pain, hearing about instead of seeing pain is “to have doubt” (Scarry 5).

Maps explodes Scarry’s paradigm that links the visible wound to pain. The novel represents bloody bodies that are neither wounded nor in pain. Askar’s woundless and painless bleeding removes the evidential nature of blood from the experience of pain. Evidence of pain—blood—is remapped instead onto the intact body. Askar’s bloody body, which *should* express the physical pain of a wound, signifies instead the absence of a wound on the male colonized body. He appears instead to bleed for the wounds on the mother figure’s body, wounds that are invisible to the witness because they appear at sites of reproduction that are culturally rendered

private. Misra's abortion, Salaado's ovariectomy, and Hilaal's vasectomy are all rendered socially invisible on the material body. Pain's material and social invisibility renders it also politically invisible (Scarry 2). Askar's bleeding makes visible what is publicly and politically invisible: reproductive wounds on the maternal body. His bloody body proves the existence of maternal and national pain that the neocolonial community does not otherwise perceive as existing or worthy of political attention.

The wounds of the mother figures in *Maps* cause infertility. Askar perceives this infertility as a loss of reproductive autonomy on both the individual and national levels. Betrayed by the mother figure's infertile body, the son Askar tries to repair or reinstate maternal and national wholeness. Although Askar does not remember doing so, Hilaal claims that he once suggested that Salaado and Misra should combine their mutilated bodies so that he "would have had a living mother with no organ partly mutilated or half removed!" (160). Even at age seven, Askar seeks a reproducing mother in control of her body.

Askar also seeks a unified nation that controls its borders by containing all of its ethnic members. As the Somalia-Ethiopia conflict over claim to the Ogaden escalates, Askar's growing Somali nationalism alienates him from Misra. In the novel, when Somalia invades the Ogaden in 1977, it becomes dangerous in Askar's hometown of Kallafo. Qorrax sends Askar to live with his Uncle Hilaal and wife Salaado, childless academics in Mogadiscio. Askar is thus forcibly removed from his transnational mother at a moment of uncertain national wholeness and transferred to a new, citizen mother in Somalia proper—an attempt to replace the nationally impure

mother in an internationally unstable region with a nationally pure mother in the state capital.

A decade later, at seventeen and having failed to repair either the mutilated maternal or national bodies, Askar finds himself at a crossroads of how best to work toward Somali unification. He debates with himself, with Hilaal, and with Salaado on whether to apply to university or join the Western Somali Liberation Front in its continuing struggle to liberate the Ogaden. At this time, Misra arrives in Mogadiscio, beaten, gang-raped, ill, and exiled for her alleged role in the recent ambush of six hundred Ogaden rebels. Askar becomes convinced that he must either kill Misra to avenge the deaths of his country men, or kill his country men to avenge the brutal violation of his mother. For awhile, replacing the alien mother with allegiance to the motherland in the hope of achieving national wholeness seems, to Askar, to be the more pressing option. Modern nationalism divides its populace even as it purports a fictive, homogeneous unity. Westwood describes “this national imaginary,” to which Askar subscribes in the novel, as one “which privilege[s] one ethnicity over others, marginalizing diversity and presenting a monologic account of national memory and construction” (Westwood). This privileged ethnicity usurps and becomes the national narrative, depicting inclusive unity yet excluding difference from the national discourse. To Askar, Misra represents difference that must be purged from the Somali national imaginary, but their familial relationship complicates his need to expel her foreignness.

Askar symbolically destroys the mother by shunning Misra when she arrives in Mogadiscio. In so doing, Askar explodes the culturally paramount mother-son

bond. Ironically, while Askar hopes to replace his mother with the nation, his dismissal of Misra temporarily undoes their familial bond and symbolically demolishes the clan-nation. Askar's attempt to repair the ideal mother and nation destroys both. He soon begins to believe Misra's claim of innocence, but he is too late. In both history and in the novel, Ethiopia quashes resistance and regains the Ogaden. That same weekend in the novel, Misra is found murdered, her heart removed.

Askar's investment in preserving an intact mother and motherland is selfish: by repairing them, he hopes to repair his lost ideal self. His dilemma is that the colonized male body is gendered both male by patriarchy and female by racism. He can expose but cannot heal the problems of individual or national mutilation because, as a man, he is ultimately part of the problem. Askar's role as a colonized man is simply to record the collective trauma of a mutilated motherland on his body. Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari suggest that the mere existence of what they call the body without organs disrupts the productive forces of social desire. The notion of a body without organs refers not to a material body but to a condition of imagelessness—in other words, the ideological *opposite* of a material body. This condition of imagelessness is the same void of invisibility to which Mbembe argues that Western imperial discourse has rendered Africa and black Africans: the colonizer forcibly removes the native from the world by making him or her invisible to it.⁵⁴ This body without organs—this imagelessness that is the black African—this testimonial body becomes “a recording surface” in response to its interactions with pathological “external desires” (Deleuze and Guattari 10). The body without organs' interactions

with social drives create “points of disjunction” which the schizophrenic “inscribes on his own body[,] the litany of disjunctions” that not only chronicles but indicts the traumatic violence of social desire (Deleuze and Guattari 10-11). Butler gestures toward the phenomenon and ineffectuality of the body as a recording surface because civilization destroys the body while history’s task for the body is to both chronicle and expose the destruction (165). The testimonial body, in Butler’s terms, is under the continual tension between external forces of domination and the internal drive toward creation: to simultaneously chronicle and indict those destructive forces. As a male recording body, Askar’s task is to become able to mourn both losses and accept his role as recorder, and to recognize that he cannot repair the social trauma of colonial occupation. Askar’s recording body can not heal the nation, but he can chronicle its destruction.

The testimonial body of Misra, more than any other in the novel, requires the consideration of new ways of conceiving not only motherhood, but also a postcolonial “Somalia.” Her mother-bond to Askar transgresses national, biological, and legal boundaries. This subversive bond suggests that if families can form along international, informal lines, then a community might as well. Wallerstein suggests this formation outside traditional national boundaries in a revision of the sociological term “status group” (193). He suggests a community formed autonomously and based on material conditions that bind its members—like collective trauma—as opposed to ethnic bonds or national boundaries. For Wallerstein, status groups form via shared ideology and demands rather than institutionalized stratifications. I suggest that through the international body of Misra specifically and the infertile mother figure in

general, Farah opens via *Maps* the possibility of a new conception of “Somalia” outside the bounds of either the ethnic group or the nation-state, one that transgresses international boundaries and forms instead a collective based on experiential and material similarities or, in Wallerstein’s terms, a large status group. Hilaal conceives Somalis as already bound by a shared experience: language. “Somali identity,” he explains to Askar:

is one shared by all Somalis, no matter how many borders divide them. . . . If [Misra’s] Somali is as good as yours, then I doubt if any bureaucratic clown would dare stand in her way or dare deny her what is hers by right. Remember this, Askar. For all we know, there is no ethnic difference which sets apart the Somali from the Ethiopian. (174)

In one redeeming moment, Hilaal doubly binds Misra to Askar, first by their shared language, and second by potential shared ethnicity. By erasing Misra’s linguistic and ethnic difference, Hilaal introduces a means for Misra to *be* Somali. In so doing, Hilaal offers Askar both a mother and a secure nation in the figure of the adopting immigrant, Misra. In this way, Misra’s mutilated transnational mothering body suggests—or even becomes—a fertile symbolic ground for developing models of a new and inclusive Somalia across ethnic or genealogical lines.

In the time surrounding Misra’s kidnapping and death, Askar tastes blood in his mouth as he realizes her value as a mother and, through her innocence of the rebel massacre, her transnational value to Somalia. The taste of blood reappears for Askar at several moments during Misra’s gradual disappearance and postmortem discovery. The bleeding mystifies Askar, who wonders, “had I underestimated my body? Was it

seceding from me, making its own autonomous decision, was my body forming its own government, was it working on its own, independent of my brain, of *my* soul?” (233-34, emphasis in original). But the blood also presages Askar’s arrest for Misra’s death and repeated testimony afterward of “the story of (Misra/Misrat/Masarat and) Askar” which exonerates Misra (259). We readers know that Askar’s body is not creating its own nation; instead, Askar’s bloody-tasting saliva links him to the wounded Misra through their bodies as they were linked when he was young. Linking bodies through wounds and blood that do not coincide suggests their affiliation through shared pain. Askar is not in pain, but his woundless bleeding and bloodless taste of blood expose the malleability of the boundaries of the body and the self. Askar’s “bloody” mouth is evidence of his body mourning Misra’s loss, repeatedly and prematurely. His “bloody” mouth suggests his capacity to record the importance of the figure of the mother to the development of a truly transnational community specifically configured outside European models of nation-statehood. The blood in Askar’s mouth must come out, as Misra’s story must come out after her death. The blood in his mouth is history, and Askar’s bloody, testimonial body is the visible chronicle of the mutilated mother and a motherland, Somalia, mutilated by colonial boundaries. In the end, *Maps* divorces the broken body of the mother from the land, ungendering it in the process. The novel suggests, in the figure of the transnational mother, a gender-inclusive alternate formation of the postcolonial nation.

Conclusion

Nervous Conditions and *Maps* represent bodily testimony as a process of introjection that reconceives postcoloniality outside the biological and ideological boundaries of colonial discourse. I want to conclude by suggesting that the characters in *Nervous Conditions* and *Maps* . . . map the possibility of an alternately conceived post-independence community by *remapping* the contours of their native bodies. The testimony of the changing body is a redrawing of the boundaries of the territory that comprises the self. Gikandi gestures toward this idea when he suggests that writing is a territorial act of claiming one's text, space, and identity.⁵⁵ The novels' testimonial bodies thus function not only as recording narratives of self discovery, but also as physical markers of spatial repossession. The testimonial body that walks through an oppressive space is subversive. By continuing to live in a Rhodesia and Somalia that have savaged them, Nyasha and Misra, respectively, use their testimonial bodies to reclaim these oppressive spaces, rewriting national histories and charting changed futures. Tambu and Askar remain behind to tell these stories.

The novels represent the postcolonial national body as a multi-gendered terrain containing elements of both masculinity and femininity, both genders enjoined in one body to form a whole. The texts propose post-independence community formations that are not gendered but what I suggest we call wholly gendered. I recall here the conception of selfhood in many African communities that pairs two halves of the self: the masculine and the feminine.⁵⁶ Bracha Ettinger gestures toward this notion in the context of motherhood.⁵⁷ She proposes replacing the phallic split and subsequent mourning of the lost m/other with a "transsubjectivity" that redefines gender as

inclusive rather than exclusive (183). Ettinger proposes that we develop an awareness of what she calls a Matrixial space outside the phallic framework in which femininity exists without any forced relation to phallic difference. This “Feminine-Matrixial difference is an impregnation of a borderline,” of a sense of being that is always being created and understood at the present moment (184). Ettinger argues that a woman’s biological potential for motherhood can be a political means of subverting patriarchy because embodying even *the potential for* motherhood grants women the ability to transgress boundaries among outside/inside, public/private, and past/present/future. I do not mean to essentialize womanhood on the basis of reproductive capacity. Instead, like Rey Chow, I mean to argue against essentializing any one representation of woman-ness or African femininity.⁵⁸ I read both *Nervous Conditions* and *Maps* as exploding boundaries and binaries of gender and nation. This ability to transgress boundaries suggests the potential for conceiving new ways of being. The opening of *Maps* eloquently suggests this kind of multiplicity:

You exist, you think, the way the heavenly bodies exist, for although one does extend one’s finger and point at the heavens, one knows, yes, that’s the word, one *knows* that that is not the heavens. Unless... unless there are, in a sense, as many heavens as there are thinking beings; unless there are as many heavens as there are pointing fingers. (3, emphasis in original)

The reader inhabits the mind of Askar at this point in the text but has been placed in the position of speaker by the second-person narration. The text explodes the standard positions of and boundaries between reader, textual subject, speaker, and listener as the narrator thinks. Here Farah envisions a multiplicity of possibilities for identity,

truth, and national belonging. This moment in the text demonstrates the nature of introjection: a multiplicity of possibilities on a multiplicity of planes.

* * *

Reading these texts as traumatic testimonies obligates the reader as witness to undergo transformation in the act of reading—not just a transformation of her ways of reading African literature but, like the postcolonial native, a transformation of the self. The act of reading traumatic testimony changes the listener by entrusting her with juridical responsibility. This breakdown of the reader’s sense of understanding of trauma, testimony, reality, and the self represents a traumatic crisis. Askar demonstrates this notion when he tells Hilaal about his fear that Arla’s death enabled his birth, that ghosts haunt the living in order to continue existing, that he menstruated, and that Arla speaks through him. Afterward, Hilaal burns all of his research on children sufferers of war-related trauma, explaining that “he had been moving in the wrong direction all along” (158). Askar’s testimony upends Hilaal’s research paradigm for trauma, changing his understanding of life and suffering’s role in it. Trauma studies tells us that a changed listener who has been able to productively witness a testimony is qualified to explore with the trauma survivor a means to “transcend” the trauma (Rand 6). This is now Hilaal’s position in relation to Askar. I hope that after witnessing the testimonial bodies in both novels, we as readers will hold similar relationships with Tambu and Askar, and with other African post-independence testimonial narratives.

Chapter 3: Censorship and Testimonial Ghosts

Introduction

In this chapter I examine the politics of gendering postcoloniality through the censorship of testimonies of traumatic histories of colonial loss. Zoë Wicomb's *David's Story* (2001) and Helen Oyeyemi's *The Icarus Girl* (2005) both use ghosts as the means to express the unsayable feminine and in so doing world potential postcolonial identities hitherto censored. First, I will summarize the plots of the novels and explain why a psychoanalytic paradigm helps us to read traumatic colonial histories fraught with gaps and tensions in order to excavate their adumbration of new visions of postcolonial identity. I will then analyze the trope and technique of testimonial censorship and the ghosts that censorship engenders in the text. I will illuminate the ways in which gendered censorship of the familial narrative functions as a metaphor for gendered censorship of the narrative of the emerging nation, which forestalls its postcolonial articulation. I will conclude by examining potential implications for reading testimonial ghosts in *David's Story*, *The Icarus Girl*, and post-independence African literature.

While the term "postcolonial" refers to a particular period of time (which begins with formal independence), the notion of postcoloniality is much more about the dynamic tensions inherent in history making than about locating specific histories within specific chronologies. Through reconstituting histories of individual and collective trauma, characters in the novels challenge the nationalist discourse of

sublimating personal history in order to participate in the imagined community. The novels articulate a different version of the postcolonial nation by including bodies hitherto not imagined as part of the emerging nation. In emphasizing the significance of women as mothers, and other marginalized and diaspora populations as integral to the fashioning of the nation, the novels suggest that the nation may be conceived as a transnational family.

In both *David's Story* and *The Icarus Girl*, the ghost is a particular female spectral body who has been censored from both the national and familial narratives. In both the family and the nation, the loss remains unaddressed and prevents forward development of the collective unit. This attempt to masculinize the postcolonial nation invokes the ghost of the censored figure of woman. Her ghostly presence reiterates the importance of "woman" in its various iterations to the formation of the new national citizenry. At the insistence of their ghosts, these novels offer a native subject speaking herself into existence from outside the space of colonized otherness.

While *David's Story* is quite explicit in the connections it makes between family and nation and gender, *The Icarus Girl* is less so. The ghostly haunting by TillyTilly ties to the postcolonial nation that cannot yet partake of postcoloniality. The ghost of Fern (TillyTilly) represents the ghost of the female body censored from the failed articulation of the postcolonial family and nation. The dead baby girl symbolizes and signifies both the familial and national losses of the female body. TillyTilly is the ghost of the baby who has not been mourned, but the specter also represents the postcolonial nation that has not come to pass. The ghost that simultaneously signifies loss also brings the potential to begin mourning. In the

novel, the arrival and migration of the specter TillyTilly brings the potential for Jessamy (and, through Jess, for Sarah) to address the incorporated losses of family (Fern) and nation (Nigeria).

In this chapter, I will compare the manner in which the *David's Story* narrative repeatedly tries to breach David's censorship of Dulcie to the way in which the "appearance" of TillyTilly in *The Icarus Girl* is a literal and ghostly apparition of that censorship. Both novels are censored testimonial narratives and a comparison of the two modes of censorship allows us to understand the relationship between silence and history. Much like the ghosts who act as witnesses to these silences in the fictional worlds of the novels, the reader listens for these silences in the text, in which she will hear the voices of ghosts. They haunt the spaces left when speech and existence are censored from the historical record. Listening for ghosts in testimonial literature is similar in method to my reading of these novels, which illustrates the manner in which the novels function like histories from below.¹ Wicomb's narrator reconstructs the tales of Dulcie and other women freedom fighters that David censors from his South African history, and Jess unearths Fern in the spectral form of the censored twin TillyTilly. We can read Dulcie, TillyTilly, Griqualand, and Nigeria as the human and geographic remains (or traces) that haunt the diaspora nation and the transnational family.

David's Story and The Icarus Girl: Summaries

The narrative action of *David's Story* bookends the inception and imminent demise of apartheid in South Africa. The novel opens in Cape Town in 1991 during the demolition of the apartheid apparatus in South Africa. At this point in history, more than thirty thousand people have been detained without trial and thousands have been tortured under former President P. W. Botha's campaign of terror.² F. W. de Klerk succeeded Botha as President the previous year and has ended a five-year national state of emergency,³ lifted the thirty-year ban on leading anti-apartheid groups,⁴ and released various political prisoners including Nelson Mandela, leader of the African National Congress (ANC). The armed resistance, known as the MK,⁵ has suspended armed operations and South Africa has begun negotiating its ideal vision of a "new," postcolonial nation.⁶

As its title suggests, the novel begins as the history of former MK cell leader David Dirkse who is in the process of demilitarization. At this moment of crafting the new nation of South Africa, of which land redistribution is an integral premise, David wants the trauma of Griqua land appropriation by white imperials publicly known through the testimony he dictates to the novel's narrator, an unnamed female transcriber whose sole qualification for the position is that she is "literate and broadly sympathetic to the liberation movement" (2). David reveals parts of the story to her and obscures others. His obsession with his family history focuses on male leadership to the exclusion of all but cursory mention of his female ancestors, all mothers and grandmothers, who play important roles in securing community safety. He omits mention of the liberation movement's gender abuses and, for that matter, dismisses as

unimportant any reference to women's roles in both the inception and demise of apartheid, censoring both the female body and the fact of its abuse from his historical record. The narrator reads between the lines of David's recitations and recreates not only behavioral motivations but entire histories for the strong women to whom he only alludes. David becomes angry at the narrator's repeated attempts to turn the manuscript narration towards women's roles in early Griqua leadership and to gendered violence in the resistance. He accuses: "You have turned it into a story of women; it's full of old women, for God's sake. . . . Who would want to read a story like that? It's not a proper history at all" (199). David's suggestion for transforming the "story of women" into a "proper history" belies the primacy of his concern for gendering history over accurately reporting it: "Can't some of the oumas at least be turned into oupas?" he asks the narrator. "There's no harm in that, just turning the she's into he's" (199). In David's proposed story, the mother figure is expelled from the work of forging a new South Africa, and David's "story" is haunted by the ghost of this censored female body. Her ghost is a metaphor for his doomed project of fathering the postcolonial nation.

While *David's Story* is set in the moment of articulating a vision of the postcolonial nation that occurs prior to the commencement of formal independence in South Africa, *The Icarus Girl* takes place several decades into post-independence with no cohesive national identity in place. Ongoing government instability has driven large numbers of Nigerians into diaspora and the novel is set in London at the beginning of the twenty-first century. The protagonist is eight-year-old Jessamy Harrison whose mother Sarah is a Yoruba immigrant from Nigeria and whose father

Daniel is white and British. Sarah has migrated to London from Nigeria to seek personal safety and a medical degree.⁷ Against her father's wishes, Sarah switches to an English literature major and thus undermines both her family's and host country's expectations for her residency in the metropole. Although studies show that most third world women relocating in the West migrate as domestic or low wage labor, or as a dependent daughter or wife, Sarah subverts this model of the female immigrant. She has moved independently and has begun a family after her arrival. Oyeyemi portrays Sarah as the stronger household leader and, when Daniel falls ill later in the novel, Sarah assumes responsibility for the family. Jess identifies Sarah as such an overpowering force in the family that she overshadows its other members to the point of obliterating them. In a word association game with her psychologist Dr. McKenzie, Jess associates "Mom" with "large," "Dad" with "smaller," and "Jess" with "gone" (135).

As the novel opens, Sarah struggles to finish a novel, Jess battles social alienation and anxiety after having skipped a grade in school, and Daniel seems mildly distant, befuddled by his place in the family. Jess tells her spectral friend TillyTilly, whom only she can see, that her classmates are "*too* different from me. It makes me...weird. I don't want to be weird and always thinking weird things and being scared, and I don't want to have something missing from me," (127, emphasis in original). Jess does not realize that what is missing is her stillborn twin Fern, about whom Jess's parents have never told her. Jess's ignorance of the loss—both of Fern's existence and death—prevents her from mourning it. The loss nevertheless manifests for Jess in the form of the ghost TillyTilly who arrives unexpectedly during a family

visit in Nigeria and becomes Jess's best friend back at home in England. Jess's need to mourn Fern is vicarious simply because she has never seen or heard of Fern, but she does need to mourn both for her own experience of loss and because she has inherited her parents' unfulfilled need to mourn. Sarah's and Daniel's unmet desire becomes one that Jess has no choice but to fulfill.

Jess is reclusive, moody, and given to one "serious tantrum" per week in school (90). Sarah and Daniel are troubled by Jess's outbursts, which especially frustrate Sarah. She complains to Daniel: "I can't mother this girl. I try, but...I'm scared of her" (211). Sarah brings the family to Nigeria with the hope of unhinging Jess's difficulty and perhaps relieving their mother-daughter tension. In Nigeria, TillyTilly entices Jess into performing increasingly troublesome mischief. When TillyTilly follows the Harrisons to London, her pranks both with and on Jess escalate to include property and bodily damage to others. Jess is extremely close with her father and he grows increasingly depressed and lethargic during TillyTilly's escalation. Daniel's illness causes Jess increasing horror: "this wasn't her father at all, it was a thing, slurred of speech, emptied" (275), and she fears TillyTilly may be to blame. The connection between TillyTilly's escalating mischief and Daniel's worsening illness is the family's headlong rush toward exposing the secret of Fern. Exasperated, Sarah connects Jess with Dr. McKenzie. When Jess befriends McKenzie's daughter, Shivs, TillyTilly becomes jealous and Jess rightly fears for the safety of her first material friend. Eventually, analysis reveals the problem to lie in unattended parental mourning. Sarah's stalled mourning manifests in her refusal to speak of Fern to Jess. Sarah's silence is a form of censorship: she has censored Fern

from the family narrative. Fern's censored residue of loss takes the form of the apparition TillyTilly who haunts the text, Jess, and, eventually, the entire family. Jess's wild behavior is her way of acting out Fern's loss, even though the fact of that loss is at first a mystery to her.

Building on Khanna's idea that ghosts of colonial trauma haunt postcolonial intellectuals who recharted the practice of psychoanalysis by redirecting its lens inward to expose its ghosts, I wish to suggest that ghosts also haunt fiction writers and their characters, and I suggest that we turn our lens on their texts to illuminate those ghosts and their demands.⁸ The ghost of the discipline of psychoanalysis is its historical application as a colonial tool, which is precisely why Khanna argues for the discipline's unique applicability to examine not only the significance of ghosts and other textual representations of trauma, but also to illuminate the ways in which colonialism and its practice inform these themes in the literature. Simply put, the mere presence of ghosts in the text constitutes a demand to discuss them in the language of trauma.

In their rescripting of psychoanalysis as a symptom and signifier of colonial trauma, postcolonial writers rewrite both psychoanalysis and postcolonial nation building as new epistemological and ideological territories haunted by their colonial pasts, even as they gesture toward just (e.g., anti-colonial) futures.⁹ Khanna suggests that "the affect" or ghost of colonialism haunts the formation of the postcolonial nation-state in the form of ethnic divisiveness and other modes of political disunity (12). Africa's divisions into nation-states remains based largely on the international boundaries negotiated during the late nineteenth century's Berlin Conference.

Individual colonies won independence through the late twentieth century, but the colonial boundaries remain largely intact. Many African communities remain split across international boundaries while in other independent nation-states like Nigeria, large numbers of culturally different communities have been forced to attempt democratic cohabitation when the sheer number of variant communities renders equitable government representation nearly impossible. In the face of such inorganic modes of national construction, the collective's sense of national identity fractures along ethnic lines or across international borders. The national self is thus fractured. The psychic dissonance of unbelonging and loss compounds the twin pathologies of racism internalized and encountered.

I read *David's Story* and *The Icarus Girl* together because despite their differences in historical moment, nation, their protagonists' age and gender, and the contexts in which the ghosts appear, both novels articulate the connection between an emerging nation and a disintegrating family as linked moments of gendered crisis. The speakers of the novels' censored stories, David and Sarah, have different relationships to the female bodies they censor from their national and family narratives, and the witnesses to whom they relay censored testimony and who mediate those experiences for the reader. Considering these novels together is thus useful because both are framed as exercises in creating literary histories of trauma. Traumatic suffering and its concomitant lack of knowledge stymies the literary characters' desires to bear witness to traumatic histories of colonial oppression. The ghost in each text is a symbol of the residue of this struggle.

David's Story and *The Icarus Girl* are about correcting faulty testimonies by exposing the ghosts that scream their censorship from within testimonial texts. Both novels employ postmodern narrative tactics to critique and reject the western novel form as a mode of transmission of testimonial literature.¹⁰ The texts represent loss in ways that call attention, however, to their traumatized engagement with Western narrative norms. *David's Story* as a novel is the penultimate nonlinear narrative. Indeed, its form replicates the process by which a traumatic narrative—which is always nonlinear and fragmentary—is constructed, complete with informational gaps, transcriptions, speculations, corrections, and primary source quotations, all arranged in a non-linear order that jumps back and forth between time periods and locations. *David's Story*, of all the novels analyzed in this dissertation, most closely resembles a faithful transcription of a traumatic testimony. Despite the prevailing critical tendency to do so, I argue against describing Oyeyemi's novel as magic realist because it dismisses the text's relationship to the Yoruba literary tradition of "cosmic totality," which Wole Soyinka defines as "a consciousness in which [a person's] own earth being, his gravity-bound apprehension of self, [i]s inseparable from the entire cosmic phenomenon" (*Myth* 3). Jess's journey into the realm of the ancestors during the novel's denouement is not just a next step in the hero's journey outside the usual realms of consciousness as part of her *Bildungs* process. Jess's journey is not intended primarily to transform her into a better citizen upon her return, but instead to reunite her with her lost half, her companion "to walk your three worlds with" (Oyeyemi 176).

* * *

The characters' unreliability as narrators of trauma demonstrates that we as readers must revise our conception of what constitutes a viable history, to consider the notion that history may reside outside of comprehensible narratives. In this light, we can read haunting as a disruption of the discursive separation of history from traumatic testimony. Haunting dismantles the ideological opposition between fact and experience. It thus changes the act of reading a literary representation of a traumatic history by infusing it with the political potential for social transformation through mourning. Eng and Kazanjian suggest that the way in which we interpret the ghostly remains politicizes loss and shapes the possibilities for mourning.¹¹

To examine traumatic loss is to read the ego's network of melancholic attachments to lost objects. Accumulations of these "traces" lend themselves to interpretation as a "hermeneutic domain" (Eng and Kazanjian, "Mourning" 4). As the ego expands by appending to itself the residue of each loss, the testimonial text expands by accommodating the ghost created by each act of censorship. To examine a testimony of loss is to read a network of traces of the speaker's losses and, in the case of the two novels discussed here, these traces are embodied in the ghostly specters of Dulcie and Fern (TillyTilly). In the way that Wicomb's narrator and Jess "read" the spectral traces of censored colonial loss, the act of reading Wicomb's and Oyeyemi's novels can initiate a process of recovery by witnessing the loss the testimony represents. In this way, one may read the two novels as doing history, to paraphrase John Williams' term for resurrecting historical silences in a historiographic text in order to initiate the work of collective mourning and thus

social change.¹² For Williams, charting the deployment, discovery, and illumination of silences in colonial history is tantamount to “charting a theory of change” and, more specifically, of changing official history (164). Wicomb’s narrator and Jess listen for these “silences” across national and family narratives to discern what the censored ghosts reveal about the conditions of their erasures.¹³ Like the postcolonial scholar, the metropolitan reader’s task is to listen for traces of erasure in moments of textual silence, mark them, and to record their histories. Bhabha most clearly articulates the intellectual’s responsibility to the ghost who calls for historical justice:

This act of writing the world, of taking the measure of its dwelling, is magically caught in Morrison’s description of her house of fiction [in *Beloved*]—art as “the fully realized presence of a haunting” of history. Read as an image that describes the relation of art to social reality, my translation of Morrison’s phrase becomes a statement on the political responsibility of the critic. *For the critic must attempt to fully realize, and take responsibility for the unspoken, unrepresented pasts that haunt the historical present.* (12, emphasis added)¹⁴

This is the task for the metropolitan reader of African testimonial literature.

Reading Censorship, Reading Loss

The trauma sufferer’s ego houses both loss and the fact of loss. Each melancholic attachment to a lost object appends more psychic material onto the ego like so many scars. The meaning of traumatic testimony is also derived from loss. Violated by a troubled ego, the nature of traumatic testimony is censorship: it is riddled with gaps and fissures created by trauma’s informational lack, the sufferer’s forgetting, and denial. Naomi Morgenstern observes that because it is censored text,

traumatic testimony is “a traumatized text” violated by the excision of the censor, a traumatized ego (107). I use the term “censored text” to mean that text which has been altered by either the refusal (or failure) to include certain material while creating it or the later excision of relevant material from its already completed form.

Torok’s essay on the rhetorical implications of editorial decisions not to publish certain of Freud’s letters suggests that censorship both obscures and displays conceptual alternatives.¹⁵ To Torok, a censored text reveals at the least two distinct yet related narratives. First, censored text itself stands as meaningful testimony. Second, traces of alteration point to the existence of the missing text. As a result, the censored text’s reader is at once deprived of the excised text and strikingly aware of its conspicuous absence.¹⁶ In the context of censorship and its relationship to loss, I suggest that traumatic testimony’s gaps and fissures are not merely holes in the text. These gaps are filled with the residues of what has been either erased or omitted. This residue is the lost object which both hides and marks its erasure.

The figure of a ghost signifies the textual matter that was erased. The ghost haunts the gaps and fissures of the censored testimony, screaming her presence in search of a witness. The ghost thus marks an unattended loss and makes it real. Avery Gordon writes, “disappearance is real *only* when it is apparitional” (63, emphasis added).¹⁷ While loss may originate in an absence, a loss is not the same as an absence.¹⁸ Loss is a particular event tied to a particular moment in time. Losses litter the past as ghostly remains pointing back to the particularity of each traumatic event while absence, which is sometimes but not always a condition of having endured a loss, transcends time.

The ghost haunts because the dead demand recognition (acknowledgement) and action (justice). In this sense, the ghost is a testimony of the trauma of erasure. While the ghost usually signifies dead bodies, it does more than that. The ghost points to a particular dead body or missed opportunity. It also illuminates a larger, traumatizing social pattern or cultural institution. The ghost disrupts the discursive boundaries of history, subjectivity, and the Real, “import[ing],” writes Gordon, “a charged strangeness into the place or sphere it is haunting, thus unsettling the propriety and property lines that delimit a zone of activity or knowledge” (63). The ghost makes traumatic testimony transgress the epistemological and ideological boundary between fantasy and fact.¹⁹ We can read haunting as a way of knowing what is or has happened that challenges the witness’s reliance on and conceptualization of the familiar because it disrupts and even destroys the way that she believes she constructs knowledge and what she thinks she knows. This knowledge is never sought.

The unfamiliar—or that which we do not already recognize—appears to us as a ghost. If the way we know ourselves and our world is structured around our notions of what we believe to be familiar, then how do we recognize the *unfamiliar*? How do we know it when we see it? Kelly Oliver suggests that “the tension between recognizing the familiar in order to confirm what we already know and listening for the unfamiliar that disrupts what we already know” is the basis for the current critical understanding of the notion of recognition (2).²⁰ Because we seek the familiar, we do not always know how to look for the ghost. We can only be open to an encounter. The ghost in the text seeks out the reader as a witness by haunting her, and then “pulls

[her] affectively into . . . a reality [she will] come to experience as a recognition” of that which she could not see before (Gordon 63). In the haunted context, witnesses’ addenda and ghostly embodiments are viable testimonial options. Because it engenders a specifically transformative way of knowing, haunting can function in the context of trauma as the testimonial possibility of productive mourning. We can conceive of loss in *David’s Story* and *The Icarus Girl* in terms of traumatic testimony, censorship, and haunting because loss in the novels is framed in terms of remains. Dulcie’s and Fern (TillyTilly)’s ghostly presences in the texts mark both loss and the fact of it. Both texts represent narratives that attempt to hide secrets that we later realize have been revealed to us all along: they are testimonies from which traumatized female bodies have been censored.

Decolonizing the Mother

The novels suggest that replacing patriarchal notions of womanhood and, in particular, of motherhood is crucial to the project of building post-independence African nations. I do not mean to essentialize African womanhood by limiting African female subjectivity to the realm of biological fertility. Nor do I intend to privilege an ideal notion of African motherhood. I refer instead to the cultural practice in most African communities of adult women sharing maternal relationships with young people in their acquaintance.²¹ “That motherhood is venerated in African communities is trite” Shereen Mills reminds us,²² but I suggest that the complexity of the mother figure’s cultural importance to decolonization remains unaddressed. I

believe these novels clamor for a theorization of the relationship between African cosmologies of motherhood and nation building.

As is familiar to us now, many postcolonial feminist scholars have highlighted the myriad ways in which women are deployed as hallmarks of tradition.²³ The site of “woman” as sign of the private and of tradition is also the site of national anxiety. Ray argues that Benedict Anderson’s claim, that national identity in the modern world is as fundamental an identity marker as gender, does not consider the differences among identities articulated “at the intersection of gender and nationality” or the ways in which these identities variously inform the national imaginary (*En-Gendering* 5).²⁴

Reintroducing the figure of the mother as mother in discursive constructions of the nation upsets the public/private split and destroys patriarchal privilege. If the family is the microcosm of the nation, then the construction of an anti-colonial, post-independence national community begins at the family level. The novels demonstrate that repositioning motherhood is central to family and national health after colonialism. History bears out this contention. Within the larger theoretical framework of the figure of woman and the importance of this figure to the emergence of nationalism, I introduce the histories of militant motherhood which demonstrate that mothers have comprised significant percentages of women’s organized protests against specific colonial injustices like pass laws in South Africa. As this example shows, women’s organized agitation against masculinist government oppression becomes a powerful symbol for rejecting patriarchy and a metaphor for the national liberation struggle. The fact that many of these women were mothers “was central to

the power of [their] symbolism” as an image of anti-patriarchal liberation (Mills). The image of women ungendering the liberation struggle through various forms of participation in it is particularly powerful when contrasted with the representation, in *David’s Story*, of women’s subordination within that struggle.²⁵

Spatial Dislocations

Both novels represent a native lived experience shaped in part by the colonial experience of forced migration—either as part of the apartheid regime in *David’s Story* or to escape dictatorial violence in *The Icarus Girl*—that require new determinations of group identity and configuration. The “diasporic nation” is such a formulation, one that accommodates “the myriad ways in which embodied citizens break out and reconstruct their relations with the nation as, for example, classed, gendered, raced, subjects with specific relations to the national project, thus producing disassembled,” or diaspora, nations (Westwood). Such alternative formulations of postcolonial communities suggest that postcolonial “African-ness” is not dependent on living in the ancestral homeland, or even in Africa.²⁶ This notion of postcolonial identity as being necessarily diasporic and, thus, postmodern, infuses both Wicomb’s and Oyeyemi’s novels. African postcolonial theorists have argued that “new kinds of state structures, cooperation and networks will emerge” if decolonization processes dismantle colonial-era borders, and African communities in particular will form instead along locally defined lines of “popular affinity” (van Binsbergen 27).

I began this chapter by suggesting that *David's Story* and *The Icarus Girl* “world” an uncensored postcoloniality in their revelations of that which had been censored. In the same way that decolonizing African communities have the opportunity to rewrite African national borders, I read decolonizing African literature as seizing the opportunity to rewrite our literary, and thus historical, notions of “Africa.” Bhabha suggests that critical reading reveals cues in the postcolonial text that expand and rewrite our ideological and epistemological cartographies of what Africa (or postcoloniality in general) can be. He writes:

If we are seeking a “worlding” of literature, then perhaps it lies in a critical act that attempts to grasp the sleight of hand with which literature conjures with historical specificity, using the medium of psychic uncertainty, aesthetic distancing, or the obscure signs of the spirit-world, the sublime and the subliminal. As literary creatures and political animals we ought to concern ourselves with the understanding of human action and the social world as a moment when *something is beyond control, but it is not beyond accommodation*. (12, emphasis in original)

Spivak’s application of the term “worlding” to literature is a multi-layered reference whose base is “the contradiction involved in the necessary colonialist presupposition of an uninscribed earth” onto which the colonial power reinscribes itself as discoverer and owner of an already inhabited territory (*Critique* 228). I will return to the notion of colonizing the earth shortly. For now, I want to discuss colonizing the “native.” This colonial fiction of “uninscribed earth,” when backed by the military and ideological forces of imperial Europe, is forceful enough to compel the “native” to see himself as “other” (*Critique* 211-12). To Khanna, the colonized native thus becomes, through the process of worlding:

the “closed,” the “concealed,” or the “earth” through the [colonizer’s] establishment of the world. To understand not only the world as it is brought into unconcealedness, but also the strife in its inception, allows us to see how the earth itself is changed forever through the creation of the world. “Worlding” involves a creation of strife; understanding worlding involves an analysis of that strife—critically worlding the processes of the previously earthed, thereby seeing the historical, political, and economic dynamics of strife through its unconcealment. (4-5)

For both Spivak and Khanna, art projects an essence of the unsayable to its observer. The work of art bears traces of the strife that marked the process of creation of that projection. Spivak hopes that we will not be able to read a literary narrative without also recognizing the traces it bears that mark the strife of its creation within a particular cultural, political, or ideological context.²⁷

Postcolonial discourse has exhaustively rehearsed colonialism’s perpetration of a network of traumatic losses on the native. Loss of native life, personal autonomy, and possessions has been theorized at length, but the traumatic loss of native land through forced relocation or seizure is only recently receiving attention in the international critical discourse on colonial loss.²⁸ For many African communities, the land and occupation of it are as psychologically significant to cultural and national identity as they are somatically crucial for survival. The act of removing the individual from her or his local resources censors history by stifling the native historical voice. The national self is censored as a result of land loss. The past dearth of critical attention to land loss has censored its importance and *its existence as a loss* from the discursive and historical texts, even as colonial land appropriation has been

widely linked to black poverty, white appropriation of black resources, patriarchy, and the subsequent erasure of the female body from the nation.

The South African Griqua and Nigerian Yoruba are displaced and diasporic due to forced migration. To be disconnected from Griqua ancestral land and Yoruba geopolitical freespace is tantamount to the loss of not just one loved person but of a loved community. Although Freud ranks the loss of a loved person above that of any other kind of love object, communities impoverished by displacement from their land like the South African Griqua and Nigerian Yoruba in diaspora “continue to suffer material loss” such that land can be the lost object for a colonized and postcolonial people (Johnson 293). Their lost object is the national *Heim*, and the literal and symbolic loss of homeland undermines national identity. Freud calls the *unheimlich* (literally, “unhomely,” but also “uncanny”) “that class of the frightening which leads back to what is known of old and long familiar” (“Uncanny” 220).²⁹ This juxtaposition of the frightening unknown with the safety of the *heimlich* (literally, “homely”)—is at the root of Freud’s question in “The ‘Uncanny’” of “in what circumstances the familiar can become uncanny and frightening” (220). Freud begins with the borrowed premise that the *unheimlich* is something which has been revealed, but which should have remained hidden (225) and, in English, “uncanny” implies supernatural involvement in the revelation. Freud muses that “something has to be added” to the unfamiliar to make it frightening, that:

among its different shades of meaning the word “*heimlich*” exhibits one which is identical with its opposite, “*unheimlich*.” What is *heimlich* thus comes to be *unheimlich*. . . . the word “*heimlich*” is not unambiguous, but belongs to two sets of ideas, which, without being

contradictory, are yet very different: on the one hand it means what is familiar and agreeable, and on the other, what is concealed and kept out of sight. (224-25)

In the essay, Freud concludes that in its development “in the direction of ambivalence, until it finally coincides with its opposite, *unheimlich*. . . is in some way or other a sub-species of *heimlich*” (226). The combination of familiarity and secrecy is the marker of the *unheimlich* within the homespace. The attribute of “foreignness,” which should disappear or be concealed when the immigrant claims the host country as home, remains a brand that always prevents the immigrant from claiming both the new and host homes. In both novels, the people’s relation to the land *as loss* figures prominently such that in the novels African peoples are defined by traumatic loss of their land. In the post-independence community, affiliation is in part based on the common experience of land loss. In *David’s Story* and *The Icarus Girl*, David’s displaced Griqua family and Jess’s diasporic, biracial British-Yoruba subjectivity function as metaphors for the Griqua community’s relationship to the apartheid South African government and for the fragmented Yoruba community’s relationship to the dictatorial postcolonial Nigerian government.

As a backdrop to *David’s Story*, Griqua law criminalized the sale of Griqua land to “foreigners” regardless of whether the land was privately or communally owned (Johnson 285). When the Griqua lands were appropriated by British and Cape Colony authorities and about two thousand Griqua were subsequently relocated to Nomansland four hundred kilometers to the east across the Drakensberg, the Griquas considered the occupation at most a forced rental to a series of colonial occupiers and never an ownership transfer. By the end of the century, most Griquas were landless

and impoverished. The Griquas still claim continuous ownership of their land. They demand acknowledgment of their ownership and restitution for ancestral lands stolen by the apartheid government. These claims surface at the moments of apartheid's inception and demise. Its one hundred year battle for the return of land stolen by whites defines the Griqua community. Although the post-apartheid government promises to return stolen land in South Africa, Griqua land remains in the control of whites who claim, with the support of the official historical record, that the Griquas sold or bartered the land to them and that white residency is thus valid and uncontested. The Griqua community stands almost no chance of regaining its parcels. With no real hope of returning to their ancestral land, the Griquas are a people defined by migration.

* * *

Forty years of post-independence government violence has required many Nigerians, like Sarah in *The Icarus Girl*, to forge communities outside the homeland, communities unencumbered by international borders or even by nationality. For the many Yoruba, for whom political alienation and repression has made the homeland a dangerous place, to be postcolonial Nigerian is to be an immigrant. The Nigerian government's exclusion of the Yoruba from post-independence political representation has effectively jettisoned almost half of all Yoruba from the nation, reframing neocolonial exile in diaspora as land loss. The series of corrupt military governments means that the dream of "postcolonial Nigeria" is lost to Nigerians unable to enjoy the safety, economic and educational opportunities, and ethnic political representation in-country which independence promised but has not

delivered.³⁰ Many Yoruba who immigrated to Europe in the 1980s dare not return to Nigeria to work or aid their families because the Yoruba there remain unrepresented by post-independence Nigeria's succession of "ethno-military" dictators (Sekoni). After the apparent 1993 presidential victory of Yoruba candidate Moshood Abiola, incumbent president Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida alleged fraud and voided the results.³¹ Nigerians in general and the Yoruba in particular had hoped that 1993 would see the post-independence election of Nigeria's first truly democratic government. All were disappointed.

Griqua and Yoruba who want to establish postcolonial communities in their homelands face the formidable task of nation building in spaces that remain inhospitable to these factions of the native citizenry. *David's Story* and *The Icarus Girl* represent microcosms of these African nations in the process of creating their ideal images of postcoloniality. The novels depict the family's preoccupation with its own troubled interrelationships as a metaphor for the postcolonial nation's attempt to coalesce into a nation-state.

Reinstating the Mother Figure

In both novels, migrations symbolize the loss of an ideal postcolonial nation. The novels rectify colonialist notions of nation building by validating the importance of women and motherhood in the processes of crafting gender-inclusive national parameters. As part of the growing body of theoretical scholarship on the permutations of "motherhood," Daymond observes that the state of motherhood motivates political activism and invokes the mother-child bond as a frequent African

“major model of social relationships” (xxvii). Contemporary African feminists do not seek a return to pre-colonial family models, but they do seek to break free of colonialism’s imposition or exacerbation of existing patriarchal social structures, as well as the residual effects of colonialism’s successors, neocolonialism and globalization. Oyěwùmí argues succinctly:

From an African perspective, what is most troubling in many feminist theories of motherhood is that the mother’s god-like power over the infant is not recognized as such. Instead the mother is seen as trapped by her role as primary caregiver; her god-like power over her child, and the authority this gives her within society are not acknowledged. (“Abiyamo”)³²

In Yoruba cosmology, the process of giving birth is so metaphysically significant that birth mothers are invested with “mystical powers, especially over their offspring” (Oyěwùmí, “Abiyamo”). Each birth creates three entities specific to that particular birthing experience: a baby, a mother, and the important bonds they share. Children know that their mothers can at any time invoke *ikunle abiyamo*, their special mothering powers granted by both the birthing process and by social and metaphysical valuation of their mothering status.³³ Similarly, before globalization, Igbo communities prized people as their most important resources and markers of wealth. Their idioms reflect this orientation: *azuka ego* means “siblings are much more important than wealth,” and *maduka* means “greatness is dependent or predicated on people.” To have children was of paramount importance to sustain both the family and the community, and the mother’s role in these endeavors was revered. Mothers were referred to as “the source of the spring, *isi mmili*” (Nzegwu).³⁴

Becoming a mother whether through biology or other means elevates a woman to the “ranks of the most revered women in Africa” (Sudarkasa). A woman’s sphere of power and influence extends over both her children and their father—and this increase in power and influence is a socially expected result of becoming a mother (Sudarkasa). An Akan proverb that says a woman gave birth to the king illustrates the notion that motherhood “antedates the king and therefore cannot be subordinated to any social institution. If anything, it is the originary source—the fountainhead of the social” (Oyěwùmí, “Abiyamo”). Motherhood is a role of elevated social importance, but this importance also means that motherhood is an observed state, and that respect is conferred based on how well the mother is observed to function as a mother. Reintroduction of the importance of the mother to social systems is beginning to replace “phallic ways of understanding” creativity, and of conceiving authorship as communal rather than an individual “ownership of meaning” (Daymond xxvii). By challenging colonialism’s phallic reinscription of Africa by in part returning its cultural emphasis toward the collective, postcolonial motherhood discourse suggests the potential for developing new modes of inclusive nation-state creation.

I will now read the two novels in order to suggest that, in the texts, the loss of land prefigures and is the precondition for censoring the mother from the birth of the postcolonial nation. David’s and Sarah’s censorship of female bodies from their personal and historical texts functions as a metaphor for the larger social elision of women from the postcolonial nation. Dulcie’s and TillyTilly’s ghostly testimonies expose and castigate their censorship in calls for justice. A just response would be to

listen for silenced women's voices, somehow screaming through the traumatic, historical, and/or literary texts.

David's Story of Women

The text of *David's Story* reflects the struggle between its two principal speakers for primacy of voice and purpose. The novel is a compilation of David's recitations, oral histories, epigraphs and longer quotations from newspaper articles and other historical monographs, the narrator's suppositions and reflections on the collaboration, journal entries from her life, and transcripts of their conversations about the work and other topics. While the text cites newspaper and other media sources, it never signals a transition from David's history to the narrator's poetic license or back again. It frequently records, however, David's outrage at such inclusions afterward. To further demolish the lines between speakers, the text uses no punctuation to demarcate conversation, the result being that the uncareful reader easily loses track of who is speaking. Finally, the novel traverses time and space frequently, between 1991 and the nineteenth century, and between Cape Town and Kokstad. The overall result appears to be a jumble of historical fact and supposition, presented in a narrative full of holes and ghosts. The literary conventions that make *David's Story's* a postmodern text are also the psychoanalytic conventions that qualify it as a textual testimony of trauma.

David avoids questions about fellow MK cell leader Dulcie Olifant with whom he is widely suspected of having an affair. "David cannot or will not answer such questions," the narrator tells us, "except that she is single and works as a

researcher for a nongovernmental organization, which accounts for the flexibility of her time. Her story is of no relevance to his own, he says weakly” (78), but the reader and narrator discern otherwise. It is important that he says it weakly; David’s tone gives the narrator a clue that Dulcie is actually key to his story. David’s ambivalent desire to both encrypt and reference Dulcie “has already betrayed the belief that some trace of hers is needed for his to make sense; he has already betrayed the desire to lose her story within his own” (78).

A powerful woman, Dulcie is an oxymoronic affront to the patriarchal structure of the MK organization. She is ritually tortured for her rise in the ranks:

The men in balaclavas come like privileged guests into her bedroom, in the early hours, always entering the house by different routes, ridiculing her reinforced bolts and locks. . . . Occasionally a real doctor is brought along. . . . Sometimes in the delirium of pain she wishes to say something soothing, comforting, for she knows that he does not understand the ways of the world, the ugly secrets of war. (81, 82)

Scarred, silent, Dulcie is both keeper and marker of “the ugly secrets of war,” and in David’s text she is regularly ungendered or rendered non-normative as well as censored. David tells the narrator: “She is not pretty, you know, not feminine, not like a woman at all” (80). When the narrator asks about how male guerillas treat female comrades, he “barks” that the question is “irrelevant. . . . In the Movement those kinds of differences are wiped out by our common goal” (78). David “doesn’t want [Dulcie’s] voice represented” so intensely that he wrangles with the narrator repeatedly over her speculations about Dulcie (199). These arguments litter the text: “he has brushed aside my piece on [Dulcie’s] obsession and silence as an absurd

exercise in style,” the narrator tells the reader (198). But the narrator also recognizes that Dulcie’s place outside the story represents woman’s place outside the new nation: “I have nothing to lose and so push ahead with my inventions. Dulcie has, after all, always hovered somewhere between fact and fiction” (198), just as womanhood in the new South Africa will always hover somewhere between the Real and the margin unless the liberation movement breaks the colonialist cycle of sexism.

In contrast, the reader sees no struggle over the narrator’s inclusion of the history of David’s ex-comrade and wife Sally whom David expelled from the Movement when he married her. At the time he told Sally that “it was only sensible that they should think about the future, of leading normal family lives” (14). Does David provide more detail on Sally or is she—like Dulcie—another of the narrator’s “inventions?” I suggest that Sally’s status as wife and mother, and not comrade, conforms to patriarchal modes of familial citizenship and eliminates her threat to the MK’s historical and ideological patriarchy. Sally’s conformity allows her to inhabit David’s history while Dulcie’s nonconformity bars her from it. Indeed, while David is uncomfortable giving place to Dulcie because she defies patriarchal norms, the narrator reports that in his history “David would like his wife to be something of a character” (17). Despite David’s permissions, however, we see less of Sally than we do of Dulcie in the text. David’s confinement of Sally in the text to the role of mother over that of comrade is emblematic of the mother’s marginality in reference to the liberation movement—a harbinger of her confinement within the margins of the new nation. Perhaps the narrator is indirectly responsible for Sally’s marginalization in the text as well: because David does not attempt, as strongly as he does with

Dulcie, to censor Sally from the text, the narrator is less driven to resurrect her minimally suppressed voice and existence.

The apartheid state was so male “in its self-conception, representation and control” that all women were “absenced,” that it censored all women from its articulation of “the people” such that “people” meant “men” (Daymond xv). Censoring women from the social text makes naturalizing violence against them possible, and David’s androcentric recitation cannot obscure the gendered dehumanization that underpins the Movement’s opposition to racialized dehumanization. For female comrades like Dulcie and Sally, both the state *and* its opposition are male. Censoring women from “the people” and from the people’s liberation movement presages their exclusion from the “new” South Africa.

David’s desire to *not* articulate Dulcie’s story in detail is tied to his conviction that sexual relations between comrades in a revolutionary organization undermines the integrity of the unit. In seeking such prohibition, however, he unintentionally opens up the possibility of the rape of women, what Sally calls “this unspoken part of a girl’s training” (123) because it is common knowledge both inside and outside the Movement that to be a woman in the MK is almost certainly to be raped. This knowledge is perhaps David’s reason for curtailing Sally’s participation in the revolution. Sally’s role as mother is incompatible with the female comrade’s vulnerability to rape or torture. David fails (or refuses) to realize that after several years as an elite cadre, Sally has surely already been raped. Indeed, when David ejects Sally from the MK to protect her from rape, the mother ejected has already been raped and so the ejection is useless. She has seen her swimming trainer’s

“bulging shorts and [known] that her time had come, as she had known it would come sooner or later” (123). David fails to see that excluding mothers from armed struggle in order to protect them from rape does not dismantle socially sanctioned gendered subordination. Instead, motherhood becomes an additional tool for gendering women *as women* in order to censor them from the project of crafting the new nation. Their motherhood is used to strip them of their nationalist roles, barring them from participation in the national birth in retribution for their past association with biological birth. For Sally, removed as with a curette from her chosen work, “there was an emptiness, a hollowness inside as if she had aborted, no, miscarried” her nationalist maternity (14). Instead, Sally is relegated to the revolution’s sidelines of community service and is textually reduced to a shrew, jealous of David’s association with her own former comrade. Sally’s fear that David may sleep with Dulcie betrays her knowledge and experience of the Movement’s paradoxical embrace of gendered subordination in resistance to racial subordination. Sally’s relationship to the Movement after she is no longer part of it is thus represented as unproductive and antagonistic. Wicomb demonstrates that absenting the mother figure from the critical operations of nation building is counterproductive to the birth of an inclusive nation.

* * *

Literary representations depict cultural markers.³⁵ In a patriarchy, rape and other forms of gendered violence are the literary and cultural absences or gaps that signify social crisis and censorship.³⁶ Censoring gendered violence from the cultural text normalizes it to the point that both men and women eventually come to *expect* women to be victimized based on their gender, and normalizing that censorship erases

women from the citizenry.³⁷ Normalized sexual violence becomes a force that helps to reinforce gender difference and identity constructions that, in turn, reinforce the existing patriarchal reality.³⁸ Reading the literature of an emerging postcolonial nation illuminates the ways in which testimonial ghosts can reveal the residues and ramifications of cultural censorship. For example, Wicomb argues elsewhere that Miriam Tlali's story "Fud-u-u-a!" about women sexually molested on a crowded train demonstrates South African social pressure on black women to identify only white men as sexual predators even though some black men are also perpetrators.³⁹ Black women in Tlali's story use the vague terms "they" and "men" to describe their molesters and thus render them anonymous. The women display ambivalence in the ways they censor their testimonies of sexual abuse. Wicomb asks: do the women refer to black men on the train, the authorities of the state who "create conditions in which abuse becomes possible," or men in general "who control female discourse?" ("Hear" 51). Black women's language conceals the possibility of black men as perpetrators and emphasizes instead other potential predators in the scenario. Erasing abuse from the social text exonerates the abuser, and the women's nonspecific language obscures the reality of black male predators in their indictment of male sexual predation in general. Tlali's story demonstrates the women's employment of the trope of concealment necessary to "negotiate the conflicting loyalties of race and gender" that was the cultural reality of the resistance and which has become the cultural reality of post-independence Africa (Wicomb, "Hear" 51).

Even as it conceals, however, the women's speech also informs those who know—who participate in and benefit from this cultural discourse of concealment—

that black men *are* the sexual violators on the train. The black women's concealment of the black male sexual predator in Tlali's story is illusory. None of the women, or anyone who overhears their conversation, wonders at the answer to Wicomb's question above about the objects of the women's discussion. In Tlali's apartheid South Africa, as in Wicomb's almost-"new" South Africa, everyone knows where the potential for gendered violence resides, as well as who will administer it and who it will victimize. But no one speaks this information in order to protect its censorship in the emerging national imaginary.

Wicomb's essay illuminates the secret of a double censorship in which the othered South African black woman, censored from the social text of the new South African "we," is pressured to ensure the new nation's health by censoring her own gendered abuse by black men from the historical record of apartheid abuses. Daymond sees this pressure as a cultural directive to rank one's various subjectivities with respect to race, class, age, and gender. To rank abuses is, of course, to create a hierarchy. Politically, black women's adherence to the mandate to rank their race above their gender invisibilizes gender and gendered abuse from public view and discourse. When the individual must sacrifice aspects of her self for the common good, then the "common good" is replaced by a collective of repressed selves. Thus, the censored female body participates in culturally censoring the very mechanism that erases her from the cultural text. Her participation both perpetuates her own erasure and necessitates the creation of a ghost in her form who demands recognition and justice.

Haunting thwarts censorship of the other because erasure fails to eradicate her completely from history's text. The ghost reveals gendered violence including rape as the failed secret and symptom of social pathology. David supposes that black women can overlook their sexual oppression within the Movement as less violating than the apartheid oppression of racism and, apparently, sexual predation from whites. His argument is flawed and the narrator's rewriting of his story exposes that flaw—the attempt to censor gendered violence from the text—cultural, testimonial, or otherwise—reveals its pervasive presence. The culturally instituted pattern of gendered violence and its erasure contains the loose thread of its own unraveling because the historically repeated pattern of violence leaves traces of each traumatic episode.

As censorship disfigures the text, the disfigured text attempts to hide the disfigured physical body. The censored historical text is riddled with holes filled with the ghosts of women's bruised and disfigured bodies. In *David's Story*, although Dulcie is not raped according to the narrator, the violence done to her—she is stripped naked and electrocuted—is intended to gender her female and is therefore gendered violence. The lead torturer instructs his cohorts, “Not rape, that will teach her nothing, leave nothing; rape's too good for her kind” (178). Dulcie represents the tension felt by women in the MK ranks: she embodies the potential for rape that haunts those who have not yet been victimized. David's disfigured historical text is a metaphor for Dulcie's disfigured, torture-scarred body which he censors but which haunts his narrative anyway. In a culture of violence, each whole body deformed

represents a loss. The narrator thus envisions Dulcie's scarred body hidden under a guerilla uniform as a diminished whole:

Her back is strong, broad, almost a square depending on where one considers the back to end. This square is marked with four cent-sized circles forming the corners of a smaller inner square, meticulously staked out with blue ballpoint pen before the insertion of a red-hot poker between the bones. The smell of that singed flesh and bone still, on occasion, invades, and then she cannot summon it away. Each circle is a liverish red crinkled surface of flesh, healed in the darkness under garments that would not let go of the blood. (19)

Meticulously marked out like the plotted map of the new South Africa, Dulcie's female body is only tolerated in the Movement because it is regularly unsexed through torture. The comrade who is not perceived as a woman poses no threat of becoming a mother and Dulcie is allowed not only in the Movement but to continue as one of its leaders because she is not perceived as feminine. Only feminine comrades threaten the integrity of the unit because their gender, according to David's verbal slip, invites rape. David misses the great irony of his belief: rape is the very act that could impregnate female cadres, transforming comrades into mothers whom the patriarchal nation must then protect from rape.

Unlike the expelled mother Sally, whose combat scars of rape are psychic and therefore invisible, Dulcie's combat scars literally crisscross her body. David demonstrates the facility with which the female comrade's service and resultant scars are both censored from resistance history when he dismisses the one instance of Dulcie actually displaying a scar, "the trace of her ordeal" of a bee swarm attack for his examination (83). Emblematically, even if unintentionally so, David tells the

narrator that “even as he stiffly bent closer to look, he could see no evidence of that savage attack” (83).

Despite her pervasive haunting of his text, David’s repeated attempts to diminish Dulcie’s importance to it demonstrates the fact that history attempts to obscure trauma because traumatic testimony threatens the cultural discourse of power and domination. Trauma survivors alienate those who have not survived similar trauma because survivor presence disrupts a culture that wishes to deny its culpability for their traumatic suffering.⁴⁰ The culture of domination shuns survivors in order to repress the shame of having created the conditions that precipitated traumatic events. Those in power thus view the trauma survivor as a threat and attempt to deny her experience through cultural institutions in order to protect the culture’s discursive and ideological frames of homogeneity and benevolence. Wicomb contends that those who “control discourse, whom a culture authorizes to speak,” are invested in survivor-citizen silence because cultural spokesmen are also generally its perpetrators of violence (“Hear” 47). To Wicomb, those in power “will not tolerate exposure and, indeed, will construct it as treacherous and politically unsound” (“Hear” 47). The trauma sufferer’s testimony, silenced as culturally *un*-sound, is subversive for its affront to cultural ideology and other institutions, and principally to the monolith of history.

Breaking Frameworks: Traumatic Historicity

To conceive of a history of trauma is to revise the definition of “history.” Freud provides such a precedent by replacing biblical history with an exploration of

trauma in “Moses and Monotheism.”⁴¹ He seems to deny the monolith—even the possibility—of historical reference in two ways: by replacing supposedly “factual” history with his own fictional supposition; and by suggesting that the historical memory of a traumatized people is merely a *version* of that people’s history filtered through the lens of trauma. Writing history as traumatic testimony is an exercise in historicity.⁴² In the novel, the narrator illustrates the choice that undergirds the practice of historicity. By transforming David’s history into a traumatic testimony, she destroys the discursive framework of what constitutes a history, breaking down the binary opposition between testimony and history to create what we might call traumatic historicity.

David is obsessed with finding and narrating an accurate history of the Griqua. He uses research techniques that, in Western academe, will yield an accurate and thus valid historical document. David thus seeks out museums and historical monographs even if they are racist. None of David’s attempts at hegemonic history making yields the information he seeks, yet he ignores as invalid a respected African mode of historical retention and transmission: testimony. David grimly endures the narratives of oral Kokstadt historian Thomas, and he dismisses his Ouma Ragel’s “old stories” as merely entertainment (27). Although David seeks to create a history, his narrative is one of land loss and it is ruptured, fragmented, stalled. What the reader begins to see even as David does not is that the real history in *David’s Story* is a traumatic testimony. Despite his repeated efforts to censor and ignore oral narratives and women’s subordination, their residue marks the narrator’s text in both its form and its content. The oral narratives she transcribes, her edits and addenda, her own diary

entries, are all—to David—extraneous to his history. And, yet, the narrator includes them all, interspersed with sections of David’s own narrative, and all presented in a non-linear fashion that bears no resemblance to a formal historical study by Western academic standards. I want to suggest that what David unwittingly delivers to the narrator is a testimony. *David’s Story* illustrates and demonstrates in its textual explosion of “a proper history” that a history of trauma is indirect, and that the fragmented nature of traumatic history does not conform to—or fit within—established Western narrative frameworks.

Laub writes that the psychoanalyst sees “historical truth” in traumatic testimony which, I have explained, is considered an inaccurate history by Western scholarly standards (61). Historical truth is that moment in a historical narrative that is inaccurate because it is the moment of trauma: it is the moment that the frame of reference breaks. Historical truth is traumatic truth. If traumatic suffering is a state of unknowing, then historical truth is the record of that which is inconceivable and unverifiable. Of an Auschwitz survivor’s testimony containing errors of established historical fact, Laub “insisted” that she spoke:

not to the number of chimneys blown up, but to something else, more radical, more crucial: *the reality of an unimaginable occurrence*. One chimney blown up in Auschwitz was as incredible as four. The number mattered less than the fact of the occurrence. The event itself was almost inconceivable. The woman testified to an event that broke the all compelling frame of Auschwitz, where Jewish armed revolts just did not happen, and had no place. *She testified to the breakage of a framework. That was historical truth.* (60, emphasis added)

As the Jewish example shows, one remembers, but one remembers falsely or inaccurately the traumatic event. This falsely remembered moment is the moment of historicity. The act or event that the individual cannot remember correctly is the very moment which the dominant culture censors from its record and which spawns the testimonial ghost. A testimony of historical truth is a testimony of resistance because it names that which the dominant culture wishes to hide from its formal history. For this reason, the testimony of resistance is about historicity and not history (62).

Testimonial inaccuracy is impossible because testimony's purpose is to acknowledge and record the indeterminate. The very nature of testimony is inaccuracy. The testimony of resistance further demands that we uncouple the experience-versus-evidence binary in order to conceive of traumatic experience *as* historical evidence.⁴³

In the context of history making, the testimony of resistance is both about and an act of social resistance because it breaks the discursive frames of both oppression and its recording. The narrative of *David's Story* is such a testimony of resistance which, presented as historical evidence, breaks patriarchal frameworks of sexuality, domination, and history making.

Writing Testimony, Writing Resistance

Writing the recovered story of censored gendered violence in the MK, as Wicomb's narrator does, is a politically subversive act that challenges the dominant anti-apartheid discourse of black unity. Nevertheless, women in the text value independence more than they fear gendered violence or recrimination.⁴⁴ Even though their sexuality is the basis on which they are exploited, it is *through* their autonomy

and anatomy that they mount their resistance. In *David's Story*, the gendered-female body is the site of both cultural resistance and control. Young women comrades in the Venda wear traditional dress “buttressing the hips and buttocks into exotic insect shapes. . . . with piles of wood balanced on their heads,” appearing to conform to patriarchal ideals of beauty. At the same time, however, these women use their supposed conformity to patriarchal social mores to mount their resistance: “their bodies a mere hint of movement within the sculpted shapes, the AK-47s perfectly concealed” (19).

When her “time” comes during her MK swimming lesson, Sally knows that complicity in the rape act serves herself and not the hegemony. It becomes her sense of agency in that it saves her life: “because she would not let him force her, lord it over her, she forced herself and said, Okay, if you want. It did not take long, and she had no trouble pushing him off as soon as he had done” (123). In this context, complicity is resistance, and the comrade-rapist believes Sally’s apparent acquiescence because her complicity follows the cultural script of female docility. Yet Sally’s experience, which is indicative of a cultural phenomenon in anti-colonial liberation struggles, is absent from David’s narrative and MK discourse. Like the women on the train in Tlali’s story, Wicomb’s narrator transgresses this cultural trope of concealment by assuming the presence of and adding black male sexual predators to the larger historical narrative.

Because the narrator is witness to David’s testimony, she is co-creator of its meaning. She embraces this role by literally creating meaning, often independent of David. She even continues to augment the testimony after he is dead—and thus,

without his permission. She tells the reader, “I took liberties with the text and revised considerably some sections that he had already approved” (3). The testimony which the narrator fashions out of David’s story of land theft is one of censoring the mother figure from the national text. *David’s Story* becomes in the end a traumatic testimony haunted by traumatic knowledge David sought to avoid: his participation in apartheid South Africa’s subordination of black mothers, often through gendered violence. The secret revealed is that the unity of the movement is not undermined by women’s opposition to sexual subordination but by the fact of the sexual subordination itself.

This revelation is a ruse. The ghost in the story, Dulcie, reveals this secret in an attempt to obscure a deeper, more shameful one. Her demand for a just response to the Movement’s gendered violence diverts the reader’s attention away from the other “genuine and truthful” secret that preys on the conscience of the ghost (in this case, Dulcie) which Abraham calls the “phantom” in reference to the apparition of Hamlet’s father (188-89).⁴⁵ David, who “believed it possible to father his text from such a distance” (2), unwittingly allows the inclusion of the secret Dulcie reveals. That secret ultimately proves him to be a liar. The narrator describes their negotiations over which materials to include in the manuscript, recalling that “what become[s] clear as the lightning flashe[s] across the window [is] that these texts [a]re no cause for fear and anxiety, that David, having come from the meeting wild-eyed and trembling, [is] using the Griqua material to displace that of which he [can] not speak” (145). In censoring the shameful secret, David insures that its residue broadcasts its existence. The secret of gendered violence in the MK is no real secret, but it masks another secret wrapped in shame. Revelation of the shameful secret is

the testimonial act that can initiate mourning and transformation of one's sense of self and the world.

David's revealed story is not gendered violence in the MK. The MK is a rape culture and gendered violence is its backdrop. In the "different world" of the MK (196), gendered violence is not a disruption of the Real, it *is* the Real.⁴⁶ As the Real is a construct, its relationship to moments of traumatic crisis is complex and paradoxical. We tend, erroneously, to presume a reality divorced from crisis. When a traumatic event occurs, we seek to return to that which we have perceived as uninterrupted normalcy. In so doing, we censor the fact that the Real is not only comprised in part of but also was forged in strife. In *David's Story*, the story of gendered violence in the MK hides the shameful, more deeply hidden secret that the expulsion of the mother figure from the Movement seeks to masculinize the birth of the new nation. And it hides the twin secrets of David's participation and of Dulcie's complicity in this expulsion.

Sally's ejection from the Movement illustrates the deepest secret of all: that the threat to black unity is not warrior women like Dulcie. For David, Dulcie's being "not like a woman at all" (80) is incongruent with the gendered figure of the wife and mother enshrined in a patriarchy. It is Dulcie's unwomanliness, and thus her lack of potential for motherhood in such a social framework, which guarantees her position of power (albeit troubled) in the Movement. Wicomb's novel demonstrates the necessity of the mother figure to the ability to dismantle racialized oppression (Daymond xxvii). The threat to the MK—to patriarchy—is neither the female warrior nor the mother. The greatest threat is the woman who inhabits both roles: the

warrior mothers who educate the next generation to subvert both racism and sexism. Sally is the warrior mother, teaching her daughter Chantal to swim so that Chantal will not have to be taught to swim later when she joins the struggle. Practically, Sally hopes to prevent Chantal's future rape by an MK swim instructor, but these swimming lessons are a metaphor. Sally is in fact teaching Chantal to subvert matrices of domination disguised as egalitarian communities. Her assumption that Chantal will join the MK belies Sally's small faith that the current flawed struggle will end in the inclusive postcoloniality it promises. In her simple act of appropriating the MK's training regimen, Sally the warrior mother reveals her own secret of resistance: *she* is the progenitor of the postcolonial nation. On the eve of independence, Sally reconfigures both motherhood and nationhood by employing guerilla tactics to mother the next generation of South African mothers and a new national citizenry.

If *David's Story* illustrates the haunting of the censored testimony of traumatic history, then *The Icarus Girl* grapples with the consequences of an unspoken testimony of loss. The novel is haunted by the ghost of the female body who has been erased from the transnational family and from the neocolonial nation.

Allowed to Remember? The Icarus Girl

Unlike *David's Story*, *The Icarus Girl* is framed as neither a history nor a testimony. I read *The Icarus Girl* as a representation of the consequences of an *absence* of testimony. A testimonial censorship so complete as to obscure the fact of the loss itself is the incorporation of that loss and an indicator of melancholia.

Melancholia is not only the failure to mourn and move beyond loss, it is also an attempt to forget that a loss has occurred. The attempt must be repeated continually, which creates the opposite of the intended effect. Rather than obliterate the lost object from consciousness, the repeated attempts to forget both the object and the fact of its loss means that the loss is foregrounded for the sufferer by virtue of continuous engagement with it. TillyTilly is Jess's ghostly manifestation of her parents' offloaded melancholic attachments to their dead baby Fern. TillyTilly first appears to Jess at a moment of crisis: Jess both seeks and fears alienation from her peers and parents: "*They should leave me alone and let me read my books, let me think my thoughts,*" she thinks (163, emphasis in original). The manifestation of Jess's social frustration, a series of hysterical attacks, compounds her sense of difference and isolation. At this moment of traumatic loneliness for Jess, a corporeal twin arrives. TillyTilly is visible only to Jess, a child obsessed with being both subject and object of the gaze that separates and binds the self and the other.

TillyTilly's supernatural abilities pervade the rest of the narrative so that most of Jess's subsequent experiences are also supernaturally infused. I read Oyeyemi's non-realistic portrayal of this period of profound transformation and growth for Jess as a metaphor for the manner in which narratives of trauma collide with the boundaries of restrictive, established narrative forms. In its depiction of a protagonist who moves from a state of profound alienation to one of enlightenment, *The Icarus Girl* is a female postcolonial *Bildungsroman*. But Oyeyemi's text ties the narrative of maturity not just to the postcolonial nation but also to linked narratives of motherhood and loss. Indeed, the experience of maternal loss launches Jess's

narrative of transformation—her *Bild*—which becomes inextricably entwined with that of TillyTilly. As the ghost of a censored loss, the character of TillyTilly functions as a reminder of the lost Fern but, in so doing, TillyTilly’s presence initiates Sarah’s eventual testimony of Fern’s loss. Because Jess has by this point already deduced the truth through her experiences with TillyTilly, one might argue that TillyTilly is a phantasmic embodiment of the loss of Fern—a testimony in the form of a ghost. By “reading” TillyTilly as the residue of her family’s loss, Jess “reads” TillyTilly as the testimony of loss that Sarah and Daniel will not and/or cannot utter.

Bildungsroman is the German word for “novel of transformation” or “novel of education” that implies a hero’s quest to emulate the image of (God) the father (Feng 2-3).⁴⁷ The journey transforms the hero into a more mature, harmonious, knowledgeable, and spiritually fulfilled individual. Despite the genre’s androcentric origin, a growing body of *Bildungsroman* scholarship has recently expanded the genre’s definition to include transformation narratives of female, racialized, and postcolonial protagonists. These *Bildungsroman* so-called sub-genres subvert the traditional *Bildungsroman* plot in various ways. When all of these “sub-genres” coalesce as they do in the *Bild* of Jess who is female, postcolonial, and racialized, the resulting narrative’s relationship with the *Bildungsroman* form is less an attempt at conformity than it is a continual and multi-pronged rupturing of the form’s traditional boundaries.

More so than class or race, gender transforms the traditional *Bildungsroman* formula in the most meaningful and complex ways. The Oedipal script of sons and fathers does not fit writing by and/or about combinations of daughters, mothers, girls,

and women. It also does not accommodate the reconfiguration of the black family through colonialism.⁴⁸ Further, in order for a young woman to discover and define a more mature, fulfilled, and enlightened self, she must defy not only the society's patriarchal "traditions and definitions of the female self," but she must also subvert the broad-reaching patriarchy of the novel form itself (Eysturoy 85).⁴⁹ If a culture defines itself through its literature and vice versa, then the female *Bild*'s quest for a way to grow *and* to exist in the world is especially difficult because she must first escape and subvert these "seemingly inescapable patterns, images, plots, and forms" (Heller 26).⁵⁰ Dana Heller finds even the conventional female quest story to be "a thwarted if impossible journey, a rude awakening to limits" on female experience (14). Only the female protagonist who authors her own text can escape and subvert the restrictions of the traditional female *Bildung* plot. In *The Icarus Girl*, Jess grows angry that Louisa May Alcott and Frances Hodgson Burnett do not "treat" their "nice" protagonists "better" (63). Jess writes in her copies of *Little Women* and *A Little Princess*, replacing passages that "make us watch people be sick, and be poor, and lose everything, and die" with her own happier emendations (62).⁵¹ In so doing, Jess asserts her ability to tell "a proper story" even "better than Louisa May Alcott does" (62). Jess's rewriting of English female *Bildungsromane* not only reaffirms the female "I" as the texts' central experiential perspective in subversion of patriarchal narrative norms, but Jess's act also delivers Alcott's Beth and Burnett's Sara from the illness and poverty that confine them, charting in the process her own escape from a confining social order that censors the feminine. The self-appointed narrator of other

female *Bildungsromane*, Jess, as the intertextual, omniscient female “I,” also adopts the authoritative role of narrator of her own narrative of transformation.

Pin-Chia Feng calls attention to the female *Bildungsroman*’s lack of an identifiable pattern. The genre is a “wild, wild zone” of fragmented narratives, repetition, repression, and the intersection of these forms with themes of race, migration, and gender (Feng 18). I suggest that the confluence of forms and narrative experiences suggests the way we talk about trauma and testimony. As a collection, women’s narrative bears the “traces of absence” that “paradoxically highlight what has been textually and politically suppressed” (Feng 19). Freud calls repression “rejecting and keeping something out of consciousness” (“Repression” 86), but Feng suggests that female postcolonial *Bildungsromane* challenge cultural repression by acting as a collective “counter-memory,” to borrow Michel Foucault’s term (*Language* 160), against the restrictive, prevailing cultural and historical narratives.⁵² If we read these texts in the context of trauma, then the female postcolonial *Bildung* functions in the same transformative manner as traumatic testimony. Trauma initiates the female postcolonial *Bildungsroman* in much the same way it can initiate testimony.

Diaspora Mourning, Diaspora Melancholia

Like Morrison’s visitor Beloved, TillyTilly is the embodiment of trauma’s “resistance to narrative” (Morgenstern 112) but, more than that, she marks Sarah’s resistance to narrating her loss and Jess’s inability to do so for her. In *The Icarus Girl* Sarah deals with mourning much like David does in *David’s Story*, by obsessively

censoring a crucial participant in her history. The longer she tries to censor Fern's existence; however, the greater the baby's intrusion into her life becomes. Like Sethe's grown-up baby Beloved Sarah's grown-up baby TillyTilly terrorizes her surviving daughter, eventually destroying property and harming people to make her presence obvious. Although Sarah can see the results of TillyTilly's destruction, she cannot see TillyTilly. Invisibility is uncertainty, and Sarah does not believe TillyTilly exists. Believing that Jess is the perpetrator is Sarah's method of continuing to avoid the increasingly obvious. This is because the mother in diaspora cannot mourn her dead child as she would in the homeland. "I didn't know I was allowed to remember," Sarah tells Daniel after Jess finally confronts her, asking about Fern (180).

Children rely on their caregivers to give meaning to "the unfathomable" trauma of sibling death and denial of meaning-making discussion can be catastrophic to the child (Charles and Charles). When Sarah refuses to tell Jess about Fern, she forestalls the potential for crucial meaning-making and thus censors crucial self-knowledge for Jess that impedes Jess's development. The most pathological family loss scenario is what Robert Krell and Leslie Rabkin call "a conspiracy of silence" in which none of the surviving family members discusses the sibling's passing (474).⁵³ This is the mourning scenario *The Icarus Girl* presents. Parent silence insulates and isolates the parent from the loss, but it also alienates the child from the parent and prevents both from addressing and possibly working through the loss. Parent isolation is, to the child, a symbolic loss of the parent. The parent's emotional

unavailability can thus threaten the child's sense of security more severely than her sibling's death did.⁵⁴

Unfortunately, Sarah's failure to mourn Fern's passage has compromised her competency as a mother to Jess, both within Nigeria and without. Consensus does not exist on what "postcolonial Nigeria" is, and the neocolonial nation that cannot define itself expels the mother. Expulsion from the homeland nullifies Sarah's existence as a mother. Symbolically unable to protect her children either at home (in the homeland) or abroad in the colonial metropole, the post-independence mother in diaspora fails *as* mother. I read Sarah as an exemplification of a Nigerian African mother struggling to reconfigure Yoruba motherhood in diaspora. I read her as hampered by the double melancholy of the loss of a child and that of exile. Indeed, Stuart Hall frames "the diasporic experience" in terms of melancholy (Chen 490).⁵⁵

As a biracial female in England, Jess has also been prevented from mourning her twin by the prevailing culture of British education. Significantly for Jess, the school is a microcosm of the homogenizing nation, entrusted with "cultural transmission" to the next generation of Britons (Gilroy, *Small* 59).⁵⁶ As the child of an immigrant parent, however, Jess's continual attempts to assimilate only draw attention to her difference, as when she does not know the "'normal' fairy tales that her mother omit[s] to tell her" and so misunderstands the cultural references made by the other children at school (183). Jess's attempts at belonging, even as a native Briton, are doomed to fail because her racial difference trumps her nativity.⁵⁷ Because culture defined as racial homogeneity excludes blackness from Englishness, Paul Gilroy has famously argued that the immigrant's attempt to adopt a European

identity in tandem with his existing black identity requires a form of “double-consciousness” (*Atlantic* 1).⁵⁸ Bhabha suggests that an attempt to assimilate is inimical to self preservation in general and to one’s healthful sense of self in particular: the “intellectual and psychic ‘uncertainty’” of whether or not one belongs is one way in which the dominant culture dehumanizes the immigrant (136).⁵⁹ By suggesting a “space between” blackness and British-ness, or a “continuity” of the two, Gilroy carves out a social space for Jess, who is biologically black *and* British. By framing that space as “provocative” and “oppositional,” Gilroy reiterates the backdrop of melancholia that characterizes the experience of inhabiting the “space between” two consciousnesses. To view the interplay of black and British identities in the context of a traumatic split is to anticipate Hall’s vision of culture as foremost a “deeply subjective and personal” expression of one’s relationship to the social structure, but also “at the same moment, as a structure you live,” regardless of how problematic that relationship is (Chen 488).

As a microcosm of the dominant culture, “family” is a culturally constructed group within which affiliation is constructed by the gaze of familiarity. This local, internal gaze is overlaid by the gaze of external dominant cultural institutions and ideologies which determine both what constitutes a family and how the ideal family should and does operate. Each culture has a specific ideal family image. Marianne Hirsch’s term “familial gaze” refers to the ideological pressure exerted upon a family unit to conform to a particular culture’s ideal family image—“the powerful gaze of familiarity which imposes and perpetuates certain conventional images of the familial and which ‘frames’ the family in both senses of the term” (10).⁶⁰ The presence of the

external familial gaze and each family member's response to it in large part shapes the social construction of and the group identifying itself as a "family." Within the family unit, members seek recognition of themselves in one another and, simultaneously, hope to be recognized by the other members of the family.

The quest for belonging based in sameness within the family is further complicated when the family loses a member and migrates to a new culture where the family's composition differs from local ideals. The surviving members of the migrant family must create a new family reality based on how the surviving family composition compares to the host country's cultural ideal even as they struggle with reformulating their internal family reality as necessitated by loss. Having survived both immigration to England and the death of her baby Fern, Sarah struggles to create a revised family reality in an English context even though doing so means foregoing significant elements of Yoruba mourning practice in relation to Fern's passing. When she returns to Nigeria with her family, it is now Jess who is acutely aware of the power of looking, of seeing, to either bind or alienate. Outside the airport, just off the plane, Jess feels uncomfortably visible when she catches a Nigerian man's eye from across the street as her father helps the driver load their cab: "He was looking at her, but in a distracted manner, as if she was something to look at while he waited for something else" (16-17). When Daniel reenters the car, Jess is relieved by the return of the familiar:

as if a lone scrap of home had just blown into the car. England, where people who stared at you would shift their eyes away with an embarrassed, smiling gesture if you stared back. England, where people didn't see you, where it was almost rude to, wrong to.

Would her cousins be like this? Would they look at her, then see her, and just not really...well, *care*? See her, and leave her looking, trying to see something? (17, emphasis in original)

Jess's questions belie her fear of a failure of family recognition and, thus, of connection and of belonging. But her deeper fear of recognition is racialized. In racialized England, Jess equates looking away with cultivated unfamiliarity. When whites do see her, it is because she is related to them because they are her father's family, and so those whites that do look, do so because they want to see her. When confronted with the possibility of a racially homogeneous family in Nigeria, comprised of people she does not know, she wonders if the same rules hold true: is there a difference between merely seeing another and the connective gaze of familiarity? The answer frightens her when, much later:

She had just realized with stunning clarity that she was the only person who saw TillyTilly. She put a hand to her mouth as she tried to sort this out in her mind. She didn't know why it hadn't occurred to her before. TillyTilly had not met anyone in her family, no one had met her, and she refused to meet anyone. And even when Jess was with TillyTilly, *never mind that people couldn't see Jess; the most noticeable thing was that they couldn't see TillyTilly*. She suddenly felt very small and a little bit scared. (164, emphasis added)

Jess places great importance on TillyTilly's presence, and she is shocked to learn that Tilly's sphere of existence is limited to Jess's own imagination. TillyTilly has failed to make Jess visible, and the knowledge that TillyTilly is not part of the social construct of reality challenges the way Jess understands belonging.

It is into Britain's hostilely racialized environment that Sarah has given birth to the live Jess and the stillborn Fern. In its failure to accommodate mourning

practices outside its own traditions, the dominant culture is in another way hostile to immigrants. Migration limits the immigrant family's potential for productive mourning when the adopted culture fails to provide access to or a supportive environment for the origin culture's mourning rituals and tools.⁶¹ For example, in cultures that consider death as another stage of life, physical emblems of the deceased are used as mourning aids to maintain bonds with the deceased.⁶²

In Yoruba communities, the *orisha* (“goddess”) *Ibeji* is the protector of twins, which are cosmically powerful.⁶³ *Ibeji* can cause sickness, infertility, and death within the family if they are not honored adequately. In contrast, if properly respected they may bring good health, children, and wealth. In Yoruba metaphysics, each living person houses one soul in a line of ancestral souls that are continually reborn. Twins share one soul such that one twin houses the spiritual half of the soul and one houses the mortal half. It is impossible to determine which twin houses which half of the soul, so both twins—whether living or not—must be treated as sacred. For the Yoruba, to survive a twin's death is to live with half a soul. The living twin yearns to be reunited with the other who has passed into the land of the ancestors and to repair the damaged soul. The deceased Yoruba twin is a lost object of powerful importance to the living Yoruba twin's definition of self. Contemporary grief theory notes that sibling loss disrupts attachment and forestalls relational development that is a crucial byproduct of constructive mourning.⁶⁴ Jess's relational difficulties in both the domestic and social spheres may be read as a result of her obstructed mourning for Fern.⁶⁵

A twin that has passed into the land of ancestors is considered an *ibeji* child, not a dead child. A figure dedicated to the *orisha Ibeji* (“goddess of the twice-born”) is carved to serve as a wooden surrogate and home for the spirit of the passed twin.⁶⁶ The *ibeji* carving is a material testimony of the child’s passing as well as a symbolic suggestion that the child is (albeit spectrally) still “alive.”⁶⁷ Nurturing the *ibeji* carving keeps the twins’ shared soul in the living world and therefore with the living twin. While this nurturing ritual is intended to curry favor with the twin who has passed and thus avoid family misfortune, it is also a physical enactment of acknowledging—of mourning—the *ibeji* twin in a ritual that reifies the Yoruba cultural emphasis on family as the most important of all social relationships.

As a Yoruba mother, Sarah may well be the latest ideological casualty in a one hundred year campaign waged by European missionaries to force Yoruba women to abandon *ibeji* and other practices that employ mourning images.⁶⁸ When an immigrant parent does not perform the mourning rituals prescribed by her culture of origin, for whatever reason, then she does not productively mourn the loss. The text does not specify Sarah’s reasons for not carving *ibeji* when Fern passes, but the reader can reasonably locate their nexus at the intersection of her political exile from Nigeria and her status in London as an immigrant. Migration as exile from a post-independence Nigeria, a nation buffeted by “considerable social unrest and civil conflict” exacerbates Sarah’s stalled mourning processes because her “vulnerable” immigrant status in England renders her “especially reluctant to divulge experiences of torture and trauma,” even those that have occurred in England, and potentially disrupt her host country’s ideological framework of racial purity and harmony

(“Posttraumatic” 465).⁶⁹ Whether cultural or not, the forces that stall Sarah, as a Yoruba mother, from productively mourning Fern’s passage into the realm of the ancestors also forestalls Sarah’s responsibilities as a mother to maintain the relational health of her family and, by extension, the community.

The result of not mourning is melancholia, another term for post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), which is the current term for traumatic suffering. Children’s PTSD symptoms manifest most often as persistent anxiety and angry outbursts that impede their functionality in social, familial, and other spheres. These symptoms follow the sight or awareness of a sudden, violent threat, injury, or death to a family member or other person, or one’s own survival of a death threat. Jess’s frequent anxiety “attacks” with no discernable cause are very likely PTSD manifestations of the trauma of surviving not only Fern’s death but the threat of her own death as well.

PTSD manifests in culturally specific ways, and the ways in which an immigrant suffers trauma may differ from those culturally sanctioned by the host country. Cultural difference compounds the emotional isolation of the surviving citizen child whose immigrant parent struggles with the multiple losses of the deceased child and the homeland. The surviving child identifies with the host country’s culture rather than with the immigrant parent’s culture of origin.⁷⁰ To the immigrant parent Sarah, her child Jess who was born in England is as foreign to her as England is: to Sarah, Jess is both English and Nigerian, and neither. Jess is a lost love object for Sarah because Jess is crucially linked to both Sarah’s *ibeji* child, the lost object Fern, and to the lost love object of her homeland Nigeria. In psychoanalysis, the sense of foreign-ness that pervades the Harrison family unit can

and does lead to a family crisis that stems from a mutual perception of disintegration. Sarah's plan for a family visit to Nigeria is her emergency measure to repair her multiple losses: Jess, Nigeria, and Fern.⁷¹

The immigrant mother's "complicated bereavement" stems from multiple losses: the material loss of the deceased child, the metaphorical loss of the survivor citizen child, and the lost homeland. If she does not attend to any number of these combined losses, the immigrant parent may see herself and be viewed by her family as culturally "impure" (Schreiber 138, 139).⁷² In the single event of Fern's passing, Sarah has lost both a child and her mother country because she does not mourn Fern the way she might have had Fern been born and become *ibeji* in Nigeria. Of course, this would only have been possible if Nigeria were a fully representative democracy in which, as Yoruba, Sarah could have continued to live.

Sarah has lost so much more of her family than Fern, however. Jess's foreignness to Sarah represents a metaphorical loss of the survivor twin as well as the *ibeji* one. In the immigrant family that has suffered the loss by death of a member, as the Harrison family has in *The Icarus Girl*, PTSD afflicts both the parents who have not appropriately addressed the loss and the child, Jess, onto whom the parents transfer their grief. Unanchored by her mother's alien status in England and her own alien feeling in Nigeria, Jess, citizen child of an exiled parent no matter which continent she inhabits, has no homeland. The novel depicts this sense of perpetual alienation when, during her second trip to Nigeria, Jess begins speaking fluent Yoruba. Though she is happy to be able to converse with Jess in her mother tongue, Sarah still considers her daughter "our very own *Iya Oyinbo!* ['Mother Stranger']"

(321). Always the stranger, Jess lives in diaspora no matter where she is or with whom.

Sarah's silence about Fern manifests as both writer's block (an obvious material referent to her refusal to testify her trauma of loss) and a feeling of inability to mother her surviving child Jess. Traumatic knowledge changes the self, often in unanticipated ways. For Sarah, the act of representation is so potentially trauma producing that she embraces silence to protect her known self from the unknown.⁷³ Sarah's incorporation of the love object means that Fern's memory is entombed in the surviving mother, not within the carved image of *ere-ibeji* as it should be. The tomb is marked by Sarah's continual efforts to maintain silence.

Failure to carve *ibeji* or tell Jess about Fern's passage is a failure to mother both twins. Nurturing an *ibeji* carving is the physical act of mourning the passed child, but not carving *ibeji* is a physical act of not mourning the *ibeji* child. Sarah's refusal to participate in this important Yoruba ritual of mothering also robs her of a significant cultural parental competence. In Yoruba cosmology, for Sarah to not carve an *ibeji* figure to commemorate (or mourn) the life and passage of Fern is to not acknowledge Fern's transition from the world of the living into that of the ancestors, to ignore reverence for the sacred bond between twins, and to ignore reverence for the sacred bond between ancestors and the living.⁷⁴ Because the *ibeji* carving is a visual reminder of the *ibeji* child, to not carve *ibeji* for Fern's passing is to actively censor her existence from the family script. In so doing, Sarah avoids mourning the loss because she transfers her unresolved grief to Jess. While to have "done *ibeji* carving" (181) for Fern would mean that an *ibeji* figure would now function as a symbol of

Fern's body, Sarah's not having done *ibeji* carving culturally necessitates a material marker for the loss of Fern. Sarah's failure to mourn according to Yoruba ritual requires Jess to mourn in her place. Not fluent in Yoruba cultural practices, Jess's repeated, failed attempts at mourning emphasize her difference from her mother and her mother's difference from her.

In psychoanalysis, the parent's transfer of grief to the survivor child can involve imposing an image of the deceased on the survivor. In the novel, Jess becomes a material stand-in for *ibeji* Fern, a pawn "playing out the unconscious fears and fantasies" of Sarah, who attempts to navigate the British familial gaze and feels conscious of failing, in part because the biracial white and black family is extremely visible in London (Charles and Charles).⁷⁵ Sarah's biracial family disrupts the British cultural imaginary of the ideal white family. Her *ibeji*-less family disrupts the Yoruba cultural imaginary of the ideal whole family. As stand-in, Jess is the repository for Sarah's displaced grief. And, until TillyTilly surfaces as the new physical marker of Fern's passing, Sarah offloads her guilt, self-loathing, and failure onto Jess. Sarah makes Jess a scapegoat to her survivor's guilt and her perceived failure to mother.⁷⁶ Sarah's displacement of grief and guilt onto Jess, as a means of protecting her censorship of Fern, severely impedes the two living women from developing a meaningful mother-daughter relationship. When the parent cannot or does not mourn, she cannot instruct the child in how to mourn, and so the child does not learn how to mourn either. Grief psychologists Timothy Yates and James Bannard have noted that in grief studies, children with unaddressed grief, particularly children who have survived a sibling's death, may exhibit emotional or behavioral

problems (575). As Jess's hijinx with TillyTilly escalate, Sarah rightly begins to fear that her own failure to carve *ibeji* may be the explanation.

Grief hallucinations are one way children respond to grief over a loss.⁷⁷ Most hallucinations are audio, visual, or both, and audiovisual hallucinations are common in anxious children.⁷⁸ Hallucinations are false sensory perceptions unassociated with real external stimuli, the content of which manifests hypochondriacally. Jess is able to see what others cannot: she intuits the loss of a twin spirit through reading the remains of Fern's loss in the familial silence.⁷⁹ Jess's inherited PTSD manifests as physical illness in the form of panic attacks and a preoccupation with vision and being seen or not seen, which belies a melancholic attachment to Fern, who is hidden. For Jess, seeing connotes familiarity—in two senses of the term: one who is known to her and one who is in her family—both of which are experienced as a threat by the survivor of sibling loss because familiarity breeds the potential for future loss. For example, when Jess corrects TillyTilly's assertion that the girl and the now-frightening ghost are sisters, Jess wants to explain more fully:

that sisters [i]s something about being held without hands, and the skin-flinch of seeing and simultaneously being seen. But in falling, Jess herself kn[ows] that she need[s] to understand the precious danger of these things, and what they mean[], or she [will] never be happy.
(219)

Jess cannot explain these notions to TillyTilly because TillyTilly exists outside Jess's family and familiar social spheres. TillyTilly's position as outside subverts the gaze's power to shape their relationship which is always, to Jess, unfamiliar and unfamiliar. In psychoanalysis, family ruptures like sibling death, immigration, or other deficits

that negatively affect the child contribute to child hallucination. The child's grief symptoms function as metaphors for the family issues the symptoms attempt to repair. Through repair, the child hopes to cohere the family and protect it from further change. The fact of the hallucination of TillyTilly is less telling than what the specter looks like, does, or says. TillyTilly's antics eventually exceed Jess's control because Jess has not summoned her, but Jess does not know that she is Sarah's designated mourner for Fern and that TillyTilly's antics are ultimately directed at Sarah, not at Jess.

Jess's relationship with TillyTilly evokes the psychoanalytic image of the child digging as at a grave—to unearth or join the dead.⁸⁰ Jess unearths *and* rejoins the dead by conjuring TillyTilly, who has a “verdant, earthy smell” and who pulls Jess down “through earth” into a space the size of a grave (273, 153). Unearthing TillyTilly returns Jess to the moment of Fern's death and Jess's survival of the death threat. The haunted child Jess is conflicted between maintaining ignorance of Sarah's secret (the love object Fern) and eliminating the presence of secrecy. The ghost TillyTilly is Jess's way of both exposing and hiding Sarah's secret. The secret is always concealed because it is shameful, but concealed shame always returns to haunt.

The survivor sibling Jess is haunted by the unknown, even secret, knowledge of Fern's death and cannot ask about it. In order to transform her relationships with both TillyTilly and her family into productive (as opposed to destructive) ones, Jess must be able to express in words the shameful family secret that TillyTilly represents. In this sense, Jess's relationship with TillyTilly begins a failure because “Fern” is not

the name by which the apparition introduces herself to Jess. It is not even “TillyTilly.” Jess cannot pronounce TillyTilly’s actual name, Titiola, correctly. Instead, she dubs her the Germanic diminutive “TillyTilly,” only occasionally pronouncing Titiola at all and even then “in an overly English way” (68). Jess realizes that TillyTilly’s destructive behavior stems somehow from Jess’s not being able to pronounce “Titiola:” “Only Titiola’s name [is] left, and Jess ha[s] taken even that” (304).⁸¹ But telling “as much about TillyTilly as she [can],” “in a halting fashion,” to her friend Shivs begins the exorcism of Jess’s guilt and shame, exposing the secret as well as eliminating the need to keep one (269).

In psychoanalysis, the child who hallucinates her deceased sibling is actively mourning in place of the mother who does not mourn the dead child. TillyTilly is the manifestation of Jess’s attempt to mourn her mother’s loss and reinstate her mother *as* mother. By conjuring TillyTilly’s presence, Jess performs the mourning acknowledgement of Fern that Sarah has not.⁸² The apparition of TillyTilly restores the lost twin Fern who in turn replaces Sarah’s lost parental competence. The ghost TillyTilly makes Fern’s loss—and the fact of Fern’s existence—real by serving as a substitute for the *ibeji* statue never sculpted. To hallucinate a dead person is to create an audiovisual testimony of the trauma of losing that loved object. For Jess, seeing the hallucination—or *ibeji* spirit—of TillyTilly is tantamount to reading Sarah’s secret testimony of Fern’s loss. For the displaced immigrant, hallucination becomes a way for the citizen child to mourn in place of the immigrant parent, for whom culture-of-origin mourning rituals are unavailable in a hostile host country. The British citizen Jess’s hallucination replaces Sarah’s absent Yoruba mourning ritual of carved *ibeji*,

forging a new mourning ritual that conforms fully to neither Yoruba nor British standards.

Reframing the real through hallucination demonstrates the potential to change it, and thus to productively mourn a loss. Reframing psychic tension can dissolve the need for repetition. Freud's psychoanalytic goal was to help the sufferer work through her trauma and thus to cease acting out. This is also Sarah's goal when she sends Jess to see Dr. McKenzie about the tantrums. But Jess does not cease acting out; she reframes her view of reality by introducing TillyTilly into it and forcing a total transformation. Edward Bibring argues that working off provides the possibility of breaking the framework of repetition compulsion by revising the conditions that compel the repetition in the first place.⁸³ Grief hallucination as a response to the trauma of loss hinges on reframing reality through haunting. The creative potential of grief hallucination is also the crux of its transformative—through testimonial—potential.

The silencing of Fern's loss and absence dominates Jess's childhood, and her recreation of the traumatic memory of her parents is necessarily fictional. Jess intuitively creates a "postmemory" of Fern in Nigeria in the specter of TillyTilly (Hirsch 22), even though no narrative of "Fern" or much of that of "Nigeria" has previously been spoken in Jess's presence.⁸⁴ Seeing TillyTilly provides Jess with a community in exile, a link to Sarah's world before loss—before losing Fern, before losing Nigeria. Jess's attempt to recreate the lost homeland in the ghost of a lost twin is an attempt to repair the lost link with her mother.

The Return

Jess is the trans-generational embodiment of Sarah's attempt to survive in the space of the colonial metropole—of her position as the postcolonial expatriate who has embraced the opportunities granted by the former colonizer: her white husband, economic and political stability, and a Western education. While migration and the subsequent stress of enculturation usually translates into family conflict, the return to the homeland to mourn the loss of a child is healing.⁸⁵ The return reverses the psychic stress of immigration, and it is during the Harrisons' second trip to Nigeria that *ibeji* is carved for Fern and Sarah begins to mother Jess. While the first trip to Nigeria births TillyTilly, the second trip sees her demise. "Seeing" TillyTilly has been Jess's attempt to repair the bridge for Sarah (and herself) to the lost motherland Nigeria and to the *ibeji* twin, all in the form of one ghost who screams the stunted testimony of their losses in the form of a "small, mauve stump; the remains of a tongue" (261).

In Nigeria, Sarah finally asserts her authority as mother and intimates that her motherhood of Jess is as good as a clean bill of psychiatric health: "I'm her mother, and nothing's the matter with her!" (327). The next day, while driving Jess to a relative's home, Sarah and Jess are hit by a car. Jess is hospitalized in grave condition. Her father tells Sarah to pray and admonishes her resistance:

You know that when you pray, you are heard, if not by God, then by yourself. When you pray, you tell yourself what you truly want, what you really need. And once you know these things, you can do nothing but go after them. (320)

Grandfather does not tell Sarah to pray to the Christian God but to testify of her losses, of which Jess may very well become the next one. Jess's grandfather, the family patriarch, also understands the importance of marking the feminine as central to the resolution of this family crisis. By imploring Sarah to testify "what you really need," Jess's grandfather is also asking her to initiate a response from the ghost—Sarah's *ibeji* daughter. In this vein, he invokes the goddess *Ibeji* not just to mark Fern's passage into the realm of the ancestors, but also to keep the remaining twin, Jess, in the land of the living:

By placing an *ibeji* carving in Jess's hospital room, her grandfather does not restore order as the colonial patriarch is wont to do. His act is one of respect and request. In Yoruba cosmology, *ibeji* are notorious for setting their own agendas: families attempt to meet the wishes of *ibeji*; not the other way around. Yoruba cosmology divides the cosmos into two distinct, overlaid realms: "aye", or the material world of the living, and "*orun*," the world of the ancestors (and unborn). Ancestors walk among the living and influence their lives. Grandfather's action both acknowledges the power of his *ibeji* granddaughter Fern and exhibits openness for a ghostly visit in whatever form Fern may choose to arrive and/or intervene in the family's affairs. Fern responds, and she is responsible for Jess's return to the realm of the living. In Fern's simple act of carrying Jess through the land of the ancestors back to the path of the living, she infuses Jess with confidence and knowledge. The *ibeji* twin, the other half of Jess's self, is catalyst toward transforming Jess the *Bild* into Jess the "sister-girl," strong and fearless (334).

Conclusion

The ghosts Dulcie and TillyTilly transform Wicomb's narrator and Oyeyemi's Jess in fundamental ways by haunting them. As a result of these hauntings, Wicomb's narrator and Jess, as haunted individuals, both represent and embody the possibility for social change. As a result of her textual relationship with Dulcie, Wicomb's narrator writes Sally as an activist mother-guerilla, a metaphor of hope for transforming the next generation of South African women into those who will dismantle hegemonic frames. As a result of her textual relationship with TillyTilly, Jess forces her family to acknowledge the secret of Fern's death and to begin mourning her. This simple act of uncensoring its loss binds the family together in a way that forges what Gilroy called "continuities" between Sarah's Nigerian heritage and Daniel's British one, creating the "space between" both ways of being in which Jess—the textual embodiment of the postmodern, postcolonial diasporic individual—can *be*.

Reading the ghostly remains of the censored female native in postcolonial literature challenges the hegemonic monoliths of patriarchy and nation. Reading haunted postcolonial literature dissolves not only the integrity of these monoliths, but also the divisions between them. Understanding postcolonial literature as testimony of the traumatic loss of the homeland requires a consideration of the possibility that nationhood in the European Enlightenment sense of the term may not be the desired outcome of decolonizing natives. The "national question" may in fact be the wrong question. In post-Atlantic slave trade Africa, nationalism is not about forming ethnically divided African nations but about embracing a form of pan-Africanism that

accommodates transnational or diasporic communities.⁸⁶ While Casely Hayford, an attorney opposing colonial appropriation of African lands in 1919, accurately argued of West African communities that “the common danger to our ancestral lands has made us one” (qtd. in Ajayi 229), J. F. Ade. Ajayi argues that if nationhood is predicated on popular consensus, then Nigeria needs to rethink its conception of nationhood because consensus does not exist among its various ethnic, linguistic, and otherwise striated groups.⁸⁷ Over sixteen thousand communities in Nigeria are comprised of about three hundred fifty distinct language groups of varying sizes. These communities “are more in the nature of nations and nationalities than tribes or ethnic groups. Nigeria is therefore more of a multi-national than a poly-ethnic state” (Ajayi 232).

While South Africa’s heterogeneity is differently organized than Nigeria’s, the reality of land loss for many groups of South Africans beyond the Griquas necessitates the introduction of the idea of forming not the “new South Africa,” but perhaps a series of transnational South Africas. Joe Teffo argues that South Africa’s history of racialized exclusion demands a post apartheid response that is inclusive of its “triple heritage” of converging indigenous, Islamic and Western cultures.⁸⁸ By referring to each community within South Africa as a “nation” which should devise its own independent, locally-specified, “contextual” governance (Teffo), Teffo advances the notion of a multi-national South Africa similar to Ajayi’s conception of a multi-national Nigeria.

The development of nationalist relationships and the concomitant vocabulary of motherhood are intended to homogenize the material conditions of variously

different groups and create emotional bonds that incite their collation into a “self-identified nation” (Heng 31). Rather than deploy the discourse of motherhood to nation building as a normalizing tactic, however, *David’s Story* and *The Icarus Girl* offer permutations of the figure of mother that recognize and value difference within the community. In psychoanalysis, embracing difference within the self is the work of introjection, or of productively existing after suffering a traumatic event. I read this notion of embracing difference within the self as a metaphor for the emerging postcolonial nation’s potential ability to celebrate differences within the national body.

Chapter 4: Testifying Wounds

Introduction

In this chapter, I explore themes of mourning and melancholia defined by Freud in Meja Mwangi's *Carcase for Hounds* (1974), Ayi Kwei Armah's *Fragments* (1970), and Moses Iseghawa's *Abyssinian Chronicles* (1998), which represent various modes of trans-generational testimony released from bodily or psychic wounds. The novels can be read on a historical trajectory that illuminates the ways in which gendered armed struggle and decolonization may reinforce or replicate colonial hierarchies rather than overturn them. The novels illustrate crucial moments in the armed struggle for independence and postcolonial nation building during which wounded principal characters challenge colonial hierarchies in different national spaces by documenting their violence. In so doing, the characters bear witness to traumatic histories they have not lived. Physical and psychic wounds compel the characters' bodies to repeatedly call for postcolonial social transformation in symbolic forms that seem impossible to procure.

African literature is usually studied under the rubric of postcolonial studies, often with an emphasis on representations of native experience as shaped solely by the victimizing forces of colonialism. This is likely because, despite formal independence, the reality for most of post-independence Africa is not truly post-colonial in the sense of being "after colonization" or divorced from colonial socio-cultural structures. For most of Anglophone Africa, the *moment* of postcolonialism is

simultaneously the *condition* of neocolonialism.¹ For the disenfranchised majority, neocolonialism looks and feels strikingly similar to colonialism. Writers are informed by political conditions, and the condition of neocolonialism continues to perpetuate violence, both physical and psychic on black Africans. The discourse of postcolonial studies offers an excellent paradigm for examining the metaphysics of the conditions of colonialism and neocolonialism in the postcolonial moment. However, it fails to provide a lens through which to analyze literary representations of the native as an agent of social change who actively creates culture and history by subverting residual and still oppressive colonial structures. The discourse's inability to historicize the colonial experience as part of the colonized (or formerly colonized) subject's political agency limits its ability to accommodate literary testimonies of colonial and neocolonial trauma.

Carcase for Hounds, Fragments, and Abyssinian Chronicles address issues of migration, colonization, and nation building through armed struggle and social activism. Bhabha argues that postcolonial writers must grapple with these subjects prior to developing postcolonial national literary traditions, but I suggest that the proliferation of these literary tropes is part of a historically African literary tradition that pairs art with political agitation and social critique. The preponderance of these themes in Anglophone African literature written after colonialism's official demise is a form of communal testimony which initiates processes of social transformation through collective mourning and calls for justice. I suggest that a psychoanalytic framework illuminates the political potential of literary representations of testimony

of that loss, for articulation introduces the possibility of worlding postcolonial nationhood and identity.

I will provide brief summaries of the novels and then examine the ways in which they revise the conventional *Bildungsroman* genre through their collective focus. I contend that, despite having male protagonists, the novels are a species of “feminine writing” that address the colonial debasement of the mother figure as an impediment to postcolonial nation building.² I will conclude the chapter with implications for reading representations of testifying wounds in *Carcase for Hounds*, *Fragments*, *Abyssinian Chronicles*, and within the corpus of post-independence Anglophone African literature as a primer for reconfiguring the nuclear and national families.

In the novels, the characters are wounded either bodily or psychically and, as a result, suffer compulsions to speak, write, or act out testimonies of the violence they have suffered. A gunshot wound compels Mwangi’s General Haraka to repeatedly demand the traitorous Kikuyu Chief Kahuru’s severed head. In *Fragments*, anxiety and depression move Baako to write numerous television treatments and journal entries on consumerist culture as the newest iteration of the Atlantic slave trade. An abusive childhood and encounters with racism as an adult prompt Isegawa’s Mugezi to act in ways that expose or exploit corrupt governments and other institutions. I call these injuries “testifying wounds” because although each marshals the sufferer’s body to testify its trauma, the drive emanates from an unknown, albeit internalized, source.

The gaping wound received in violence may be read metaphorically as a mouth, for traumatic suffering releases a testimonial voice that calls for justice. The

wounds wrought by colonialism are not merely material phenomena; a psychic wound also festers over time. I read these three texts together because they are set in moments of revolution and the emergence of the postcolonial nation. Armed struggle and decolonization both politicize literary cultural articulation, which is a people's ability to speak the group into a "dynamic self-generating whole" (Cheah 235). I read these two historical moments depicted in the novels as the developing nation's testimonial moments. Both struggle and decolonization articulate the collective trauma of colonial occupation and a transformed future. In their depictions of principle characters as representatives of "the people," *Carcase for Hounds*, *Fragments*, and *Abyssinian Chronicles* illuminate the politics of a gendered articulation of a traumatized nation's past, present, and future.

Carcase for Hounds, Fragments, and Abyssinian Chronicles: Summaries

Carcase for Hounds is set during the historical moment of Emergency in Pinewood Forest Station, a Kikuyu resettlement camp near the Aberdare Forest in Kenya. A Mau Mau cell led by the legendary General Haraka has a camp in the forest several miles from the village. The resident District Commissioner Kingsley is under enormous pressure from Headquarters to squelch Haraka's activities in the district. Kingsley has blanketed the area with leaflets promising amnesty to Haraka's gang if they surrender by October 23. Kingsley lays a dragnet and hopes to capture the elusive Haraka by force or surrender.

Days before the amnesty deadline, Haraka is shot in the chest during a government raid on an oath-taking ceremony in Pinewood Village. The gunshot wound

marshals the weakening Haraka's voice to call feverishly for the village chief Kahuru's head. Haraka's second-in-command and successor, lieutenant Kimamo, takes over the unit while the general is ill. The closest medical help is in Meru on the other side of Mount Kenya, an impossible distance to move a dying man under heavy surveillance. Inside the dragnet the gang waits, trapped in a cave. Discovery looms inevitable. The amnesty deadline passes and Kingsley intensifies his search.

The shooting occurs midway through the text and, soon afterward, Haraka "stubbornly [clings] to his life" past the point when he should have died (119). As the wound grows infected, Haraka becomes "more violent in his demand for the chief's head," sometimes to the point of requiring restraint (119). He fixates on this single subject, "always mumbling to himself" in sleep and "demand[ing] the head every conscious minute" (119). Scenes like this one echo through the second half of the novel:

"The chief's head, Kimamo," the general moan[s], his eyes staring.
"Yes, the head," Kimamo answer[s] for the hundredth time.
The general's laboured breath falter[s], then ca[tches] on again with rheumatic wheezing.
"Where is it?" he mouth[s].
"It's coming, general, it's coming." Kimamo pat[s] him lightly on the arm. "They will bring it."
He sp[eaks] out of habit. (119)

Kimamo deploys several envoys to assassinate the chief. All attempts fail either through desertion or ambush, and Haraka is able to stand just long enough to shoot each of those who returns empty-handed.

When their supplies are depleted and starvation is certain, Kimamo vows to grant Haraka's wish by the next day. The decision relieves and liberates Kimamo from obsessing about whether to prioritize starvation or the head. By coincidence, on the night Kingsley announces that Operation Haraka has failed, Kimamo leads a suicide raid for the head. In the dark, Kingsley's soldiers believe Kimamo is Haraka and riddle him with bullets. Kimamo is mortally wounded and returns to the cave to find Haraka alone. The entire unit, except Kimamo and Haraka, has either died or deserted. The novel ends with their deaths and Haraka and Kimamo move fluidly into the spirit realm just before Kingsley arrives.

Fragments is set in the decades following a struggle for independence in Ghana like the one that *Carcase for Hounds* depicts in Kenya. *Fragments* charts the return of a young black Ghanaian man, Baako, from a United States university. The novel depicts Baako's quest to contribute productively to postcolonial nation building. Juana is a black Puerto Rican psychiatrist who has migrated to Ghana to work with trauma sufferers and Baako first sees her professionally.³ Their professional relationship transforms into a romantic partnership when each recognizes the other's frustrated intentions for social transformation.

Baako's family wants him to behave like a "been-to," which is an African who has repeated the passage Westward and has also returned. Baako does not ascribe to be a been-to and instead writes television treatments about the African slave trade and colonial oppression for the state-run Ghanavision. His producer rejects Baako's subject as unbecoming the national agenda of celebrating its "inherited" "glorious culture" (146-47). Baako quits Ghanavision, begins a journal,

and falls ill. Like Haraka, Baako grows increasingly feverish as his resistance against the oppressive state waxes futile. Baako is sickened by capitalist corruption of the national and nuclear families, and his writing challenges these neocolonial norms. Baako's refusal to inhabit the been-to role reflects a larger aversion to assuming the capitalist father subject position that is his due as a been-to Ghanaian man. Baako's stance leaves his Ghanaian family fatherless and, even more important, threatens a social order predicated on patriarchal values. His family commits him to a mental health facility and Juana prepares a space for him in her apartment. I read the novel's ending as the need to configure the postcolonial nation outside the structural hierarchies of the neocolonial social order. The ending suggests that Juana will assume a directive role in relation to Baako after his institutional release. Their partnership suggests the possibility of formulating a transnational, anti-patriarchal family model. Throughout the novel, images of reproductive malady are associated with patriarchal constructions of motherhood. Childless and single, Juana represents less an archetype of African motherhood than the possibility for envisioning new iterations of the figure of woman in the emerging postcolonial nation.

While *Carcase for Hounds* and *Fragments* depict the conditions of armed struggle and an early, troubled post-independence, the epic *Abyssinian Chronicles* spans the last years of Ugandan colonialism, its independence struggle, Idi Amin's military dictatorship, the civil war to oust Amin, and its immediate aftermath under Milton Obote. As in *Carcase for Hounds* and *Fragments*, images of fertility, childbirth, and reproductive malady in *Abyssinian Chronicles* are associated with processes of revolution and nation-building.

The prominent mother figure in the novel is Padlock, mother to Mugezi and a religious fanatic who suffers near-orgasmic out-of-body experiences whenever she canes children. Her beatings are so severe that Padlock is banned from the convent school in which she teaches before marrying Mugezi's father, Serenity. Padlock has no interest in marriage or motherhood and she directs her anger over the expulsion toward her children. Padlock abandons Mugezi for several years when he is a child and he lives with his grandparents. He apprentices to his grandmother's midwifery practice and develops a following of pregnant women devoted to his talent for reading and assuaging their morning sickness and other reproductive ailments, and for predicting the health of their unborn babies. After his grandmother is killed early in the novel, Mugezi moves in with Padlock and Serenity. He is chagrined to discover that they have had several other children since abandoning him and whom they immediately charge Mugezi to babysit. Padlock and Serenity beat Mugezi and "the shitters," as he calls his younger siblings, repeatedly. Mugezi nicknames Padlock and Serenity "the despots" for their dictatorial parenting style. To Mugezi, Idi Amin is a benevolent national father next to his own abusive mother and her cohort Serenity. Mugezi enters seminary school at Padlock's order, the first of a series of educational, government, and international organizations he encounters that repeat the colonialist dehumanization of blacks by Dutch white fathers. As a result of these experiences, Mugezi later understands Amin's dictatorship as a raced reincarnation of colonial domination.

In the intermittent, temporary custody of his grandmother and, later, his aunts and female companions, Mugezi thrives. All of these women have suffered gendered

and other forms of violence under colonial rule and under Amin, and all reside in the margins. In their care, Mugezi feels nurtured and in turn is able to work productively toward individual growth and some meaningful occupation. One day after he is grown, Mugezi is sitting on the rim of a paved-over volcano crater that also serves as a bustling urban center. He has always considered the place to suggest a geological vagina that births the happenings of the city. In this place Mugezi experiences a revelation of the intertwined historical futures of Uganda and himself.

Mugezi soon flees ravaged postwar Uganda for safety, sponsored by a Dutch aid organization that needs a representative of “Africa.” On the airplane, Mugezi faces a crossroads, caught between his opportunistic past and an uncharted future. In Amsterdam, Mugezi is sickened by the international aid industry, which operates through the “necrophilic exploitation” of the “starving Africans” stereotype (419). Mugezi deserts his benefactor organization and enters the ghetto’s underground transnational community. By abandoning Ugandan and Dutch circles of power, Mugezi deliberately renders himself officially nonexistent.⁴ Unable to afford to leave or apply for legal citizenship, Mugezi procures a fake British passport and becomes simultaneously an international citizen and homeland-less. Now a blank slate, Mugezi reinvents himself as a gravedigger and cremator. He begins to read the past lives marked on Dutch corpses as he once read the children’s’ futures etched into pregnant women’s bodies. The novel’s ending depicts Mugezi’s epiphany of a reality inverted to expose interconnections across the globe, the generations, and the realms of human and spectral existence. His previous intuition of a historical selfhood recurs at the novel’s conclusion in the form of a commitment to write Uganda’s traumatic history.

This narrative repetition is delivered to the reader as the novel *Abyssinian Chronicles*, a testimony of the national loss of the subversive mother as a model of the nation that could have been.

Revising the *Bildungsroman*

As postcolonial *Bildungsromane*, *Carcase for Hounds*, *Fragments*, and *Abyssinian Chronicles* are literary vehicles that interrogate socio-cultural and political institutions in order to initiate social transformation. The novels revise the traditional *Bildungsroman* genre in two important ways: through their collective orientation and by ungendering their male protagonists in order that they might speak responsibly as representatives of the collective. The novels function as testimonies of the collective crisis of postcolonial nation formation, an ideological moment during which Slaughter observes that the *Bildungsroman* genre proliferates. As testimony, *Carcase for Hounds*, *Fragments*, and *Abyssinian Chronicles* demonstrate that the emergence of the nation is the moment of articulation of the “meaning and scope of” postcolonial citizenship (Slaughter 1411). Because the novel instructs its readers in how to become “the people,” literature creates culture as well as the nation. For this reason, Cheah argues that the *Bildungsroman* genre is “imperative” for the process of decolonization because the narrative of the national *Bildung* follows that of the novel’s *Bild* who is its first and ideal national citizen (239). My use of the term “nation” is fraught here as a familiar sign for the more amorphous notion of transnational or diaspora community which is, in fact, the sphere in which the postcolonial *Bild* hopes to mature as a citizen. In its resistance to the formal colonial

administrative structures of neocolonial nation-statehood, the postcolonial *Bildungsroman* charts instead the formation of an informally organized international community.⁵ I mean to emphasize here, in this discussion of the intentional unboundedness of the postcolonial *Bildungsroman*'s emergent nation, the nuanced emphasis of post-independence Anglophone African *Bildungsromane* on inclusivity. This notion of inclusion (in opposition to the exclusivity of the nation-state) informs both the international borderlessness of the postcolonial diaspora community and the collective orientation of the novels studied in this chapter. Izevbaye notes that this departure from the Western novel's individualistic hero reflects a historical African rejection of the individual in favor of the collective as the potential source of social transformation. The post-independence African novel represents a collection of the voices of a community that has been traumatically wounded by colonialism. As a buried collective self emerges, the collective wound releases the voice of the incipient nation clamoring for recognition. It grows louder when it encounters the possibility of listeners, screaming the people's history of oppression. This voice calling for justice takes the form of the emerging nation's literature.

The African novel's collective voice recalls Mikhail Bakhtin's conception of the novel as the most effective literary exercise in accommodating multiple voices.⁶ It is precisely because the contemporary African novel is a hybridized form that we can read critics like Bakhtin to understand the collective narrative voice that issues from within an individual protagonist who is a representative of this collective voice. Bakhtin coins the term "heteroglossia," an English translation of the Russian *raznorecie* (literally, "multilingualness"), to discuss the tension for cultural

primacy between a given people's diversity and the national discourse of unity. He argues that the novel is the best-equipped literary genre to represent and mediate the tensions between the voices of the people and the state. This argument is especially prescient when the novel functions as a literary agitation against an oppressive neocolonial state, as do those studied in these pages.

Male Writers, "Feminine" Writing

Colonialism feminizes the African male writer to the point that it is possible for him to speak of the colonial condition on behalf of both sexes, by intentionally uncoding himself as a man in order to do so. This is a radical appropriation of marginalization for subversive testimonial purposes. While they may not be feminists, Mwangi, Armah, and Isegawa write about themes of gendered colonial oppression and liberation in ways that reject phallogentrism and engage with black feminist concepts. Filomena Chioma Steady argues that African feminism looks at women first as human beings and secondly in terms of gender, class, cultural and racial dimensions of oppression. Steady calls this approach "humanistic feminism" because its gender inclusive scope views the male-female relationship as two halves that make up one "human whole" (4, 7). African feminism's premise of complementarity resonates with various African cosmologies of humanity. While I argue that African notions of human complementarity make it appropriate to take seriously what an African man writes about women,⁷ I follow Steady's lead in referring to African gender-inclusive belief systems as "feminist" in order to place them in conversation with Western discourses of gender that do not recognize the

existence of non-patriarchal social structures.⁸ By putting these seemingly variant discourses together, I attempt to read these novels differently than would be possible by situating my theoretical locus exclusively in either Africa or the West. I use Hélène Cixous's notion of "feminine writing" to recode these supposedly male narratives as female writing. I do so because the texts call into question the black male postcolonial character's relationship to the lie of national narratives of inclusion by depicting men who refuse or abandon patriarchal privilege in the moment of emerging nationhood.⁹

"Feminine" writing, like testimonial writing, reconnects the wounded body and the psyche (Cixous 311).¹⁰ Cixous's famous interest in linking writing to the body is useful for considering how a physical or psychic wound transforms the traumatized body into a vehicle for testimonial voice, and how "voice" can in turn manifest as a body of historical, testimonial literary repetitions.¹¹ I am interested in the fact that the kind of writing Cixous describes is, in post-independence African literature, testimonial and raced as well as feminized by colonialism.

Kaja Silverman's conception of "historical trauma" can help us read a feminized postcolonial text (*Male* 55).¹² History and trauma can rupture or even dismantle the master narratives of social order and power. *Carcass for Hounds*, *Fragments*, and *Abyssinian Chronicles* all represent racialized male protagonists who reject their ungendered subject positions, which disrupts the (post)colonial order. In psychoanalytic terms, gender is a set of culturally defined performances and expectations mapped onto bodies without regard to anatomy, and the hysteric is one who does not perform the required behavioral codes. To be "male" in a patriarchy is

to have power and voice. In this system, the subject without power and voice is thus female, “whatever her anatomical construction” (Boyarin 118).¹³ A number of critics like Eng, Daniel Boyarin, and Lynne Kirby provide a lens through which to ungender hysteria, which Freud originally conceived as a female disease.¹⁴ While women, working-class men, and other subalterns “bore the brunt of the shocks of modernity” (Kirby 124), the colonized man also receives an unequal share of modernity’s traumatic “shocks.” Under Freud’s original rubric, hysteria feminizes the powerless male body by way of symbolic castration.

While race, class, and gender can conveniently marginalize the other in order to maintain patriarchal order, what of the ideal male subject who intentionally declines his privilege and castrates himself? The male hysteric’s refusal to perform codes of masculinity is especially “scandalous” for the social maintenance of male subjectivity because his refusal exposes a rupture in the patriarchy and thus the potential for its dismantling (Eng 177).¹⁵ Silverman argues that the male hysteric threatens not only patriarchal maintenance, but also the very nature of gender difference and reality as well. The Oedipus model grants privileges to ideal male subjects who will accept the “dominant fiction[s]” of male subjectivity, law, and the nation (*Male 2*). Living and believing in the validity of the Oedipus complex is to believe in a fiction, but adherence is also fictive. The mandate to social conformity contains the seed of its own doom because no matter how closely a subject’s nature adheres to social norms, a part of the psyche always “remains in excess” of the dominant fiction (*Male 2*). In other words, every participant in a social hierarchy is at least partially aware that the system’s survival hinges on mutual complicity. The man

who embraces castration, alterity, and specularity “say[s] ‘no’ to power” (*Male 2*) and “this is not what ‘men’ are assumed to do” (Smith 109).¹⁶ Refusing to occupy a position of patriarchal position of privilege is the “very uncoding of men as men” (Eng 178). As black postcolonial men who write about trauma and fertility in relation to nationalism and nation building, Mwangi, Armah, and Isegawa articulate perverse masculinities in the characters of Haraka, Baako, and Mugezi who in turn become vehicles for testimony, of recording colonial trauma. The reader using the lens of female writing can read the refusals of Haraka, Baako, and Mugezi to claim their Oedipal roles—Haraka as chief, Baako as been-to, and Mugezi as a government investigator or professor—as a critique of patriarchal systems of gendered access to power. In their depictions of masculinities that reject phallic standards, *Carcase for Hounds*, *Fragments*, and *Abyssinian Chronicles* reconfigure notions of masculinity.¹⁷ If reconfiguring masculinity can dismantle the patriarchy, then these textual depictions also suggest a potential postcolonial lived femininity unencumbered by dominating masculinist structures.

Locating the Postcolonial Figure of the Mother

In the three novels studied in this chapter, representations of motherhood and birth are paired with efforts to birth the next iteration of the nation. While *Fragments* and *Abyssinian Chronicles* rechart the *Bildungsroman*’s gendered focus to privilege the role of the mother, *Carcase for Hounds* depicts the detrimental ramifications of eliding the mother. In *Fragments* and *Abyssinian Chronicles*, images of infertility and child loss symbolize the independent nation’s failure to deliver on the

revolution's promise to end colonial influence. In *Carcase for Hounds*, the absence of the mother figure, portrayed in both the presence of the failed would-be mother Muthani and in the absence of other mother figures, suggests that the impotent chief Kahuru, Muthani's husband, functions as a metaphor for the failure of the native collaborator to birth the next iteration of Kenya. In this context, it is interesting to note that the fictional Muthani's name and the chief's long infertility evokes the image of an earlier, similarly named Mary Muthoni Nyanjiru, whose famous anger against native male impotency in the face of colonial injustice is considered to be the birth of Kenyan women's public nationalism.¹⁸

In their depictions of images of reproductive disease or loss associated with the pathologies of colonial influence, all of the texts evoke the colonial practice of debasing the native maternal. While the colonial ideal of Victorian womanhood is encapsulated in the white European woman's role of wife and mother, the colonizer does not view the native woman as either "woman" or "mother." *Fragments* and *Abyssinian Chronicles* draw a relationship between the woman at the moment of giving birth—of becoming a mother—and the birth of the neocolonial state. In *Carcase for Hounds*, the gendered literary representation of Mau Mau differs from some historical narratives which credit women as integral to the struggle's success. The lack of women is a destructive force that materially decimates General Haraka's fictional cell, just as a lack of female participation would have doomed the historical Mau Mau resistance. The novel's depiction of gendered resistance as doomed suggests a critique of envisioning a gendered postcoloniality.¹⁹ I suggest that these three postcolonial *Bildungsromane* tie the narrative of maturity to the creation of the

post-independence nation as well as to the linked narratives of motherhood and loss. I suggest a new way of reading the novels' maternal imagery: to expand the reader's focus so that related narratives of individual and national growth are informed by the cultural necessity of the figure of the mother to the national birthing process. Oyěwùmí theorizes the Yoruba conception of motherhood as "community-transforming" and, as such, a "public institution" more important than any other ("Abiyamo"). This Yoruba conception of motherhood as a crucially transformative cultural institution echoes across the continent. In the postcolonial context, African social healing includes the presence of motherhood and birth.

Testifying Wounds, Postcolonial Mourning

Freud opens his landmark essay "Mourning and Melancholia" with a question: what work does mourning do? While analysts have since debated the relationship between mourning and melancholia as different responses to loss, the psychoanalytic community has generally agreed that mourning offers a way to transcend loss and survive productively afterward while melancholy traps the sufferer in the moment of loss indefinitely. I have noted in earlier chapters that melancholia infuses mourning processes and I am interested in this tension as an ontological site of grief's transformative potential.²⁰ Greg Forter cautions that misunderstanding melancholia can elide the violence of its effects on the sufferer because both mourning and melancholia result in at best violence and at worst death.²¹ To Freud, a crucial difference between mourning and melancholia is the emotional terrain that loss renders "poor and empty" ("Mourning" 246). The violence of loss cuts the mourner

off from the world, but melancholia behaves “like an open wound,” bleeding the self dry and “emptying the ego until it is totally impoverished” (“Mourning” 253). While melancholia can result in suicide if the sufferer’s hate of the buried object intensifies enough, mourning’s work can be just as deadly. In order to save the self from the ego’s unhealthy attachment to the object, mourning requires “disparaging,” “denigrating,” and even “killing” the object (“Mourning” 257). In *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, Freud continues the work of “Mourning and Melancholia” by shifting our attention to the open bodily wound and its relation to the accompanying psychic wound.²² I am interested in Freud’s use of images of open wounds and violence to the self as a way to describe the psychic effects of mourning and melancholia because *Carcase for Hounds*, *Fragments*, and *Abyssinian Chronicles* all depict wounded characters whose repetitive testimonies demonstrate a desire to mourn that is infused with melancholic attachment.

Freud’s analogy of loss as a physical violence that inflicts wounds on the self underlies the vocabulary of trauma studies because trauma variously assumes the forms of violently inflicted physical or psychic wounds. The word “trauma” is from the Greek *trauma*, meaning “wound.” Originally used to designate a wound of the body, psychoanalysts now also use the term to signify a wound of the mind. Caruth argues that the psychic wound is not a “simple and healable event” but is rather a series of them, beginning with an experience that occurs too quickly and unexpectedly to comprehend in the conscious (4). The unknown event returns to the survivor in repeated nightmares and repetitive actions. Trauma is not located in a single violent event in the *past*, but in its unassimilated nature—its unknowability—

into the *future*. To the trauma sufferer, the future looks like the past. There is no revelation from which to develop or grow forward; there is only confusion and fear. Traumatized by the lack of understanding, the sufferer stands at the crossroads of mourning and melancholia. The melancholic's path to forgetting is short, a circle that begins and ends at the traumatic event. The mourner's path toward productive survival is long, full of switchbacks that repeatedly intersect the path of melancholy. Contemporary trauma studies discourse provides the vocabulary with which we talk about the survivor's journey over one or across both of these paths.

Laura Di Prete suggests that the only way to tell the story of a trauma—to be able to narrate that which is shrouded in the unknown—is to redefine our understanding of the notion of “voice.”²³ First, we must recognize that testimonial voice—like trauma—operates independently of time and space. As cinematic speech is present and current each time it is repeated, traumatic testimony is immediate and new each time it is spoken. Testimony, like cinematic voice, is the “very essence of presence” (Silverman, *Acoustic* 43).²⁴ Second, we must divorce voice from an exclusive relationship with language and instead expand its parameters to include verbal, nonverbal, physical, and written cues. Finally, and most important, we must understand voice as linked to an expanded notion of “body” that is “tongued and in touch with what the mind cannot know” (Di Prete 88). The wounded body, linked to the unconscious, “will voice its unspoken truth” (Di Prete 88). The body voices trauma when and because the mind cannot.²⁵

In Freud's reading of Torquato Tasso's *Gerusalemme liberata* (*Jerusalem Delivered*), Tancred's accidental double murder of his beloved Clorinda represents to

Freud the way trauma repeats itself for the survivor against his will, without cease, and implicates him in a historical pattern of repetition.²⁶ Freud reads Tasso's story to illuminate repetition compulsion as "passive experience" (*Beyond* 24, emphasis in original)²⁷ which Caruth frames as haunting. Repetition becomes an "unwitting reenactment" of an event "that one cannot simply leave behind" (Caruth 2). What the sufferer cannot leave behind is the originary trauma, which may be a long-past traumatic event. As we see in *Carcass for Hounds*, *Fragments*, and *Abyssinian Chronicles*, this event may precede the lifetime of the present sufferer.

Literary representations of the speaking traumatic wound suggest the possibility of reading literature as a traumatic history. The literary wound's voice links the sufferer to others in the community and to the ancestor who suffered the original traumatic event. This presence of another, a historical other in traumatic suffering and in the testimonial compulsion, suggests that trauma is historical.

In literary testimony, the text alludes to a traumatic event that precedes the narrative's beginning. Morgenstern writes that locating the moment of the traumatic event in *Beloved*, for example, is difficult because the traumatic moment precedes the opening of the novel. The traumatic moment in *Beloved* is not the infanticide because the only literary descriptions of it are mediated by white men. That experience is not Sethe's or the baby's, but the text does not suggest an alternative possibility. This example illustrates the fact that trauma does not reside in a specific literary moment or fictional character. Instead, the suffering character Sethe is the embodiment of *cultural* suffering. The infanticide is a literary reenactment of a historical event that precedes the pages of *Beloved* but that establishes the traumatic culture in which the

novel is set. *Beloved* is both Sethe's child and the representative of "sixty million and more." In much the same way that *Beloved* repeats collective historical trauma, Haraka's shooting, Baako's imprisonment, and Mugezi's abuse are literary repetitions of historical trauma in different national spaces.

I will now examine *Carcase for Hounds*, *Fragments*, and *Abyssinian Chronicles* in order to examine the ways in which traumatic injury can marshal the resources of the body in service of testimony and social justice.

Calling for Justice in Carcase for Hounds

Carcase for Hounds is a history of Mau Mau armed resistance in Kenya; it is Mwangi's second Mau Mau novel.²⁸ Historical discourse on Mau Mau generally affirms one of two conflicting mythologies, one of a positive social force that expelled colonialism and the other of Kikuyu regression into animalistic violence.²⁹ The novel is set in the early 1950s, just after post World War II mechanization rendered African subsistence ("squatter") farming obsolete. Legislation forced agricultural Kenyans off their land into rural employment centers so that settlers could expand their commercial farms. In Kenya, 1945 to 1955 was about "the tyranny of property" as squatter resistance ensued (Atieno-Odhiambo 27). The Kikuyu comprised half of Kenyan squatters in the late 1940s, so this group was disproportionately represented in the number of Kenyans expelled. Kikuyu were thus crucial catalysts in the armed struggle for Independence.³⁰ In Kikuyu cosmology, the earth is tied to home and the body. To African Kenyans in the 1940s, being landless meant being homeless, excised from the sites of one's birth, history, and the self. To

the Kikuyu in particular, forced relocations “fragmented the African notion of self” to the extent that to become a “landless human” was oxymoronic (Atieno-Odhiambo 28-29). The resulting armed struggle was referred to as Mau Mau, an impoverished, initially all-male, unorganized network of guerilla cells “who went to war with nothing—no guns, no spears . . . nothing but determination to get freedom and their land” (Turner and Neal).³¹ When a State of Emergency was declared in 1952, Mau Mau resistance was already active. After the declaration, thousands more men and women fled to the forests. As the number of insurgents grew, a loose network formed across the forested territories.

Of the thousands of forest fighters, most were Kikuyu and about five percent were women. Despite their full participation as combat and non-combat troops, historical and scholarly record before the last decade have (except for a few notable exceptions) largely ignored Mau Mau women’s activities or have referred to them as “passive wings” (Kenya, *Annual* [1955] 37).³² Cora Ann Presley argues that gendered colonial historiographies and academic scholarship perpetuate the misperception that Mau Mau was also “a conflict among males,” and that Kikuyu women’s nationalism and Mau Mau involvement were “incidental” to the rebellion’s “main currents” (“Mau Mau” 502). Gendering the Mau Mau rebellion erases the ways in which Mau Mau women ungendered Kenyan social and cultural roles by transforming the struggle into an egalitarian collective. By erasing or deradicalizing Kenyan women’s contributions to the struggle, Mau Mau discourse ignores the movement’s radical potential to fashion an anti-colonial, post-independence Kenya.

By becoming warriors, Kikuyu women subverted traditional and colonial gender roles and constructions, and transformed the nature of Kikuyu political authority, which colonialism had assigned exclusively to men. Tabitha Kanogo notes that women's transformation from "guardians of the domestic front" to military and political guardians of the homeland was a "slow and painful process for the women" made so by initial male resistance and gender subordination ("Kikuyu" 78).³³ Like colonial-era Kikuyu political circles, Mau Mau councils and gang leadership were originally all-male, but the creation of "joint men and women councils" and the promotion of women to gang leadership ungendered Mau Mau government and leadership to the point that troops marked "no difference between a male or female leader" (Gitahi).³⁴

Outside the forest, thousands of women comprised a crucial non-combat network which is widely recognized as the reason the forest fighters (and the resistance itself) survived as long as they did. Non-combat Mau Mau sympathizers of both genders provided information, arms, food, clothing, and medical supplies to the forest fighters, recruited new fighters and helped transport them to the camps, and administered loyalty oaths. Non-combat Mau Mau women ranged in age and social position and undertook an array of subversive activities.³⁵

Kikuyu women's Mau Mau involvement irrevocably changed both the idea and practice of Kikuyu womanhood. Mau Mau women's work as soldiers, spies, and suppliers, and their inclusion in previously male-only realms like combat, politics, and law enforcement illustrate changing attitudes toward women's full participation in the creation and administration of the armed struggle. Mau Mau women also

ruptured the patriarchal system of domestic subservience. Having survived “the worst of the hair-raising ordeals of Mau Mau,” they required revision of the domestic sphere as well as the public (Kanogo, *Squatters* 148). Returning female soldiers would not return to domestic servility post-independence.³⁶ The Mau Mau war transformed Kikuyu and Mau Mau gender because the women “could do everything—build a house, sell at the butchery—there was no such thing as a man’s job any more” (Turner and Neal). In their Mau Mau work, Kikuyu women fashioned new social, political, and domestic roles and identities for themselves that introduced new possibilities for lived postcolonial experiences in Kenya.

The British use of phrases like “passive wing” obscures the breadth and crucial importance of women’s and men’s dangerous non-combat support work,³⁷ yet the Government’s actions and internal discourse give the lie to its dismissive rhetoric,³⁸ as one District Commissioner reported tellingly, women “may well be described as the ‘eyes and ears of Mau Mau’” (Kenya, *Political* 1).³⁹ The colonial government recognized women’s Mau Mau participation both inside and outside the forest as so crucial to the movement’s success that it attempted to gender the insurgency in order to squelch it. The Government’s strategy was to separate the forest fighters, which were predominantly male, from their non-combat support, which was comprised of mostly women, via a multi-pronged campaign of arrest and detention, social policy, and villagization.

The 1954 “villagization programme” forced about a million Kikuyu to abandon their homesteads and build eight hundred new villages surrounded by barbed wire and watch towers (Johansson 24).⁴⁰ Begun as “a punitive measure,”

villagization eventually became the Government's anti-Mau Mau "centrepiece" in an array of divisive, gendered social policies (Kenya, African, *Annual* [1954] 33).⁴¹ Calling women's anti-colonial activism "far more rabid and fanatical than the males and more violent in their support of Mau Mau" (Kenya, Community, *Annual* [1956] 4),⁴² the Government created the Community Development Department which seized land from Mau Mau supporters and reassigned it to loyalists (Great Britain 80),⁴³ and rehabilitated sympathizers through propaganda and *Maendeleo ya Wanawake* ("Progress among Women") clubs that provided members with social services denied to Mau Mau sympathizers.⁴⁴

I have summarized women's crucial roles in the success of the Mau Mau struggle to underscore the paramount importance of Mwangi's omission of women almost entirely from his representation of Mau Mau combat and non-combat forces. I have noted that women comprised a small fraction of the combat troops, therefore Mwangi's depiction of an all-male gang over the course of a few weeks is historically possible. The text's portrayal of non-combat Mau Mau support as all-male, however, contradicts a broad array of both indigenous and colonialist historical evidence. The disparity between the fictional and historical records is so striking that I suggest that Mwangi was not toeing the colonial party line, but that we can read the novel as a critique of it. The presence of Mau Mau women in the colony threatened colonial rule, and Mau Mau's joint men and women's councils and eventual sharing of domestic and military tasks was an affront to the British modernist discourse of gendered social roles and their construction. The Government's decision to gender its response to Mau Mau resistance suggests to Luise White that the Mau Mau-British

war was an armed debate over how to construct Kikuyu gender in a way that would achieve “a British vision of calm and productive African families” and impose patriarchal order (25).⁴⁵

* * *

In *Carcase for Hounds*, Haraka’s foils are Kingsley and Kahuru, and the histories of the three men intertwine. Kahuru is a collaborator with the Government “master” Kingsley (27), and succeeds Haraka as chief. A fistfight between Kingsley and Haraka precipitated Haraka’s flight into the forest camp and Kahuru’s ascent to power. Kingsley’s subsequent murder of “the little terrorist general” has rocketed Haraka into his current “turbulent task of gang leadership” (21). The parasitic collaborator Kahuru is “the malignant undesirable rot that ha[s] grown up among [us]” (105). In contrast, Haraka has always been a fighter, leader, and protector.

As adults, Haraka, Kingsley, and Kahuru assume father roles that ultimately doom their potential for success because all three roles reinforce colonialism’s racist mythology. General Haraka is preceded by legends of animalistic violence, strength, and speed and, indeed, this mythology serves Haraka by insuring that villagers fear and help him. Kahuru deploys Haraka mythology to explain his political murders, and Kingsley affirms that mythos by accepting Kahuru’s assessments—“a Haraka thing”—as an excuse to avoid giving chase over “the most impassable terrain” (33). To Kingsley, chasing a legend is both “insanity” and affirming (33). Successful completion of Operation Haraka will be Kingsley’s great triumph because he will have achieved the racialized and gendered colonial mandate. To paraphrase Gilroy,

Kingsley will have symbolically protected the fair-skinned Lady Britannia from the penultimate black male predator.⁴⁶

Despite historical evidence that Mau Mau's success depended on the involvement of the entire Kikuyu community, the novel portrays an all-male guerilla gang and nearly all-male non-combat Mau Mau sympathizers. While the text does not specify whether the gang is all-male by preference or circumstance, I suggest that Haraka's gang is doomed even before the shooting. The gendered gang does not reflect the national collective, and Haraka's worst fear is that he is not part of a collective resistance but was perhaps instead "tricked" into waging a one-gang war (102).

Like the chief's "barren" marriage (27), Haraka's all-male cadre portends badly for the ideological space of the feminine and of motherhood in postcolonial Kenya. If the cell itself does not or can not sustain an inclusive population, then what is the hope for the postcolonial nation? Slowly, the gang is decimated by desertion and ambush. The mission is flawed: a gendered Mau Mau is doomed to fail. Its failure in the novel to correct historical wrongs retards the possibility of charting a different future. In depicting a masculinized armed struggle as doomed, the novel gestures toward the necessity of women's inclusion to securing postcolonial success.

The most influential female character in the novel is the chief's wife Muthani, although she appears only twice. She controls access to the chief, even for Kingsley. When Kingsley visits the village, "a woman look[s] out of the hut towards the Land-Rover. . . . Quickly the head [i]s withdrawn. The chief emerge[s] from the hut a few seconds later" (27). Muthani is the youngest daughter of Mwaniki, the last known

Mau Mau sympathizer in the village. In lieu of providing a marriage dowry for Muthani, Kahuru sanctions Mwaniki's political subversion even though, as Chief, he does not condone it. By insuring her father's life, Muthani insures local Mau Mau survival. While the text does not specify whether Muthani relays information she learns from her husband to her father, Kahuru nevertheless hides his anti-insurgency activities from her. When corporal Njoro arrives in the night to alert Kahuru that Mwaniki is hosting an oath-taking ceremony, Muthani grants Njoro access, and then watches them both. Njoro's attempt to alert Kahuru while revealing nothing to Muthani results in confusion:

“Have you considered, chief?” he ask[s].
“Considered what?”
“You told me you would, chief.”
The chief th[inks].
“I don't understand you.” (77)

Unable to make Kahuru understand the opportunity to kill Mwaniki and, Njoro hopes, receive a promotion for completing the job, Njoro instead signals their mutual fear of Muthani, a message which he knows the Chief *will* understand:

The corporal lower[s] his voice to a whisper.
“It is about...about Mwaniki,” he sa[ys].
The chief look[s] back instinctively at the dark interior of the house where the daughter of Mwaniki wait[s] in his bed. Then he [comes] out and shut[s] the door behind. The two move[] a little way away from the hut. (77-78)

If Muthani is not a Mau Mau informant, she is certainly an untapped resource. The text does not specify whether she actively or secretly supports Mau Mau, or not at all.

Perhaps the text means to suggest that Haraka's crucial failing is in not recognizing the magnitude of Muthani's potential importance to his project. The text does tell us that other village women participate in the oathing ceremonies, but these women are portrayed as little more than nameless and frightened. Even though the novel is narrated in third-person and alternates perspectives among Kingsley, Kahuru, Kimamo, and Haraka, none of these male characters seems particularly cognizant of women's participation as necessary to the resistance. Their ignorance reinforces patriarchal views of women as cursory to militancy. I suggest that Mwangi's depiction of the failure of these would-be fathers of the Kikuyu illustrates the impossibility of fathering a postcolonial nation.

The text also provides the possibility that Haraka inhabits a non-patriarchal form of masculinity. The text describes Haraka's relationship with Kimamo in terms that connote an intimate love that undermines their hyper-masculine personas of general and lieutenant. Whenever Haraka and Kimamo are separated, Haraka wishes repeatedly that Kimamo were with him and, when Kimamo returns, "the general's heart li[ghts] up" (49). I do not intend to suggest that Haraka and Kimamo are lovers. I argue instead that by framing their relationship in terms of romantic intimacy, the novel suggests a subversive complexity to the lived masculinities of Haraka and Kimamo that patriarchy does not accommodate.

Just before the amnesty date and his shooting, Haraka's team approaches the villagers to "doctor them clean of the white man's ills" in an oathing ceremony (57). The group's oath-taking gives voice to the social wound of colonialism. The voice is testimonial and juridical because the ceremony is a crucial step in organizing

collective resistance. Haraka wants to “doctor” *all* the villagers because he sees “the tribal marks grow dimmer” as some shift allegiance to the settlers (57). By “tribal marks,” Haraka means commitment to independence, and the marks’ dimming suggests waning village support for Mau Mau. As history shows, non-combat support sustained the insurgency. Losing the fictional villagers’ support will debilitate resistance in the district.

When the Home Guard raids the ceremony, Haraka is shot in the gut. The text represents the pain’s movement into his body in images of voice: “Pain waves s[i]ng through his chest and body” (81). Pain itself is also described in terms of voice: when angry that their escape bridge is not already in place over a spiked trench, “Haraka swallow[s] back a mouthful of screaming pain” (81). It is significant that Haraka is shot during an oath-taking ceremony because he is wounded at the moment of his greatest threat to the colonial administration’s maintenance of patriarchal control over Kenya. At this moment, Haraka represents the worst kind of African to Kingsley: he has not only refused the Oedipal power bestowed on him, but he is also mobilizing an organized revolt against his former benefactor. At the same time, the group oath-taking is a moment of collective testimony which binds the community together. Ultimately, while shooting Haraka does eventually eradicate his branch of the resistance, it also fails to restore order.

Very soon after he is shot, Haraka sees a vision of justice in a fevered daydream about Kingsley and Kahuru: “as he watched the two images the heads fell off one by one. At the sight of the bloody stumps of necks that were left, *something laughed inside the general*. One long ecstatic howl” (103, emphasis added). The

“something . . . inside the general” that releases a “long ecstatic howl” articulating a juridical purpose is the disembodied voice released by the gunshot wound, the voice that begins to call incessantly for the chief’s head. The chief represents, to Haraka and the reader, African complicity in its own subjection. Killing the chief becomes a symbol for Haraka of eradicating that complicity. The severed head is both proof of the chief’s death and a symbol of silencing the collaborator’s praisesong for the master. The wound’s repeated call for the chief’s head symbolizes the people’s cry for an end to colonial domination and African collaboration.

Haraka’s wound links him to the collective in that his incapacitation requires other soldiers to carry out his wound’s directive. I read Haraka’s continuous moaning for the head as both signifying and delivering a repeated testimony of the violence that Kahuru has wrought upon his people. Testimony’s emergence is the beginning of productive mourning and Haraka’s drive to possess the chief’s head suggests the possibility of an “ultimate end” to colonial occupation. The troops’ repeated failures to deliver the head trap Haraka in a melancholic attachment to the lost object, of which the head is a symbol. In the sense that melancholic attachment precedes productive mourning, Haraka’s wound voices calls for both justice and mourning in the form of the head. While beheading the corrupt chief will end corruption, reductively put, the price of mourning is to kill the object and killing the chief (as object) also obtains that objective. Kahuru’s death may *signal* the beginning of the end of settler rule, but one death will not necessarily *instigate* it.

As days pass, the wound grows more infected and Haraka’s obsession with Kahuru’s beheading intensifies. It seems that the wound keeps Haraka’s body alive

for the sole purpose of repeating its demand. The body has become the mouthpiece of the demand and it punishes any failure to comply. Kimamo observes at one point that “the fever ha[s] killed all the better parts of the general” (116). The gangrenous “rot” has gone to Haraka’s head and all that is left is a disembodied, testimonial, demanding voice “always talking of nothing” (122, 116). At their most desperate hour, Kimamo screams at Haraka that it is impossible for them to get the chief’s head: he is too heavily guarded. At this outburst, Haraka’s “granite eyes” shed “real” tears and “a little fresh blood appear[s] through his jacket” (126). When spoken speech becomes impossible, the wound continues to make its demanding “voice” known by marking the body in blood.

Haraka’s injury marks a turning point in the fighting and in the gang’s cohesion. The wound demands the most daring mission under their most dangerous circumstances and thus begins the unit’s dissolution. The longer the wound’s call goes unfulfilled, the worse it becomes. The gash is now infected with gangrene. It emits “blood mixed with the dark green mess oozing out to make an ugly sight uglier” as well as the “foul stench of rotting flesh” (122). The wound finally grows so repulsive that one soldier “thankfully” disposes of a dead body rather than clean it (122). The wound’s chances of healing diminish as the infection spreads, and so the gang’s chances of surviving Kingsley’s manhunt also plummet. Their numbers diminish through desertion and capture, food supplies dwindle as gatherers do not return and sending new envoys becomes riskier, and morale sinks as the troops fear discovery by Kingsley’s tightening dragnet.

Later, on his way back to the cave after his own failure to procure the head, the mortally wounded Kimamo thinks, “the wound failed” (132), intuiting that Haraka’s wound carries a purpose and power beyond its shifting borders on Haraka’s skin. The wound has failed, however, to turn the tide of either this gang’s survival or the resistance movement’s success. When Kimamo reaches the cave, Haraka is alone and sits upright. Kimamo is unsurprised at Haraka’s temporary recovery because Kimamo now believes that the general is impervious to death as long as Kahuru lives. Kimamo knows that even as the rest of their unit is dead, and that he too will soon die, the melancholic Haraka will remain trapped in this moment, “mumbling unintelligibly to himself” forever, “waking up again and again to ask for Chief Simba’s head” (132).

During the ensuing exchange with Haraka, Kimamo’s head throbs relentlessly with Haraka’s repeated demand. The headache has been a trope throughout the narrative, associated with Kimamo’s fear of failing to lead the gang as Haraka would. In the cave, Haraka knows that Kimamo has not brought the head, but he does not recognize Kimamo. This is significant because throughout his delirium, Haraka has always recognized Kimamo, and only Kimamo. Now, Haraka believes that the soldier returning in failure is Njogu, the last soldier who failed to behead Kahuru. To Haraka, Kimamo’s cannot be the face of such an egregious disappointment because Haraka associates Kimamo with militaristic success—“pure officer material,” he has called Kimamo, “the settlers w[ill] hear more about him” (21). To Haraka, Kimamo represents the last hope for the head and so much more. The general’s disappointment and Kimamo’s worsening headache slowly coalesce, inform each

other, and bind the two men together. Haraka's disappointment feeds Kimamo's headache, intensifying it:

His head throb[s] now more painfully. Every beat of his heart resound[s] like a tin drum in his head. He close[s] his eyes tight, sh[akes] his head repeatedly, to no avail. The general's voice sound[s] frail and distant, growing gradually louder and reverberating to the point of jarring his whole body. (133)

Haraka's voice has infiltrated Kimamo's head: "'Njogu, you failed,' the general seem[s] to rumble into his ears" (134). Kimamo's beating heart pulses in time with Haraka's echoing accusation: "*You failed,*" suggesting that failure has infiltrated the life force. For the general, this episode is a reenactment of the other failures to behead Kahuru, and each failure to procure Chief Simba Kahuru's head repeats the original failure to stop the collaborator who sold his neighbors. To Haraka, endlessly echoing a historical trauma, failure *is* the life force.

Exacting the stated price for failure to destroy the chief, Haraka shoots Kimamo in a scene that is usually read as confirmation of Haraka's fabled brutality. I suggest that Haraka's action instead liberates them both for neither will survive Kingsley's detection. This second shooting, of Kimamo, is timely, for even as the "strange booted feet" of Kingsley's forces "tramp[] the jungle" outside the cave, Kimamo hears only Haraka's gunshot and then, "darkness" (134). We know that Haraka dies immediately after Kimamo because "suddenly," in the "dark," Kimamo is "not alone" (134).

In the end, even though the gang is decimated, the novel's depiction of Kimamo and Haraka in the realm of the ancestors foretells a new potential paradigm

for creating masculinity after colonialism—one that sheds the stoic warrior façade and instead creates connections with others. In the novel’s final scene, Haraka “glide[s] over” to Kimamo, who sits “worn and lost” (134):

The ghost place[s] its hand on his weak shoulder and sa[ys] comfortingly, voicelessly:

“Let’s go.”

“Where?” Kimamo’s lips move[] but no sound [comes].

“The gate,” hoarsely. (134)

This exchange repeats verbatim the one Kimamo and Haraka have after Haraka is shot, but with a very different outcome. Now, Haraka and Kimamo go together again, “hand in hand,” but this time “joyfully,” through “golden gates” into a jungle “with merry, laughing streams and no angry bursting rivers and no pale-faced fierce soldiers, and no guns” (134). Kimamo notices that his companion in this merry place, as it has “always” been, is “*his* general,” Haraka (134, emphasis added). The two warriors, famed as bloodthirsty killers, are depicted in this final scene in terms denoting gentleness, affection, and belonging that contradict the brutal Mau Mau mythos. This language is more often associated with patriarchal constructions of femininity, yet the novel suggests that Haraka and Kimamo reject these gender constructions, and even war altogether, in exchange for a gentle, companionable masculinity that does not fit within the confines of patriarchal reality.

Outside the cave, in the last lines of the novel, a hyena that has been calling periodically since Haraka’s injury cries again, “sarcastic” and timeless (134). In Kikuyu cosmology, the hyena foretells a death. This hyena’s cry indicates that, despite the trail of corpses littering the novel’s last pages, the death he has been

foretelling has not yet occurred. Perhaps the hyena's cry, coupled with Kingsley's failure to capture Haraka alive, suggests that the predicted downfall will not be Mau Mau's success but Britain's colonial grip on Kenya. By transporting both Haraka and Kimamo to the land of the ancestors and the unborn before Kingsley can kill them, Mwangi suggests a next stage after colonial domination that is not necessarily the death of the native but instead the potential for transformation and rebirth.

Trans-generational Testimonial Fragments

In *Fragments*, Baako Onipa's feeling of social dissonance creates a psychic wound that sends him into psychiatric consultation with Juana, an African American expatriate who has moved to Ghana to work with psychic trauma sufferers. "It's not really possible to work without others," Baako tells Juana, but his former teacher and mentor Ocran has advised him that "you can't do anything serious here if you need other people's help, because nobody is interested in being serious" (118, 81). Baako faces the paradox of hoping to help mobilize a collective in a community of individualists. His inability to find a common mind alienates him from his avaricious family and stalls his career. The resulting psychic wound spurs all of Baako's writings, and we can trace its origins to his matriculation in the United States where a previous psychiatrist prescribed medication to counteract the effects of consciousness expansion toxins like those produced by LSD. While Pinkie Mekgwe suggests that Baako is surprised by the level of individualism and consumerism he encounters upon his return to Ghana, I read Baako's initial interactions with Juana and Ocran to

suggest that Baako anticipated what he would find and that the anticipatory knowledge, coupled with its later confirmation, are the source of his agitation.⁴⁷

Baako explains to Juana that he so feared an inability to “do anything worthwhile” after returning to Ghana that, according to his American psychiatrist, he was already spontaneously “generating [his] own expansion toxins” in anticipation of his return (102). Kofi Owusu argues that Baako’s “madness” originates from his ability to see the madness in the world and his simultaneous inability to escape it: he *must* see it because he *can* see while his grandmother Naana’s blindness protects her from viewing that which sickens Baako.⁴⁸ I read Naana’s interactions with the mad world as quite perceptive. She feels the Kliegs illuminating the airport at night, hears the mourning in African American music, and remarks on the strangeness of lighting the night, on shared traumatic histories she hears in the blues. Baako’s madness is “a reflection of dis-ease” in an insane society that defines the sane as mad because they do not conform to insane social mores (Owusu 362). I read Baako’s dis-ease not as a desire to escape from but as a refusal to conform to a flawed sociality. To flee would be impossible, as the concluding ambush scene depicts. After leading an out-of-shape posse of would-be kidnappers on an enervating, wall-scaling chase in the nude, the nonconformist Baako is captured, tied, and institutionalized for male hysteria. His detention is masterminded by his mother Efua and his sister Araba who are symbols of the pathology that pervades consumerist articulations of motherhood.

The voice of his writing emanates from Baako, but it is not his. Baako is merely the present designee of a collective and trans-generational trauma of loss. The Atlantic slave trade has wounded generations of Africans and this wound settles into

Baako's psyche, releasing his writing voice. The psychic wound hounds Baako to write even in adverse conditions of frequent illnesses: "a fractured thought crossed his mind. The urge to trap it before it disappeared made him forget the general pain of his body. . . . he began to write" (156). Through writing, Baako tries to access the knowledge to which his wound's voice refers, but he is unable to. He explains that his work at Ghanavision "was trying . . . to get hold of something. It was like a growing happiness, or the beginning of a good understanding which would vanish easily in a moment" (122-23).

Deciding to write at all was a traumatic experience for Baako. He tells Ocran, "I had a nervous breakdown over it" (80).⁴⁹ Similar to Haraka in *Carcase for Hounds*, Baako embarks on a mission to transform his society as part of a collective only to find himself without allies. Baako tells Ocran that working alone *and* against the "general current" is "like being tricked into a trap" (103, 80). Once he has resolved to write, however, Baako does not "do the usual kinds of writing" (80). He develops several television treatments about slavery and oppression for Ghanavision. When Baako presents his treatments at a production meeting, his programming manager Asante-Smith questions "such a choice of topic" when, as Asante-Smith explains to Baako, "we're a free, independent people. We're engaged in a gigantic task of nation building. We have inherited a glorious culture, and that's what we're here to deal with" (146-47). For Asante-Smith and others in power, the inherited "glorious culture" is Britain's, not Ghana's, and postcolonial "nation building" means censoring colonial history. The "usual kinds of writing," then, uphold these tenets, and perhaps Baako's decision to write was traumatic because writing the unusual

means he will encounter resistance to his work. Postcolonial Ghanaians like Asante-Smith want to maintain their melancholic attachments to the lost object of their autonomy. They cover these losses with a patina of gratitude for their “inherited” culture, repressing its violent arrival.

As the been-to who eschews cargo to become a writer who insists on producing traumatic histories that implicate an “inherited,” “glorious culture,” Baako *is* the “incurable wound” on the surface of neocolonial Ghana (Owusu 363). Baako’s compulsion to resist and chronicle is a task of heroic proportions that links Baako to “the old heroes who turned defeat into victory for the whole community” (103). Discouraged, Baako burns his treatments. He attempts to explain his motivation for writing to Naana: “I was trying to say things in my mind, to let other people see” (154). But even as Baako is compelled to speak the “things” in his mind to others, the text suggests ignorance about the source of his compulsion. When Efua asks, “What is it you can’t stop writing?” after an insomniac night of typing, Baako replies vaguely, “Just things I’ve thought about” (156). In part, he seeks to put Efua off his trail because he senses her disapproval of his stance and of his writing, but Baako’s reply to his mother also belies his inability to explain his testimonial compulsion. Only Ocran seems to understand that Baako has within him “a fullness [he] need[s] to bring out” (193).

After quitting Ghanavision, Baako’s compulsion to write continues in a journal, this time about what he calls “cargo culture,” or the worship of capitalism and its focus on acquisition. In his journal, Baako writes that the been-to is dead to his African self. He is instead a “powerful ghost, cargo and all,” the specter of the slave-

trade collaborator who elevates himself and his family economically at the expense of the community (157). The character of Brempong, whom Baako meets on his trans-Atlantic flight, symbolizes the been-to. Brempong brings appliances and money to his large family, who surrounds and worships him at the Accra airport. The notion of the benevolent been-to is one of the significant effects of globalization, and Brempong is the epitome of cosmopolitan postcolonial Ghanaian consumerism.⁵⁰ Brempong represents the been-to as a new kind of hero who, to Baako, is merely a deformation of the “old” African returning hero shaped by neocolonialism and its alter ego, globalization. The return is crucial, for it supposedly differentiates the been-to from the slave. But the premise of been-to ideology is that an African must journey to Europe or the United States and mimic the former master in order to improve his social status in postcolonial Ghana. In the been-to mythos, the returner is transformed economically by the journey, now “a sort of charmed man, a miracle worker” able to distribute worldly goods rather than spiritual enlightenment (103).

Araba instructs Baako that “men think they rule the world” (86), but even as this primary female character pulls aside the veil of male dominance, Baako has already demonstrated an alternative form of masculinity. His refusal to inhabit neocolonial Ghana’s been-to subjectivity begins in America when he is still packing to return to Africa. He brings only a typewriter and a guitar. By packing only two carry-on tools of creativity rather than shipping a bounty of big-ticket appliances and a car to distribute in a consumerist display, Baako demonstrates that he intends to assume, once home in Ghana, the subject position of West African *griot* (musician, writer, historian) rather than that of cosmopolitan benefactor. Baako’s refusal to

conform to the social mores of postcolonial Ghana's "changed world" signals his refusal of the imported Oedipus: "I know what I'm expected to be," he tells Juana at their psychiatric intake meeting, but "it's not what I want to be" (98, 103). In quitting Ghanavision, Baako refuses the perks of power and adopts a postcolonial masculinity outside the patriarchy. The potential for articulating alternative formations of masculinity recurs in the beach scene wherein a boy's rhythmic drumming helps a crew of male laborers move a heavy load in pulses to his steady beat. The boy's music, not brawn, moves the heavy cargo and suggests that brute strength is an ineffective model of masculinity. The scene suggests the possibility of privileging a common African societal balance of male-female-child-adult societal participation.⁵¹

The novel uses images of infertility as a metaphor for social corruption and impotency. Ghanaian mothers who embrace neocolonial values suffer reproductive trauma: Baako's mother Efua lost a young child, and her daughter Araba repeats the pattern. Araba has had five miscarriages and is pregnant with a sixth child when Baako arrives from the United States. She sees his return in symbolic terms and is convinced that the wealth she presumes Baako brings will coax this new baby to term. The baby is born but the hasty, premature celebration of the birth, in contradiction to Akan custom, leaves the child dead. Rushing the ceremony pushes the baby into the public sphere before he has decided whether to remain in the family, and a child who does not like what he sees may decide not to stay. According to custom, the premature ceremony may have been responsible for the baby's death, and Naana sees the consumerism that drove its scheduling in terms of violence. Increasingly, vices like consumption and greed are no longer considered criminal,

Naana laments to Baako; they are instead accepted as hallmarks of progress. The phrase, “the world has changed,” is used to explain “every new crime,” Naana argues, and to “push a person to accept all” former injustices (98). Sanctioning that which used to be a moral injustice rather than testifying of the suffering it engenders “bring[s] a sickness to the stomach of the listener,” she tells Baako (98).

* * *

Baako’s developing romantic partnership with Juana offers a fictional space for the figure of woman to occupy that is not defined by the patriarchy.⁵² The narrative does not hint that Juana becomes pregnant, but the next-to-last scene shows her hope for a productive future in preparing her unused room for Baako’s arrival after his institutional release. It would be simplistic to suggest that Juana will give birth, with Baako as father, to a symbolic infant called postcolonial Ghana. The text does suggest, however, that Juana and Baako will continue to work together as partners. Whether they will remain romantically entwined or not is irrelevant, but Armah’s depiction of an egalitarian male-female partnership is significant. Further, leaving the couple’s romantic status undefined at the end of the novel dismantles the potential for positing heterosexist assumptions about male-female relationship models in the postcolonial future that Juana and Baako will chart. Juana and Baako together are a metaphor for a gender-inclusive postcolonial future.

At the novel’s conclusion, Naana prepares to cross into the realm of the ancestors. So close to joining the ancestors, Naana remembers those she leaves behind and those whom she will soon join. Naana’s insight bookends the novel and has been throughout a source of companionship and inspiration to Baako—“I should

listen more to you, Naana,” he has told her, “but I always find you so sad” (97). At the narrative’s close, however, Naana foresees possible change, one of which Baako can be a part, but which requires that he cultivate insight. Naana describes her vision in an internal monologue directed to the ancestors:

I know of the screens of life you have left us: veils that rise in front of us, cutting into easy pieces eternity and the circle of the world, so that until we have grown tall enough to look behind the next veil we think the whole world and the while of life is the little we are allowed to see. . . . [W]hen we grow just tall enough and, still clutching the useless shreds of a world worn out, we peep behind the veil just passed and find in wonder a more fantastic world, making us fools in our own eyes to have believed that the old paltriness was all. (200-01)

Naana’s revelation suggests, as does Kimamo’s and Haraka’s passage between realms in *Carcase for Hounds*, that an alternative but as-yet unseen version of the world exists outside fictive reality. Naana releases her grip on the realm of the living and the reader is privy to her internal dying monologue. Naana’s closeness to the ancestors gives her metaphysical insight and she regrets that she can not convey to Baako the “thoughts of his [future] happiness” with which she is “filled” (199).

Words into Weapons: Abyssinian Chronicles

In *Carcase for Hounds* and *Fragments*, we see one primary wound that marshals the sufferer’s body to voice a call for justice. In *Abyssinian Chronicles*, Mugezi makes a life out of reading and listening to the voices of others who have been wounded. Mugezi’s multiple wounds release various modes of testimonial transmission throughout his life, beginning with testimonial performances and

culminating in a commitment to write the historical testimony of all black people. Mugezi has survived parental and institutional abuse, colonialism, civil war, and a military dictatorship. After such violent beginnings, it is the casual stares and pejorative gestures he receives in public when he is with his white girlfriend Magdeleine that “[wear] me down” (460) so much that he disassociates repeatedly from official society. The final metamorphosis of Mugezi’s testimonial voice from action to speech occurs after he has been wounded physically and psychically, has read the wounds of others, and, finally, has excised himself from all pathological affiliations and societal contexts. Unfettered, unaffiliated, even officially nonexistent, Mugezi is sufficiently detached from the world to read it from a distance. The detachment precipitates his epiphany of an upended reality and sends him into language and employment training so that he can chronicle the history of Abyssinia with an arsenal of words sharpened “into weapons” (461).

Mugezi’s childhood pranks are non-verbal attempts to speak about his community’s traumatic wounds. Diana Taylor identifies a “performatic” realm of testimony in “trauma-driven performances” that function as testimonial actions (1674).⁵³ These may initiate social and individual recuperation. Trauma manifests as “acting out in both the individual and the social body” before the sufferer can speak about it (Taylor 1675). Traumatic performances precede language and, thus, spoken testimony. Taylor’s term “performatic” (from the Spanish *performático*) distinguishes trauma-driven performance from the “performative” which is based in language.⁵⁴ Performatic recuperation can involve almost any type of movement, but traumatic movement will always be “bracketed from daily life” (Taylor 1677, note 3).

Mugezi's childhood performances all take the form of anti-colonial sabotage. At seminary, for example, he shuts off the school's electricity so that the abusive Dutch faculty will have to share its stores of frozen food with the malnourished African students. Mugezi's traumatic performance both calls attention to the faculty's abuse and precedes his later writing, and both forms of expression are testimonial.

While this and other childhood performatic protests are testimonial in nature, they are fraught by Mugezi's immaturity and so they remain incomplete appeals to justice and productive mourning. The voice speaks the survivor's secret shame, and Mugezi's shame is complicity in his own oppression—his childhood testimonial performances are anonymous. When those in power inflict the same trauma on all or many members of a group, personal trauma binds the collective together. In these instances, personal trauma can “mobilize collective acts of condemnation” (Taylor 1675). By operating alone and in secret, Mugezi misses a valuable opportunity to organize his fellow seminary students against the trauma of colonial education. Rather than name the oppression he has suffered to a witness and potentially initiate mourning processes, Mugezi flees Uganda. But he cannot flee the state of melancholy.

Mugezi's experience demonstrates that an important link between the body and the voice is immigration. Bhabha observes that the melancholic and the migrant speak the same “encrypted discourse” (164). For Bhabha, the postcolonial migrant is necessarily a melancholic for whom the lost object is the national *Heim*. Bhabha refers to the migrant's bodily gestures as foreign to the physical lexicon of the host country; they repeatedly mark both the lost national *Heim* and the migrant's

difference. For Bhabha, because the gesture is not a spoken word, the repetition of gesture is not sufficient to bridge the void between action and knowledge. The gesture becomes merely a mime of living, entrapping the migrant in a representation of a life he cannot live in reality because, as migrant, he is not schooled in the ways of being at home in the host country. The migrant native remains trapped outside the host *Heim*, silent.

As long as Uganda remains mired in postcolonial political upheaval, it will continue to be *unheimlich* to its native population. As Mugezi's experience in both post-war Uganda and in Amsterdam demonstrates, the postcolonial Ugandan is at home neither in the motherland nor abroad. In particular, Mugezi finds that as half of an inter-racial couple in Amsterdam, "I hate[] the visibility Magdeleine accord[s] me" because it carries the responsibility of interracial access to privilege he wishes to refuse (461). In order to access a measure of racial privilege through his gender, Mugezi must perform racist stereotypes of both the hyper-virile black man *and* the subservient house servant to Magdeleine's social circle. Unwilling to represent these competing essences of stereotypical black masculinity, Mugezi goes underground. His eventual epiphany shows him the possibility of constructing a non-patriarchal form of masculinity. Like Haraka in *Carcase for Hounds*, Baako in *Fragments*, and Askar in *Maps*, Mugezi accepts his role as the recorder of social trauma and transformation. Mugezi becomes another *griot*: the writer, the testifier, the social critic, and historian.

In Amsterdam, Mugezi comes to believe that his pastime of recreating histories of Dutch corpses in some way restores histories to the millions of

unremembered Ugandans, dead from decades of dictatorial rule and civil wars under Amin and Obote. Mugezi has seen the disembodied body parts lying in the streets, the walking “corpses of war” crying testimonies on their way out of detention (306-09), the charred ruins of destroyed villages. All wounds, scarred bodies, and decimated villages tell different histories of trauma, but these histories bind all sufferers together. The disfigured torture victims and urban destruction seem to Mugezi, who is an experienced midwife’s assistant, to be war’s afterbirth. War was the birth of a new nation, Uganda, which has exited the womb of the central region’s L Triangle. The Triangle is the nation’s geographic center and is a strategic military site for national control. Shaped like a pubis, the Triangle is alternately occupied by rebel and government forces throughout the novel. The narrative’s repeated images of rape and AIDS in describing political and military activities in the Triangle suggest repeated violations of the nation from external attackers as well as from pathogens inside the national body. Although Mugezi is skilled in the art of divining afterbirth tissue for clues to a baby’s future, reading the “afterbirth of war” requires the ability to read the future of the emerging postcolonial, postwar nation (299). For this divination, Mugezi learns to look into the past. He begins by reading his Grandpa’s beaten corpse, seeing the political murder as a metaphor for Uganda’s post-independence dictatorial abuse of subversive citizens (313).

In the last pages of the novel, Mugezi is again sitting in a bustling urban center, this time at Amsterdam’s enormous Central Station. Finally free of Magdeleine, he can now “discover the world peacefully and dream and redream it” (461). In service of this goal, Mugezi has “attacked the Dutch language course like a

madman . . . attacked the subsequent job course with the same zeal” (461). He garners a job at a magazine and there, “where words [a]re beaten into weapons, . . . I [am] gradually forging mine” (461). The train station is and becomes for Mugezi, at this moment, the center and microcosm of the world:

The sun [is] shining, doves [a]re fluttering about, three youths [a]re banging out a rock tune on scuffed instruments. . . . Half-naked youths [a]re watching, travelers streaming past, trams rumbling. People of all nations and colors pour[] into the great city like ants streaming toward predestined locations in subterranean tunnels. (462)

Images of birth, infancy, and youth dominate the scene, suggesting that Central Station is yet another womb, bringing forth “youths,” “half-naked,” from its vaginal, “subterranean tunnels” into the sunshine (462). This image of birth precipitates Mugezi’s revelation: “As I look[], my head beg[ins] to spin: I [am] getting dizzy. People seem[] to be walking upside down, the dead rising from their graves, the living diving into fresh graves” (462). The grave imagery is prescient for Mugezi, who has dug and excavated burial sites, but it also invokes the notion of the living moving freely between this world and the realm of the ancestors. The ability to move freely among realms demolishes the boundaries of the real and thus posits, as in *Carcase for Hounds* and *Fragments*, the suggestion that reality is a fiction that can be replaced. *Abyssinian Chronicles* takes this notion a step further, however, and where *Carcase for Hounds* describes in detail an arms-free pastoral paradise, *Abyssinian Chronicles* depicts not what Naana’s “more fantastic world” looks like, but what it feels like. Mugezi both sees and feels this revelation:

There [is] motion and inversion everywhere: the invaders [a]re being invaded, the partitioners being partitioned, the penetrators getting penetrated. The mixing and juxtaposition of peoples bec[omes] mind-blowing. . . . I h[o]ld on to the cement bank in order to stop myself from spewing or getting spewed. I ha[ve] found myself a stone to lay my head on, an enchanted hilltop made of boulders from all the corners of the globe. (462)

At the close of *Abyssinian Chronicles*, untied to nation, gender, or race, Mugezi belongs nowhere, and his epiphany of belonging everywhere erases formalized boundaries and ideological constructions. He sees “motion and inversion everywhere” as patriarchal hierarchies, frames of reference, and social structures collapse into themselves and destroy each other (462). He is “in” the transnational community that stretches everywhere, stretched out himself, prone on “an enchanted hilltop made of boulders from all the corners of the globe” (462). Mugezi’s vision of the total inversion of reality is a look into the possibilities for a changed future, for postcolonial mourning. Mugezi has not yet begun writing his text of the novel’s title, but the epiphany figuratively sends him into what he calls Abyssinia, inverting the life-death binary and linking him to his now-deceased father Serenity through their shared desire to write this story. Serenity had also dreamed of writing the history of what he called Abyssinia, of all black people, and that dream repeats and crystallizes in Mugezi’s revelatory commitment. The path to mourning, Mugezi realizes, is through the community from which he has so many times excised himself. From his mental perch on the top of the world, Mugezi can envision a transnational community, an “enchanted” one comprised of “juxtapose[ed] peoples” from “all the corners of the globe.” If the partitioners and penetrators are stopped, then we might read the end of

Abyssinian Chronicles as worlding a hitherto unimagined transnational postcolonial community.

Conclusion

While Haraka, Baako, and Mugezi do not complete the tasks their wounds demand, each text ends with a signal of the potential for success to occur after the end of the narrative. This possibility resides in the narratives' movement into realms that may best be described as alternative realities. *Carcase for Hounds* and *Fragments* both end after having just placed principle characters within the realm of the ancestors and unborn, and *Abyssinian Chronicles* ends with Mugezi having just seen an inverted vision of reality in which the living and spectral consort. In each realm, violence and oppression are absent; joy and justice predominate.

Moving the narrative action from the fiction of reality into an alternate realm of existence signals the epistemological and ideological possibilities for breaking down barriers surrounding notions of patriarchal reality, the condition of postcolonialism, and even suggesting the possibility of justice wrought from unconventional forms of gender and recuperative testimony. Bhabha suggests that literature unconceals alternative ideas and beings that the real world cannot accommodate. Specifically, he suggests that literary representations of "obscure signs of the spirit-world, the sublime and the subliminal" can write the world (12). The spirit-world and the sublime can inscribe, or world, the postcolonial world. That all three novels' final action takes place outside reality and temporality suggests the need to reconfigure postcolonial reality, citizenship, and societal parameters if post-

independence African nations are finally to disengage from residual colonial realities. These narratives' movement outside the real and the temporal are especially striking because the surrealist endings depart so dramatically from the realist portrayals that comprise the rest of the novels, thus highlighting the power behind the spectral representations.

The three texts juxtapose references to the realm of the ancestors and the unborn with narratives that, while set in the present, also traverse the boundaries between the realms between living and spectral. Oyèwùmí expands on this notion, of linking pregnancy with atemporality across many African communities, noting that across the continent, motherhood transcends boundaries of gender, metaphysics, and the individual body (“Abiyamo”). This nexus of possibility is the atemporal moment which the pregnant woman inhabits in many African cosmologies. I read this metaphysical juncture of past, present, and future in the texts as opening a space for the entrée of the mother figure into the birthing process of the postcolonial nation, an entry that reintroduces gender inclusivity to nation building.⁵⁵ The surreal endings in *Carcase for Hounds*, *Fragments*, and *Abyssinian Chronicles* may suggest that “postcolonialism,” or a historical stage unlike that of colonialism, exists (like literature and trauma) only as an imagined reality. I would like to think, however, that the narrative juxtaposition of genders and realist and spectral depictions demonstrates that the possibility of conceiving an independent nation resides in the creative potential of an atemporality that overrides linearity in favor of simultaneity—past, present, and future existing in one moment.

Chapter 5: Writing (in) Africa, Reading “African” Literature

This dissertation has underlined the various ways in which trauma is witnessed and written in Anglophone African novels: through damaged bodies, censorship and ghosts, and the wounded self’s trans-generational voice. In this concluding chapter, I grapple with the question of who reads and writes “Africa” and Anglophone “African literature” in the contemporary metropolitan literary community. I begin by examining the speeches delivered on the occasion of J. M. Coetzee’s 2003 Nobel Prize award in Literature, the responses of the African National Congress, the South African press, academe, and the mission statements of the two most influential institutions that determine what constitutes world literature, the Swedish Academy and the United Kingdom’s Man Booker Foundation. It is appropriate that I conclude my study by examining the rhetoric of defining African literature because I have consistently argued that how we read that literature is inseparable from the ways in which such a reading constructs an Africa for consumption. Given our increased attention to globalization, we might want to step back and try to understand how we as readers construct “Africa” as our neighbor in a global community. We also need to consider how post-independence Anglophone African literature challenges ethnocentric and phallogocentric constructions of Africa and African literature imposed by a metropolitan readership. In these pages, I interrogate the ways in which public discourse shapes the contours of canonical Anglophone African literature and how that canon shapes and is shaped by our understanding of “Africa.”

I have chosen to focus here on Coetzee's 1999 novel *Disgrace*, which won the Man Booker Prize and whose publication preceded his Nobel Prize, because it continues to receive the largest share of international critical attention of all his works. Since the end of the twentieth century, Coetzee has been broadly heralded as *the* Anglophone African writer, and this pinnacle novel is widely considered to offer a new paradigm for conceptualizing justice in post apartheid South Africa. *Disgrace* represents interracial rape and prostitution as a metaphor for the social trauma of colonialism. I will argue that the popular reading of the white woman working against the colonial lynching narrative reinforces white privilege under the guise of progressive politics. I interrogate the novel's representations of interracial sexual exploitation and response through the interrelated lenses of trauma and social justice theories, reading against the grain of the popular interpretation to better illuminate its complications. Postcolonial and trauma studies thus coalesce in the figure of the metropolitan reader as a potential witness to Anglophone African testimonial narratives. Ultimately, I suggest that international reading practice marshals the power for social repression or transformation in its designation of the progenitors of Anglophone "African Literature." I analyze the ways in which public discourse enshrines a particular reading of *Disgrace* which reinforces colonialist representations of "Africa" and black Africans as victims devoid of the resources to shape their own postcolonial identities. I offer an alternative reading of the novel that resuscitates and complicates fraught and repressed textual testimonies in order to illuminate traumatic narrative as more than a litany of abuse, but also a catalyst for progressive social transformation.

For two decades, literary and popular critics have hailed Coetzee as one of South Africa's most important writers who, along with other "best-known" white South African writers like André Brink and Nadine Gordimer, forges "'new' departures in South African writing" (Dodd 327).¹ In particular, Coetzee is lauded for "subversively" rewriting not only the South African political novel "but also the discursive and ideological codes which make a liberal subject position tenable in the first place" (Bethlehem 20).² Coetzee's poststructuralist orientation begs an understanding of Coetzee as a linguist first, suggests David Attwell, which means that Coetzee's writing "is a primary, constitutive element of consciousness and of culture at large" (*Coetzee* 10).³ In Attwell's words, Coetzee's more recent discomfiting fictional engagements with the constructedness of violence and justice are harbingers of the way that an emerging post apartheid South Africa articulates its culture. Coetzee's work has garnered copious critical praise for suggesting an "ethical engagement with history," and particularly with the troubled history of apartheid (Marais, "Little" 159), as well as some feminist concern for his misogynistic "textual production of 'woman'" (Dodd 327).⁴ Nevertheless, whether in the form of praise or critique, and critical attention to Coetzee weighs more heavily toward the former, Coetzee's work and *Disgrace* in particular has generated an impressive body of scholarship. Coetzee's impressive string of international literary prizes began in 1977 with South Africa's premiere literary honor, the Central News Agency Literary Award for *In the Heart of the Country*, and culminated in 2003 with his selection for the world's top literary recognition, the Nobel Prize in Literature.⁵ In his Nobel Award presentation speech, Per Wästberg of the Swedish Academy called Coetzee "a

Truth and Reconciliation Commission on your own” (“Work”).⁶ *Disgrace* has also won England’s top literary honor, the Man Booker Prize, making Coetzee the award’s first multiple recipient.⁷ Possibly the most prestigious literary award given for a single work, the Man Booker Prize’s value to the writer extends far beyond its £50,000 check.⁸ The Man Booker Prize Foundation acknowledges its “power to transform the fortunes of authors, and even publishers. . . . Both the winner and the shortlisted [sic] authors are guaranteed a worldwide readership plus a dramatic increase in book sales” (*Man Booker*). And, indeed, the sheer prestige of the prize guarantees the winner’s inclusion in the West’s bestseller lists, university literature syllabi and, in many cases (e.g., as with former winners Gordimer and Salman Rushdie), inclusion in the world literature canon. Despite its international power to launch and bolster literary careers, The Man Booker Prize caters to an elite cadre of writers because only citizens of the British Commonwealth are eligible for consideration for the award.

As a feminist and an Africanist residing and working in the metropole, my interest in *Disgrace* stems from my recognition that politics surround any act of representation. Spivak examines an ethics of representation, specifically the communication that either takes place or does not because of absences—of telling, of understanding and, therefore, of knowledge. For Spivak most, if not all, of the theoretical questions we explore in the humanities are underpinned by the question of knowledge. Who creates it? Who records it? Who disseminates it? And underlying these questions about the production and dissemination of knowledge are more questions, primarily of modus operandi and motive. How and why is knowledge

created? How and why is it recorded? How and why is it disseminated? This chapter will interrogate the complicated global network of representations created, recorded, and disseminated by the metropolitan literary establishment through its embrace of *Disgrace*. I will also examine the politics surrounding this embrace. I find that even as *Disgrace* is widely held to articulate a new, even ethical, vision for post apartheid South Africa, this reading of the novel in fact reinforces colonial structures of racism and sexism.

Set in post apartheid South Africa, *Disgrace* is a material artifact of the postcolonial condition that represents interracial prostitution and rape as the most outrageous illustration of power imbalance. In the novel, rape functions metonymically rather than metaphorically for the social trauma inflicted in Africa by colonialism. Eileen Julien finds that rape functions similarly in Francophone African literature:

not an aberration, not a singularly sick act, nor an individual problem in an otherwise healthy society. . . . [Rape] is portrayed rather, as the French term *viol* makes clear, *metonymically*, as a *quintessential* act of violence in a context of rampant abuse, both political and sexual. (161, emphasis in original).

The French term *viol* means mutilation, rape, or violation, and *Disgrace* opens by establishing postcolonial South Africa as a space in which sexual exploitation and violence have become normalized to the point of representing an agreeable solution to the protagonist David Lurie's "problem of sex" (1).

The novel's protagonist and narrator is David, an urban white South African college professor beyond his sexual prime. *Disgrace* opens with David's representation of Soraya, a prostitute whom the text suggests to be Indian by its

descriptions of “her honey-brown body, unmarked by the sun” (1). David tells the reader that “Soraya is tall and slim, with long black hair and dark, liquid eyes” (1), and he is her weekly client. David eventually invades Soraya’s personal life and she rebuffs him, severing all contact. Soon after, David quits his job over a sexual harassment complaint for raping his student Melanie whom the novel represents as racially ambiguous. Fleeing scandal, David retreats to his daughter Lucy’s rural farm. Almost immediately, three black men attack and imprison David, burgle the house, and rape Lucy. Although she is markedly wounded by the incident, Lucy at first neither confirms nor denies David’s suspicion of rape and repeatedly refuses to report that aspect of their ordeal to the police. David lives with Lucy for most of the second half of the novel, frequently berating the increasingly withdrawn Lucy to report the rape and leave the farm. Instead, she remains on the farm and negotiates a “marriage” with her black neighbor and business partner Petrus: his protection from further sexual assault in exchange for her land. While Lucy’s rape is the novel’s narrative climax and focus of its denouement, Melanie and Soraya are quickly written out of the text when they refuse David’s sexual invasions early in the narrative.

In a popular reading of the novel, Lucy refuses to report her rape to the authorities in order to stunt the reach of a suspect juridical institution. Louise Bethlehem and Georgina Horrell capture the brutality of this inscription of justice on the female body most effectively. Bethlehem observes that in *Disgrace* “it is rape which ushers in the ‘New World’” (21). Horrell similarly argues that “it is on and through the body of Lurie’s daughter that the terms for white South Africa’s future ‘remembering’ are ultimately sketched” (25).⁹ While neither Bethlehem nor Horrell

condone the violent abuse of a woman's body as the terms for national transformation, they and the majority of gender critics who examine *Disgrace* focus on Lucy's abuse to the exclusion of Soraya's and Melanie's. Ignoring the brown or black women in the text elides their sexual exploitation and ignores their disappearances.

In the novel, Lucy's refusal to testify opposes David's proposal to report the rape to the authorities who will, in turn, punish the rapists. Because the novel represents David as the consummate colonizer, Lucy's solution in opposition to his appears to be an anti-colonial critique. The narrative represents Lucy in such total misalignment with David that one might be tempted to read her refusal to narrate her rape story as inhabiting a third space outside David's binary worldview. One might view Lucy's refusal as operating on a trajectory not in opposition to David's, but as instead articulating a radical alternative from the margin. This reading, to which I will return later, argues that *Disgrace* suggests a radical new form of social justice in post apartheid South Africa.

As testament to the power of organizations like academe, the Swedish Academy, and the Man Booker Foundation to shape the contemporary literary canon, the press has promoted the popular reading of *Disgrace* and discredited criticism, particularly post-Booker and post-Nobel. The most notable dismissal was of the African National Congress (ANC)'s censure of the novel during the South African Human Rights Commission (SAHRC)'s hearings on racism in the media in 2000.¹⁰ The ANC issued the following statement:

In the novel . . . it is suggested that our white compatriots should emigrate because to be in post-apartheid South Africa is to be in 'their territory,' as a consequence of which the whites will lose their cards, their weapons, their property, their rights, their dignity. (qtd. in Bridgland)¹¹

Nadine Gordimer and Chris van Wyk, both South African writers, also criticized the novel. Gordimer argued that "there is not one black person who is a real human being" in *Disgrace*, and van Wyk called the book "racist" (Donadio 1).¹² The South African press dismissed the ANC's statement as unfounded and two British papers cast the ANC as a bully.¹³ The controversy surrounding the novel's release documents the politicized tensions surrounding race and representation in post-apartheid South Africa. At the moment of *Disgrace*'s ascendancy to canonical status, what was at stake in South Africa was the way we should read African literature and what to recognize *as* African literature.

* * *

Disgrace critiques David's colonial ideology of normativity by representing his worldview in racial, gender, and moral binaries. For David, to respond to the rape of his daughter is to choose one of two diametrically opposed options, e.g., to either report the rape or not, which is to either seek punishment of the perpetrator or not. If David is positioned as the consummate colonizer, then his desire for punishment of the perpetrator is positioned as merely the first step toward repair of his damaged patriarchal status. Victim testimony in *Disgrace* is bound up in David's vengeful lynching impulse and is thus recast as worthy of colonial critique. Lucy's refusal to testify, because it opposes David's proposal, is privileged in the novel as the ethically superior response to rape. Further, Lucy's refusal to seek punishment of her rapists is

represented as non-normative. Lucy's refusal to testify also works against the patriarchal rape narrative in which the victim publicly tells her rape story so that the community can punish her attacker for its own self-protection. In a racialized culture, where the rape narrative has the potential to transform into the lynch narrative, Lucy's refusal subverts both narratives. The novel casts Lucy's subversion of these two narratives as decidedly non-normative, radically marginal. Because it disrupts racialized police justice, Lucy's response is also frequently read as potentially political.

If, as I suggested earlier, we read Lucy's refusal to testify as positioned in opposition not to the father's desire for testimony but in opposition to David's binary view of vengeance versus inaction, then we may be tempted to read Lucy's silence as a "slippage of categories" from the patriarchal juridical binary into what Bhabha calls the Third Space of articulation, from which Lucy articulates a new path to justice in South Africa—the path of protection for the black perpetrator (140). As Bhabha describes it:

The intervention of the Third Space of enunciation, which makes the structure of meaning and reference an ambivalent process, destroys this mirror of representation in which cultural knowledge is customarily revealed as an integrated, open, expanding code. Such an intervention quite properly challenges our sense of the historical identity of culture as a homogenizing, unifying force, authenticated by the originary Past, kept alive in the national tradition of the People.
(37)

Construction of the Third Space is both outside binaries and also necessarily repetitive. If the space remains constant, then it becomes normative and thus part of the binary. I suspect that misapplication of Bhabha's theory, whether intentional or

not, is at the heart of readings that assign a radical politicism to Lucy's silence. The fundamental problem with any attempt to position Lucy's silence outside the juridical binary and within a marginal space of articulation between the performative and the pedagogical is that Lucy's silence neither constitutes or slips through a rupture in the cultural script. Nor does it challenge a historically "homogenizing, unifying" culture. On the contrary, Lucy's silence adheres to racist patriarchal rape scripts that are centuries old.

In her analysis of *Rape Stories*, which is a documentary comprised of rape testimonies, Wendy Hesford notes that social relationships among black and white men and women have been scripted by the "politics and historical consciousness of rape" (21). While Hesford's analysis refers to the racialized rape history of slavery and its aftermath in the United States, the notion of racialized and gendered relational scripts is transferable to apartheid-era and post apartheid South Africa. These scripts inscribe whiteness and maleness with privilege which is maintained through the threat of rape (of the white woman by the black man) and by the act of rape (of the black woman by the white man). These relational hierarchies based on rape inform and complicate the potentiality for sisterhood between black and white women,¹⁴ and also foreground the white woman's power over the black man by either unleashing violence against him with her accusation or protecting him with her silence. Lucy's silent response to her rape by black men is more complicated than a simple conviction that hers is not a public narrative but a "purely private matter . . . in this place, at this time" (112). It is also more complex than a desire to protect black criminals from a racist, corrupt judicial system. Instead, Lucy's silence invokes her power to decide

the fate of the black men by either signaling the conclusion of the lynching narrative or granting them life. One could read Lucy's silence as a melancholic attachment to the lost object of white supremacy in South Africa.

Lynn Higgins and Brenda Silver argue that the aesthetics of rape is its politics. *Disgrace* represents sexual exploitation in ways that are framed by and based on racialized constructions of rape, sexual exploitation, and justice. While the typical rape model in a patriarchy involves a male aggressor and a female victim, in a patriarchal reality the majority of aggressors are also white and the majority of victims are black or brown. The novel dismisses rape reality and privileges the centuries-old myth of black men raping white women.¹⁵

Disgrace's representations of sexual violence and responses to it are gendered and racialized by the sex and race of the rape victims versus that of the attackers, and also by the sex and race of the rape victims versus that of the narrator. David is a key participant and interested party in every sexual violence or exploitation scenario in the novel: he is Soraya's "john," Melanie's rapist, and Lucy's father. From his complicated subject position, David is at best an unreliable narrator. At worst he is a liar. "Rapist narrative" shows the relationship between words and actions—to Hesford, rape is "both a material and discursive site of struggle for cultural power" (19). *Disgrace* both narrates rape and employs a rapist narrator—and thus can only offer a skewed representation of rape as a racialized and gendered struggle for cultural power. The narrative itself is David's struggle to retain his own cultural power which the fall of apartheid has stolen it from him. "*Du must dein Leben ändern!*: you must change your life," he thinks when he learns that Lucy plans to

marry Petrus rather than flee to Holland as he wishes. But, he realizes, while “Lucy may be able to bend to the tempest; he cannot, not with honour” (209). The novel’s mixed reception represents another level of the cultural power struggle over the global representation of “postcolonial Africa.”

Julie Mertus writes that if power holders define crimes, then sexual exploitation and rape are defined according to the agendas of those in power.¹⁶ History is written by the victor who decides which narratives to privilege and which to suppress. Higgins and Silver write: “Whether in the courts or the media, whether in art or criticism, who gets to tell the story and whose story counts as ‘truth’ determine the definition of what rape *is*” (1, emphasis in original). As narrator and the holder and embodiment of textual power, David determines what is and is not sexual violence and exploitation in *Disgrace*. He authors the history of colonialism in his representation of postcolonial South Africa. In David’s narrative history, not all sexual violence and exploitation is represented as such. Perhaps even more than his position as the white father, David’s narrative authority on such matters of definition is strengthened by his own experience as a sexual predator. First, his narration renders the major incidents of sexual violence and exploitation to which he is party interracial. Then he uses the racialized colonial paradigm to re-classify each incident as either exploitative or not.

Disgrace quickly establishes David’s attitude toward non-white women as merely providers of a necessary service (sex), not exploitation, through his arrangement with Soraya. We presume that David prefers to be sexually serviced by brown or black women because he chose Soraya from the “exotic” list in the escort

service directory (7). David's frame of his economic relationship with Soraya as a clean, predictable, high-priced, weekly "escort" meeting rather than as street prostitution undermines the possibility of characterizing it as sexual exploitation. David even goes so far as to fantasize that Soraya chose this career for its convenience and financial reward rather than out of circumstance. He muses at one point, "It may be that she is not a professional at all. She may work for the agency only one or two afternoons a week, and for the rest live a respectable life in the suburbs" (3). Further, David imagines that Soraya shares a mutual "affection" with him (2), which suggests that she has sexual intercourse with him voluntarily. This fantasy obscures the fundamental power imbalance in their relationship based on race, gender, and class. Thus, while David represents his regular interracial sexual exploitation and eventual stalking of Soraya as culturally sanctioned and mutually enjoyed activities, the only kind of sexual relationship a black man can have with a white woman in this text is the worst kind of sexual violence: gang rape.

David frames the interaction between himself as white professor and his racially ambiguous student Melanie as "not rape," but merely "an impulse" (25, 53). In an attempt to erase the patina of violation from their coupling in a racialized social context, he races Melanie increasingly non-white throughout the narrative. First, he inscribes her with Asian exoticism, noting her "close-cropped black hair, wide, almost Chinese cheekbones, large, dark eyes" and, later, he Africanizes her fully by referring to her as "Meláni: the dark one" (11, 18). Because David-as-narrator races Melanie non-white, we must read her as non-white. Indeed, while the text never assigns any definitive racial or ethnic classification to Melanie, it does provide a basis

for David's ability to write brownness upon her body and then to later rewrite her as black. During the faculty hearing over Melanie's sexual harassment complaint against David, Dr. Farodia Rassool suggests that "in a case with overtones like this one . . . the wider community is entitled to know . . . what it is specifically that Professor Lurie acknowledges and therefore what it is that he is being censured for" (50). By referring to "overtones like this one," Farodia may imply a racial component to the sexual harassment case in addition to that of "abuse" (53). Yet, while David later entertains various explanations of why his sexual encounters with Melanie are censured, he never acknowledges responsibility for racialized sexual exploitation or rape. Instead, he muses that his "affair with the girl" ended and is censured perhaps for their age difference, the student-teacher power imbalance, and perhaps even his failure "to supply something" to Melanie (42, 171). "I lack the lyrical," he later explains to her father Mr Isaacs (171). Yet, by racing Melanie as he does, David confirms Farodia's concern, re-mapping his rape of Melanie to the colonial paradigm of interracial sexual exploitation. Their teacher/student power imbalance reinforces the master/slave dynamic David has already established as the preferred paradigm for his erotic pursuits. Finally, David's fatherly instinct toward Melanie, whom he calls his dark "child," again reinforces his status as the white father to the raced, gendered, infantilized other (20). Thus, while David entertains the possibility that certain imbalances may have doomed his "affair" with Melanie, he does not represent it as the complex network of patriarchal control it surely is.

Race mediates the response to sexual violence and exploitation in *Disgrace*.

In the novel the question of justice is gendered and racialized across the sexual

exploitation of three women in the form of rape and prostitution, yet in its focus on the rape of the white woman the novel provides meager, if any, response to the sexual exploitation of an Indian woman and the rape of another woman of color by a white man. In focusing on the colonial model, *Disgrace* fails to recognize the sexual exploitation of the black or brown woman *as exploitation*. David denies these women the opportunity to testify their traumatic experiences by erasing them from the text, thereby denying them and the community any potential for recovery or a just response. David assumes no just response is required for his sexual violence against Melanie and Soraya. In the colonial social model, the sexual violation of the brown or black woman by the white man is not violation. David's dismissal of Melanie's rape *as rape* is so complete that he refuses to read her sexual harassment complaint against him during the faculty hearing on the matter. Refusing to defend himself against the charges implies that David denies any basis to them. Any regret David later feels is for his failure to have been a better boyfriend to Melanie, not for attacking her. His narrative perspective obscures Melanie's resistance and rewrites their coupling as consensual. For his exploitation of Soraya, David perceives no censure except the trouble of finding another "exotic" prostitute when she terminates their business arrangement after he invades her private life:

[H]e pays a detective agency to track her down. Within days he has her real name, her address, her telephone number. He telephones at nine in the morning, when the husband and children will be out.

"Soraya?" he says. "This is David. How are you? When can I see you again?"

A long silence before she speaks. "I don't know who you are," she says. "You are harassing me in my own house. I demand you will never phone me here again, never."

Demand. She means *command*. (10, emphasis in original)

David undermines the authority of Soraya's second and final refusal of his invasion by correcting her English. In so doing, he highlights her racial difference to dilute his transgression.

David seeks a repaired scene regarding Lucy which, to him, means removing both the rapists and the raped from the area. He incessantly browbeats Lucy for refusing his solution: "your situation is becoming ridiculous, worse than ridiculous, sinister. I don't know how you can fail to see it. I plead with you, leave the farm before it is too late. It's the only sane thing left to do" (200). To refuse the will of the father, to refuse to restore patriarchal order, is insanity.

Insofar as Coetzee's writing invites difficult questions about the intersections of race, representation, and agency, I propose to read *Disgrace* in the context of these questions, but also to question the way the novel is read. Reading the novel as merely one layer in a cultural context rife with tension suggests Derek Attridge's notion that the text being read "demand[s] a new work in response" (*Singularity* 92)¹⁷ such that the work invites "new ways of reading" and "new ways of writing," rendering any reading of *Disgrace* a new layer on the existing, strifed literary discourse surrounding the text. The novel engages with questions of trauma and social justice in the postcolonial situation. We can engage with its literary representations to illuminate the problems that underlie questions surrounding the implementation of social justice in a postcolonial condition, and the ways in which trauma studies can inform our reading of postcolonial testimonies of colonial trauma in the text—or the absence

thereof. What does the presence or absence of traumatic testimony in a postcolonial text that represents colonial trauma suggest?

Disgrace subscribes to a metropolitan juridical epistemology, but constructed notions of justice are not universally desired or appropriate. In the novel David scoffs at Lucy's protective arrangement with Petrus and instead pushes judicial solutions. In a context in which David represents the cultural minority, his racial privilege allows him to ignore or denigrate indigenous African understandings of justice. Rather than rely exclusively on colonialist models, purveyors of social transformation in post apartheid South Africa must interrogate metropolitan notions of justice and seek responses to interracial sexual exploitation that meet the needs of African as well as European victims and communities. Trauma and justice theories provide a framework for such responses, which are based on victim testimony and productive mourning. The South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) adopted this framework for its own methodology.

Reading *Disgrace* through the interrelated lenses of trauma and social justice theories engages productively with the novel's questions of traumatic sexual violence and the potentiality for a response in a form that can lead to social and individual mourning. Both African and non-African critics with a social justice agenda are currently grappling with theoretical and material implications for initiating socially transformative (i.e., mourning) processes within neocolonial conditions of injustice. Many of these writers including Mertus, Amadiume, Mahmood Mamdani, and Soyinka pay particular attention to gendered and colonial violence. With respect to trauma, Fanon's psychoanalytic work elucidates the psychopathology caused by

colonial violence in Algeria.¹⁸ Finally, as this dissertation argues, much African literature written both prior to and since independence represents and acts as traumatic testimony. Justice and trauma theories therefore help to lay out the problematics associated with exploring the possible forms social mourning might take, if any, in a social context of domination.

Freud defines traumatic neurosis as psychic repetitions or reenactments of a life-threatening accident. Today's discourse of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) is still engaged with the ghost that haunts the trauma sufferer; that ghost is the experience that remains unknowable. Both trauma and social justice studies are concerned with the relationship of the traumatic experience of an individual as representative of and related to the traumatic history of a people, and with the healing implications of testimony (or what the TRC called truth). Like trauma, healing occurs at two levels: the individual and the social. At the social level, healing is referred to as social justice and it seeks to install equity among the members of a community after a conflict that was originated either externally or internally. Equity requires that the needs of both the individual victim(s) and the community be met. Testimony (truth) serves here to identify the crimes committed, their perpetrators, and their victims. Testimony thus allows for reparation to the victims, for social justice in the form of punishing the perpetrators and facilitating reconciliation among the members of the community, and finally for the creation of a traumatic history. Testimony thus functions both juridically (i.e., in proctoring reparation and punishment) and as a means of recuperation (in that its historical narration initiates processes of social and individual mourning). Truth is a prerequisite to reconciliation

or social justice, not an alternative to it. In the case of South Africa, the TRC equates truth with reconciliation, or social justice, and this is not necessarily a like pairing. Truth can exist without reconciliation, and reconciliation can exist without testimony. To achieve social justice, truth is essential, but so is reparation. Soyinka argues that the TRC's failure to incorporate the important element of reparation prevents the possibility of achieving reconciliation through truth alone:

An ingredient is missing in this crucible of harmonization and that ingredient is both material and moral. The moral element is glaring enough, though it is much too nebulous to assess—that element being remorse and, thus repentance. . . . And [the material], I believe, is where the cry for Reparations for a different and more ancient cause suggests itself as the missing link between Truth and Reconciliation. The actual structuring of Reparation is secondary. . . . The essential is to establish the principle: that some measure of restitution is always essential after dispossession. (*Burden* 34, 35-36)¹⁹

The omission of reparation is an omission of accountability, argues Soyinka. And the omission of accountability is particularly egregious in the pursuit of social justice in a postcolonial community like South Africa, in which the former perpetrators must forge a new nation with their former victims. The TRC's provision of amnesty for apartheid perpetrators decriminalizes their past abuses and rewrites the nation's history of traumatic violence in the interest of authoring a new South Africa for the future. The problem with this, argues Soyinka, is that memory (history) has implications for power.

Mamdani argues that if, as Foucault claimed, power relations inform the institutional production of knowledge, then the TRC's limitations on history, criminality, and victimhood (for instance, ignoring the three and a half million

victims of forced removals) produced a particular apartheid truth. This “TRC mindset” attempts to pave the way for future racial harmony by erasing the nation’s racially fraught past (Farred 116).²⁰ The TRC’s selective production of “truth” has implications not only for the future potentiality of achieving social justice through mourning in South Africa, but also for the health of the nation’s relations with the rest of the world. Given Africa’s postcolonial subordination in the world community through dismissive foreign policy, economic colonialism via the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank, and its media and cultural representations, internal South African reconciliation takes on a new importance as a microcosm for global reconciliation. In a traumatized global economy, Soyinka argues that:

Where there has been inequity, especially of a singularly brutalizing kind, of a kind that robs one side of its most fundamental attribute—its humanity—it seems only appropriate that some form of atonement be made, in order to exorcise that past. Reparations, we repeat, serve as a cogent critique of history and thus a potent restraint on its [retraumatizing] repetition. (*Burden* 83)

Moral and material reparation need not be economic, argues Soyinka, but a recording responsibility is the overarching theme of postcolonial traumatic testimony and its aim of social mourning, or justice. Derrida ties mourning and justice to the ethical and the temporal, calling justice a “responsibility” to the ghosts of the past, the unborn of the future, and those that surround us in the present (xix). Metropolitan acknowledgement of colonial abuses, preservation of slavery’s historical sites, and fair trading practices with developing African countries all satisfy the overlapping requirements for truth (testimony), history (memory), and social healing

(reconciliation). Amadiume and An-Na'im emphasize that the definitions of mourning, which they call healing, and social justice vary situationally:

The possibility of social justice as both end and means of healing [mourning] and reconciliation is examined in the light of the fact that conceptions and mechanisms of realizing social justice vary among countries, societies and cultures, and even perhaps gender and class. (6)²¹

Thus, Soyinka requires that reparation should not only “respond to the heroic latitude of the victims by an equally heroic act of remorse” but also be “expressed in some ingenious way” (82) that meets the specific needs of the victims and/or the community.

Trauma sufferers need to testify to responsible witnesses who will hear the event's reality in the name of justice. The potential for mourning lies in the testimony's attempt to reproduce history in order to secure justice. Representation becomes the telling—the narrative—of the injury, which is an imperative precursor for the pursuit of justice. If the victim can name the injury, then she can begin to heal, and the hearer of the traumatic testimony can know how to pursue a just response to it. In addition to initiating justice, testimony is linked to subject (re)formation. Trauma survivors, and in particular of rape, writes Mertus, often see themselves as un-whole and “searching to be whole again” (149). Testimony allows them the opportunity to become subjects again, thereby undoing the power of the violence which has rendered them objects. This premise applies not only to representations of knowledge production within literature, but in the form of literature

itself. In the specific case of *Disgrace*, the first step in the pursuit of justice is rereading the sexual violence back into the text where it has been obscured by David and ignored by some critics. In particular, we need to reread those textual moments in which sexual exploitation has been rewritten for guilt-free consumption, as David rewrites his “affair” with Melanie and his “arrangement” with Soraya.

David’s displacement of sexual violence and exploitation from the text suggests its displacement from the Real, which evokes the notion of a traumatic accident. To describe trauma as emanating from outside one’s experience allows the possibility of anticipating the traumatic accident as distinct from one’s “normal” experience. In fact; however, the reverse is true. The notion of traumatic possibility means that the possibility of a traumatic event always exists, but its timing and occurrence are never certain. Trauma is accidental only because of its unpredictability. The notion of traumatic possibility takes on added significance in the context of interracial rape in the colonial situation. To the colonized and post apartheid black or brown woman, rape is an expected part of her experience, but the act is a surprise each time it occurs for each victim. The traumatic suffering that ensues is caused not by the event itself but by the rupture in “the mind’s experience of time” (Caruth 61): the threat is recognized a moment too late.

Within traumatic experience lies both the threat of death at the moment of traumatic injury and the diminished quality of life as a result of the trauma (including repeated traumatic reoccurrences). Trauma imbeds not only destruction but survival—life-threatening events cause traumatic suffering, and so the reaction is not to the event but to the “peculiar and perplexing experience of survival” (Caruth 60).

The traumatic survivor has survived the death threat without knowing death, and so survival means repeatedly grappling with the necessity and impossibility of knowing the threat to life. In *Disgrace*, we see Melanie's symbolic death during her rape and Lucy's description of herself as "dead" in a letter to David after her rape (161).

Surviving a rape means to continually repeat the reemerging back into life.

David thwarts individual and social mourning and justice in three crucial ways: by not representing the sexual exploitation of all women as traumatic; by ignoring the importance of individual trauma in the traumatic history of a colonized people; and by prohibiting traumatic testimony, the prerequisite to justice and healing. As narrator, David instead mediates representations of sexual exploitation through racist colonial stereotypes of the sexually lascivious brown or black woman and the desexualized white woman. For example, he describes Melanie as perhaps acquiescing too easily during his attack, allowing some critics to read the incident, as David does, as merely "intercourse" or "seduction" (Bethlehem 21; Marais, "Little" 173).²² As narrator, David never considers that Melanie's and Soraya's conquests are more than likely fueled by gendered, racialized, economic (and, in Melanie's case, authoritative) power relationships rather than by mutual affection. Victim complicity in these cases serves not only the hegemony by validating racist scripts; it also serves the victim because it saves her life: in the case of rape, to choose life often involves choosing rape over death. The rapist David believes the victim's complicity because it follows the cultural script which is, in this case, the sexual availability of the black or brown woman to the white man.²³

In contrast to Soraya and Melanie, the white woman Lucy is represented as the epitome of nonsexual: David suspects that she is a celibate lesbian. Lucy's relationship to David as his daughter notwithstanding, as narrator he represents her as strange and uninteresting. This because Lucy is sexually unappealing to David, who measures female worth in terms of sexual desirability. Even in a sexualized context, as when David and Petrus's brother in law Pollux view her exposed breasts, Lucy is never represented as a sexual being. The sexual context always serves some other purpose; as when in this scene it reinforces David's view of Pollux as a sexual predator.

In another racialized contrast, David graphically displays the black or brown woman sexually splayed across the text for the reader's pleasure while shielding the sexuality of the white woman from the reader's view even after her violation. David describes his rape of Melanie in titillating detail, displaying his exploitation of the brown woman to his readers like some broken, exotic prize. Melanie's rape takes place at her apartment, into which David "thrusts himself" with "words heavy as clubs" (24, 25). His entries into the apartment and into Melanie's life are as violent as his entry into her body. David describes Melanie during the rape as dead, "as though she had decided to go slack, die within herself for the duration" (25). She is not only lifeless, but disembodied as "her limbs crumple like a marionette's" (24). Finally, Melanie is dehumanized "like a rabbit when the jaws of a fox close on its neck" (25). Re-raced, displayed, disembodied, dehumanized, and lifeless, Melanie is fully dismissed during her own rape. Indeed, it is possible to read this scene as a suggestion that David is guilty of more than rape and denial, but of symbolic murder

as well. Melanie is next seen in the novel ten pages later no less disembodied: a helmeted “figure in black,” a passenger on a motorcycle (35). David describes even her exit from the text in aggressively sexual terms: “Melanie, on the pillion, sits with knees wide apart, pelvis arched” (35) in a reenactment of the sex act—astride a throbbing phallic hog with her thighs encasing her lover’s hips. She never speaks again. We see her once more, onstage from twenty rows back near the end of the novel, acting in a play. No longer subject, she is now purely an object of David’s sexual fantasy of control: “If, for instance, those absurd clothes were to burn off her body in a cold, private flame and she were to stand before him, in a revelation secret to him alone, as naked and as perfect as on that last night in Lucy’s old room” (191), he muses, then perhaps he could own her again.

Unlike his limited experience with Melanie, David’s sexual exploitation of Soraya in a rented room is so regular that he describes merely an amalgam of their many encounters. Unlike his representations of his couplings with Melanie or his experience of the attack at Lucy’s farm, David describes his sexual encounters with Soraya as expected, clean, and uncomplicated:

On Thursday afternoons he drives to Green Point. Punctually at two p.m. he presses the buzzer at the entrance to Windsor Mansions, speaks his name, and enters. Waiting for him at the door of No. 113 is Soraya. He goes straight through to the bedroom, which is pleasant-smelling and softly lit, and undresses. Soraya emerges from the bathroom, drops her robe, slides into bed beside him. “Have you missed me?” she asks. “I miss you all the time,” he replies. He strokes her honey-brown body, unmarked by the sun; he stretches her out, kisses her breasts; they make love. (1)

This scene opens the novel. David presents his arrangement with Soraya as the successful solution for one of life's chores—sex—almost as if he had opened his narrative with the declaration that he has found an excellent housekeeper. Indeed, his evaluation of Soraya could apply to either a prostitute or a housekeeper—to any provider of a regular service: “he has been on her books for over a year; he finds her entirely satisfactory” (1).

In contrast to these representations, David narrates the rape of the white daughter Lucy as offstage. The reader is locked in the bathroom with David and we are denied any but a few details regarding her attack or its ramifications. Much later, we learn that Lucy is pregnant and intends to parent the baby. Interestingly, Lucy's rape is positioned as the novel's narrative climax and is framed and discussed *as violation* repeatedly during the entire second half of the text. Lucy's rape, however, represents a climax not only because it is the most transgressive sexual exchange (indeed it is the only sexual transgression, in David's view) and therefore the most noteworthy, but its transgression is multiplied by its violation of not only white authority but also of patriarchal norms of racial homogeneity, sexual monogamy, and heterosexuality. If Lucy's rape is transgressive because her attacker is black, then the violation is compounded by the fact that her attacker is also more than one in number. Notwithstanding the fact that the repertoire of accepted colonial sexual exploitation includes all of these “transgressions,” David's narration during the second half of the novel repeatedly reflects his reaction to the transgressive multiplicity of Lucy's violation as urgently requiring a juridical response.

Yet while David enacts the colonial impulse to protect the white woman's sexual integrity and therefore frames Lucy's rape as a violation, *Disgrace* also offers the sexual exploitation of the white woman as repair for colonialism in a perversion of biblical law's "an eye for an eye" solution to injury. This is Lucy's response to her rape, and its viability as an alternative response relies on the reader's acceptance of the twin colonial myths of the black male sexual predator of white women and the black Africans' desire to invert the apartheid hegemony and vengefully dominate whites. The difference between David's and Lucy's responses to her rape is in their framing of it as respectively warranting repair and as repair itself.

The novel's representations of perpetrators of sexual exploitation also require interrogation. Not surprisingly, David frames himself not as a rapist but as a wronged father. In fact, the reader can easily forget (indeed, if he ever considered) that David is a sexual predator. The other sexual perpetrators in the novel; however, are framed only as sexual perpetrators. Lucy's refusal to discuss her rape or the rapists robs those black men of any identity other than that of black rapist. In fact, we cannot even refer to these men as anything but as black and/or as rapists. As narrator, David does not allow Lucy to provide us with any other descriptors. Because they are described only in terms of their blackness and by the fact that they "*do rape*" (158, emphasis in original), the rapists are dehumanized, merely examples of the colonial stereotype of black men as animalistic sexual predators. Indeed, David does refer to them as animals, as both the injury and the response he seeks are clearly racialized. "You filthy swine!" he later calls Pollux (206). Further, with the exception of Pollux who "was there to learn" (159) and may not have actually raped Lucy, the black

rapists disappear from the text immediately after their transgression against the narrator's white daughter. Pollux reappears several times, but he is represented as mentally deficient and violently unreadable, even animal-like. "I don't trust him," David tells Lucy. "He is shifty. He is like a jackal sniffing around, looking for mischief. In the old days we had a word for people like him. Deficient. Mentally deficient. Morally deficient. He should be in an institution" (208). David thus recasts Pollux as the mythic animalistic black male sexual predator who should be confined, the only identity the black man can assume in order to continue inhabiting this text.

In characterizations like this one, David fails to recognize the importance of individual trauma in the traumatic history of a colonized people. Freud's understanding of survival is that the individual's trauma and survival engenders a history of trauma and survival of a larger group, even of multiple generations. The trauma of rape takes on a communal proportion that becomes the traumatic history of a formerly colonized people. If, as Caruth writes, "the formation of history" is "the endless repetition of previous violence" (63), then history both binds and implicates us in "each other's traumas" (24). In *Disgrace*, Farodia implicates David in apartheid's history of repeated interracial sexual violence during the hearing on Melanie's complaint. In fact, Farodia argues that the hearing itself is a series of repetitions, a smaller situational replay of the larger historical one. She notes:

We are again going round in circles, Mr Chair. Yes, he says, he is guilty; but when we try to get specificity, all of a sudden it is not abuse of a young woman he is confessing to, just an impulse he could not

resist, with no mention of the pain he has caused, no mention of *the long history of exploitation of which this is part*. (53, emphasis added)

Sadly, this moment of clarity is lost in the larger agenda of the meeting, which is devoted to establishing David's level of sincerity in his apology rather than his guilt or innocence, or even his or the university's ethical obligation to Melanie and her recovery from rape trauma. Farodia's assertion invokes the notion that in a colonial culture, to survive rape is to face the potential of being raped again so that survival takes on subversive qualities for the colonized black or brown woman. Survival begets the desire for justice—for resistance—in a condition in which sexual violence is the norm. Farodia rejects David's impulse to place his "impulse" outside Melanie's normal experience by reinforcing the presence of the threat of sexual violation in the brown woman's postcolonial condition as a constant possibility. Farodia's testimonial voice in the text, like Melanie's, is quickly silenced.

In this and other ways, David as narrator silences testimony. Indeed, to paraphrase Spivak, stalling (and forestalling) of the victim's testimony *is* the story of *Disgrace*.²⁴ Much of what is telling about the telling—or not telling—of sexual violence and exploitation narratives in the novel is their placement either partially or wholly in the margins of the text. In some cases they are relegated to margins outside of the text. The text's obscuration of Lucy's rape from the reader's view, and of sexual violence against brown women represented otherwise in the text, leaves behind what Higgins and Silver call:

a conspicuous absence: a configuration where sexual violence against women is an origin of social relations and narratives in which the event

itself is subsequently elided. . . . Rape exists as an absence or gap that is both product and source of textual anxiety, contradiction, or censorship. (3)

Silence has implications for justice and healing: it prohibits both.

He who controls the narrative controls the potential for trauma recovery and the concurrent pursuit of justice. *Disgrace* is a collection of informational failures or absences controlled and mediated by its narrator David. For all his caterwauling about Lucy's failure to testify to the police, David is just as invested in silence as she is. Banishment from the text prevents Soraya and Melanie from giving testimony to their exploitations and thus initiating judicial processes against him. David briefly presumes Soraya has left the city, but we hear nothing directly from Melanie and Soraya after they reject his sexual invasions. Rather than allowing their traumas to haunt him—these traumatized women haunt the margins of the text instead.

While the white victim stays in the text, but she is also silenced. Although discussion of her rape reoccurs periodically throughout the second half of the novel, we receive little direct testimony of Lucy's ordeal. Immediately after the rape, she tells David: "You tell what happened to you, I'll tell what happened to me" (99), indicating that she will not report the rape to the police. In the next few weeks, while she does acknowledge the rape to David, it is only in abstract terms and she still leaves certain details unspoken. For instance, she says her youngest assailant "was there to learn" (159) but does not clarify whether he raped her as well or merely watched the others do so. In the remainder of the novel, Lucy does little more than remind us repeatedly that she is withholding information. She is frustratingly reticent about the details of her rape, leaving both David and the reader in troubling silence.

The story Lucy eventually must report is one that the body will out—her pregnancy. Thus, the only testimony Lucy will offer, her child’s body at birth, will occur off stage, after the novel’s conclusion. In the end David as narrator, not a politically empowered Lucy, stalls the rape narrative.

The popular reading of *Disgrace* views Lucy’s silence as a political refusal to testify. This reading ignores the counter-narrative of Soraya’s and Melanie’s inabilities to refuse or choose to testify. The reader is not told whether Soraya reports to her employer or Melanie to her father and the university. Any testimonies these women may or may not offer take place off stage, and thus are not witnessed by the reader. In contrast, Lucy’s refusal to testify occupies center stage and renders the reader, and David as houseguest and patriarchal protector, her captive witnesses to a testimony never delivered. It is important to clarify that Lucy’s refusal to name the rape publicly does not in fact render it nonexistent to her. It is, however, nonexistent to the public prior to the baby’s birth. While Lucy’s response to the rape is silence, and while she may consider that response to be just, if she does not narrate her trauma, then she can not begin the work of living productively after the fact. Further, in the juridical sense, if no injury is named publicly then no public and/or punitive response to it can occur. In some ways, Lucy’s silence is the opposite of punishment because it seeks no repair from the perpetrator in response to the injury. While it is true that refusing to narrate her injury may protect Lucy from further injury (i.e., retraumatization), victim silence also protects the perpetrator who remains free to injure others. Particularly if Lucy’s suspicion that her attackers are “rapists first and foremost” is true (158), then if she takes no action to hinder their mobility in the

district they will likely rape other women too. If the rapists are allowed to continue to “do rape” to other women (158, emphasis in original), then Lucy’s silence is destructive to herself and the community, not benevolent. Hesford and Wendy Kozol find that violation of the survivor (or witness) is necessary to expose the crime—both must live through the trauma all over again via testimony in order to initiate healing for the survivor and a witness response in the name of justice. While silence may prevent repeated trauma to the survivor, Lucy’s silence, no matter how potentially radical, prevents working through. This retards the potential for her own healing of trauma and justice to occur via testimony.

Disgrace is not about the exploited. Nor is it about responding to the victim of gendered and racialized violence. We know little about Melanie, Soraya, and Lucy beyond the (a)sexual and, because the novel is told from David’s point of view, what we do learn of these women is filtered through his patriarchal gaze. David’s narrative is instead about the exploiter. The reader cannot escape David’s chronic objectification of women or his torturous patriarchal guilt for failing to protect Lucy, and even Melanie as a surrogate daughter-lover. Instead of representing the testimony of the trauma sufferer, David substitutes his testimony: that of the perpetrator. By centering on his own monologue to the exclusion of any substantial testimony from the victims, David-as-narrator prevents the possibility of any form of justice or mourning. David’s patriarchal desire is ultimately to repair the injury not to Lucy, but to his own subject position: robbed of both possessions and means of mobility, and locked up while his white daughter is raped by black men, David suffers a deep blow to his patriarchal self. His desire for repair is for his own ego

trauma, not for Lucy's rape. David's worries about himself and then Lucy far eclipse her own words on the matter. In his musings on the Isaacs' case, his ruminations on the effects of his actions on Mr Isaacs, then on his family, eclipse any consideration of his effect on Melanie. By focusing on how sexual exploitation affects the white father to the near exclusion of its effect on the victim, *Disgrace* represents interracial gendered violence from the point of view of the rapist.

In his reassignment of traumatic testimony to the perpetrator and in his adherence to racialized colonial definitions of gendered violence and justice, this narrator's postcolonial "justice" is white and male. As much as readers may want to ascribe a sense of radicalism to Lucy's silence as an antidote to neocolonial institutional racism, the racialized exploitations of Melanie and Soraya and the conspicuous absence of their testimonies in the text make it impossible for us to ignore their silence as well. In the end, the novel offers no recuperative potential to any of victims of sexual exploitation. The only advantage to testimony in *Disgrace* is its dual benefit to the father. First, securing punishment of his daughter's rapists could assuage his guilt for not having been able to protect her from injury. Second, seeking punishment would render the rape valuable in that it would allow him to reenact the lynching narrative, to punish the black man for raping his white woman. Trauma in *Disgrace* becomes a homosocial transaction of patriarchal maintenance—the daughter's rape becomes about the father and recasts the victim as a "tax" the perpetrator steals from the father (158). In a racial reversal of the colonial lynch narrative, Isaacs threatens David with punishment under the university guidelines and symbolically castrates the teacher by removing him from his post.²⁵ Of course, David

undermines the realization of Isaacs's revenge fantasy by resigning his position, which is already a fairly benign censure for rape relative to that possible through the state's juridical system.

The text portrays Lucy's acceptance of her rape by several black men as her resigned (taxed) defiance against the former apartheid juridical order. The novel suggests that white women's sexual autonomy is the price whites pay to remain in South Africa after the fall of apartheid. But Lucy explains to David that rape is the "tax" *she* has also paid for being an unprotected white woman in South Africa at that moment (158). By trading her sexuality for land use, Lucy ruptures the homosocial exchange between white men and black men by removing her sexuality from the male economy. In so doing, of course, Lucy elides black and brown women from consideration at all. To rewrite Spivak's famous words, one might say that in the novel the white woman saves the white man from the black man and the black man from the white man so that the white man can live in a multi-hued nation.²⁶

Rather than challenging racist and sexist colonial power structures, David's narration reifies them. By representing and promoting the prevention of individual healing or social justice in the aftermath of racialized and gendered exploitation, David, as narrator, reinforces the colonial paradigm of racialized and gendered power that must be dismantled. As the white father, David offers female bodies as commodities. We must recognize that the sale or sacrifice of Soraya and Melanie to the white father reenacts the white colonizer's rape of the black or brown native, in which her sexual integrity is regularly stolen as a condition of oppression. We must notice the textual offering of the white female body as a "tax" (158) paid to black

men and for the reading pleasure of a metropolitan audience. Is David the patriarch attempting to impose order on a racially messy South Africa? If so, then his assumption that Lucy is a desired material payment echoes the colonial myth of the black man lusting after white women. David's sexual sacrifice of women during their exploitation and his relative lack of response to that exploitation simultaneously perpetuate and are offered as repair for the colonial rape of Africa.

I hope my interrogation will help to emphasize the necessity of interrogating the politics surrounding the voice of authority represented in postcolonial Anglophone African literature. As academics we need to expose and foreground the constructed nature of history writing, and seek out the testimony of the oppressed in order to accommodate a multiplicity of truths and to initiate social and individual transformation. We particularly need to engage in this type of exercise when reading texts like *Disgrace* that feature problematic narrators. I hope that my "inventive reading" has exposed a new set of possible questions to ask about the politics of silencing and excavating gendered and racialized trauma and testimony in African literature.

By reading *Disgrace*'s fictional vision of a new, post apartheid South Africa alongside the international discourse of what constitutes Anglophone African literature, I have attempted to demonstrate that the trauma of colonialism persists into the post-independence era. The voices and bodies of black Africans are silenced in *Disgrace*, and I have attempted to illuminate the ways in which reading African literature informs not only our understanding of the literature itself, but of the world, how we construct it, and all of our places in it. If postcolonial literature is a literature

of nation-building, as Bhabha suggests, then when we read postcolonial literature as testimony, we enter a site of social transformation. Post-independence Anglophone African literature depicts the nation in flux. As testimony, it initiates social mourning and thus transformation. As readers, we are transformed by our exposure to traumatic testimony. If we can transform ourselves as readers, we can collectively change the world.

Notes

Chapter 1

¹ Ayi Kwei Armah, *Fragments*, 1970, African Writers Ser., reset ed. (Oxford: Heinemann, 1983). J. M. Coetzee, *Disgrace* (New York: Penguin, 1999). Tsitsi Dangarembga, *Nervous Conditions* (Seattle: Seal, 1989). Nuruddin Farah, *Maps* (New York: Penguin, 2000). Moses Isegawa, *Abyssinian Chronicles* (New York: Vintage, 2001). Meja Mwangi, *Carcase for Hounds* (Nairobi, Kenya: East African Publishing House, 1974). Helen Oyeyemi, *The Icarus Girl* (New York: Talese, 2005). Zoë Wicomb, *David's Story*, 2000, Women Writing Africa Ser. (New York: Feminist P at City U of New York, 2001).

² Geoffrey H. Hartman, "On Traumatic Knowledge and Literary Studies," *New Literary History* 26.3 (1995): 537-63.

³ Étienne Balibar, "Is There a 'Neo-Racism'?" trans. Chris Turner, *Race, Nation, Class: Ambiguous Identities*, by Étienne Balibar and Immanuel Wallerstein (London: Verso, 1991) 17-28.

⁴ Cathy Caruth, *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative and History* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1996).

⁵ Jacques Derrida, *Specters of Marx: The State of the Debt, the Work of Mourning, and the New International*, trans. Peggy Kamuf (London: Routledge, 1994).

⁶ Even as trauma is unspeakable, its presence in the psyche creates a language, or cryptology, as a means of representing the event to the survivor. Traumatic representation can assume various forms that affect the survivor's chances for cure in different ways. Understanding these differences requires an awareness of the concepts of introjection and incorporation as distinct responses to loss. Both are ways to represent the traumatic event to the survivor. Analysts have used the two terms "incorporation" and "introjection" interchangeably because both mechanisms accommodate the suffering ego's inclusion of the object. The reader requires a clear understanding of incorporation's and introjection's differing relationships to language in order to accurately discuss the psychological ramifications of the different ways of representing colonial and neocolonial violence. Maria Torok distinguishes between the two mechanisms, and her analysis is useful for discussing the different ways in which various subjects process the traumatic nature of their racialized situations after independence. The crucial difference between the two mechanisms lies in what, exactly, is taken into the self and the method for doing so. Incorporation is born out of a lack, or loss, and the body or psyche engulfs the object as compensation. The energy of this action is directed inward; it aims toward foreclosing awareness of the object and of loss. Incorporation is the basis of what Freud calls melancholia. Introjection, in contrast, cannot originate in the loss of a love object. Instead, introjection is born out of contact with the object and the ego's relationship with it. Introjection is not an act of engulfing the object, it is instead the ego's accepting all the complexities of its relationship with the object which can enrich and transform the ego through the experiences of contact and acceptance. Introjection functions as an instinct toward growth, not as a decision to compensate, and the energy of this action is directed outward and forward. We can think of introjection as the goal of mourning processes.

Introjection is characterized by inclusion and identification, not by the repression of incorporation. Thus, language and time operate differently for introjection and incorporation. Incorporation is quick and painless, while introjection is a lengthy process fraught with psychic pain. Torok calls the process of incorporation "magical" because it seeks an "instantaneous" solution to the problem of loss ("Illness" 113). The incorporating ego marshals the resources of the self—language, behavior, bodily states, or several of these simultaneously—to support its magical fiction of compensation. Yet, magic disrupts accurate representation and so incorporation is concerned with instant repression or the obstruction of naming. Notwithstanding its opposition to meaning, incorporation thus has a crucial relationship with language. Incorporation masks the repressed object and the fact of its repression in a cryptic language of obscurity. The magic of cryptic representation

is so potent that it masks the loss and its subsequent repression even from the ego. Paradoxically, as much as incorporation attempts to obscure accurate representation of the object and its repression, the fact of its repression is based on accurate and enduring representation. Thus, the encryption of the object obscures the presence of that object in its crypt which is in turn engraved with the markings of the object's internment. Importantly, the inability to represent prohibits cure. As a result of incorporating the traumatic experience, the survivor is haunted by repetitions of it. In contrast to incorporation, introjection is slow enough to allow the formulation of language. The gradual growth of desires allows their eventual validation and naming. Testimony is the language that the sufferer is finally able to produce in an attempt to make sense of the lost experience, the world, and the self. One who identifies the presence of and works through a traumatic experience does so in the language of introjection, which creates the potential for cure.

In this study of traumatic literary representation, the relationship between traumatic experience and language is crucial. My investment in distinguishing between the pathology of incorporation and the potential for cure that characterizes introjection is to provide a vocabulary for discussing the various ways in which colonial and neocolonial violence are represented in post-independence Anglophone African literature. In addition, this distinction also provides a way for talking about how that literature is read. Anne Cheng warns against a simple binary conception of incorporation and introjection as exclusively pathological or curative. She argues that Torok's distinction reinforces this binary and precludes the possibility of a range of responses to trauma that may (or, Cheng suggests, always) embed elements of both health and pathology. Post-independence Anglophone African literature, continuing as it does a mixed literary heritage of both cultural domination and resistance, reflects in its representations both incorporative and introjecting textual relationships to the trauma of colonial and neocolonial violence—often within the same literary work. Wariness of simplistic binaries is a crucial consideration for reading this literature. Anne Anlin Cheng, *The Melancholy of Race: Psychoanalysis, Assimilation, and Hidden Grief*, Race and American Culture (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2001). Maria Torok, "The Illness of Mourning and the Fantasy of the Exquisite Corpse," *The Shell and the Kernel: Renewals of Psychoanalysis*, by Nicolas Abraham and Maria Torok, ed. and trans. Nicholas T. Rand, vol. 1 (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1994) 107-24.

⁷ Ayi Kwei Armah, "Writing as a Profession in Africa: Aspects of Literary Craft in a Time of Permanent Crisis," Drexel University, Philadelphia, 17 Apr. 2003.

⁸ Dangarembga studied medicine in Cambridge for three years beginning in 1977. She also studied psychology at the University of Zimbabwe.

⁹ Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, Trans. Constance Farrington (New York: Grove, 1963).

¹⁰ Uzoma Esonwanne, "The 'Crisis of the Soul': Psychoanalysis and African Literature," *Research in African Literatures* 38.2 (2007): 140-42. Simon Gikandi, "Chinua Achebe and the Invention of African Literature," *Things Fall Apart*, by Chinua Achebe (Oxford: Heinemann, 1996) ix-xvii.

¹¹ Juliana Makuchi Nfah-Abbenyi, *Gender in African Women's Writing: (Re)Constructing Identity, Sexuality, and Difference* (Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1997).

¹² Françoise Vergès, *Monsters and Revolutionaries: Colonial Family Romance and Métissage* (Durham: Duke UP, 1999).

¹³ Bougoul Badji, *La Folie en Afrique: Une rivalité pathologique* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 1993). Rita el Khayat and Alain Goussot, *Psychiatrie, culture et politique* (Casablanca, Morocco: Éditions Aïni Bennaï, n.d.)

¹⁴ Achille Mbembe, *On the Postcolony*, trans. A. M. Berrett, Janet Roitman, Murray Last, and Steven Rendall (Berkeley: U of California P, 2001).

¹⁵ Nicolas Abraham and Maria Torok, *The Shell and the Kernel: Renewals of Psychoanalysis*, ed. and trans. Nicholas T. Rand, vol. 1 (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1994).

¹⁶ Ifi Amadiume and Abdullahi An-Na'im, eds., *The Politics of Memory: Truth, Healing and Social Justice* (London: Zed, 2000).

¹⁷ Embedded in this tradition is the writer's choice of language. At Drexel, Armah answered the language question as other African writers have, which is to say that writing in the colonial languages of English and French reaches the largest reading audiences. Writing in English, Armah says, extends his readership beyond African book-buying and university readers to the same constituencies in Europe and in the United States as well. All of the novels examined in the dissertation were written in English.

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- ¹⁸ Stanley Leavy, *The Psychoanalytic Dialogue* (New Haven: Yale UP, 1987).
- ¹⁹ Susan Z. Andrade, "Influences: *Death of a Discipline* and African Literary Studies," *PMLA* 123.1 (2008): 239-41.
- ²⁰ Dori Laub, "Bearing Witness or the Vicissitudes of Listening," *Testimony: Crises of Witnessing in Literature, Psychoanalysis, and History*, by Shoshana Felman and Dori Laub (New York: Routledge, 1992) 57-74.
- ²¹ Shoshana Felman "Education and Crisis or the Vicissitudes of Teaching," *Testimony: Crises of Witnessing in Literature, Psychoanalysis, and History*, by Shoshana Felman and Dori Laub (New York: Routledge, 1992) 1-56.
- ²² William Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, ed. Barbara A. Mowat and Paul Werstine, The Folger Shakespeare Library ed. (New York: Washington Square, 1992).
- ²³ Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, *A Critique of Postcolonial Reason: Toward a History of the Vanishing Present* (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1999).
- ²⁴ For more on the *testimonio*'s address to the cross-cultural reader, see Doris Sommer, *Proceed with Caution, When Engaged by Minority Writing in the Americas* (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1999). John Beverley addresses the question of subaltern representation in the context of the academic study of subalternity as a practice which often reinforces hierarchical positions. Beverley's examination of the debate surrounding the veracity of Rigoberta Menchú's *testimonio*, *I, Rigoberta Menchú*, begs the question of whether doubts about Menchú's accuracy and honesty are rooted in ethnocentric ranking of written over oral history, and class. The mere existence of a debate exposes the dilemma of reinforcing Menchú's subalternity even as the historiographic study of her work is meant to liberate her and other subalterns from colonial silencing. John Beverley, *Subalternity and Representation: Arguments in Cultural Theory* (Durham: Duke UP, 1999). Rigoberta Menchú, *I, Rigoberta Menchú: An Indian woman in Guatemala*, comp. Elisabeth Burgos-DeBray, trans. Ann Wright (London: Verso, 1987).
- ²⁵ Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (London: Routledge, 1994). Ranjana Khanna, *Dark Continents: Psychoanalysis and Colonialism* (Durham: Duke UP, 2003).
- ²⁶ Loretta Ngcobo, *And They Didn't Die*, Women Writing Africa Ser. (New York: Feminist P at City U of New York, 1999).
- ²⁷ Amma Darko, *Beyond the Horizon*, African Writers Ser. (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 1995).
- ²⁸ Mariama Bâ, *So Long a Letter*, trans. Modupe-Bode-Thomas, African Writers Ser. (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 1989).
- ²⁹ See, for example, Gayl Jones, *Corregidora* (Boston: Beacon, 1987); Jamaica Kincaid, *Annie John* (New York: Farrar, 1983); and Paule Marshall, *Brown Girl, Brownstones*, 2nd ed. (New York: Feminist P at City U of New York, 1981), and *Daughters* (New York: Plume, 1992).
- ³⁰ Toni Morrison, *Beloved* (New York: Penguin, 1987).
- ³¹ These tropes repeat across much contemporary Caribbean literature. Edwidge Danticat, *Breath, Eyes, Memory* (New York: Vintage, 1994).
- ³² Some Francophone African literary scholars, for example, have begun to reject the terms "postcolonial" and "Francophone" to describe their scholarly discourse because its contemporary traumatic concerns no longer center on France and its former occupation. The historical fact of colonial occupation is no longer foregrounded in some North African community discourses and testimonial literatures. Neither, of course, is it forgotten.
- ³³ For further reading on the debate over the politics of using the term "postcolonial," see Valérie Orlando, *Nomadic Voices of Exile: Feminine Identity in Francophone Literature of the Maghreb* (Athens, OH: Ohio UP, 1999); and Ella Shohat and Robert Stam, *Unthinking Eurocentrism: Multiculturalism and the Media* (London: Routledge, 1994).
- ³⁴ A melancholic attachment dooms the sufferer to a future of traumatic repetitions of the event. Sigmund Freud, "Mourning and Melancholia," *On the History of the Psychoanalytic Movement, Papers on Metapsychology, and Other Works*, vol. 14 of *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, trans. and ed. James Strachey (London: Hogarth, 1957) 237-58.
- ³⁵ Fanon discusses Lacan's theory of the mirror stage in *Black Skin, White Masks*. Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, trans. Charles Lam Markmann (New York: Grove, 1967). Lacan, Jacques. *Écrits*:

The First Complete Edition in English, trans. Bruce Fink, Héloïse Fink, and Russell Grigg (New York: Norton, 1996).

³⁶ David L. Eng and David Kazanjian, "Mourning Remains," introduction, *Loss: the Politics of Mourning*, ed. David L. Eng and David Kazanjian, (Berkeley: U of California P, 2003) 1-25.

³⁷ Nicholas T. Rand, "Renewals of Psychoanalysis," introduction, *The Shell and the Kernel: Renewals of Psychoanalysis*, by Nicolas Abraham and Maria Torok, ed. and trans. Nicholas T. Rand, vol. 1 (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1994) 1-22.

³⁸ Ayi Kwei Armah, "Larsony, or Fiction as Criticism of Fiction." *New Classic* 4 (1977): 33-45.

³⁹ This refusal to conform to disciplinary boundaries established by modernity's fathers demonstrates what V. Y. Mudimbe refers to as the Africanist appropriation of power in the self-creation of ways of knowing, or *gnosis*, which infiltrates the colonial apparatus of knowledge about Africa. Mudimbe's work both acknowledges and appropriates Foucault's notion of the ordering of knowledge systems. V. Y. Mudimbe, *The Invention of Africa: Gnosis, Philosophy, and the Order of Knowledge*, African Systems of Thought (Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1988). Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences* (New York: Vintage, 1994).

⁴⁰ Defining an African literary work as a "novel" calls to mind the violent collision of African and Western literary traditions that took place in the colony's mission school classrooms. Kwame Anthony Appiah, Chinweizu, Onwuchekwa Jemie, Ihechukwu Madubiuke, Neil Lazarus, and Wole Soyinka all grapple with questions of defining "African" literature by Africanist literary standards rather than by Eurocentric ones, an argument that begs the question of how to define Africanist literary standards after four hundred years of cultural genocide. Chinweizu and Joanna Sullivan argue that the contemporary African novel is not a mere hybridization of indigenous and imperial artistic traditions because it often rejects Western literary practices in favor of indigenous ones or, when it does incorporate them, it does so in ways that signal its rebellious appropriation. Recent Africanist scholarship has recognized that the contemporary African novel genre bears only slight resemblance to the Western notion of "novel" and that African novels "took from the West only the very idea of the novel . . . but not its concrete forms" (Nikiforova 425). Kwame Anthony Appiah, *In My Father's House: Africa in the Philosophy of Culture* (New York: Oxford UP, 1992). Chinweizu, Onwuchekwa Jemie, and Ihechukwu Madubiuke, *Toward the Decolonization of African Literature*, vol. 1 (Washington, DC: Howard UP, 1983). Neil Lazarus, *Resistance in Postcolonial African Fiction*, (New Haven: Yale UP, 1990). Wole Soyinka, *Myth, Literature and the African World* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1976). Irina Nikiforova, "The Development and Distinctive Features of Forms of the Novel in African Literature," *Research in African Literatures* 18.4 (1987): 422-33. Joanna Sullivan, "Redefining the Novel in Africa," *Research in African Literatures* 37.4 (2006): 177-88.

⁴¹ While repression fixes the subject in time, space, and personhood, the positionality of dislocation and marginalization assumes movement. Carole Boyce Davies, *Black Women, Writing and Identity: Migrations of the Subject* (New York: Routledge, 1994).

⁴² "Feminism" is a fraught term and discourse in the global community. M. J. Daymond and Trinh T. Minh-ha elucidate the notion that as much as a "universal" feminism almost always means middle-class, white, Euro-American women's concerns, appending terms like "of color" and "Third World" to "women" or "feminists" as a corrective measure is just as bisecting and hierarchical as appending "wo" to the root "man." Black feminists have addressed at length the importance of examining the ways in race and class inflect feminist concerns. More recently, Oyèrónké Oyèwùmí and others have theorized the place of African feminisms in the global feminist, women's studies, and gender studies communities. M. J. Daymond, introduction, *South African Feminisms: Writing, Theory, and Criticism, 1990-1994*, ed. M. J. Daymond (New York: Garland, 1996) xiii-xliii. Trinh T. Minh-ha, *Woman, Native, Other: Writing Postcoloniality and Feminism* (Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1989). Oyèrónké Oyèwùmí, ed. *African Women and Feminism: Reflecting on the Politics of Sisterhood* (Trenton: Africa World P, 2003).

⁴³ See the previous note. Also, Rosalyn Terborg-Penn and Andrea Benton Rushing destroy the Euro-American feminist mythology of African women as merely objectified victims of patriarchal societies across history and the continent. Oyèwùmí and Amadiume demonstrate that power and gender were tied not to the body in many pre-colonial African communities but to other factors such as age and social status. Rosalyn Terborg-Penn and Andrea Benton Rushing, eds. *Women in Africa and the African Diaspora: a Reader*, 2nd ed. (Washington, DC: Howard UP, 1996). Ifi Amadiume, *Male*

Daughters, Female Husbands: Gender and Sex in an African Society (London: Zed, 1987).
Oyèrónké Oyěwùmí, *The Invention of Women: Making an African Sense of Western Gender Discourses* (Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 1997).

⁴⁴ Lois A. West, "Nation," *A Companion to Gender Studies*, ed. Philomena Essed, David Theo Goldberg and Audrey Kobayashi (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2004), *Blackwell Reference Online*, 14 Oct. 2007 <http://www.blackwellreference.com/>>.

⁴⁵ Although Stratton's study appeared before more recent work on African women's writing, the focus of much Anglophone African literary scholarship remains focused on exclusively either men or women rather than looking at them together. Florence Stratton, *Contemporary African Literature and the Politics of Gender* (New York: Routledge, 1994).

⁴⁶ I am thinking in particular here of the women's community formed in Ngcobo's *And They Didn't Die*. Hazel V. Carby, "'On the Threshold of Woman's Era': Lynching, Empire, and Sexuality in Black Feminist Theory," *Dangerous Liaisons: Gender, Nation, and Postcolonial Perspectives*, ed. Anne McClintock, Aamir Mufti, and Ella Shohat, *Cultural Politics*, 11 (Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 1997) 330-43.

Chapter 2

¹ Both novels are groundbreaking. *Nervous Conditions* is Dangarembga's first novel as well as the first novel published by a black Zimbabwean woman. *Maps* is Farah's seventh. It is part of his "Blood in the Sun" trilogy along with *Gifts* (New York: Penguin, 1993) and *Secrets* (New York: Penguin, 1998), about the uncertainty of postcolonial national identity. Farah is the first Somali national to publish a work of fiction in any language (English), and also the first to publish a novel in Somali.

² Rhodesia was colonized for its rich mineral and gem deposits beginning in 1889 when Cecil Rhodes persuaded Britain to charter his British South Africa Company (BSAC). Somalia has long been an attractive territory for its string of ports along the Gulf of Aden and the Indian Ocean. Between the seventh and tenth centuries, Muslim Arab and Persian traders established trading posts along Somalia's Gulf of Aden, which the British later viewed as a strategic fort as well. The Ogaden region lies between Greater Ethiopia and Somalia and represents, for the land-locked Ethiopia, access to Somalia's crucial trade ports on the Gulf of Aden and Indian Ocean. For more on Rhodesian history, see Abiodun Alao, *Brothers at War: Dissidence and Rebellion in Southern Africa* (New York: St. Martin's, 1994). For more on Somali history, see I. M. Lewis, *The Modern History of Somaliland, from Nation to State* (New York: Praeger, 1965); and David D. Laitin and Said S. Samatar, *Somalia: Nation in Search of a State* (Boulder: Westview, 1987).

³ Many Somalis consider the July 1, 1960, Independence joining British and Italian Somalilands a "bitter harvest," arguing that Somali independence is only partial as long as the Ethiopian-held Ogaden territory, Kenyan-held Northern Frontier District, and French-owned Djibouti are not part of the Somali Republic (Laitin and Samatar 67).

⁴ I use the term "colonial discourse" to refer to the construction of knowledge about the nature of colonialism, the colony, the colonized, and the colonizer.

⁵ For more on the relationship between the individual and the postcolonial community see, among others: Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*; Achille Mbembe, "African Modes of Self-Writing," trans. Steven Rendall, *Public Culture* 14.1 (2002): 239-73; Oyěwùmí, *African Women and Feminism*; R. Radhakrishnan, "Nationalism, Gender, and the Narrative of Identity," *Nationalisms and Sexualities*, ed. Andrew Parker, Mary Russo, Doris Sommer, and Patricia Yaeger (New York: Routledge, 1992) 77-95; and Spivak, *A Critique of Postcolonial Reason*.

⁶ As an example, Spivak notes that the historical reconstruction work of the Subaltern Studies collective is necessarily masculinized by virtue of the insurrectionist texts' relationships to the dominant group and colonial administration. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, "Can the Subaltern Speak?" *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*, ed. Cary Nelson and Lawrence Grossberg, (Champaign: U of Illinois P, 1988) 271-314.

⁷ Sangeeta Ray, *En-Gendering India: Woman and Nation in Colonial and Postcolonial Narratives* (Durham: Duke UP, 2000).

⁸ Ray, *En-Gendering*. Tovi Fenster, "Space and Cultural Meanings," *A Companion to Gender Studies*, ed. Philomena Essed, David Theo Goldberg, and Audrey Kobayashi (Malden, MA: Blackwell), 2004, *Blackwell Reference Online*, 14 Oct. 2007, <<http://www.blackwellreference.com>>.

⁹ This continuous cycle of production and reproduction recalls Anthony Giddens' notion of nations as containers of power, each one an ideologically bounded site of tension among variously ranked constituencies for representation, identity, and resources. Conventional discussions of national formation have also carried the baggage of ethnocentric analysis, assuming that Western modernity facilitated the origin of the nation. This assumption denies the possibility of other nations formulated in other regions and at other times. Such bias politicizes the discourse of nation-building and nationhood in a global context by claiming epistemological ownership over national formation in native communities. This epistemic domination accompanies that of geographic domination, for "territory and its domestication was the crucial marker of modernity evident in the rise of nations and the growth of colonial powers" (Westwood). Anthony Giddens, *Contemporary Critique of Historical Materialism*, (Cambridge: Polity, 1985) 119-21. Sallie Westwood, "Unequal Nations: Race, Citizen, and the Politics of Recognition," *The Blackwell Companion to Social Inequalities*, ed. Mary Romero and Eric Margolis (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2005), *Blackwell Reference Online*, 14 Oct. 2007, <<http://www.blackwellreference.com>>.

¹⁰ Ray, *En-Gendering India* 32, 18.

¹¹ Anne McClintock, *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender and Sexuality in the Colonial Contest* (New York: Routledge, 1995).

¹² See the Introduction, "Postcolonialism and the Angel of Progress," in *Imperial Leather* for McClintock's insightful reading of the feminized treasure map in Henry Rider Haggard's *King Solomon's Mines* (London: Dent, 1885).

¹³ The *testimonio* may take the form of autobiography or autobiographical novel, oral history, memoir, confession, diary, interview, eyewitness report, life history, novella-*testimonio*, nonfiction novel, or fictionalized history. In the case of a Latin American Indian *testimonio* speaker addressing an ethnically dissimilar Indian reader, the *testimonio*'s call to solidarity may require using the colonial language such that becoming a comrade requires adopting the guise of the enemy. For more on *testimonio* studies, see John Beverley, *Testimonio: on the Politics of Truth* (Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 2004); Doris Sommer, *Proceed with Caution*, especially chapter five, "No Secrets for Rigoberta;" and Yvonne Unnold, *Representing the Unrepresentable: Literature of Trauma Under Pinochet in Chile* (New York: Peter Lang, 2002).

¹⁴ See Appiah's chapter seven, "The Postcolonial and the Postmodern," in *In My Father's House*. Sangeeta Ray, "Through the Looking Glass: Realism and Cosmopolitanism in Amitava Ghosh's Novels," (*In*)*fusion Approach: Theory, Contestation, and Limits*, ed. Ranjan Ghosh (Lanham, MD: UP of America, 2006) 173-88.

¹⁵ Pheng Cheah, *Spectral Nationality: Passages of Freedom from Kant to Postcolonial Literatures of Liberation* (New York, Columbia UP: 2003) 242-43. Cheah quotes Georg Lukács, *The Theory of the Novel: A Historico-Philosophical Essay on the Forms of Great Epic Literature*, trans. Anna Bostock (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1971) 61.

¹⁶ Dan Izevbaye, "Issues in the Reassessment of the African Novel," *African Literature Today* 10 (1979): 7-31. Sembene Ousmane, *God's Bits of Wood* (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 1996). Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o, *Petals of Blood* (New York: Penguin, 1991).

¹⁷ Smith issued the Rhodesian Unilateral Declaration of Independence on November 11, 1965.

¹⁸ Scholarship on Nyasha's illness tends toward defining her illness as an eating disorder and identifying how colonialism has sickened her. In general, Nyasha is said to be sick because she is trying to refuse Englishness and the colonial system kills her in retaliation. Sue Thomas suggests that Nyasha is sick from "a critical and highly ambiguous attempt at self-determination" and rebellion against "the sexual and cultural politics" of the dinner table as emblem of colonial hegemony (191). Brendan Nicholls argues that Nyasha deploys illness as a radical bid to "re-author colonial history, Settler law, and Shona tradition" (122). The much-debated question of whether or not the African Nyasha can actually have a "Western" hypochondriacal disorder like anorexia or bulimia is both irrelevant and a rehearsal of ethnocentric assumptions about Africans as being almost the same, but not

quite Western. Michelle Vizzard allows for the possibility that Nyasha may have anorexia, which she considers “a condition usually associated with the middle class West” (207). Vizzard suggests that this disease’s representation in “an African text is one that raises a number of problems” but “can be understood” to be a result of Nyasha’s intensive exposure to Western middle class culture through her father (207). Thomas argues that disallowing Nyasha an eating disorder based on cultural exclusivity reinforces the mythology of the African woman as lacking interiority because the collective nature of much of indigenous society precludes individual self awareness, and lack of significant exposure to Europe precludes any cultural similarities as coincidence. This mythology is employed to dismiss Nyasha’s eating disorder as impossible on the basis that black women can not suffer psychiatric problems because they lack sufficient levels of self-awareness to develop them. Nicholls argues that we should call Nyasha’s eating disorder “boulimia” from the Greek *bous* (“ox”) and *limos* (“hunger”) in order to (1) “arrive at non-appropriative conclusions” that avoid ethnocentrically confining Nyasha’s subjectivity, and (2) to “stretch [Nyasha’s] hunger beyond physiological dictates” in order to accurately reflect her political and cultural dis-ease (120, 121). Nicholls argues that Western literary critics who deny Nyasha a diagnosis of anorexia or bulimia fail to understand that neither anorexia nor bulimia is an inclusive diagnosis of Nyasha’s broad-reaching melancholia. Nicholls’ assignment of a Greek name to Nyasha’s illness reinforces the mythology of a Hellenic creation of Western science and thought. Because Dangarembga represents this mythology as the architecture and curriculum of Sacred Heart convent, and she critiques it via Tambu’s melancholic embrace of classical education in *Nervous Conditions*, Nicholls might have better served Nyasha by suggesting a Shona term to describe her illness. Dangarembga tells interviewer Kirsten Holst Petersen that “cases of anorexia have been reported in Zimbabwe” but she also hints that the disease may be underreported and/or misdiagnosed if only Western conceptions of the disease are applied (Petersen 345). The Zimbabwean hesitancy to name a condition a disease when it may not be one differs from a Western compulsion to diagnose. Brendon Nicholls, “Indexing Her Digests: Working Through *Nervous Conditions*,” *Emerging Perspectives on Tsitsi Dangarembga: Negotiating the Postcolonial*, ed. Ann Elizabeth Willey and Jeanette Treiber (Trenton: Africa World, 2001) 99-134. Kirsten Holst Petersen, “Between Gender, Race and History: Kirsten Holst Petersen Interviews Tsitsi Dangarembga,” *Kunapipi* 16.1 (1994): 345-48. Sue Thomas, “Rewriting the Hysteric as Anorexic in Tsitsi Dangarembga’s *Nervous Conditions*,” *Scenes of the Apple: Food and the Female Body in Nineteenth- and Twentieth-Century Women’s Writing*, ed. Tamar Heller and Patricia Moran (Albany: State U of New York P, 2003) 183-98. Michelle Vizzard, “‘Of Mimicry and Woman:’ Hysteria and Anticolonial Feminism in Tsitsi Dangarembga’s *Nervous Conditions*,” *SPAN: Journal of the South Pacific Association for Commonwealth Literature and Language Studies* 36 (1993): 202-10.

¹⁹ Although Britain considered the UDI an act of rebellion, it did not use force, but instead entered into lengthy negotiations with Smith’s government. In 1971, the British and Rhodesian governments reached an independence accord that allowed some eventual black African political participation but no promise of black majority rule. Britain eventually refused to recognize Rhodesian independence based, it claimed, on black African opposition to the accord. Smith futilely sought recognition and military aid for his government from the United States and Britain, but only apartheid-era South Africa recognized Smith’s government as legitimate. From 1976, the Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU) under Robert Mugabe and the Zimbabwe African People’s Union (ZAPU) under Joshua Nkomo operated out of Mozambique and Zambia, respectively. In 1978, Smith brokered an “internal settlement” with three black leaders, forming an interim coalition government. Black political gains evaporated the next year, however, when a white-only referendum revised the constitution, renamed the country Zimbabwe-Rhodesia, and the parliamentary elected Bishop Abel T. Muzorewa and his United African Council sought aid from apartheid-era South Africa. Ironically, when the Rhodesian colonial government agreed with the rebels to become a legally independent, democratically governed Zimbabwe under a new constitution, it did so on the condition that Britain regain colonial rule until the elections in exchange for financing a voluntary land-redistribution program. Although they were the minority population in (Southern) Rhodesia, whites owned seventy percent of the land. Independence came at the price of further domination, and the land redistribution program has degenerated into neocolonial cronyism, resulting in widespread black landlessness, starvation, and poverty.

²⁰ “*Chimurenga*” is a Shona term meaning “struggle.” Zimbabweans divide their recent history into three *chimurenga* periods, and all concern the right to habitation and farming (ownership) of the land.

The First *Chimurenga* was the 1896-97 Shona revolt against Rhodes' British South Africa Company at the inception of imperial (and subsequent colonial) rule. The Second *Chimurenga* was the 1972-80 guerilla war for national independence. Although hordes of white farmers fled to South Africa, Britain, and Australia during the second *Chimurenga*, whites remained the owners of about seventy percent of arable land in Zimbabwe after independence. Many war veterans, ZANU militants, and landless black peasants in Zimbabwe consider the contemporary post-independence era the Third *Chimurenga*, or the struggle against neocolonialism. Colonial-era social and economic structures remain intact even though they are administered by black Africans. The majority of the productive land remains in minority white control. The uneven land distribution represents both an unpunished crime of theft but, in more practical terms, it cripples the survival potential of the majority of a primarily agricultural society. The post-independence government has repeatedly promised and has even made some progress toward redistributing the majority of the land to the black majority despite fierce white opposition to the program. Black Zimbabweans who remain disenfranchised consider the land distribution struggle to be the essence of the Third *Chimurenga*. For more on the importance of land in Zimbabwe and on *chimurenga*, see Norma J. Kriger, *Guerrilla Veterans in Post-War Zimbabwe: Symbolic and Violent Politics, 1980-1987* (New York: Cambridge UP, 2003).

²¹ For more on Zimbabwean historical timelines and a regional overview, see Barry Turner, ed., *Southern Africa Profiled: Essential Facts on Society, Business and Politics in Southern Africa* (New York: St. Martin's, 2000).

²² Somalia's border conflict with Ethiopia predates the action of the novel by four hundred years. The Ogaden is peopled primarily by Somali pastoralists but has been, historically, a site of boundary tension between the two governments. On twenty-first century maps of Ethiopia and Somalia, the southern border between the Ogaden and Somalia usually appears as a dotted line, often with the region labeled "Ogaden" and often with a notation explaining the boundary dispute, as in "boundary not demarcated and under dispute" or "provisional administrative line." See, for example, "Somalia Political Map," map, 24 Jan. 2008, 1 May 2008 <http://www.maps.com/ref_map.aspx?cid=694&pid=12353&nav=MS> and "Somalia (Small Map) 2008," map, *Perry-Castañeda Library Map Collection*, U of Texas (US Central Intelligence Agency, 2002), 21 Apr. 2008, 1 May 2008 <http://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/cia08/somalia_sm_2008.gif>. For more on Somali-Ethiopian history, see Alexander de Waal, *Evil Days: Thirty Years of War and Famine in Ethiopia* (New York: Human Rights Watch, 1991).

²³ Guerrilla warfare continues in the area until 1988 when Somalia relinquishes the Ogaden to Ethiopia in a cease-fire agreement.

²⁴ Joseph R. Slaughter, "Enabling Fictions and Novel Subjects: The *Bildungsroman* and International Human Rights Law," *PMLA* 121.5 (2006): 1405-23.

²⁵ Clare Counihan, "Reading the Figure of Woman in African Literature: Psychoanalysis, Difference, and Desire" *Research in African Literatures*, 38.2 (2007): 161-80.

²⁶ Spivak argues that it should be impossible to read nineteenth century British literature without the realization that imperialism was not only a national "mission," but also "a crucial part of the cultural representation of England to the English" (*Critique* 113).

²⁷ Spivak draws her notion of "worlding" from Martin Heidegger, *Basic Works: From Being and Time (1927) to the Task of Thinking (1964)*, ed. David Farrell Krell (San Francisco: Harper, 1993).

²⁸ The phrase "mimic men" is Bhabha's (88), borrowed from V. S. Naipaul's novel *The Mimic Men* (New York: Vintage, 2001). For more on colonial policies enacted under the rubric of civilizing native Africans in Southern Rhodesia, see Dickson A. Mungazi, *The Last British Liberals in Africa: Michael Blundell and Garfield Todd* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 1999), especially chapter two, "The Political History of Zimbabwe."

²⁹ For more on illness, see chapter three, "A Fable of Exquisite Corpses: Kingston, Assimilation, and the Hypochondriacal Response." Cheng's discussion of racial melancholia as not "merely a symptom but as an analytical paradigm responsive to the material *and* imaginative realities of racial dynamics" in the United States (xi, emphasis in original) is transferable to the racialized cultures of Fanon's colonial Antilles and neocolonial Africa. Cheng writes:

On the one side, white American identity and its authority is secured through the melancholic [incorporation] of racial others that it can neither fully relinquish nor

accommodate and whose ghostly presence nonetheless guarantees its centrality. On the other side, the racial other (the so-called melancholic object) also suffers from racial melancholia whereby his or her racial identity is imaginatively reinforced through the [incorporation] of a lost, never-possible perfection, an inarticulable loss that comes to inform the individual's sense of his or her own subjectivity. Already we see that these two 'sides' are in fact implicated by one another. (xi)

The white hero is in danger of being eaten by the black (racialized) other, but his own identity is also based upon his own incorporation of that same other. The eating goes both ways.

³⁰ Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. Robert Hurley, Mark Seem, and Helen R. Lane (New York: Viking, 1977). See in particular chapter two, "The Body Without Organs," in Part I, "The Desiring Machines."

³¹ American Psychiatric Association, "Schizophrenia," *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders: DSM-IV*, 4th ed. (Washington, DC: APA, 1994) 274-90.

³² Louise A. Demers, "Intergenerational Grief: Who's Mourning Whom?" *Canadian Journal of Psychoanalysis* 1.1 (1993): 27-40, 27. American Psychiatric Association, "Narcissistic Personality Disorder," *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders: DSM-IV*, 4th ed. (Washington, DC: APA, 1994) 658-61.

³³ Demers lists four clinically diagnosable mourning categories: utopian, ectopic, topographical, and paratopographical.

³⁴ Demers' essay is an excellent explanation of cryptophores and ectopic mourning.

³⁵ I discuss this distinction at length in chapter one's notes. For Torok's extended distinction between incorporation and introjection, see her "The Illness of Mourning and the Fantasy of the Exquisite Corpse."

³⁶ Nicolas Abraham and Maria Torok, "'The Lost Object—Me': Notes on Endocryptic Identification," *The Shell and the Kernel: Renewals of Psychoanalysis*, by Nicolas Abraham and Maria Torok, ed. and trans. Nicholas T. Rand, vol. 1 (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1994) 139-56.

³⁷ Abraham and Torok, "Self-to-Self Affliction: Notes of a Conversation on 'Psychosomatics,'" *The Shell and the Kernel: Renewals of Psychoanalysis*, by Nicolas Abraham and Maria Torok, ed. and trans. Nicholas T. Rand, vol. 1 (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1994) 162-64.

³⁸ Abraham and Torok, "Mourning or Melancholia: Introjection versus Incorporation," *The Shell and the Kernel: Renewals of Psychoanalysis*, by Nicolas Abraham and Maria Torok, ed. and trans. Nicholas T. Rand, vol. 1 (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1994) 125-38.

³⁹ Cheng 35, 46.

⁴⁰ Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Tenth Anniversary Edition* (London: Routledge, 1999).

⁴¹ John K. Noyes, "S/M in SA: Sexual Violence, Simulated Sex and Psychoanalytic Theory," *American Imago* 55.1 (1998): 135-53.

⁴² Nyasha references, perhaps unintentionally, the nineteenth century kidnapping, enslavement, display, and later racist "scientific" study of Saartje Baartman a Khoisan woman from what is present-day South Africa. Baartman's ordeal was inflicted upon her to test, prove, and display supposed proof of the centuries-old racist European stereotype that African women had different genitals and body shapes than European women did, which was supposed to signify Africans' sub-humanity. Nyasha's fear of developing a "large backside" illustrates her internalization of the white Western woman's fear of developing the supposedly large buttocks for which Baartman was infamous in Europe. For an interesting juxtaposition of visual and spoken colonial and anti-colonial discourses on the history of Baartman's capture, display, death, and interment, see Zola Maseko's film, *The Life and Times of Sara Baartman: "The Hottentot Venus"* (New York: First Run, 1998).

⁴³ I have not seen a critical consideration that Nyasha is trying to become African, yet the African response to the novel supports this reading. Dangarembga tells interviewers Rosemary George and Helen Scott: "In Zimbabwe, however, people are much more conscious of the question of Nyasha's, well... alienation. One young man said he actually wept for her that she could come home and be a stranger in her own country" (314). Rosemary Marangoly George and Helen Scott, "An Interview with Tsitsi Dangarembga," *Novel: A Forum on Fiction* 26.3 (1993): 309-19.

⁴⁴ Reader misunderstanding, whether intentional or not, of the text's message undermines the potential for reading a traumatic testimony productively. Laub warns that the lack of a qualified listener

“annihilates the story” and prevents any judiciary or curative response (68). Laub’s “Bearing Witness or the Vicissitudes of Listening” is an excellent explication of the listener’s (and, I suggest, the reader’s) responsibilities vis-à-vis traumatic testimony.

⁴⁵ The character Martha from Dangarembga’s play *She No Longer Weeps* (Harare, Zimbabwe: College, 1987) is perhaps a representation of the more mature dissident Nyasha would have become if she had lived beyond the end of *Nervous Conditions*. The fact that Martha’s rebellion against neocolonial patriarchy may not, like Nyasha’s, “have been successful” bespeaks a type of traumatic repetition within the opus of Dangarembga’s work.

⁴⁶ One could argue that Nyasha’s living but radically marked body is a more lasting and perhaps textually intrusive testimonial specter than would be the ghost her death would surely unleash.

⁴⁷ Nuruddin Farah, “A Conversation with Nuruddin Farah,” *Maps* (New York: Penguin, 2000) n. pag.

⁴⁸ For more on the social importance of African women in many pre-colonial African communities, see Filomena Chioma Steady, “African Feminism: A Worldwide Perspective,” *Women in Africa and the African Diaspora: A Reader*, ed. Rosalyn Terborg-Penn and Andrea Benton Rushing, 2nd ed. (Washington, DC: Howard UP, 1996) 3-21.

⁴⁹ Somalia’s dilemma is different from that typical of other post-independence African nations which struggle to unify multiple ethnic groups under one state administration.

⁵⁰ Laitin and Samatar 68.

⁵¹ For a more complete examination of the causes and ramifications of narcissistic personality disorders, see Demers.

⁵² Immanuel Wallerstein, “Social Conflict in Post-Independence Black Africa: the Concepts of Race and Status-Group Reconsidered,” *Race, Nation, Class: Ambiguous Identities*, Étienne Balibar and Immanuel Wallerstein (London: Verso, 1991) 187-203.

⁵³ Elaine Scarry, *The Body in Pain: The Making and Unmaking of the World* (New York: Oxford UP, 1985).

⁵⁴ Mbembe, *Postcolony* 187. Judith Butler discusses invisibility in regard to gender: in a patriarchy, femininity invisibilizes.

⁵⁵ Simon Gikandi, “The Politics and Poetics of National Formation: Recent African Writing and Maps,” *Emerging Perspectives on Nuruddin Farah*, ed. Derek Wright (Trenton: Africa World, 2002) 449-67.

⁵⁶ For more on the African sense of selfhood that encompasses elements of both genders, see Amadiume, *Male Daughters, Female Husbands*; Farah, “A Conversation with Nuruddin Farah;” Farah, “Celebrating Differences: The 1998 Neustadt Lecture,” *Emerging Perspectives on Nuruddin Farah*, ed. Derek Wright (Trenton: Africa World P, 2002) 15-24; Farah, “How Can We Talk of Democracy?: An Interview with Nuruddin Farah by Patricia Alden and Louis Tremaine,” *Emerging Perspectives on Nuruddin Farah*, ed. Derek Wright (Trenton: Africa World P, 2002) 25-46; Farah, “Why I Write,” *Emerging Perspectives on Nuruddin Farah*, ed. Derek Wright (Trenton: Africa World P, 2002) 1-13; Oyěwùmí, *The Invention of Women*; and Steady.

⁵⁷ Bracha L. Ettinger, *The Matrixial Borderspace*, *Theory out of Bounds*, 28 (Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 2006). See in particular chapter six, “Weaving a Woman Artist with-in the Matrixial Encounter-Event.”

⁵⁸ Rey Chow discusses the politics of admittance into the nation in *Ethics After Idealism: Theory, Culture, Ethnicity, Reading*, *Theories of Contemporary Culture*, vol. 20 (Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1998). See especially chapter 4, “The Politics of Admittance: Female Sexual Agency, Miscegenation, and the Formation of Community in Frantz Fanon.”

Chapter 3

¹ The work of the Subaltern Studies Group charts the ways in which silence is employed, exposed, and eliminated in colonial Indian history.

² Botha’s presidency ended in 1989 when he suffered a stroke and resigned. His campaign of terror to eliminate opposition, from 1985 to 1988, was characterized by intensified state violence in the form of

soldier-police patrols in armed tank-like vehicles, destroying black squatter camps, and detaining thousands of blacks and so-called “coloureds” under the Internal Security Act. Of the detainees who died, causes ranged from murder by the authorities to suicide.

³ During the final throes of the apartheid government’s stand against civil agitation, Botha declared a state of emergency on July 20, 1985, covering thirty-six magisterial districts in the Eastern Cape, and in the Pretoria-Witwatersrand-Vereeniging region. In October, Botha added the Western Cape. The state of emergency censored the media, limited black and so-called “coloured” mobility via curfews, and expanded Presidential decree power beyond the reaches of the constitution and Parliament. On June 12, 1986, four days before the ten-year anniversary of the Soweto uprising and one year into the limited state of emergency and detainment sweeps, Botha simultaneously ordered some minor race-based reforms and expanded the state of emergency to cover all of South Africa. The state’s lip service to racial equity failed to quell increasing black civil unrest, and fearful whites fled the country in waves. The government again expanded its powers to declare certain places “unrest areas” and crush protests there with an expanded arsenal of violent methods. For an excellent documentary account of the repressive violence Botha’s government deployed during the state of emergency, see *Witness to Apartheid*, dir. Sharon I. Sopher and Kevin Harris, California Newsreel, 1986.

⁴ These groups were the African National Congress (ANC), the Pan Africanist Congress, and the South African Communist Party.

⁵ MK (short for *Umkhonto we Sizwe*, literally “Spear of the Nation”) began as an independent guerrilla unit but eventually became the military wing of the ANC’s opposition to the South African apartheid regime. MK proclaimed its existence on December 16, 1961, and the apartheid regime immediately classified it a terrorist organization and banned it. By 1994, the South African National Defence Force (SANDF) had absorbed the MK. For more on how the anti-apartheid rebels waged guerilla warfare, see Stephen M. Davis, *Apartheid’s Rebels: Inside South Africa’s Hidden War* (New Haven: Yale UP, 1987), and in particular chapter four, “The ‘AK-47 Song’.”

⁶ Mandela was sentenced to life imprisonment and incarcerated on June 12, 1964. He was freed on February 11, 1990. The MK suspended armed attacks on August 1, 1990. In December 1991, the Convention for a Democratic Southern Africa (CODESA) met at the World Trade Centre in Johannesburg to begin work on a transitional constitution extending political rights to all groups and an election date for a democratic, transitional, multiracial government. For more on South African historical timelines and a regional overview see Turner.

⁷ Sarah’s move may have been part of a United Kingdom campaign begun in the 1970s to recruit Nigerian nurses for public, inner-city hospitals unable to attract sufficient numbers of native nurses. See Cecilia Menjivar, “Migration and Refugees,” *A Companion to Gender Studies*, ed. Philomena Essed, David Theo Goldberg, and Audrey Kobayashi (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2004), *Blackwell Reference Online*, 14 Oct. 2007 <<http://www.blackwellreference.com>>.

⁸ Khanna specifically mentions Frantz Fanon, Albert Memmi, and Aimé Césaire.

⁹ Khanna elaborates on this point at length.

¹⁰ Wicomb has expressed discomfort in “To Hear the Variety of Discourses” with any but a locally specific theory to discuss South African writing, advocating instead one that reflects community- and individual-level needs of South Africans. Wicomb is wary of imposing supposedly universal modernist theoretical paradigms onto a diverse body of South African ways of living and expression that neither conform nor attempt to conform to modernist mores. In short, Wicomb is wary of replicating the colonial encounter in literary analysis.

In interviews, Oyeyemi avoids using the term “magical realism” to describe her method of “taking things out of context” and “chopping up rules” even while *The Icarus Girl* is one of the recent African novels most widely celebrated for its magical realist qualities (Oyeyemi, interview). Other reviewers and interviewers also refer to the novel as a magic realist engagement with African mythology. See also Karen Campbell’s “Vivid ‘Icarus’ Charts a Child’s Search for Self,” and Felicia R. Lee’s “Conjuring an Imaginary Friend in the Search for an Authentic Self.”

Although Western critical consensus since the 1980s has regarded magic realism to be a strain of postmodernism’s larger project of challenging hegemony in general and the Western literary model in particular, writers of literature which critics call “magic realist” have a history of discomfort with any but the most specific use of the label. African writers especially have expressed dismay over the recent critical trend of labeling certain African writing “magic realist.” I suggest that this reticence

may exist because magic realism evolved out of Africana literary traditions. Mario de Andrade's landmark novel *Macunaíma* is grounded in questions of Afro-Brazilian identity and race, and Gabriel García Márquez's work is marked by the deep and varied African, Indian, and Spanish cosmological influences on his native Colombia. To call African literature "magic realist," and therefore at the end of the trajectory of literary modal development, is to ignore its founding relationship to the mode of magic realism and thus reinforce colonialist discourse of African literature and ways of knowing and being as derivative of Western forms. In what would appear to be an alignment with Wicomb's stated wish above, Stephen Slemon looks for ways to read literature frequently labeled magic realist through a locally specific lens of postcolonial theory. Mário de Andrade, *Macunaíma*, trans. E. A. Goodland (New York: Random House, 1984). Karen Campbell, "Vivid 'Icarus' Charts a Child's Search for Self," rev. of *The Icarus Girl*, by Helen Oyeyemi, *Boston Globe* 20 June 2005, 30 Mar. 2006 <<http://www.boston.com>>. Felicia R. Lee, "Conjuring an Imaginary Friend in the Search for an Authentic Self," rev. of *The Icarus Girl*, by Helen Oyeyemi, *New York Times* 21 June 2005, late ed.: E1. Helen Oyeyemi, interview with Anita Sethi, "I didn't Know I was Writing a Novel," *Guardian Unlimited*, 10 Jan. 2005, 30 Mar. 2006 <<http://books.guardian.co.uk>>. Stephen Slemon, "Magic Realism as Postcolonial Discourse," *Magical Realism: Theory, History, Community*, ed. Lois Parkinson Zamora and Wendy B. Faris (Durham: Duke UP, 1995) 407-26. Zoë Wicomb, "To Hear the Variety of Discourses," *South African Feminisms: Writing, Theory, and Criticism, 1990-1994*, ed. M. J. Daymond (New York: Garland, 1996) 45-55.

¹¹ David L. Eng and David Kazanjian, preface, *Loss: the Politics of Mourning*, ed. David L. Eng and David Kazanjian (Berkeley: U of California P, 2003) ix-x.

¹² R. John Williams, "Doing History: Nuruddin Farah's *Sweet and Sour Milk*, Subaltern Studies, and the Postcolonial Trajectory of Silence," *Research in African Literatures* 37.4 (2006): 161-76.

¹³ Dipesh Chakrabarty suggests that "ruling-class documents often used for historical reconstructions of working-class conditions can be read both for what they say and for their 'silences'" (179). This work bears a parallel to the trajectory of this chapter, in that the colonial state's silencing of peasant consciousness and organization in revolt is a metaphor or precursor for the gendered censorship I identify in the novels. The uneasy markers of silenced peasant agency in official historiographies are the ghosts in official Indian historical texts, and it is the work of the Subaltern Studies intellectual to mark, identify, and give voice to these silenced presences. Spivak has an interesting critique of the Subaltern Studies Collective and their refusal of women. See her essay in *In Other Worlds*. To hear the silenced voice and reconstruct its narrative is also the juridical work of the testimonial witness. Dipesh Chakrabarty, "Conditions for Knowledge of Working-Class Conditions," *Selected Subaltern Studies*, ed. Ranajit Guha and Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (New York: Oxford UP, 1988) 179-232. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, *In Other Worlds: Essays in Cultural Politics* (New York: Routledge, 2006).

¹⁴ Bhabha quotes Toni Morrison, *Honey and Rue*, program notes, Carnegie Hall, Jan. 1991.

¹⁵ Maria Torok, "Unpublished by Freud to Fleiss: Restoring an Oscillation," *The Shell and the Kernel: Renewals of Psychoanalysis*, by Nicolas Abraham and Maria Torok, ed. and trans. Nicholas T. Rand, vol. 1 (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1994) 226-33.

¹⁶ Eng and Kazanjian similarly suggest that the absence following a loss can represent a "potential presence," marking the site of that particular loss such that "loss is known only by what remains of it" (preface, ix).

¹⁷ Avery F. Gordon, *Ghostly Matters: Haunting and the Sociological Imagination* (Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 1997).

¹⁸ Dominick LaCapra carefully distinguishes between loss and absence in *Writing History, Writing Trauma* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 2001).

¹⁹ Torok's reading of the editorial decision not to publish certain of Freud's letters demonstrates this possibility. Freud's unpublished—censored—letters to his colleague Wilhelm Fleiss accommodated a wider range of explanations for traumatic sufferer responses than the previously accepted binary of either sexual fantasy or paternal sexual trauma. For Torok, the fact that these letters in particular remain unpublished suggests "a trauma of alternatives, bearing on the reality or the mythological fiction of an event" ("Unpublished" 232). Torok's readings of both Freud's letters and the rhetorical situation of their suppression suggests the conclusion that traumatic testimony is not confined

exclusively to either the realm of fantasy or to that of fact. In testimony, an array of sources and of classifications, is possible.

²⁰ Kelly Oliver, *Witnessing: Beyond Recognition* (Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 2001).

²¹ Daymond refers to this common African cultural practice.

²² Shereen W. Mills, "Mothers in the Corridors of the South African Legal System: An Assessment of the Johannesburg Family Court Pilot Project," *JENdA: A Journal of Culture and African Women Studies* 4 (2003), 7 Aug. 2007 <<http://www.jendajournal.com/issue4/mills.html>>.

²³ Ray argues that a feminist understanding of nationalism illuminates the practice of deploying the figure of woman—and particularly the native woman as "the nonliminal site of otherness"—as a means of bounding and defining the nation, even in discourses of transnationalism that seek to explode the constrictions of "nation" in the bounded sense (*En-Gendering* 5, 8, 2). R. Radhakrishnan similarly observes that colonialism forces the native nationalist subject to inhabit two spaces: Western Enlightenment on the outside, and a "traditional" identity uninfluenced by outer changes—"a reactionary and essentialist nativism"—on the inside (85). The figure of woman comes to signify a timeless "interiority" and, as such, reframes the process of decolonization as both political and epistemological (Radhakrishnan 84). In this way, the discourse and practice of nationalism does not represent all of the people. Instead, in such a paradigm, women's place in the society is reduced to the question of whether, why, and how they should belong.

²⁴ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, rev. ed. (London: Verso, 1991).

²⁵ In chapter four of this dissertation, I discuss the ways in which women's involvement in Kenya's Mau Mau armed resistance ungendered the struggle.

²⁶ Stuart Hall articulates this lived experience of "being inside and outside, the 'familial stranger,'" by drawing on his own personal history as a Jamaican immigrant living in Britain. For Hall, the postcolonial diasporic identity is a postmodern one "since migration has turned out to be *the* world-historical event of late modernity" (qtd. in Chen 490, emphasis in original). Kuan-Hsing Chen, "The Formation of a Diasporic Intellectual: An Interview with Stuart Hall by Kuan-Hsing Chen," *Stuart Hall: Critical Dialogues in Cultural Studies*, ed. David Morley and Kuan-Hsing Chen (London: Routledge, 1996) 484-503.

²⁷ Spivak cautions that "the rôle of literature in the production of cultural representation should not be ignored" (*Critique* 113).

²⁸ Yet even as colonial land loss remains peripheral to the critical discussion of postcoloniality, the ghost of its existence—and absence from the discursive script—haunts the novels that seek to highlight it. The sensitive postcolonial reader can read these hauntings as illuminating both the fact and the censorship of land loss from the discourse of postcolonial studies. Calling attention to the censorship is also a call for justice in the form of reinstating the primacy of land loss to the lived trauma of being native under colonial rule. Several good essays have been published in the last few years that complicate Western discourses of loss by extending the discussion of apartheid-era black South African loss to include the crucial loss of land. For theorizing the Griquas' melancholic loss of land, see David Johnson, "Theorizing the Loss of Land: Griqua Land Claims in Southern Africa, 1874-1998," *Loss: the Politics of Mourning*, ed. David L. Eng and David Kazanjian (Berkeley: U of California P, 2003) 278-99. For theorizing the larger question of melancholic loss of land nationwide in South Africa, see Mahmood Mamdani, "The Truth According to the TRC," *The Politics of Memory: Truth, Healing and Social Justice*, ed. Ifi Amadiume and Abdullahi An-Na'im (London: Zed, 2000) 176-83. While much has been written on Biafra's annexation to (or thwarted secession from) Nigeria as the loss of control of the land, the notion of Yoruba migration from Nigeria as land loss remains largely unstudied. Ropo Sekoni argues persuasively for the importance of attention to this question. Ropo Sekoni, "The Historical Duty Awaiting the Yoruba in Today's Nigeria," *Isokan Yoruba Magazine* 3.2 (1997), 8 Feb. 2007 <<http://www.yoruba.org/Magazine/Spring97/S2.html>>.

²⁹ Sigmund Freud, "The 'Uncanny,'" trans. and ed. James Strachey, *An Infantile Neurosis and Other Works*, vol. 17 of *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud* (London: Hogarth, 1955) 217-56.

³⁰ For more on Nigerian history, see Levi A. Nwachuku and G. N. Uzoigwe, eds., *Troubled Journey: Nigeria Since the Civil War* (Lanham, MD: UP of America, 2004). For a good historiography of Nigeria that theorizes the impact on Africa of the colonial intrusion, Africa's responses, and its

prospects for working through the traumas of underdevelopment and of globalization, see Toyin Falola, ed., *Tradition and Change in Africa: The Essays of J. F. Ade. Ajayi* (Trenton: Africa World P, 2000).

³¹ Babangida later resigned in response to public outcry.

³² Oyèrónké Oyèwùmí, "Abiyamo: Theorizing African Motherhood," *JENdA: A Journal of Culture and African Women Studies* 4 (2003), 7 Aug. 2007 <<http://www.jendajournal.com/issue4/oyewumi.html>>.

³³ Oyèwùmí, "Abiyamo."

³⁴ Nkiru Nzegwu, "Cultural Epistemologies of Motherhood: Refining the Concept 'Mothers'," *JENdA: A Journal of Culture and African Women Studies* 5 (2004), 29 Aug. 2007 <<http://www.jendajournal.com/issue5/nzegwu1.htm>>.

³⁵ Eileen Julien presents a thorough and compelling argument for rape as a metonymy of cultural pathology (although Julien's vocabulary is not that of illness). For Julien, a culture's literary representations "enable characters and readers to know—not through simple analogy (metaphor) but because rape is a related manifestation (metonymy)—the society in which rape takes place" (161). Eileen Julien, "Rape, Repression, and Narrative Form in *Le Devoir de Violence* and *La Vie et Demie*," *Rape and Representation*, ed. Lynn A. Higgins and Brenda R. Silver (New York: Columbia UP, 1991) 160-81.

³⁶ I discuss rape as a form of gendered violence, but I do not use the two terms "rape" and "gendered violence" interchangeably. Gendered violence includes rape but it can also take other sexualized and non-sexualized forms perpetrated against a woman because of her gender.

³⁷ Cultures that silence, censor, and erase rape are "rape cultures" (Higgins and Silver 1). Wendy Hesford notes that a rape culture constructs femininity based on its version of reality and, within that reality, class, race, gender, and national identity all conspire to determine both the quality of "rapability" and how those who will be vulnerable to the threat of rape are to be identified as such (32). Catherine MacKinnon coins the term "rapability" to describe the condition of being gendered female in a system of male dominance (643). Wendy S. Hesford, "Rape Stories: Material Rhetoric and the Trauma of Representation," *Haunting Violations: Feminist Criticism and the Crisis of the "Real"*, ed. Wendy S. Hesford and Wendy Kozol (Urbana: U of Illinois P, 2001) 13-46. Lynn A. Higgins and Brenda R. Silver, "Rereading Rape," introduction, *Rape and Representation*, ed. Lynn A. Higgins and Brenda R. Silver (New York: Columbia UP, 1991) 1-11. Catherine MacKinnon, "Feminism, Marxism, Method, and the State: Toward Feminist Jurisprudence," *Signs* 8.4 (1983): 635-58.

³⁸ In a culture of domination, the Real is constructed based on a notion of the Other against which to differentiate the self. This binarization results from identity formation predicated on the opposition of the subject-self to the Other.

³⁹ Wicomb, "Hear" 52. Miriam Tlali, "Fud-u-u-a," *Footprints in the Quag: Stories and Dialogues From Soweto* (Cape Town: David Philip, 1989) 27-43.

⁴⁰ Laub 74.

⁴¹ Sigmund Freud, *Moses and Monotheism* (New York: Vintage, 1955).

⁴² I distinguish between "history" and "historicity" in the context of deconstruction, which suggests that historicity is the terrain of necessities, possibilities, and choices that surround historical events. In this light, each historical event is not a concrete fact impenetrable to interpretation but instead a moment of indeterminate possibilities contingent on a correspondingly open array of necessities, not all of which are possibilities. Our ability to choose our responses to events based on or in opposition to our cultural legacies implies a modicum of freedom in determining history.

⁴³ While they do not write specifically of trauma, the notion of moving away from experience versus evidence toward experience as evidence is from Hesford and Kozol 4.

⁴⁴ For women, anti-colonial resistance means vulnerability to rape in the Movement, and later stigmatization as a whore. Ingrid Sinclair's film *Flame* (California Newsreel, 1996) is set in Zimbabwe's Second *Chimurenga* for independence from Britain and is a good visual example of the paradox of female ex-comrades raped during the struggle and stigmatized afterward as promiscuous.

⁴⁵ Nicolas Abraham, "The Phantom of Hamlet or The Sixth Act preceded by The Intermission of 'Truth'," *The Shell and the Kernel: Renewals of Psychoanalysis*, by Nicolas Abraham and Maria Torok, ed. and trans. Nicholas T. Rand, vol. 1 (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1994) 187-205.

⁴⁶ Hesford and Kozol have noted this trend in literary representation. They argue that violence, trauma, resistance, and language are interlinked, and that all of these shape the Real. There is no reality “that exists independently” of these phenomena (“‘Real’ Crisis” 2). Wendy S. Hesford and Wendy Kozol. “Is there a ‘Real’ Crisis?” introduction, *Haunting Violations: Feminist Criticism and the Crisis of the ‘Real’*, ed. Wendy S. Hesford and Wendy Kozol (Urbana: U of Illinois P, 2001) 1-12.

⁴⁷ Pin-Chia Feng, *The Female Bildungsroman by Toni Morrison and Maxine Hong Kingston: A Postmodern Reading*, *Modern American Literature: New Approaches*, vol. 10 (New York: Peter Lang, 1998).

⁴⁸ Feng makes a similar point with reference to the Atlantic slave trade.

⁴⁹ Annie O. Eysturoy, *Daughters of Self-Creation: The Contemporary Chicana Novel* (Albuquerque: U of New Mexico P, 1996).

⁵⁰ Dana A. Heller, *The Feminization of Quest-Romance: Radical Departures* (Austin: U of Texas P, 1990).

⁵¹ Louisa May Alcott, *Little Women* (New York: Signet Classic, 2004). Frances Hodgson Burnett, *A Little Princess* (New York: Harper Trophy, 1998).

⁵² Sigmund Freud, “Repression,” *Papers on Metapsychology; Papers on Applied Psycho-analysis*, vol. 4 of *Collected Papers*, trans. Joan Riviere (London: Hogarth, 1950) 84-97. Michel Foucault, *Language, Counter Memory, Practice: Selected Essays and Interviews by Michel Foucault*, ed. Donald F. Bouchard (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1977).

⁵³ Robert Krell and Leslie Rabkin, “The Effects of Sibling Death on the Surviving Child: A Family Perspective,” *Family Process* 18.4 (1979): 471-477. This seminal essay is still considered timely after nearly three decades.

⁵⁴ The idea that parental emotional unavailability is more devastating to a child than sibling death is from Timothy T. Yates and James R. Bannard, “The ‘Haunted’ Child: Grief, Hallucinations, and Family Dynamics,” *Journal of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry* 27.5 (1988): 573-81.

⁵⁵ Hall and Paul Gilroy theorize the immigrant experience as one of double exile: from the homeland and from the host country. Gilroy elaborates on the immigrant’s psychic split from both home and host nations, and how this melancholic loss fragments and differentiates the black subject from the dominant culture. To Hall, the diasporic individual is “far away enough” from his homeland to feel the “sense of exile and loss, close enough to understand the enigma of an always-postponed arrival” (qtd. in Chen 490). An immigrant in England, Hall tells Chen that he does not feel at home in either his birth country or his host country. He grew up in colonized Jamaica and immigrated before independence, so postcolonial Jamaica is simultaneously familiar and strange to him. He was educated in the colonial system, so he knows England but, as a black West Indian native, he is “not and never will be ‘English’” (Chen 490). Paul Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness* (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1993).

⁵⁶ Paul Gilroy, *Small Acts: Thoughts on the Politics of Black Culture* (London: Serpent’s Tail, 1993).

⁵⁷ Less than fifty percent of blacks in England are born there; so blackness and immigration are linked in the minds of the white British majority. Gilroy links the increased post World War II black presence in England directly to Britain’s crisis of “post-colonial decline” as a global empire (*Small* 22). Black presence in decolonizing Britain contradicts its national imaginary of racial (and thus cultural) homogeneity, based on a predominately white prewar populace. Any escalation of civil unrest and crime is blamed on immigration. Black “settlers,” their history, and their culture are all viewed as “an illegitimate intrusion into a vision of authentic British national life that, prior to their arrival, was as stable and as peaceful as it was ethnically undifferentiated” (Gilroy, *Atlantic* 7).

⁵⁸ Gilroy, *Small* 56. Gilroy borrows his term from W. E. B. du Bois, *The Souls of Black Folk*, 1903, ed. Henry Louis Gates Jr. and Terri Oliver, Norton Critical Ed. (New York: Norton, 1999) 2.

⁵⁹ Hall and Gilroy build on Bhabha’s point that the dominant culture imposes sameness while highlighting difference.

⁶⁰ Marianne Hirsch, *Family Frames: Photography, Narrative, and Postmemory* (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1997).

⁶¹ Gerry Doran and Nancy Downing Hansen, “Constructions of Mexican American Family Grief After the Death of a Child: An Exploratory Study,” *Cultural Diversity and Ethnic Minority Psychology* 12.2

(2006): 199-211, *PsycARTICLES*, EBSCO, U of Maryland Lib. System, 20 Jan. 2007 <<http://search.ebscohost.com>>.

⁶² Doran and Hansen's study of how Mexican-American families maintain a bond with their deceased children illuminates the particular practices and challenges of the immigrant family's mourning acknowledgment of a deceased child. Such practices have been discouraged in the West. Indeed, Western psychology has only recently begun to depathologize the notion that the sibling bond transcends death (Charles and Charles). Survivor siblings can maintain relationships with their deceased siblings—can enjoy “an enduring sense of presence of the deceased”—and simultaneously forge new relationships (Doran and Hansen). It is now understood that the relationship between the alive and the passed siblings adapts over time to meet the mourning needs of the survivor. Devon R. Charles and Marilyn Charles, “Sibling Loss and Attachment Style: An Exploratory Study,” *Psychoanalytic Psychology* 23.1 (2006): 72-90, *PsycARTICLES*, EBSCO, U of Maryland Lib. System, 23 Jan. 2007 <<http://search.ebscohost.com>>.

⁶³ *Ere-ibeji* means “image of the twice-born.”

⁶⁴ Charles and Charles.

⁶⁵ For an excellent discussion of the impact of family and other grieving forces on the surviving child of sibling loss, see Martha Blechar Gibbons, “A Child Dies, a Child Survives: the Impact of Sibling Loss,” *Journal of Pediatric Health Care* 6.2 (1992): 65-72.

⁶⁶ *Ibeji* carvings are nude adult likenesses, usually between six to fourteen inches high, and stand on a base with their arms at the sides. For more detailed descriptions and photos of *ibeji* mourning practices and figures, see Henry Drewal, John Pemberton III, and Rowland Abiodun, *Yoruba: Nine Centuries of African Art and Thought*, ed. Allen Wardwell (New York: Abrams, 1990); and John Pemberton III, John Picton, and Lamidi O. Fakeye, *Ibeji: The Cult of Yoruba Twins*, ed. George Chemeche, Hic Sunt Leones ser. (Milan: Five Continents, 2008).

⁶⁷ *Ibeji* carvings are cared for in ways that replicate the nurturance of a live child: the mother and sometimes the surviving twin, for example, smear food on its lips, wash its face, and make clothes for it. Constant handling can wear away much of the carving's detail over a single generation.

⁶⁸ Nineteenth century Christian missionaries considered *ibeji* nurturing to be idol worship, which the Bible prohibits. They believed they were disbanding an *ibeji* cult by forcing Yoruba women to discontinue *ibeji* image use.

⁶⁹ American Psychiatric Association, “Posttraumatic Stress Disorder,” *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders: DSM-IV*, 4th ed. (Washington, DC: APA, 1994) 463-68.

⁷⁰ Carlos E. Sluzki, “House Taken Over by Ghosts: Culture, Migration, and the Developmental Cycle of a Moroccan Family Invaded by Hallucinations,” *Families, Systems, and Health* 22.3 (2004): 321-37, *PsycARTICLES*, EBSCO, U of Maryland Lib. System, 20 Jan. 2007 <<http://search.ebscohost.com>>.

⁷¹ One could make an interesting comparison here to *Nervous Conditions*, to the ways in which Tambu's internal migration and Nyasha's transatlantic migration and return are similar to Jess's internal and transatlantic migrations.

⁷² Shaul Schreiber, “Migration, Traumatic Bereavement and Transcultural Aspects of Psychological Healing: Loss and Grief of a Refugee Woman from Begameder County in Ethiopia,” *British Journal of Medical Psychology* 68.2 (1995): 135-42. Schreiber studies an Ethiopian woman whose baby died while she was fleeing Ethiopia. The customs in her host nation, Israel, prohibited her from practicing Ethiopian purification rituals and she suffered psychic as well as somatic (hypochondriacal) ramifications.

⁷³ Sarah's fear is common in trauma sufferers, and not entirely unfounded. While testimony has the power to initiate healing, it is a risky undertaking because testimony can also retraumatize.

⁷⁴ “Mourning” here can mean simply an acknowledgment of Fern's life and passage. Loss takes on a different connotation in a cultural context that recognizes ancestors as spectral presences among the living. Doran and Hansen oppose the grieving goal of “moving on,” reading it to mean that “working through” the loss (i.e., of a family member through death) is in fact to attempt to eradicate any “enduring sense of presence of the deceased” from the survivor's life (Doran and Hansen). They suggest that Western psychology's strictest, traditional sense of “working through” pathologizes maintaining a bond with the deceased whether in spectral or material form. The failure to accommodate the health of grief goals other than working through is ethnocentric in that it

pathologizes ways of mourning that are healthy in other cultures. For example, “it was inconceivable not to maintain such a bond” with deceased child for Mexican-Americans (Doran and Hansen), and Moroccans count dead children among the living: “We are fourteen, ten alive and four dead,” a Moroccan father tells Sluzki. The characterization of Jess’s relationship with TillyTilly as mad denies her African self-apprehension as spiritually co-existent as outlined by Soyinka (*Myth* 3). This conception of maintaining a relationship with the dead who are irrevocably changed because they are now phantasmic is not necessarily an act of incorporation—of denying the death by encrypting the deceased. It is instead a built-in cultural mechanism to facilitate mourning in its recognition—the expectation—of a changed relationship with the deceased.

⁷⁵ Only two percent of all marriages in England and Wales are listed as “inter-ethnic,” according to the United Kingdom’s April 2001 census. United Kingdom, Office for National Statistics, “Inter-ethnic Marriage,” *Census, April 2001, National Statistics Online*, 21 Mar. 2005, 27 May 2007 <<http://www.statistics.gov.uk/cci/nugget.asp?id=1090>>. Path: Ethnicity and Identity.

⁷⁶ Kay Tooley’s study remains foundational in the field of sibling loss and mourning. Kay Tooley, “The Choice of a Surviving Sibling as ‘Scapegoat’ in some Cases of Maternal Bereavement—a Case Report,” *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry* 16.4 (1975): 331-39.

⁷⁷ Christopher Baethge breaks tradition in the study of hallucinations by defining grief hallucinations as “true” hallucinations rather than as a subcategory of pseudohallucination. Baethge bases his argument on the fact that grief hallucinations comprise a clearly defined group of perceptions and can display all the characteristics of “true” hallucinations. Baethge also suggests that previously used definitions of pseudohallucinations contradict each other and should therefore be abandoned. I follow Baethge’s lead in discussing grief hallucinations as hallucinations. Christopher Baethge, “Grief Hallucinations: True or Pseudo? Serious or Not? An Inquiry into Psychopathological and Clinical Features of a Common Phenomenon” *Psychopathology* 35.5 (2002): 296-302.

⁷⁸ Visual, tactile, and phobic hallucinations (VTPH) like TillyTilly, which visit anxious children, have recently been established as much more common than previously reported in pediatric medical literature. See, for example, Maryland Pao, Cheryl Lohman, Dorothy Gracey, and Larrie Greenberg, “Visual, Tactile, and Phobic Hallucinations: Recognition and Management in the Emergency Department,” *Pediatric Emergency Care* 20.1 (2004): 30-34.

⁷⁹ In Sluzki’s study, the “vision” of the ghost impairs the son Emal’s vision.

⁸⁰ Charles and Charles.

⁸¹ Jess’s grief hallucination is an attempt to repair the loss of the lost object Fern by restoring her, albeit in the spectral form of TillyTilly. One could argue that TillyTilly is, as she eventually claims, the specter of Fern rather than a stand-in for her. But if TillyTilly is *ibeji* Fern, then why does she introduce herself to Jess as “Titiola” rather than as “Fern?” This confusing moment of their introduction foreshadows TillyTilly’s spectral presence as a confusing one for Jess as well. Titiola is a Yoruba name meaning “eternal riches” (*titi* means “forever” and *ola* means “wealth”), so it is possible that while the spirit comes to Jess in the spirit of generosity, Jess’s ignorance of Yoruba naming practices and pronunciation allow her to perpetuate her mother’s failure to acknowledge Fern by renaming Titiola a diminutive of “Tilly.” Tilly is the short form of the English “Matilda” which means “strength in battle.” Tellingly, Jess thus changes Titiola’s name from “wealth” to “battle.” Burying the Yoruba “Titiola” under an English name with a different meaning maintains Sarah’s incorporation of Fern’s existence, death, and the fact of hiding it.

⁸² Yates and Bannard study an American child whose hallucinatory experiences are interestingly similar to Jess’s in the context of a mother’s mourning difficulties impinging upon her survivor child’s psychic health. In Yates’ and Bannard’s study, nine-year-old David had hallucinations of his stillborn younger brother who was born when David was two. Their mother did not attend the baby’s funeral. To David, the brother Peter appeared as a three-dimensional boy the age he would have been had he lived, seven. Like Jess’s fictional experiences with TillyTilly, David could not control Peter’s appearances or their conversations. Peter’s visits grew more frequent whenever David feared for his family’s stability. The visits grew less frequent whenever David perceived himself as supported by his parents. Years later, after David’s mother worked through Peter’s death by attending a friend’s funeral, David was free to and did develop external friends and interests. Afterward, Peter’s visits grew rare and even these were merely brief check-ins. Analysis concluded that David’s hallucinations

were a product of his mother's stalled mourning and David's resultant fears of family disintegration as a result.

⁸³ Edward Bibring, "The Conception of the Repetition Compulsion," *The Psychoanalytic Quarterly*, 12 (1943): 486-519.

⁸⁴ Hirsch's notion of postmemory is a vision that a child constructs about her parent's history which is of necessity fictional.

⁸⁵ Doran and Hansen, Sluzki.

⁸⁶ Creating the notion of diaspora nations is part and parcel of globalization's ever-accelerating compression of time and space which reshapes our understanding of "the world." As a discourse and as a process, Wim van Binsbergen, Rijk van Dijk, and Jan-Bart Gewald note that globalization is becoming more widely recognized as increasingly responsible for the devaluation of "nation-state" as an international delimiter and for the decreasing importance of national boundaries at all (26). Recent discussions about globalization have concluded that we live in a postnational world, but the dissolution of the nation-state is still more theoretical than material. The international movement of economic and human resources that categorize globalization processes mimics the colonial period's movement of labor, yet again creating diaspora communities that undermine national ideologies of homogeneity and instead introduce transnational populations of marginalized remainders. These discussions have simultaneously acknowledged the caveat that in order to be involved in global processes it is still necessary to fly a national flag. Wim van Binsbergen, Rijk van Dijk, and Jan-Bart Gewald, "Situating Globality: African Agency in the Appropriation of Global Culture," *Situating Globality: African Agency in the Appropriation of Global Culture*, ed. Wim van Binsbergen and Rijk van Dijk (Leiden, Netherlands: Brill, 2004) 1-54. See also Manuel Castells, *The Power of Identity* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1999); and David Held, Anthony McGrew, David Goldblatt, and Jonathan Perraton, *Global Transformations: Politics, Economics and Culture* (Stanford: Stanford UP, 1999).

⁸⁷ J. F. Ade. Ajayi, "The National Question in Nigeria in Historical Perspective," *Tradition and Change in Africa: The Essays of J. F. Ade. Ajayi*, ed. Toyin Falola, (Trenton: Africa World P, 2000) 217-41.

⁸⁸ Joe Teffo, "Monarchy and Democracy: Towards a Cultural Renaissance," *Journal on African Philosophy* 1.1 (2002), 23 March 2008 <<http://www.africanphilosophy.com/vol1.1/toc1.1.htm>>.

Chapter 4

¹ Frederick Cooper offers an overview of decolonization across sub-Saharan Africa that refuses to divide African history into periods called "colonialism" and "postcolonialism" because the two eras are not as different as the terms suggest. The Third All-African People's Conference defines "neo-colonialism" as the "survival of the colonial system in spite of the formal recognition of political independence in emerging countries which become the victims of an indirect and subtle form of domination by political, economic, social, military or technical means." Frederick Cooper, *Africa since 1940: The Past of the Present* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2002). Third All-African Peoples Conference, *Resolution on Neocolonialism*, Cairo, Egypt: 25-31 March 1961.

² Hélène Cixous, "The Laugh of the Medusa," trans. Keith Cohen and Paula Cohen, *Critical Theory Since 1965*, ed. Hazard Adams and Leroy Searle (Tallahassee: Florida State UP, 1986) 309-20.

³ Fanon's work with Algerian trauma sufferers echoes in the immigrant psychiatrist character Juana. The crucial difference in this parallel is not lost on the careful reader: Fanon's work was with sufferers of colonial trauma; Juana's work is with sufferers of neocolonial trauma. In making this connection, Armah suggests that differences between the traumatizing potentials of the colonial and neocolonial conditions are minimal if not illusory.

⁴ Mugezi's intentional escape off the grid echoes the reasoning of Ralph Ellison's protagonist in *Invisible Man*, who says, "I myself, after existing some twenty years, did not become alive until I discovered my invisibility" (7). Ralph Ellison, *Invisible Man* (New York: Vintage, 1995).

⁵ The postcolonial *Bildungsroman* can thus operate as a "demarginalizing" performance of hegemonic critique in its iteration of the boundaries of post-independence citizenry (Slaughter 1416). Slaughter

argues that, from a human rights perspective, “we might recognize *Bildungsroman* . . . as the name of a function, the generic label that good reformists repeatedly give to texts that perform a certain kind of incorporative literary social work” (1411).

⁶ M. M. Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays*, ed. Michael Holquist, trans. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist (Austin: U of Texas P, 1981). See in particular pages 259-422.

⁷ Catharine Stimpson argues for a reevaluation of our thinking about the intersections of women, literature, and society that accommodate a male writer who addresses the figure of woman. When a male writer writes about women he faces a biological difference from his subject as well as the difference of shared experience that a female writer writing about women would not have. To Stimpson, the male writer may choose one of several strategies to bridge the chasm between himself and the women about whom he wishes to write. His efforts are necessarily limited by anatomy, however, so that while “a male writer may speak of, for, to, and from the feminine. He cannot speak, except fictively, of, for, to, *and* from the female” (Stimpson 179, emphasis in original). Cixous argues, too, that “there are some men (all too few) who aren’t afraid of femininity” (315). Catharine R. Stimpson, “Ad/d Feminam: Women, Literature, and Society,” *Literature and Society*, ed. Edward W. Said, Selected Papers from the English Inst., 3 (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1980) 174-92.

⁸ This engagement is historically fraught and has been theorized most recently and at length by Oyèwùmí and others in *African Women and Feminism*.

⁹ Virginia Woolf’s notion of androgynous writing as being the only live writing anticipates African notions of feminism which view humanity as androgynous. Woolf’s request for androgynous writing is that “if one is a man, still the woman part of the brain must have effect; and a woman also must have intercourse with the man in her” (1978). Woolf cautions that anything written through only one gendered side of the brain is “fatal” or, worse yet, “doomed to death” (1981). Virginia Woolf, *A Room of One’s Own, The Norton Anthology of English Literature*, ed. M. H. Abrams, 6th ed., vol. 2 (New York: Norton, 1993) 1926-86.

¹⁰ Referring to her famous notion of *l’écriture féminine* (“women’s writing”), Cixous notes that the works of some male writers “might be called feminine” (311). Cixous refers to Jean Genet, but African male writers who create strong women characters have also been famously characterized as having feminine writing. Some early reviewers were convinced that Nuruddin Farah was a woman. Farah tells an interviewer:

In 1968 I began work on *From a Crooked Rib*, my first published novel, in preparation for a reflection on the politics of gender in Somali society long before feminism became a byword. Moreover I remember receiving a letter from the British publisher who asked me if I was a man or a woman. Soon after its publication in 1970, I got used to receiving letters addressed to me as Ms. or Mrs. Farah, and for a good while I was at a loss as to whether I should disabuse them of their assumption by telling them that I was after all a man. (“Conversation”)

Nuruddin Farah, *From a Crooked Rib* (New York: Penguin, 2006).

¹¹ Kathryn Robson argues that Cixous’s interest in the feminine writing body is not essentialist, as has been argued, but is instead a way to link the body with the unconscious. Robson writes:

It is through writing (with) the body, Cixous claims, that one can gain access to repressed impulses and desires and that otherwise hidden parts of the psyche can emerge.

Cixous’s writing is concerned above all with articulating that which would usually remain unsaid and unknown: in her words, “Writing is the delicate, difficult and dangerous means of succeeding in avowing the inavowable”. . . . Her writing uses the body as a means of access to the psyche, exploring the body in order to delve into the psyche. (63)

Kathryn Robson, *Writing Wounds: The Inscription of Trauma in Post-1968 French Women’s Life-Writing*, Genus, 4 (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2004).

¹² Kaja Silverman, *Male Subjectivity at the Margins* (New York: Routledge, 1992).

¹³ Daniel Boyarin, "Freud's Baby, Fliess's Maybe: Homophobia, Anti-Semitism, and the Invention of Oedipus," *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies* 2.1-2 (1995): 115-47.

¹⁴ David L. Eng, *Racial Castration: Managing Masculinity in America*, Perverse Modernities (Durham: Duke UP, 2001). Lynne Kirby, "Male Hysteria and Early Cinema," *Camera Obscura: A Journal of Feminism and Film Theory* 17 (1988): 113-31.

¹⁵ Perhaps Freud does not pursue the notion of male hysteria as a viable social condition because too much is at stake ideologically and nationally. At the moment of crafting a new nationhood, the moment Freud inhabits after the war, the figure of the male hysteric threatens "what is promised to be a glorious future: unimpeded access to paternal privilege" (Eng 178).

¹⁶ Paul Smith, "Vas," *Camera Obscura: A Journal of Feminism and Film Theory* 17 (1988): 89-111.

¹⁷ I want to be careful not to incorrectly label Mwangi, Armah, or Isegawa as feminists because I have not seen published evidence that they identify themselves as such. Nevertheless, their work in these novels recalls Stephen Heath's essay on male feminists and the biological barriers that inform their work. Heath addresses this problem, writing that male feminists, "no matter how 'sincere,' 'sympathetic' or whatever, . . . are always also in a male position which brings with it all the implications of domination and appropriation, everything precisely that is being challenged, that has to be altered" (1). Heath proposes that feminist men must identify and dismantle the forces of oppression that link all men to each other. Stephen Heath, "Male Feminism," *Men in Feminism*, ed. Alice Jardine and Paul Smith (New York: Methuen, 1987) 1-32.

¹⁸ Feminist scholars as well as female oral historians of Mau Mau and Kenyan women's resistance acknowledge Mary Muthoni Nyanjiru as one of the first Kenyan freedom fighters killed in struggle with colonialists during the Harry Thuku uprising in 1922. Thuku had been jailed for insurgence and thousands demonstrated against his incarceration. When the male demonstrators began to disperse as ordered, the women were outraged. Nyanjiru stripped naked in a Kikuyu gesture of extreme contempt. "You take my dress and give me your trousers," she castigated the men as impotent. "You men are cowards. What are you waiting for? Our leader is in there. Let's get him" (Turner and Neal). Nyanjiru's actions incensed the crowd; colonial police killed her and nineteen others in the ensuing confusion. Terisa E. Turner and Teena Jo Neal, "Interview with Muthoni Likimani," foreword, *Mau Mau Women*, ed. Terisa Turner, home page, 15 Nov. 2006, 25 Apr. 2008 <<http://www.uoguelph.ca/~terisatu/MauMau/index.htm>>.

¹⁹ *Carcase for Hounds* has received sparse critical attention. The scholarship I have found on the novel reads it as anti-Mau Mau, but I do not read it thusly. Instead, I read Mwangi's text as articulating a weak moment in Mau Mau history that was later corrected, the result of which secured Kenyan independence. See, for example, Lars Johansson, *In the Shadow of Neocolonialism: Meja Mwangi's Novels 1973-1990*, Umeå Studies in the Humanities, 110 (Stockholm: Acta Universitatis Umensis, 1992); and David Maughan Brown, *Land, Freedom and Fiction: History and Ideology in Kenya* (London: Zed, 1985).

²⁰ Cheng discusses the "transformative potentials of grief" at length (65).

²¹ Greg Forter, "Against Melancholia: Contemporary Mourning Theory, Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby*, and the Politics of Unfinished Grief," *differences: A Journal of Feminist Cultural Studies* 14.2 (2003): 134-70.

²² Sigmund Freud, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, trans. and ed. James Strachey, rpt. (New York: Norton, 1961).

²³ Laura Di Prete, "Foreign Bodies:" *Trauma, Corporeality, and Textuality in Contemporary American Culture*, Literary Criticism and Cultural Theory (Routledge: New York, 2006).

²⁴ Kaja Silverman, *The Acoustic Mirror: The Female Voice in Psychoanalysis and Cinema*, Theories of Representation and Difference (Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1988). While Charles Affron argues that sound is the quality that "guarantees immediacy and presence in the system of absence that is cinema" (105), I suggest that the testimonial voice guarantees similar immediacy and presence in the experience of absence that is traumatic suffering. Charles Affron, *Cinema and Sentiment* (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1982).

²⁵ Denis Vasse argues that the voice is located "in the partition between the biological body and the body of language" (qtd. in Silverman, *Acoustic* 44, trans. Silverman). To Silverman, the voice bridges meaning and the body. See Denis Vasse, *L'ombilic et la voix: deux enfants en analyse* (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1974).

²⁶ Tasso, Torquato. *Jerusalem Delivered (Gerusalemme liberata)*, 1573, ed. and trans. Anthony M. Esolen (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 2000).

²⁷ Tasso “unwittingly kills” his beloved Clorinda in a duel while she is disguised. He wounds her again later when her soul is “imprisoned” in a magic tree that he slashes in fear (Freud, *Beyond* 24). The crucial point is that of passivity—Tancred *unwittingly* brings on his traumatic suffering by *accidentally* killing his beloved.

²⁸ Mwangi’s first Mau Mau novel (and his first novel) is *Taste of Death* (Nairobi: East African Publishing House, 1975).

²⁹ E. S. Atieno-Odhiambo provides a detailed analysis of the various strains of discourse about and by African Kenyans, the formation of Mau Mau resistance, and the movement’s aims. E. S. Atieno-Odhiambo, “The Formative Years, 1945-55,” *Decolonization and Independence in Kenya: 1940-93*, ed. B. A. Ogot and W. R. Ochieng’, Eastern African Studies (London: James Curry, 1995) 25-47.

³⁰ Kenyan independence was formalized on December 12, 1963.

³¹ The state detained ninety thousand and killed one hundred fifty thousand Kikuyu. In contrast, Mau Mau activity caused two thousand deaths (Johansson 18).

³² Kenya Colony and Protectorate, African Affairs Department, *Annual Report* (1955). The same report also states:

The threat of confiscation of land, together with the imposition of 24-hour curfews also had a considerable effect in breaking the last efforts of the Mau Mau to conceal information. The confession teams in the settled areas . . . had an extremely difficult job to begin with . . . they subsequently achieved remarkable and effective results in breaking the passive wings on the farms and discovering the main gang bases or food depots. (37)

In the last two decades, Tabitha Kanogo, Cora Ann Presley and Terisa Turner have published landmark sociological studies on the breadth of Mau Mau women’s subversive activities as well as the socially transformative ramifications of the Mau Mau women’s work. Cora Ann Presley, “Kikuyu Women in the ‘Mau Mau’ Rebellion,” *In Resistance: Studies of African, Caribbean and Afro-American History*, ed. Gary Y. Okihiro (Amherst: U of Amherst P, 1986) 53-70; Presley, “The Mau Mau Rebellion, Kikuyu Women, and Social Change,” *Current Research on African Women*, spec. issue of *Canadian Journal of African Studies/Revue Canadienne des Études Africaines* 22.3 (1988): 502-27; Tabitha Kanogo, *Squatters and the Roots of Mau Mau 1905-63*, East African Studies (Athens: Ohio UP, 1987); and Terisa Turner, ed., *Mau Mau Women*, home page, 13 Oct. 2006, 25 Apr. 2008 <<http://www.uoguelph.ca/~terisatu/MauMau/index.htm>>.

³³ Male forest fighters initially argued that women were too weak to withstand inclement weather or combat. They also argued that women would undermine the active warriors’ celibacy vow. However, while recognized “forest liaisons” and families were accommodated during the Mau Mau war, conception while in the forest was considered irresponsible (Kanogo, “Kikuyu” 87). A pregnant soldier “lost the rifle” (was removed from combat) and the baby’s father was demoted (Kanogo, *Squatters* 147). Women in the forest who were already mothers either reared their children there, living as mothers rather than as combatants, or placed them in the care of close female relatives when they went on missions. Outside of these familial accommodations in the forest, however, “there was no time for enjoyment of sex. There was no tolerance for rape. Fighting was always first. The oaths which Mau Mau were taking made them highly disciplined” (Turner and Neal). Tabitha Kanogo, “Kikuyu Women and the Politics of Protest: Mau Mau,” *Images of Women in Peace and War: Cross-Cultural and Historical Perspectives*, ed. Sharon MacDonald, Pat Holden, and Shirley Ardener (London: MacMillan, 1987) 78-99.

³⁴ Gitahi, Ruth Gathoni, interview with Tabitha Kanogo, 21 and 29 Jan. 1984, “Kikuyu Women and the Politics of Protest: Mau Mau,” *Images of Women in Peace and War: Cross-Cultural and Historical Perspectives*, ed. Sharon MacDonald, Pat Holden, and Shirley Ardener (London: MacMillan, 1987) 78-99. Women’s contributions in the field were also equally recognized. Muthoni Ngatha was promoted to the senior post of Field Marshal, and Wagiri Njoroge was crowned Queen of Mau Mau in a symbolic critique of Queen Elizabeth II’s coronation. See Kanogo, “Kikuyu Women.”

³⁵ Mau Mau support defied age, gender, and class boundaries. Female and male informants, errand runners, and couriers ranged in age from below ten to the elderly. At about eight or ten, girl and boy children took a Mau Mau support oath and younger children were sealed in dedication to the struggle. Gakonyo Ndungi tells Kanogo, "If you saw my young son Hinga on the road with his toy-wheel—*mubara*—you would think he was playing. But he was really on [surveillance] duty" (Ndungi). Muthoni Likimani tells Turner and Neal, "No one would suspect a grandmother. Walking sticks in hand, they would take all kinds of things into the forest" (Turner and Neal). Mau Mau support also came from the rural poor to the urban elite who used their positions of influence to aid Mau Mau, including prominent Kikuyu and their spouses. Mama Sarah Sarai was "totally involved in Kenyatta's inner circle. She would go out of the country where she would send letters and cables and get people to write in support of Mau Mau" (Turner and Neal). Gakonyo Ndungi, interview with Tabitha Kanogo, 2 Jan. 1984, "Kikuyu Women and the Politics of Protest: Mau Mau," *Images of Women in Peace and War: Cross-Cultural and Historical Perspectives*, ed. Sharon MacDonald, Pat Holden, and Shirley Ardener (London: MacMillan, 1987) 78-99.

³⁶ One woman soldier, Wambui X, had been known as "the Killer," refused to remarry after her husband was killed. Others tell Kanogo that Wambui: "could not be ruled. She knew everything. Her hands had become very light and she could easily kill a useless husband" (Gitahi).

³⁷ The example of Wanjiru Nyamarutu's Mau Mau involvement illuminates the complexity and breadth of so many women's participation. Nyamarutu signified her Mau Mau commitment by eschewing Western clothing and wearing instead stitched cloths in traditional Kikuyu style. She collected and delivered food to fighters in four different forests for which she was ranked *Genero-wa-Rigu* ("General-in-Charge-of-Food"). She raised money, collected clothes, medicine, scrap metal for making rifles, and bottles for making ammunition. Nyamarutu later had to relocate to avoid arrest for her Mau Mau work. She then supervised oath administration, and recruited and led new guerillas to various regiments who called her *Nyina-wa-Anake* ("the Mother of Senior Warriors"). Later, Nyamarutu became a judge in the Mau Mau court system which punished anti-Mau Mau crimes, sometimes capitally. See Kanogo, *Squatters*.

³⁸ Presley argues that "women's massive participation in Mau Mau contributed to the rebellion's initial psychological, if not military successes" and that the British Government recognized that "wooing women's loyalty was an essential ingredient in winning the war" ("Mau Mau"). Military sweeps imprisoned over thirty-four thousand women from 1952 through 1958 for violating Emergency Regulations, thousands of whom were repeat offenders. No women's detention facilities existed before the Emergency, but the Government arrested so many women for Mau Mau activity that it had to build facilities to house them. The prison camps forced labor and "re-socialization" that "cleansed" prisoners who denounced Mau Mau (Kenya, Community, *Annual* [1954], 21-24; Kenya, Community, *Annual* [1955], 22-26). Women comprised a significant proportion of the prison population, and they did not receive preferential gender-based treatment (Presley, "Mau Mau"). Kenya Colony and Protectorate, Community Development Department, *Annual Report* (1954); Kenya Colony and Protectorate, Community Development Department, *Annual Report* (1955).

³⁹ Kenya National Archives, *Political Record Book*, Kiambu District, KBU/44 (1953).

⁴⁰ Home Guards escorted women to their farm plots and enforced village-wide curfews. The state forced men, women, and children villagers to work ten hour days in so-called communal labor, returning home an hour before curfew to tend garden plots, gather food, firewood, and water for cooking and cleaning. Home Guards and various other colonial administrators beat, raped, and harassed women in the village camps. Villagization created a greater incentive for the village women to organize, sharing domestic tasks and support across the collective.

⁴¹ Kenya Colony and Protectorate, African Affairs Department, Central Province, *Annual Report* (1954).

⁴² Kenya Colony and Protectorate, Community Development Department, *Annual Report* (1956).

⁴³ Great Britain, *Colonial Office Report on the Colony and Protectorate of Kenya* (London: HMSO, 1954).

⁴⁴ Kenya, Community, *Annual* (1955).

⁴⁵ Luise White, "Separating the Men from the Boys: Constructions of Gender, Sexuality, and Terrorism in Central Kenya, 1939-1959," *International Journal of African Historical Studies* 23.1 (1990): 1-25.

⁴⁶ Gilroy notes that “the most potent symbols of the [colonial] national culture are not merely racialized but gendered too:” the image of racism is Britannia, an aged white woman being chased by black children who will certainly mug her (*Small* 25).

⁴⁷ Pinkie Mekgwe, “Constructing Postcolonial Maleness in Ayi Kwei Armah’s *Fragments*,” *Gender and Sexuality in African Literature and Film*, eds. Ada Uzoamaka Azodo and Maureen Ngozi Eke (Trenton: Africa World P, 2007) 49-56.

⁴⁸ Kofi Owusu, “Armah’s F-R-A-G-M-E-N-T-S: Madness as Artistic Paradigm,” *Callaloo* 0.35 (1988): 361-70.

⁴⁹ About the trauma of deciding to write, Armah has written that, as a writer himself, he began to respect and revere “persons and groups that had worked to create new, better social realities in place of those they had found at birth” (“One” 1753). Armah found that, to his dismay, he could not help Africa as a freedom fighter. Psychically and physically sick with his own feeling of militaristic and nationalist impotence, Armah resigned to write “as the least parasitic way” of contributing to building a postcolonial Africa (“One” 1753). He writes that he has hoped that his writing can produce change: “I was in the position of a spore which, having finally accepted its destiny as a fungus, still wonders if it might produce a penicillin” (“One” 1753). Ayi Kwei Armah, “One Writer’s Education,” *West Africa* 26 Aug. (1985): 1752-53.

⁵⁰ According to van Binsbergen, et al., global capitalism introduces or exacerbates local and global class divisions of have and have-not so that extreme wealth is amassed only through the exploitation of the labor class (8, 9).

⁵¹ Mkegwe discusses this point at length.

⁵² Abena Busia contends that Armah’s female characters are either stereotyped or marginalized in the text. For Busia, Juana’s and other women’s roles in *Fragments* are derivative of Baako’s, and either unsexed or denied sexuality (48). I suggest that the women in *Fragments* are not only complex, but that they also operate in complex ways as women and as sexual beings. Juana’s sexual relationship with Baako, and the sexualized flirtations between Naana and Baako, Araba and Baako, and Efua’s teasing of flirtations between Araba and Baako depict their sense of themselves as both women and as sexual beings. Abena P. K. Busia, “Parasites and Prophets: The Use of Women in Ayi Kwei Armah’s Novels,” *Critical Perspectives on Ayi Kwei Armah*, ed. Derek Wright (Washington, DC: Three Continents, 1992) 48-71.

⁵³ Diana Taylor, “Trauma and Performance: Lessons from Latin America,” *PMLA* 121.5 (2006): 1674-77.

⁵⁴ J. L. Austin defines the performative as language that acts. J. L. Austin, *How to Do Things with Words* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1962).

⁵⁵ For an extended dramatic treatment of this theme, see Wole Soyinka, *Death and the King’s Horseman*, Norton Critical Ed. (New York: Norton, 2002).

Chapter 5

¹ Josephine Dodd, “The South African Literary Establishment and the Textual Production of ‘Woman’,” *South African Feminisms: Writing, Theory, and Criticism 1990-1994*, ed. M. J. Daymond (New York: Garland, 1996) 327-40.

² Louise Bethlehem, “Pliant/Compliant; Grace/Disgrace; Plaint/Complaint,” *Symposium on Disgrace*, ed. Leon de Kock, spec. issue of *Scrutiny2: Issues in English Studies in Southern Africa* 7.1 (2002): 20-24.

³ David Attwell, *J. M. Coetzee: South Africa and the Politics of Writing* (Berkeley: U of California P, 1993).

⁴ Michael Marais, “‘Little Enough, Less Than Little: Nothing’: Ethics, Engagement, and Change in the Fiction of J. M. Coetzee,” *Modern Fiction Studies* 46.1 (2000): 159-82.

⁵ Indeed, Coetzee’s compatriot Elleke Boehmer has suggested that *Disgrace* “may well have paved the way” for Coetzee’s Nobel Award (135). Elleke Boehmer, “Sorry, Sorrier, Sorriest: The Gendering of Contrition in J. M. Coetzee’s *Disgrace*,” *J. M. Coetzee and the Idea of the Public Intellectual*, ed.

Jayne Poyner (Athens: Ohio UP, 2008) 135-47. J. M. Coetzee, *In the Heart of the Country* (London: Secker and Warburg, 1977).

⁶ Per Wästberg, "The Work of Professor John M. Coetzee," The Nobel Prize in Literature 2003 Award Ceremony, Stockholm Concert Hall, Stockholm, 10 Dec. 2003, *The Nobel Prize in Literature 2003*, The Nobel Foundation, 2 Nov. 2006 <http://nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/literature/laureates/2003/press.html>.

⁷ *Life and Times of Michael K* won in 1983. J. M. Coetzee, *Life and Times of Michael K* (New York: Penguin, 1985).

⁸ The Man Booker Prize, sponsored by international financier the Man Group P.L.C., the Man Booker Foundation, and operated by international foodservice conglomerate Booker P.L.C., cultivates its "incomparable influence" in order to "reward merit, [and] raise the stature of the author in the eyes of the public" (*Man Booker*). Tapping a novel for the Man Booker prize proclaims it, on an international level, "contemporary quality fiction" (*Man Booker*). As an example, the 2002 winner, *The Life of Pi* by Yann Martel, has sold over one million copies and has been on the Western bestseller lists since its publication. The Booker Prize Foundation, *Man Booker Prizes*, 2007, 26 Mar. 2008 <<http://www.themanbookerprize.com>>. Yann Martel, *Life of Pi* (Edinburgh: Canongate, 2002).

⁹ Georgina Horrell, "J. M. Coetzee's *Disgrace*: One Settler, One Bullet and the 'New South Africa'," *Symposium on Disgrace*, ed. Leon de Kock, spec. issue of *Scrutiny2: Issues in English Studies in Southern Africa* 7.1 (2002): 25-32.

¹⁰ The South African Human Rights Commission (SAHRC)'s 1999 interim report on its investigations of racism in the media includes specific requests to investigate the *Mail and Guardian*'s editorial tendency to "create[] the impression that black people are essentially corrupt and incompetent" (13). The SAHRC interim report includes a joint request by the Black Lawyers Association (BLA) and the Association of Black Accountants of South Africa (ABASA) to investigate the *Mail and Guardian* for racist reporting practices. In their request, the BLA and ABASA argue that their experience and research suggests that:

Media remains largely in white hands in terms of ownership and accordingly white males by and large continue to control opinion on all current issues, whether of a political, social, economic or educational nature. . . . [T]he *Mail and Guardian*, in the mode and manner in which they deal with and expose corruption, for example: suggesting those accused are guilty even before any due process, and the under reporting of corruption (amongst whites and in the private sector) creates the impression that black people are essentially corrupt and incompetent. (SAHRC 13)

The South African Human Rights Committee, *Investigation into Racism in the Media: Interim Report*, 21 Nov. 1999, 9 Mar. 2004 <http://www.sahrc.org.za/sahrc_introduction_to_interim_report.PDF>.

¹¹ Fred Bridgland, "The Shaming of a Hero," *Sunday Herald*, 5 Oct. 2003, 9 Mar. 2004 <<http://www.sundayherald.com/newshome.shtml>>.

¹² Kai Easton examines the controversy over *Disgrace* in "J. M. Coetzee, *Disgrace*: Reading Race/Reading Scandal," *Scandalous Fictions: The Twentieth-Century Novel in the Public Sphere*, ed. Jago Morrison and Susan Watkins (Hampshire, Eng: Palgrave, 2007) 187-205. Rachel Donadio, "Out of South Africa," rev. of *Disgrace*, by J. M. Coetzee, *New York Times*, Sunday Book Review: 1-2, 16 Dec. 2007, 12 June 2008. <<http://www.nytimes.com/2007/12/16/books/review/Donadio-t.html>>.

¹³ The *Mail and Guardian*'s literary critic Shaun de Waal argues that the ANC had misread the novel and, in a strange conflation, cited poverty and illiteracy as factors contributing to the ANC's alleged misunderstanding. Britain's *The Guardian* calls the ANC remarks "a high profile attack," while the *Sunday Herald* implies an abuse of state power in Coetzee's "ugly brush with the ruling African National Congress" over a "false charge of racism" (Carroll; Bridgland). De Waal is quoted in Rory Carroll, "Nobel Prize for J. M. Coetzee: Secretive Author who made the Outsider his Art Form," *The Guardian*, 3 Oct. 2003, 22 Feb. 2004 <<http://books.guardian.co.uk/news/articles>>.

¹⁴ Daymond addresses the "positively dangerous" claim of sisterhood for all South African women given the country's "specific history of apartheid" with its embedded racially hierarchical relational scripts (xix). According to Daymond, black, brown, and white South African women must challenge the "universalism" of the sisterhood myth and establish a community recognizing difference (xix).

Only then can the work of social transformation begin, of women and by women, in the form of focusing on specific, practical tasks.

¹⁵ I do not suggest that black or brown men have never raped white women. Instead, I am thinking of Sharpe's contention that the Western rape myth was deployed in colonial India to quell native rebellion. Sharpe's argument is translocatable to (formerly) British colonial South Africa.

¹⁶ Julie Mertus, "Truth in a Box: The Limits of Justice through Judicial Mechanisms," *The Politics of Memory: Truth, Healing and Social Justice*, ed. Ifi Amadiume and Abdullahi An-Na'im (New York: Zed, 2000) 142-61.

¹⁷ Derek Attridge, *The Singularity of Literature* (London: Routledge, 2004).

¹⁸ In *The Wretched of the Earth*, Fanon describes the disconnection from the self which results from existing in a culture of colonial violence:

[C]olonialism forces the people it dominates to ask themselves the question constantly: "In reality, who am I?" The defensive attitudes created by this violent bringing together of the colonized man and the colonial system form themselves into a structure which then reveals the colonized personality. This "sensitivity" is easily understood if we simply study and are alive to the number and depth of the injuries inflicted upon a native during a single day spent amidst the colonial regime. (250)

Decolonization, Fanon argues, rewrites the colonized "thing" into a "new" man (or, I would add, woman) (36-37). In *Black Skin, White Masks*, Fanon cites the psychopathology that results from being black in a white-dominated culture: "A normal Negro child, having grown up within a normal family, will become abnormal on the slightest contact with the white world" (143).

¹⁹ Wole Soyinka, *The Burden of Memory, the Muse of Forgiveness* (New York: Oxford UP, 2000).

²⁰ Grant Farred, "The Black Intellectual's Work is Never Done: a Critique of the Discourse of Reconciliation in South Africa," rev. of *Complicities: The Intellectual and Apartheid*, by Mark Sanders, *Postcolonial Studies* 7.1 (2004): 113-23.

²¹ Ifi Amadiume and Abdullahi An-Na'im, "Facing Truth, Facing Justice," introduction, *The Politics of Memory: Truth, Healing and Social Justice*, ed. Ifi Amadiume and Abdullahi An-Na'im (New York: Zed, 2000) 1-20.

²² Interestingly, Marais characterizes Melanie's rape as "rape" in an earlier essay on the same topic ("Possibility" 58). Mike Marais, "The Possibility of Ethical Action: J. M. Coetzee's *Disgrace*," *Scrutiny2: Issues in English Studies in Southern Africa* 5.1 (2000): 57-63.

²³ Hesford 23.

²⁴ Stalling seems to be a major trope in Coetzee. For an explication of stalling that is only correctable in the margin in *Foe*, see Spivak's chapter, "Literature," in *A Critique of Postcolonial Reason*. J. M. Coetzee, *Foe* (New York: Penguin, 1987).

²⁵ Perhaps because of his confrontation with Isaacs, David assumes that he—not Melanie—is the agent of her sexual harassment complaint and withdrawal from the university. David's assumption, provided as fact because he is the narrator and following Melanie's removal from the text, removes the last possibility of autonomy in Melanie's response to her sexual exploitation. But all we really know is what Isaacs tells David, which is that he wants David punished under the university (not state) law.

²⁶ In reference to the fantasy of "imperialist subject-production," Spivak writes, "White men are saving brown women from brown men" ("Subaltern" 296).

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