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MUSTAPHA KHAROUA

TRAUMATIC REALISM IN DIASPORIC AFRICAN WRITING

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Diasporic African Writing*

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation aims to address literary texts written in English by diasporic writers of African descent in the context of trauma. Drawing on Michael Rothberg's concept of "traumatic realism," it seeks to question the Eurocentrism that marks cultural trauma studies and bring into focus the anxieties of home and (un)belonging as indicators of post-traumatic African cultures. The three analyzed works by Abdulrazak Gurnah, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, and Caryl Phillips are placed at the crossroads of cultures, beyond the victim/perpetrator dichotomy, in order to construct new cartographies that question the history of colonial modernity. The spatiotemporal intricacies of postmemory in the texts problematize the "realism" of nationalist narratives and question the prefix "post" in "post-colonial" that claims a "working through" the ills of the past.

Confronted with the detritus of the "real," the African diaspora seeks to provide an ethical understanding of the past as it lays bare the far-reaching aftereffects of colonial and slave-holding enterprises on the daily lives of the displaced Africans. In "traumatic realist" terms, the writers negotiate the politics of space and race as they are constantly implicated as postgenerations of colonialism and slavery, while engaging contemporary readers ethically in the repercussions of a painful past. Several studies have addressed displacement as a traumatic aftereffect of colonialism and slavery. Yet, "traumatic realism" and its exploration of the overarching notion of "the implicated subject" by writers of African descent has not been given enough consideration. This dissertation follows a chronotopic (Bakhtin) line of investigation that realigns the dichotomous past and present, or the extreme and the everyday, as it draws on the intricacies of postmemory that bring forth the "lived" manifestations of the colonial discourse.

Central to this study is the way in which the structures of nation-states, especially in Africa and/or Britain, continue to foster the forces of forgetting and separation that blight the realities of the displaced African subjects. Today, we bear witness to the growing numbers of refugees, exiles, and immigrants, particularly African ones, who are confronted with oppression, genocide, and racism between the structures of the nation-states in Africa and Europe. This context stresses the need to address pressing questions that highlight what Michael Rothberg refers to as "historical responsibility,"

which engages other subjects, be they descendants or non-descendants of colonial violence, to bear responsible witness to the lasting aftereffects of the colonial and slaveholding pasts. The critical double bind of their representation of the past brings two issues to the fore: Although they need to provide a particularized documentation of the past, the writers resort to a non-competitive model that locates the violence inflicted on the displaced Africans side by side with those suffering from other forms of violence centered in the West.

Keywords: African literature, trauma, realism, memory, diaspora, Abdulrazak Gurnah, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, Caryl Phillips

Kharoua, Mustapha

Traumaattinen realismi diasporisessa afrikkalaisessa kirjallisuudessa

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ABSTRAKTI

Väitöstutkimus tarkastelee afrikkalaistaustaisten englanninkielisten diasporakirjailijoiden teoksia trauman kontekstissa. Michael Rothbergin traumaattisen realismin käsitteen avulla tutkimus kyseenalaistaa kulttuurisen traumatutkimuksen eurosentrisyyden ja tuo tutkimuksen keskiöön kodin sekä kuulumisen ja kuulumattomuuden tuntemukset post-traumaattisten afrikkalaisten kulttuurien indikaattoreina. Sijoittamalla tutkimuksessa tarkasteltavat kolme Abdurazak Gurnahin, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichien ja Caryl Phillipsin romaania kulttuurien risteyspisteeseen, uhri/väkivallan tekijä -dikotomian tuolle puolen, tutkimus kartoittaa uudelleen ja kyseenalaistaa kolonialistista moderniteettia. Tarkasteltavien teosten esiintuomat postmuistin (postmemory) spatio-temporaaliset piirteet problematisoivat kansallisten kertomusten "realismin" ja kyseenalaistavat post-koloniaalin käsitteen post-etuliitteen, jossa korostuu menneisyyden negatiivisten kokemusten työstäminen.

Kohdatessaan "reaalisen" jälkeensä jättämät jäljet, afrikkalainen diaspora pyrkii rakentamaan eettisen käsityksen menneisyydestä paljastamalla kolonialismin ja orjakaupan kauaksi ulottuvat jälkivaikutukset paikkansa menettäneiden afrikkalaisten elämässä. Traumaattisen realismin käsittein ilmaistuna kirjailijat neuvottelevat tilan ja rodun politiikkojen kanssa, sillä ne ovat jatkuvasti implisiittisesti läsnä kolonialismia ja orjuutta seuranneiden sukupolvien elämässä. Tarkasteltavat teokset kutsuvat nykyhetken lukijoita osallistumaan eettisesti kivuliaan menneisyyden jälkiseurauksiin. Vaikka useat tutkimukset ovat tarkastelleet paikaltaan siirtymisiä kolonialismin ja orjuuden traumaattisina seurauksina, afrikkalaislähtöisten kirjailijoiden tavoille hyödyntää traumaattisen realismin käsitettä ja sille keskeistä implikoidun subjektin käsitettä ei ole tarkasteltu riittävästi. Väitöstutkimuksessa hyödynnetään M.M. Bahtinin kronotoopin käsitteelle pohjautuvaa tutkimustapaa, joka yhdistää niin nykyisyyden ja menneisyyden kuin äärimmäisyyden ja arjen vastakohta-asettelut hyödyntämällä postmuistin tapoja tuoda esiin kolonialistisen diskurssin elettyjä ilmentymiä.

Tutkimuksessa tarkastellaan keskeisesti niitä tapoja, joilla erityisesti niin afrikkalaiset kansallisvaltiot kuin Britannia vaalivat unohtamista ja erottamista paikaltaan siirtyneiden afrikkalaisten elämää hankaloittavina piirteinä. Tämän päivän maailmassa todistamme päivittäin erityisesti afrikkalaisten pakolaisten, maanpakolaisten ja siirtolaisten lisääntyviä kohtaamisia sorron, kansanmurhan ja rasismien kanssa niin Afrikan ja Euroopan kansallisvaltioissa kuin niiden välissä. Tässä kontekstissa tu-

lee korostaa tarvetta tarkastella huomioltamme vaativia kysymyksiä, jotka korostavat Michael Rothbergin "historiallisen vastuun" käsitettä. Rothbergin mukaan jokaisen, riippumatta siitä ovatko he koloniaalisen väkivallan harjoittajien tai uhrien perillisiä vai eivät, tulee säilytettävä muisto kolonialismista ja orjuudesta sekä niiden jälkiseurauksista. Tämä menneisyyden representaatioiden kriittinen kaksoissidos korostaa kahta seikkaa: vaikka kirjailijoiden tulee dokumentoida tietynkaltaisia menneisyyksiä, niin tehdessään he hyödyntävät tapoja, joilla paikaltaan siirrettyjen afrikkalaisten kokema väkivalta asetetaan rinnakkain niiden kanssa, jotka kärsivät muista länsimaihin keskittyvistä väkivallan muodoista.

Avainsanat: afrikkalainen kirjallisuus, trauma, realismi, muisti, diaspora, Abdulrazak Gurnah, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, Caryl Phillips

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DEDICATION

My humble effort I dedicate to my loving wife. Without her support and encouragement, the completion of this work would not have been possible. You are the best thing that has ever happened to me.

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1 Introduction

Since the ethical turn of the early 1990s, cultural research centering on violent pasts has brought traumatic aftereffects to bear on cultural and literary studies. A great deal of valuable work has examined the need to particularly infuse literary exegesis with trauma-centered readings. The Euro-American cultural trauma studies carried out especially by theorists of the Holocaust and studies of post-9/11 traumatic aftereffects have emphasized the importance of the hermeneutics of pain when grappling with epistemological questions related to justice. However, in Craps and Buelens's view, such works have not fully accomplished their ethical promise to bear witness responsibly, since the Eurocentrism that marks their focus on specific events falls short of providing readings that grant postcolonial and post-slavery legacies their "traumatic due" (2008).

The ensuing injustice in these studies feeds the need to redirect the readers' attention toward the legacies of violent events centered in non-Western contexts. Recent interest in trauma in postcolonial African cultures emanates from the urgency of the demands raised by the depressing stories that continue to emerge from the posttraumatic cultures of the black continent (Eaglestone 2008), stories that engage witnesses, be they descendants or non-descendants of the colonial past, to become responsible "bystanders" of the aftereffects of the extreme. Cathy Caruth's summation that "history, like trauma, is never simply one's own," and that "history is precisely the way we are implicated in each other's traumas" (Caruth 1996, 24), saliently anchors the representation of the "real" in history to new ways of reading and listening that enjoin everybody to bear responsible witness (cf. Rothberg 2006; 2008). This thesis follows this line of thought. It aims to examine these issues through an analysis of three contemporary texts written by African and black British diaspora writers, namely *By the Sea* (2001) by Abdulrazak Gurnah, *Half of a Yellow Sun* by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie (2006), and *Foreigners: Three English Lives* (2007) by Caryl Phillips. I want to read these works as trauma narratives that seriously engage with questions of justice and historical responsibility in postgenerational terms. As will be explained in Chapter Five, the inclusion of Caryl Phillips's work as African diasporic writing draws attention to the notion of the writer as an "implicated subject" in postgenerational terms. My reading of the text as such is due to the importance of bringing into focus the writer's belonging to the *posttraumatic* African culture given the existence of the same ideological cultures that have contributed to his separation from his African past (cf. Rothberg 2013). Accordingly, the construction of an emerging African diaspora spatiotemporally is based on writing as a means of forging an identity in flux. Throughout my analysis of the texts, I will use Michael Rothberg's notion of "traumatic realism" in order to argue that, as the diasporic writers are confronted with the belated effects of colonialism and slavery, they are engaged responsibly in implicating contemporary readers in the repercussions of a violent past. As a hallmark of contemporary African realities, displacement needs to be given its due consideration when analyzing texts that seek to come to terms with a painful past. In particular, my reading especially

focuses on the way in which the texts call into question the conceptual foundations of colonial modernity by laying bare its corrosive aftereffects on the daily lives of displaced Africans. This work is especially indebted to the examination of issues of color, racism, imprisonment, discrimination, and state oppression as daily reflections of far-reaching repercussions shared by displaced Africans.

1.1 TRAUMATIC REALISM: AFRICAN DIASPORA AND COMPLICITY

Out of historical responsibility, Frantz Fanon's multidisciplinary body of work has set postcolonial theory to investigate the psychology of the dispossessed in the colonial and postcolonial realities. His work is an inspiration for the theorists who have located "traumatic" relevance in narratives that grapple with the aftereffects of colonialism and slavery (cf. Craps and Buelens, 2008). Drawing on Michael Rothberg's notion of "traumatic realism" (2000), this study partakes in debates that reflect on the persistent questions of justice and historical responsibility, as it presents readings that view the displacement of African subjects through the hermeneutics of pain. Throughout my discussion of traumatic realism as a theoretical framework, I want to argue that the forces of separation and isolation that bred the ground for colonialism and slavery continue to belatedly affect the everyday of the African diaspora in all facets of life. On that account, "long-term, cumulative and other forms of structural oppression" trouble the binary between the extreme and the everyday (Craps 2013, 4). I especially draw attention to the moral prerogative to historicize the painful past through narratives that foreground the trauma of displacement in African literature in English. My focus is on the ways in which African diasporan texts narrating traumatic events always seek witnessing that takes place at the crossroads of cultures. These works especially delineate the intersection of the legacies of colonialism, slavery, the World Wars, and other atrocities committed especially between Europe and Africa (cf. Eaglestone 2008; see also Rothberg 2006).

Central to this study is how, within the framework of traumatic realism, issues bearing on realism should intimately correlate with the overarching category of the "implicated subject" (Rothberg 2013). This subject, who acts as a "bystander" of the extreme, needs to bear witness responsibly to the long-term and long-distance impact of the violence inflicted by colonialism and slavery. Refusing to offer a simplistic reflection of a painful past, the realism in the texts under analysis is implicated in laying bare the haunting legacies of colonial modernity through nuanced textual experimentation. In the shadow of the nationalist ideologies that celebrate modernity, the driving force these writings lies in their constant struggle to break free from the shackles of oppression and exploitation. The writings' struggle against the forces of amnesia imposed by nationalist ideologies thus propels them to question the hyphenated prefix "post" in post-colonialism (Gandhi 1998), not to say post-slavery, by bringing the violence of colonial modernity to bear on the daily lives of the African diasporic *postgenerations*. They thus do not focus on the *posttraumatic* in African cultures as a sign of recovery, as they constantly struggle to come to terms with the painful past. They seek to breach the boundaries between past and present—an assumption that

situates trauma between the event and its belatedness—through spatiotemporal constellations that blast open the isolation inflicted by the hegemonic discourse. Based on Roger Luckhurst’s theorization of how the investigation of individual trauma has to be “tangled up” with broader issues of modernity, above all “industrialization, bureaucracy, and war” (Luckhurst 2008, 14-15), I want to bring to the readers’ attention the corrosive impact of the machinery of modernity on the daily lives of displaced Africans today (cf. Luckhurst 2008; Rothberg 2014; Visser 2014).

Owing to the growing interest in contemporary crises of displacement, migration, and hybridity in African texts, it is irrefutably paramount to analyze African literary works from Caruth’s view that displacement, in its textual and material forms, bears a close relation with trauma (Caruth 1996). Criticism has been levelled at Caruth’s failure to transcend the Eurocentric frame (cf. Craps 2013). Yet, her salient contribution to trauma studies may be confirmed through referring to Rothberg’s statement that “it is difficult to imagine trauma as not involving dislocation of subjects, histories, and cultures” (2014, xii). His conclusion draws attention to Edward Said’s attempt at historicizing displacement when he points out that contemporary history is marred by an unprecedented “scale” of dispossession. In his view, our era “is indeed the age of the refugee, the displaced person, mass migration” (Said 1994, 137-138). His prophecy has rightly predicted that more violence for the dispossessed looms just as large. More is in store especially for those who share the demise engendered by the machinery of colonial modernity, modern warfare, imperialism and totalitarianism exerted by post-independence nationalist regimes (Said 1994 138). Said’s statement implies the necessity to grant those who have suffered oppression in silence the right to historical dignity. The oft-cited quote above has thus inspired my reading of the African texts under study through the engaging imperative that grants justice to African subjects who share the anxieties of unbelonging in Africa and/or Britain across generations (cf. Nyman 2009). I want to read the “traumatized” texts written by African diasporic postgenerations as attempts to rescue their history. Their aim is to fight the forces of amnesia and isolation nurtured by the nationalist ideologies that maintain the enduring aftereffects of colonialism and slavery.

My primary interest is in how the intricate strands of “postmemory” (Hirsch 2008), particularly for the African post-generational diaspora, draw attention to how communities may be constructed transnationally in order to engage more bystanders to bear witness responsibly (cf. Nyman 2009; Herman 1992). Though a raft of valuable work has been produced about the traumatic African pasts (cf. Woods 2007; Eaglestone 2008), “traumatic realism” as an approach to reading texts of a diasporic nature has not been given sufficient consideration. Under the assumption that “realism” remains paramount for anchoring justice to representing the African pasts, a need arises to question the dark underside of colonial modernity. Within the framework of spatiotemporally restrictive paradigms, the binary of Europe/Africa, Self/Other, has been produced primarily by the history of modernity, whose “ideals of rationalism and universality are central” to an allegedly “prehistoric” continent deemed to have been “born to modernity” because of the slave trade and colonialism (Olaussen 2009a, x). As such, a reassessment of the modern/premodern, here/there Manicheanism aims at fighting the forces that belatedly isolate and, by implication, condemn African histories to frozenness. This thesis attempts to investigate how the works under study

bring into the open the contradictions of nationalism and its oppressive politics in both post-independence Africa and the Metropolis. It will argue that, through revitalizing memory, the emerging geographies of memory that characterize African texts strive to construct a collective self beyond national boundaries. I want to emphasize that these works are both interdisciplinary and relational in nature. My argument is allied with Irene Visser's view that

postcolonial trauma theory needs a broader basis than that provided by psychoanalysis and deconstruction [...] Now, there is a widespread understanding that a broader, interdisciplinary, comparative and relational approach to trauma will open ways of accommodating not only culture-specific, but also broader registers of trauma research for postcolonial studies. (Visser 2014, 1)

Given that the depth and breadth of the term "trauma" lie beyond simple definitions, the quote above sets in motion continuous investigations and negotiations that problematize the victim/perpetrator binary. If postcolonial theorists purport to attain full recovery from the past, they are stripped of the responsibility to bear witness to the new forms that trauma as an "unsayable" phenomenon seems to assume. They thus take into account the due critical position that opens new avenues into the poetics and politics of relation through non-competitive forms of comparison that grant justice to other legacies of violence. What needs to guide the critique of colonialism and its haunting legacies is the assumption that trauma, in Visser's view, needs to be construed as an intricate "void" or as a "knot" that stimulates thinking and, out of moral necessity, connects academic disciplines, "histories, geographies and communities" (Visser 2014, 1; see also Rothberg 2006; Luckhurst 2008). By continually expanding, trauma poses as a "knotted entanglement" that preserves contradictions by binding together the "recuperative or transformative potential" of inquiry with "the Derridean notion of the ultimately unknowable and 'unsayable' nature of the full traumatic experience at the center of that entanglement" (Visser 2014, 3).

In traumatic realist terms, the tendencies that underlie the explorations of trauma have to consider its complexity as their modes of address are both "realist" and "anti-realist" in approach (Rothberg 2000, 3-4). Through intertextual and interdisciplinary investigations, all facets of life in African posttraumatic cultures can be brought into focus by the debates that are sparked by the memory work of the diaspora. Oppression in the public sphere mainly constitutes the detritus of the "real" in which the African diaspora are implicated, constantly driving African literature to make clear the persistence of the same ideological structures that made colonialism and slavery possible.

1.2 NEW GEOGRAPHIES OF MEMORY

The focus of this dissertation is primarily on the posttraumatic effects of a painful past upon the people of African descent who write in English. Using the language of the oppressor is certainly another reason the question of complicity should come to the forefront. I want to particularly explore African cultures and their diasporic

descendants in view of the enduring aftereffects of slavery and colonialism inflicted upon African subjects. My aim is to examine how such legacies weigh on the writings, of which displacement and the construction of diasporic communities over distant spaces and times are the binding themes. I am well aware that North Africa should be part of my discussion of African writings. However, for technical and ethical reasons, this study may run the risk of failing to provide a full-fledged reading that would do justice to African literature about displacement. My future project will focus primarily on the North African region given that it deserves to be given due consideration. I thus aim to place emphasis on the legacies of the encounter between British colonialism, its language and culture, and the diaspora who are descendants of the black continent.

Many issues at stake remain unexplored as regards this encounter. The tide-bound Eastern and Western parts of Africa, and the Caribbean constitute geographical settings that bind together far-flung histories. The unrecorded pasts in these regions feed the need to probe closely into the destructive manifestations of the history of colonial modernity. They especially call attention to how the colonial encounter has produced the loss of a sense of home for the descendants of extreme events (cf. Gilroy 1993; Steiner 2008). For reasons that necessitate a critical engagement with Eastern Africa, Tina Steiner, for instance, speaks of the analytical purchase of using Mikhail Bakhtin's notion of the "chronotope" in order to trace new encounters between what Paul Gilroy dubs the "Black Atlantic" and the Indian Ocean through the image of the ship, which is a "marker for black modernity" (Steiner 2008, 50). Charting new terrains makes it possible to scrutinize the common aspects that allow literary witnessing to draw new cartographies of solidarity against the isolating hegemony of the discourse of modernity. Not to mention that through the multidirectionality of cultural memory, which sets forth a non-competitive model of comparison, the African pasts can be mapped upon the histories of violence at the crossroads of cultures (Rothberg 2006). The cases focusing on Africa and the interconnected legacies of colonialism and British slavery still need to be further theorized, as slavery in the British mainstream history is rather remembered for having been abolished by the benevolence of prominent British subjects (cf. Ward 2011). The geographical trajectory of this direction helps provide a critical framework for mapping the colonial aftermath on a post-slavery grid through the poetics of relation that forge critical solidarity across littoral lines. By registering the ship as the literal and the metaphoric signifier of journeying (Steiner 2008, 51), the "chronotope" may be recast as the social microcosm for the restlessness of the everyday in posttraumatic African cultures (cf. Gilroy 1993; see also Peeren 2007). In Caruth's view, such displacement needs to be rethought through the new "displaced" forms that a traumatic event may assume (1996), as movement to other shores is characteristic of the life of Africans who constantly face oppression in all fields of life.

A pressing need thus arises to examine how, by seeking to construct a diasporic community spatiotemporally out of traumatically disrupting events, African writing in its search for justice is energized by constantly probing into the "real" in representation. Following from the longstanding debate between the post-structuralist and the materialist strands in postcolonial theory, the argument of this study falls at neither extreme. It is premised on the assumption that the critical position of literary

witnessing should inhabit the position between event and discourse (cf. Craps 2013; Woods 2007). This dissertation thus responds mainly to the calls of Rothberg (2006; 2008) and Robert Eaglestone (2008), who have insisted on a traumatic realist rendition of works written on events that have blighted histories such as those of the African diaspora. However, the nuances of a mixed realist and constructionist paradigm bring to light questions of reference and show how trauma is both a persistence to recover the past in its literality and a framework that supplies history with counter-discursive criticism. My analysis of texts of a traumatic nature treads an in-between path that attempts to blend the abovementioned textualist and materialist strands. In traumatic realist terms, this critical direction opens up avenues towards readings in which the boundaries of “classical realism and the poststructuralist critique of representation” tend to collapse (Rothberg 2000, 100).

The present dissertation is also part and parcel of the new directions in postcolonial studies that delineate transnational explorations of displacement and unbelonging. The texts under study—published between 2001-2007—thus reflect these new directions that construe realism in terms that transcend the facile transparency in literary works as has been the case with earlier nationalist writings. Tim Woods critiques the realism in the early period of post-independence African nationalism in that it “serves only to legitimate and normalize everyday states of affairs, without challenging or questioning the structures or ideologies that underpin them” (2007, 77-78). Also, the traumatic realism in the texts under analysis calls for an understanding of African posttraumatic cultures beyond national boundaries by providing a critique of the past. Given that its themes evolve around what Kamau Brathwaite terms “tidalectics” a “‘geopolitical model of history’ inspired by the rhythms and flow of the ocean in relation to the land” (Wilson et al. 2010, 3), this study aims to re-route the postcolonial African studies based on re-territorializing the Indian Ocean and the Black Atlantic. It takes for granted the way in which “the postcolonial has moved in recent years from being a historical marker to a more globally inflected term applicable to a variety of regions,” as the political and ethical engagement of the field focuses on “spaces increasingly defined, perhaps even constituted, *relationally* and *or/rhizomatically*” (Wilson et al. 2010, 2; emphasis original). This “re-routing” of the postcolonial thematizes questions that re-territorialize the postcolonial world through investigations of “the local versus the global”, “national versus transnational forces”, “cosmopolitanism” and “underprivileged agencies (refugees and asylum seekers)” (Wilson et al. 2010, 2). By the same token, in the 21st century, writing displacement in the posttraumatic African cultures registers the grim tales that foreground the “trans-national convergence of cultures under the structures of global economy” (Tagoe 2006, 94).

Narrating the past is a constant process of “working through” the trauma of displacement by African diasporic writers who struggle to construct communities beyond national boundaries. The duties that ensue in the process of writing about traumatic events bring forth the demands of realism that “are of a social nature—they arise from efforts of victims, bystanders, and those born after [the fact] to engage with the legacy of specific historical events” (Rothberg 2000, 7). I want to argue that when diasporic African writers are confronted with the repercussions of displacement as a bequest of colonialism and slavery, they link traumatic realism with three demands that attempt at “comprehension and representation”: “a demand for documentation, a demand for

reflection on the formal limits of representation, and a demand for the risky public circulation of discourses on the events” (Rothberg 2000, 7). Traumatic realism can therefore be summarized into these demands, the binding thread of which consists of implicating the African diasporic writers in the representation of the extreme. Writing about trauma is a preservation of paradoxes at best, attesting to the necessarily intricate notions of trauma that seem to reflect writing about the painful past. The guiding principle of my analysis of three African diasporic works is therefore as follows: The literary representation of displacement in African diasporic writings is caught in the grip of a persistent event that at once demands to be documented and resists unduly simple expression and integration. Yet, by virtue of its refusal to be appropriated, it also seeks to be brought to the public attention in ways that grant it justice. Narratives of trauma are subject to literary experimentation and fragmentation in which the past stretches well into the present, in that they bring the injustices of the past to the attention of contemporary readers. Rothberg points out in this regard that “the way we talk about trauma today and tomorrow will certainly bear the traces of those earlier layers of historical accretion” (2014, xi).

By revisiting the event-based model (Post-traumatic Stress Disorder) proposed by the American Psychological Association (cf. Craps 2013), the underlying premise of this dissertation is that a “realist” rendition of the African pasts is predicated not on reflecting colonialism and slavery as events in themselves. Rather, as trauma is between event and discourse, it is the moral imperative to rescue justice that drives African diasporic writers to *spatiotemporally* be implicated in narrating events they did not experience at first hand. By critically modulating the amount of distance and proximity, their approach to the past as subjects who belong to the affected community is rather an ethical stance that identifies with the victims without appropriating the particularity of their predicament. Given the nuances that should characterize the telling of traumatic events as both possible and impossible (cf. Luckhurst 2008), the examination of the inherited legacies of colonialism and slavery does not promise a complete recovery, as a sense of survival locates trauma narratives between “acting out” and “working through” (LaCapra 2001). In other words, a realist approach to the past is not predicated on the texts’ closure simply guaranteeing a smooth transition from the individual to the collective self of the African diaspora. The allure of such an assumption only submits the violence of the past to the forces of forgetting as often celebrated by post-independence nationalist claims to modernity (Gandhi 1998). On account of its breaking the boundaries between past and present, traumatic realism allows a sense of historical responsibility that constantly guides our critique of colonial modernity (cf. Lloyd 2008). Accordingly, in rethinking the narrative of modernity and its teleology, I want to discuss how implication can realign the binaries of past/present, victim/perpetrator, or the free/the unfree if Michael Rothberg’s notion “traumatic realism” is deployed. The works under study will therefore focus on how postgenerational witnessing energizes memory against condemning African histories to frozenness and isolation. Africa’s contact with Europe is certainly emphasized since a non-competitive paradigm of comparison will prove that the traumatic experiences of the two histories’ cross-influences set them in contact with each other at the crossroads of cultures. They have to fight the forces of isolation and separation endemic in colonial discourse.

1.3 THE STRUCTURE OF THE THESIS

The thesis consists of a theoretical chapter, three case studies and a conclusion. In the theoretical chapter, I will discuss the discursive pitfalls in the narratives of African nationalist discourse that claims a full recovery from the ills of the past. I will use traumatic realism as a theoretical framework to explain the ways in which the texts of African diasporic subjects contest the feigned claims to a reliable truth in nationalist discourse. By deploying a theoretical framework that accounts for the haunting legacies of a painful past, the three texts to be analyzed will suggest that in post-generational witnessing, African diasporic writers produce their narratives with the conviction that historical responsibility implicates them in representing the aftermath of colonialism and slavery. These narratives of displacement are not only centered in the metropolis, but, as will be explained with reference to Gurnah's and Adichie's novels, displacement starts from within the post-independence African nations themselves. The conclusion will discuss the opportunities brought forth by the futurist outlook that needs to mark trauma studies. I will point to the necessity of drawing new topographies of memory. In a nutshell, I want to argue that the African past cannot be retrieved in its literality, but, in traumatic realist terms, narratives that are of a diasporic nature persist in scrutinizing the mechanisms through which displacement has become one with the colonial and slaveholding legacies.

The first work under study is Abdulrazak Gurnah's novel *By the Sea* (2001). As a Zanzibari diasporic subject, he documents the past by bringing the violence inflicted by the history of colonial modernity in the Indian Ocean to the attention of contemporary readers. In refusing to be defined by the limitations of the discourse of benevolence that depicts the displaced Africans in victimizing terms, the narrative implies the rejection of the state of "unfreedom" inflicted by the discourse of modernity. In traumatic realist terms, the moral position toward history nourishes the need to break free from the shackles imposed by the literal and discursive confinement inflicted by the politics of race and space in both Zanzibar and Britain. The turmoil that marred the tranquility of the island in the post-independence period propels Gurnah to remap the legacy of colonial violence upon its European counterpart spatiotemporally. He brings together two Zanzibari diasporic narrators who belong to successive generations. As it shows that they are caught unawares in the family feuds over inheritance, the text reevaluates the alliance of "race" and "nationality" that have characterized the colonial and postcolonial periods. My discussion of Saleh Omar's imprisonment focuses on how the "camp mentality" (Gilroy 1999) reenacts the racial violence in colonial discourses in both Zanzibar and Britain for the displaced Africans. It especially attests to the state of "unfreedom" that permeates the public sphere beyond the colonial times. The limitations inflicted by the discourse of nation and nationalism are thus questioned by the way the novel revisits Europe's violent past through the younger narrator's account of his time in East Germany.

As a searing narrative that grapples with the trauma of the past, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's novel *Half of a Yellow Sun* (2006) is the second work under analysis. By narrating a dark episode in the history of the Igbo diaspora, it has managed to garner quite considerable critical acclaim. The text derives its power from the due considera-

tion it grants the nuances of documenting the violence inflicted upon Adichie's people in Nigeria in the 1967-1970 war. It convincingly rethinks the Orientalist discourse that is part and parcel of the colonial modernity. Out of responsibility, its pressing demands for justice against the enduring effects of colonialism typify postcolonial trauma theory's attempt at probing into the everyday suffering of African subjects. Reading Adichie's text through Michael Rothberg's notion of "traumatic realism", I also aim to examine the novel's attempt to both document the past and to implicate the Western reader in the detritus of the extreme. To resist objectification, the novel sets out to redirect the attention of the reader toward the "pogroms" committed on racial grounds. A primary focus of the work will be on Ugwu as the novel's first protagonist and the postcolonial re-writing of the enduring effects of colonial violence in post-generational terms.

The third work engages the writer spatiotemporally with the issues of belonging and the ethical position to assume through postmemory. As he lays claim to the African past, the black British writer Caryl Phillips attends to the intricacies of diasporic identity by redrawing the cartography of the African past in the chronotopic world of the Middle Passage. By bringing together three black British subjects (one from the 18th century, two from the 20th century), the haunting legacies of the history of slavery require the construction of an African diasporic community out of bounds. I thus seek to investigate how Phillips's experimental work *The Foreigners: Three English Lives* (2007) makes a convincing case against the ideological structures of racism endemic in the master/slave narrative of modernity. Central to Phillips's oeuvre is the struggle to rework the division of the black British identity from its African past. Despite their occurrence in different times, the grim tales of the three diasporic subjects—two from the West Indies and one from Nigeria—testify to their shared inability to integrate in the racist British society. Besides the postmemorial documentation of history, the traumatic realism of Phillips's experimental work points to his implication in dismantling the structures that isolate the African diasporic community, a community that is still drawn into modern-day slavery. It thus brings to light what has been concealed and appropriated by the history of modernity. The counter-discursive purchase of the text lies in the cross-cultural solidarity that brings together African posttraumatic cultures in conjunction with other legacies centered in Europe in order to fight isolation.

2 New Paradigms in African Representation of Displacement: Spatiotemporal Identification and the Promises of Traumatic Realism

The recent literary focus on exploring trauma in many non-Western contexts has been driven by the moral prerogative to bring the readers' attention to the aftermath of colonialism and slavery. By virtue of necessarily engaging in a multi-disciplinary approach to come to terms with the painful past, questions of the posttraumatic effects upon the postcolonial and post-slavery writings' will-to-truth are brought to bear mainly on the literary, psychological and historical issues of representation. Earlier critics have discussed the need to give the postcolonial trauma its "traumatic due" and to unmoor the field from its Eurocentric harbors (Stef Craps and Gert Buelens 2008; Craps 2013), and the need to open new avenues into a multidisciplinary and cross-cultural investigation of trauma (Buelens, Durrant and Eaglestone 2014; Visser 2014). My reading, however, suggests that, as a critique of the history of modernity, the African Diaspora resorts to a "traumatic realism" that shows that the traumatizing legacies of colonialism and slavery continue to have a bearing on the everyday of the African subjects in displacement.

Following Cathy Caruth's theorization about the ethical purchase of cross-cultural witnessing, the debate over literary testimonies through combining the "textualist" paradigms with the historicist and culturalist approaches can translate, in Craps's and Buelens's views, into new forms of cross-cultural solidarity (Craps and Buelens 2008). This theoretical chapter follows this line of thought. It argues that African novels can most fruitfully be read from an ethical viewpoint especially through implementing Michael Rothberg's notion of "traumatic realism". The need for African writers to rely on the realist and constructionist modes of reference to the past also answers Robert Eaglestone's call for drawing attention to the ethical benefits of re-visiting African texts through the lens of the notion "traumatic realism", one among a myriad of approaches to the past that should not fall by the wayside in postcolonial trauma analyses (Eaglestone 2008, 74; see also Woods 2007, 10). Rothberg's concept holds pertinence for the analysis of African literature due to questions that center on psychological and material recovery, as they open new avenues into the underpinnings of painful pasts through avant-gardist, experimental textual practice. These questions *do* persist and, as a result, duly engage with representation and cultural criticism with regard to historical issues bearing on epistemology, ethics and politics.

My analysis is thus indebted to the vexed issues of the “real” in representation and how the trajectory of African literature’s will-to- liberation from the contours of racial representation has always been governed by realism and “real world” issues. In view of the silence imposed by mainstream theorizations of trauma, Rothberg’s notion of “traumatic realism” is among the rare contributions in cultural trauma studies to have pinpointed a literary exegesis focused on colonialism and slavery’s enduring effects, thereby insisting on the need to remap them upon the genocides that have marred European history (Rothberg 2000; 2006; 2008; 2009). Traumatic realism thus helps us embark on meeting the needs of the current globalized world by moving from the singular models of trauma to those considering how traumatic events often occur in conjunction with each other.

More precisely, then, this chapter engages with the broader questions that center on involving everybody in *responsibly* bearing witness in posttraumatic terms to the African as well other histories of violence. Given that a broadly justice-minded sense of responsibility needs to take both the particular and the global for granted, the concept emphasizes the overarching notion of “the implicated subject”, a critical position that holds the writer accountable in bearing responsible witness while s/he brings the aftereffects of the violence of colonialism and/or slavery to the critical attention of contemporary readers. Beyond the limiting nationalist interventions in African literature that restrict their redemptive narratives to the same critical frameworks promulgated by the violent history of colonial modernity, my analysis of African trauma argues for necessary spatiotemporal articulations that account for the simultaneously problematic and persistent narrative of the past. Special emphasis will be put on how redemption *is* possible in African writings through the production of the traumatic effects by narratives marred by displacement. I particularly want to argue that dislocation and the construction of the African diasporic communities draw attention to the examination of traumatic pasts through the belated effects that have solicited identification across space and time. Parallel to the need to define the various existing categories of displacement namely the refugees, the diasporans and the exiles through ethically determined paradigms, the overarching notion of the “implicated subject” aims to guarantee the due solidarity along ancestral and other lines of identification, while undoing the discursive paradigms that laid the ground for the primal violence of colonialism and slavery. To explain the lost and yet persistent sense of community when the social fabric of diasporic collectivities undergoes dispersion, it can be said that:

Cultural trauma occurs when members of a collectivity feel they have been subjected to a horrendous event that leaves inedible marks upon their group consciousness, marking their memories forever and changing their future identity in fundamental and irrevocable ways. (Alexander 2004, 1)

Through spatiotemporally determined identifications for the postgenerations of a traumatic “primal event”, African literature expresses the belated effects of colonialism and slavery and propels African diasporic writers perennially to stake their claims through a realism that questions the conceptual economy of hegemonic dis-

course. In the three sections that follow, I will discuss, in traumatic realist terms, how the epistemological imperative to represent African pasts “is primarily interested not in the question of reference and knowledge of the past, but rather in the question of the proper ethical stance to take in relation to the past” (Rothberg 2000, 14). In a similar vein, Tim Woods speaks of the need to employ a “traumatic realism that differs from stereotypical conceptions of mimesis” given that the posttraumatic nature of African culture goes back to “the effects of colonial oppression, neo-colonial oppressions, racial barbarisms, racial genocides, autocratic corruption, and continued economic harshness and environmental crises” (Woods 2007, 10).

The first section will thus cast light on the definition of trauma and its multidisciplinary engagement of psychology and the art of witnessing through a spatiotemporal approach that questions the event-based paradigm. I will especially discuss how trauma narratives can engage witnesses ethically at the spatiotemporal level by producing the “real” through belated aftereffects. They show that the postmemorial (Hirsch 2008) articulations of trauma solicit diasporic subjects to reconnect across space and time and lay claim to a lost past. Central to the theoretical framework of traumatic realism is the focus on an African diasporic consciousness that seeks to criticize the facile narratives of nationalism that claim “recovery” and a complete break with the painful past.

Deploying Frantz Fanon’s case of diasporic consciousness, the second section will emphasize how writing from the vantage point of a diasporic subject complicates the smooth passage from the individual to the collective. It will also investigate how Fanon’s case as a displaced subject shapes his choice of the “border cases” that trouble the victim/perpetrator dichotomies, cases that convey the concept of complicity that accounts for the necessary dialogue ensuing from the colonial encounter. Implied in such a critical direction is the need to question the realist tendencies, together with their “visually-directed” representations in nationalist writings that condemn African history to frozenness and isolation.

The third section will demonstrate how the use of Mikhail Bakhtin’s figure of the “chronotope” draws a promising path toward exploring how the claim on an African past is able to bring the “Black Atlantic” diasporic subjectivities into solidary contact in order to construct new communities. It will demonstrate that new forms of identification through the multidirectionality of memory (Rothberg 2006) lay bare the contradictions of the nationalist “sites” of memory that sustain the forces of forgetting in the public sphere.

2.1 TRAUMATIC REALISM: REVISITING THE EVENT-BASED PARADIGM

This section aims to lay the theoretical framework that redefines the paradigms viewed as insensitive to the posttraumatic aftereffects of colonialism and slavery. For reasons motivated by the moral prerogative to associate representation with complicity that measures the amount of distance and proximity when identifying with the victims of trauma, writing of African displacement draws a promising path toward the construc-

tion of communities out of bounds. Such writing further brings into the open the contradictions of the racial politics of nation and nationhood, since African writers are not only expected to register the experience of displacement. Rather, they also have to set in motion self-reflexively the memory work. They are bound to redefine the antinomies of displacement that bring the exile into closer contact with the refugee: the two seemingly opposite figures invoke the images of the “postcolonial flaneur,” who inhabits such centers of the cosmopolitan world as “London and New York [...] away from the crowd” and “those” refugees he has “nothing in common with the strangers caught in the cracks of the failed state” (Gikandi 2010, 22-23). Gikandi’s analysis of the African cases of refugees as “the outcasts of wars” points to the imperative to find an overarching definition that brings the different categories of displacement into contact. This concern finds its equivalent in Jopi Nyman’s study of the paradigms of individualized exile, as seen through the postcolonial texts. Nyman’s investigation revisits the advantages provided by “distance,” as by “privileging the individual exile, the experiences of entire groups are not heard, yet the emergence of refugee writers shows that their stories can be told” (Nyman 2009, 249). This line of argument is driven by the moral prerogative to tell the stories of displacement, which raise compelling questions of “politics, oppression, poverty, and lack of human rights [...] torture, war and racism [...] homesickness and nostalgia” (Nyman 2009, 252). Linked to the traumatic aftereffects of colonialism and slavery, these themes set the displaced Africans in the perilously restless space between the structures of the nation-states and, as such, constitute the urgent issues of contemporary investigations of African identity. Central to the ongoing attempt to recover the historical dignity of the colonized subject is Edward Said’s (1994) enquiry into the subject position of the intellectual exile. Revisiting the Western modernist paradigm that romanticizes the purportedly coherent subject reaching a plenitude through writing, Said rather proposes exile and its enigmas as a historical phenomenon that helps probe into “the *unhealable* rift between a human being and a native place, between the self and its true home” (Said 1994, 137; emphasis added).

Emphasis will thus be laid on the figures of displacement in African history that further raise questions of representing the extreme and the responsibility to bear witness. Bound to bear the brunt of the racial politics instigated by the “divide and rule” colonial policy that has pitted Africans against each other, many people have been forced to leave their homes because of simmering racial tensions (Mamdani 2001, 36) to face racism in Europe or other regions in neighboring African countries. Others are left to perish under conditions of world silence in refugee camps. Caught in the grip of the social manifestations of the discourse of “modern racilogies” or what Paul Gilroy also dubs, in literal and metaphoric terms, “camp thinking”, “camp nationality” or “encamped ethnicity”, many African subjects in displacement are prone to “a condition of social death [which] is common to inmates in regimes of unfreedom, coercion and systematic brutality” (1999, 193). I therefore want to argue how using Bakhtin’s notion of “the chronotope” enables the identity politics of those in displacement to break free from the contours codified by the restrictive discourse of nationalism and its essentialized politics of representation.

I would like to point out a key issue with regard to the geographical span of my analysis of trauma in African literature. Although my focus in this chapter is on

the “Black Atlantic”, there are other extreme cases that reclaim an African ancestry against a backdrop of colonial and slaveholding hegemony garbed in displaced forms. These cases are represented by Eastern Africans whose investigations track the routes of the Indian Ocean (cf. Steiner 2008). As will be shown in the next chapter, my examination of the chronotopic approach based in the “Black Atlantic” does not ignore the role of the Indian Ocean in redrawing the cartography of African studies that delineate the geopolitical entanglements between Africa, Europe and Asia. My objective is to draw on the “Black Atlantic” as one paradigm that attests to the need to carve out communities out of identifications across distant spaces and times.

Given that the analytical chapters have as their common focus the displacement subjects of African descent in and outside their nations, I aim to draw upon the image of diasporic consciousness that constitutes the hallmark of today’s African identity. Nana Wilson-Tagoe’s inquiry into the recent postcolonial theorizations of globalization responds to the need to grapple with the constant concern of the “African worlds with the *aftereffects* of an older modernity,” as modern African literature needs to continuously locate itself *vis-à-vis* “nation, culture and narrative, yet centers on traumas of national collapse, transnational movements and an increasingly global focus on social and economic relations” (2006, 94; emphasis added). By the same token, this assumption motivates the inquiries that put an accent on the category “diaspora”. It echoes James Clifford’s (1992) summation about the trope of “travel” in the current debates against freezing the time and space of the colonial other through homogenizing analyses of cultures. This line of thought, however, grants the local its due consideration through breaking the local/global binary, in that the local is defined through external relations and different forms of displacement. Clifford makes reference to Arjun Appadurai’s term “‘metonymic freezing,’ in which one part or aspect of peoples’ lives come to epitomize them as a whole” (1992, 100). While critiquing how people are restrictively defined by virtue of their belonging to a specific place, Clifford posits a disclaimer about the fact that “traveling cultures” should not pretend that “there are no locales or homes, that everyone is—or should be—traveling, or cosmopolitan, or de-territorialized” (Clifford 1992, 108). Rather, the concern is that “the cultures of displacement and transplantation are inseparable from specific, often violent, histories of economic, political and cultural interaction” (1992, 108). In resorting to comparative methods of defining a culture as “a dwelling-in-travel” that grants each case of displacement its historical specificity, the analyses of diasporic categories need to “avoid [...] the excessive localism of particularist cultural relativism, as well as overly global vision” (1992, 108).

My emphasis is thus on nationalism as the inherited demise after the colonial encounter, on colonialism and slavery’s *aftermath* and the ensuing alienation produced by the anxieties of post-independence disillusionment for African subjects between nation-states, between home and exile. Thus, in posttraumatic terms, requiring empathy and ethical identification in space and time, “the past acquires significance for those subjects, peoples and communities for whom categories of the present have been made unusually unstable or unpredictable, as a consequence of the displacement enforced by postcolonial and migrant circumstances” (Woods 2007, 24). Spatiotemporal empathy brings the many categories of displaced subjects into contact through new paradigms that historicize the trauma of dislocation. In Nyman’s words,

The notions of displacement and diaspora are [...] in a dialogic relationship with each other. While the former suggests a loss of familiar space and the need to accommodate, the latter links the displaced with one another, suggesting that diasporic identity may be related more to community and shared history than to a particular place of origin. What this means is that the communities constructed around the experience of forced migration may be different from those of traditional diasporas: the diasporic identity of a particular ethnic or national group may be replaced by transnational alliances and communities where the alliances cut across binaries and the politics of location in a counter-hegemonic manner. (2009, 250)

The traumatic realist tendency in such a redefinition of the diaspora is that, because displaced subjects are faced with the same forces that instigated violence, they are constantly under pressure to revitalize memory against their aftereffects through constructed communities. The constant struggle to “work through” the trauma of displacement thus hinges on the passage from the individual to the collective self in order to fight those forces of forgetting (Nyman 2009, 246) along geographical lines that seek to transcend, but are still overdetermined by the politics of home and belonging. In the case of cultures that have been marginalized, it is due to its ethical, and thus critical, engagement of others convincingly that “the traumatic nature of history means that events are only historical to the extent that they implicate others” (Caruth 1991, 188). Rather than pretend that the representation of the “real” can provide “recovery” for the collective self in an unproblematic manner, the diasporic consciousness opens the local/global fault lines in a constant struggle against the posttraumatic effects that imprison and freeze the promising transformation of African histories. In line with Nyman’s exploration of the implied polemic force of the solidarity that fights an imposed silence given the constraints underlying the truth of recounting a traumatic event, there is an urgently ethical demand to challenge the frameworks that have induced it. To be afforded justice in the public sphere is thus of utmost consideration in traumatic contexts as the victim seeks to rescue the event from silencing isolation and attempts to mobilize the bystanders to take an ethical stance. Judith Herman points out that in this sense,

To hold traumatic reality in consciousness requires a social context that affirms and protects the victim and that joins victim and witness in a common alliance. For the individual victim, this social context is created by relationships with friends, lovers, and family. For the larger society, the social context is created by political movements that give voice to the disempowered. (Herman 1992, 8)

Following from the conclusion that the perpetrator tries in every way possible to silence and isolate the victim’s voice through hegemonic meaning-making processes, the powerful effect of “alliances” breaks free from such an imprisoning world by politicizing the victim’s claims from the individual to the social sphere, a reminder of the importance of creating a public against the atrocities that are either rationalized or authorized by the silencing discourses in the dominant public sphere (Lloyd 2008). Though the primal event is referred to as a “significant cause” of violence, “its mean-

ing as traumatic must be established and accepted, and this requires time to occur, as well as mediation and representation" (Alexander 2004, 61). If justice is sought, then further questions bearing on the shift from individual to the collective in its different forms solicit a renegotiation of the past. In fact, the cultural importance accrued to trauma studies lies in its larger-scale impact, which may be reflected in its capacity to spatiotemporally shift from the individual to the culture as a whole. Since the early 1990s, the scope of trauma has been expanded to represent other categories than those directly affected by the existing stressors in the wake of what has been termed the "ethical turn" foregrounding ethics, history and politics (Craps 2013, 1). Assuming a mediatory and necessary role between victim and perpetrator, these "secondary" status victims (or vicarious victims) that may at times stand for the "reading" (or listening or viewing...) public are also supposed to take responsibility, across distances of space and time, for ensuring justice; these might include "witnesses, bystanders, rescue workers" (Luckhurst 2008, 1). Delineating the role of telling as a "legal pledge", Shoshana Felman situates trauma narratives within testimonial paradigms as

Memory is conjured [...] essentially in order to address another, to impress upon a listener, to appeal to a community. To testify is always, metaphorically, to take the witness's stand, or to take the position of the witness insofar as the narrative account of the witness is at once engaged in an appeal and bound by an oath. To testify is thus not merely to narrate but to commit oneself, and to commit the narrative, to others: to take responsibility—in speech—for history or for the truth of an occurrence. (Felman 2000, 103-104)

It bears mentioning, however, that the immediate contact with the witness is not always necessary. Most importantly, and related to the diasporic identity that continually seeks to reassemble its broken history, the spatio-temporality of articulating a collective's sense of community seems to pave the way to reconnecting the dispersed subjects to each other regardless of the space and time of their experience. Within this context soliciting the articulation of a diasporic identity in constant flux, especially when displacement proves to be caused by violence, recovery seems to be a persistent but perennially constrained undertaking that seeks documentation. With the growing globalized public sphere and the advent of electronic mass media and migration, the group-based collective is able to readjust its spatiotemporally diffused identitarian foundations seeing that:

Groups are mobile, so are the borders of its memory and collective identity-formation. The spatial parameters marking these borders vary and have attained more fluidity with the exponential development of mass media. While they may be rooted in relatively specified geographical boundaries, with the aid of mediated representation they may span such restricted space to reach exiles and expatriates. (Eyerman 2001, 10)

It should be noted, however, that the stakes of making one's claims public still remain high. Though the role of the category of the bystander is essential to ensuring justice,

there is the risk of trivializing transmissibility, the fact which obscures “the difference between victims of traumatic historical events and others not directly experiencing them,” given that this tendency should not “become a pretext for avoiding economic, social and political issues” (LaCapra, 2001, ix). The particularity of the traumatic event rejects appropriation, since its representation runs the risk of taking other meanings than those promising to ensure justice. Sympathy rather than empathy is therefore one way of weakening one’s stance when traumatic events are addressed, sanctioning the problematic “composing of narratives that neither confuse one’s own voice with the victim’s nor seek facile uplift, harmonization, or closure” (LaCapra, 2001, 78). There is a somehow unwavering commitment within the narratives of trauma to refuse simplistic resolutions and their will-to-knowledge even if the reader tries to bring the story’s plot to an end. Roger Luckhurst (2008), for instance, points out that narratives are non-linear in emplotment and constitute a retrospective understanding of the occluded event. The “realistic” tendency in trauma narratives is that when they are formally structured as modernist, experimental texts, they are beyond trauma as a subject in itself and are to be “read as mimicking the traumatic effect” (Luckhurst 2008, 88). The fact that the images are registered “affectively and cognitively” (Luckhurst 2008, 240), that is, between the demands for documentation and the demands for “controlled identification” (LaCapra 2001), corresponds to what Dominick LaCapra terms “empathic unsettlement”. In his words,

It is obvious to identify with the victim to the point of making oneself a surrogate victim who has a right to the victim’s voice or subject position. The role of empathy and empathic unsettlement in the attentive secondary witness does not entail this identity; it involves a kind of virtual experience through which one puts oneself in the other’s position while recognizing the difference of that position and hence not taking the other’s place. (LaCapra 2001, 78)

Reminiscent of the overarching notion of the “implicated subject” that constitutes the thematic hub of traumatic realism, three demands may be involved in any confrontation between culture and history when the issues related to attempts at comprehension and representation on the part of victims, bystanders, and those born after the event are at stake: “a demand for documentation, a demand for reflection on the formal limits of representation, and a demand for the risky public circulation of discourses on the events” (Rothberg 2000, 7).

Diasporic subjectivity therefore responds to the ethical, political and epistemological demands of traumatic history through the notion of traumatic realism. It assists in drawing our attention to the category of the witness as “an implicated subject” in spatiotemporal terms seeing that it can be generalized in terms that enable its unsettling of the victim/perpetrator dichotomy in order to hold an ethical position toward the past. As a paradigm set at the threshold of subject-positions, complicity is driven by the moral prerogative to bear responsible witness through identification that takes different representational forms. In this sense, and in a traumatic realist perspective, it can entail “the survivor, who attempts to document an undocumentable experience; the bystander, who feels impelled to bear an impossible witness to the

extreme from a place of relative safety; and the latecomer or representative of the 'postmemory' generation, who [...] inherits the detritus" of a violence culturally writ large (Rothberg 2000, 13). I want to focus on how the category of implicated witnesses is generally endowed with the duty to lay bare and trouble the ideological structures that triggered the primal violence, not to say its role in dismantling the ideologies that instigate the forces of separation.

Using the case of South Africa, Mark Sanders describes the intellectual's "responsibility-in-complicity" as enabling, a concept that helps foreground the notion of the "implicated subject" who is neither accused nor excused. Contrary to the sense of "apartness" fostered by apartheid, "folded together-ness of being" stands for the condition "of being, of self and other. Such foldedness is the condition of possibility of all particular affiliations, loyalties, and commitments" (2002, 11). Sanders foregrounds the role of the imaginative writing represented by fictive works and the different forms that autobiography can take. I stress the different forms that the biographical representation can covertly take as the works under analysis are indirect representations of the people, either fictional or real, whom the writer identifies with spatiotemporally. The writer's responsibility "assumes a sympathetic identification that can be realized through narrative and through the projection of the 'little perpetrator' into quasi-fictive situations" (Sanders 2002, 2). Read in traumatic realist terms, these writings are driven by a constant vigilance against the potential complicities in the future (Sanders 2002, 18), thereby invoking the possibility of solidary affiliations for the diasporic subjects over distances of space and time. In terms of writing as testimony in favor of the "living and the nonliving," literature broadly makes the writer postgenerationally take the role of the "little perpetrator" who "calls upon a reader to assume responsibility for an other in the name of generalized foldedness in the human-being" (Sanders 2002, 17). Timothy Bewes's notion of "shame" denotes the stakes raised by literary forms with regard to their "inadequacy" to the personal experience of the writer. He points out that:

When it comes to literature, a practice that, in the modern period, involves the transfiguration of individual experience into an aesthetic form, the very presence of shame raises questions concerning the ethical, political, or representational adequacy of the text—questions that remain, therefore unanswerable. In literary works, shame does not exist in some buried state, to be unearthed by the penetrating critic; rather, shame appears overtly, as the text's experience of its inadequacy. (Bewes 2012, 3)

Bewes, however, moves beyond the simple embodiment of the text of one's experience and explores the "shame" that the contemporary postcolonial writers explore. He locates their subject-position vis-à-vis the legacies of colonialism through a sense of complicity in the forces of inequality against which they struggle. In such writings, there is no coherence between form and content; instead, "insofar as it has any value for interpreting artistic or literary works, shame functions as a negative principle, alerting us to lack, rather than to a presence" (Bewes 2012, 39). As the postcolonial writers of this study have not witnessed the event of colonialism firsthand, they become implicated across space and time in the representation of the extreme.

Accordingly, based on colonialism's and slavery's far-reaching legacies from the past to the present, it will be argued that, instead of an oversimplified notion of realism able to "work through" the violence of history, the writing of trauma and the sense of displacement, inside and outside the nation, puts pressure on African subjects to continually try to unravel the enduring effects of the past. Trauma can be induced by the existence of the same ideological forces that have led to the social and cultural oppression of the disadvantaged in all facets of life. What Africans who continually grapple with the question of realism try "to demonstrate in their writing in the post-colonial epoch is that postcolonial history has a traumatic structure—it is repetitive, discontinuous and characterized by obsessive returns of the past and the troubling of simple chronology" (Woods 2007, 96). Instead of pretending that traumatic history can be depicted transparently in order to fully alleviate the hysterical symptoms by putting wounds into words or through "abreaction" or "catharsis" in Freud's and Breuer's terms (Herman 1992, 11), it will be argued that a more realistic approach to trauma recognizes that belatedness is what should guide our representation of a ruptured past. The effects of racism and other related means of marginalization feed the need to reflect upon the discursive constructions that perpetuate the same conditions of oppression in posttraumatic cultures, generating a continual reassessment of the circumscribed sense of identity that offers insights into the enduring effects of the everyday of marginalized subjects from past to present. The emerging new directions of multidisciplinary studies on trauma have therefore culminated in calling into a question a "full" understanding of its nature and repercussions since it blurs the boundaries between the extreme and the everyday (Rothberg 2000, 6).

My examination of the redefinition of trauma first sheds light on how traumatic realism is a theoretical framework that brings the enduring effects of the painful pasts of the disadvantaged groups to the critical attention of its present readers. The primary focus of this section is on how the concept can generally enable the shift of trauma from the individual to the collective, not in their ability to achieve full recovery, but in their constant renegotiation of the meaning of the past (cf. Lloyd, 2008; Eyerman 2001). As the "vast bulk of research on trauma has focused on individual psychology and has been dominated by the clinical parameters of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)", a need arises to investigate the spatiotemporally mediated and troubled passage from individual to collective trauma (Saunders and Aghaie 2005, 16-17). Extreme events are not reflected by direct experience, but by inhabiting the space between the private and the public, the extreme and the everyday, the psychological and the material recovery. The interstitial space between the categories remains unstable in that they set their turbulent relationships within a realm that still demands responsible investigations. As has been intimated, at the center of this chapter's focus of inquiry with regard to traumatic realism is the development of a new category of historical responsibility referred to by Rothberg as "the implicated subject" (2013, n.p.)—a position that troubles polarized thinking in order to open new inroads into investigating the possibilities brought forth by undoing the boundaries between victim and perpetrator. This in-between space—as it invokes the figure of the diaspora—calls for the implication of subjects who are spatially and temporally distant from the events and who, as bystanders of the extreme, are supposed to bear witness responsibly over the course of generations.

Traumatic realism thus attempts to respond to the paradoxical demands of traumatic history as it acknowledges the irretrievability and persistence of historical trauma. While narrating trauma is torn between the need to document and the attendant challenge to recollect the extreme, it still insists on resisting silence through responding to the dominant discourses in “the public sphere” (Herman 1992). Witnessing and testimony may be barred by the inaccessibility of the event to documentation, but “the historical trauma [of extreme events] also *de-realizes* human experience and thus creates a need for fiction” (Rothberg 2000, 206; emphasis original). Cathy Caruth’s proposition of a paradigm that prompts the multidisciplinary contribution of psychology, literature, and history as textual “undecidability” or “unreadability” in the inaccessible trauma suggests that “traumatic histories can grant us a paradoxical mode of access to extreme events that defy understanding and representation” (Craps 2013, 2). As is argued by this chapter’s explorations of trauma by resorting to philosophy, psychology, sociology, anthropology, and literature, breaching the boundaries between the “real” and “anti-real” in the narratives of pain warrants a multidisciplinary examination of extremity. Trauma’s ability to invade different cultural arenas has consequently stirred the interest of various disciplines. Accordingly, it dismantles the disciplinary boundaries as it “opens up alternative avenues for exploring the intersection of the psychic and the social, the discursive and the material, and the extreme and the everyday” (Rothberg 2000, 6). As it seems to defy occlusion within the contours of a single discipline, it serves as a pervasive and elusive kind of memory with unyielding demands. It is one type of memory and its importance stems from progressively penetrating other areas of study, thus integrating the links between inside and outside, “between social history, subjective experience, and cultural representation” (Traverso and Broderick 2010, 5).

In tandem with these juxtaposed tendencies, Rothberg’s “traumatic realism” explores the ability of literature to preserve contradictions that open up an academic dialogue by breaking the boundaries between the realist and the discursive, the familiar and the extreme. By realist, Rothberg means both an epistemological claim to the extreme events as knowable objects and “that this knowledge can be translated into a familiar mimetic universe [...] according to scientific procedures and inscribing the events within continuous historical narratives,” and the discontinuous antirealist model that “cannot be captured in traditional representational schemata” (Rothberg 2000, 3-4). Such a conception underlies the critical stance towards the painful past through the notion of “traumatic realism” that corresponds to the diverse renditions of the writings of marginalized subjects. These modes of expression at once include such literary tendencies as realism, modernism, and postmodernism, which are not only styles and periods, but are also to

be understood as persistent responses to history. Like the demands themselves, these responses are also social; they provide frameworks for the representation and interpretation of history. In the representation of a historical event, in other words, a text’s “realist” component seeks strategies for referring to and documenting the world; its “modernist” side questions its ability to document history transparently; and its “postmodern” moment responds to the economic and political conditions of its emergence and public circulation. (Rothberg 2000, 9)

Accordingly, the main components of such means of representation raise the stakes of the implicated subject position and the demands for justice through witnessing. The responsibility to document is certainly taken for granted; yet, given the ethical considerations of an occurrence “which is no longer straightforwardly referential” (Caruth 1991, 182), the event both solicits its deserved complexity to restore justice with regard to how it needs to be represented, and requires to be told in nuanced terms that dismantle the conceptual foundations of hegemonic discourse as it seeks to engage others politically to bear witness.

The underlying premise of “traumatic realism” is that to rescue their historical consciousness, trauma narratives have to spatiotemporally grapple with the intellectual investigation of past and present which, instead of being separated, are rather inextricably intertwined. Against modernity’s ideology of progress, which disregards such relations, the ramifications of trauma are brought to bear on the contemporary issues pertaining to the posttraumatic cultures. For Roger Luckhurst, for example, modernity as the producer of technology—“a violent assault on agency and self-determination”—has come to be perceived as synonymous with “wound” because it is “often dated to the rise of the modern nation in the eighteenth century,” as the stability of the time of traditional societies is “dislocated” “by a standardized time that routinizes labor” (2008, 20). Luckhurst’s argument is in alignment with Walter Benjamin’s suggested notion of the “constellation” (qtd. in Rothberg 2000), which constitutes an attempt to redeem the past from the grip of the alienating and restrictive ideology of nationalism and its claim to progress. Against the homogenizing narrative that freezes and isolates history through separating the past from the present, a “constellation” is produced to act as “a sort of montage in which diverse elements are brought together through the act of writing [that] is meant to emphasize the importance of representation in the interpretation of history” (Rothberg 2000, 10). To find redress for injustices in the past, testimony brings on board diverse elements during the act of representation. Not only does it help provide historical evidence, but also it aims to ensure the public circulation of its claims in convincing fashions. It engages in serious meaning production in an unchronological manner. Caruth attributes to the narrative an anti-linearity referring to the inherent forgetfulness of the traumatic event as the legacy of the displacement enacting a rupturing of a writing which “is the site of trauma; a trauma which [...] appears to be historically marked by the events” that “divide” the text (Caruth 1991, 189).

In sociological terms, and quoting Neil Smelser, Jeffrey C. Alexander speaks of the progress of representations of a “social reality” wherein “causality is symbolic and aesthetic, not sequential or developmental, but ‘value-added’” through the carrier group’s engagement in “successful meaning work” (2004, 12). The capacity to transmit the traumatic effect is not restricted to the specific context of the event. Rather, it solicits that memory mobilizing historical documents as testimony is spatiotemporally mediated. Thus, the “members of an originating collectivity become convinced that they have been traumatized by a singular event” and “only with this success can the audience for the traumatic claim be broadened to include other publics within the ‘society at large’” (Alexander 2004, 12). The issue therefore lies in how the construction of the collective self belatedly carries the imprint of inherited trauma and further deline-

ates the importance of the meaning-making process against silence and isolation. The construction of the collective self in the African American case, for instance, came about as the product of a constant reconstruction of the meaning of the traumatic past inherited by succeeding generations. Given the ensuing “protective necessity” and “group solidarity,” these reconstructions have been formed in the shadow of a subordinating hegemonic culture as a determiner of a not necessarily common experience but that of a “common fate” (Eyerman 2001, 14-15).

The question of time is thus essential for trauma as its theory cannot refer to the traumatic event, but to the posttraumatic stage that delays and compounds the effect to reveal a myriad of other stressors. In this sense, it “denotes [...] the recurrence or repetition of the stressor events such as wars, disasters, accidents that produce certain identifiable somatic or psycho-somatic disturbances” (Visser 2011, 272). The posttraumatic effects could therefore be attributed to a constellation of factors that sustain its effects within the cultural and social spheres. To trace the “real” is not without its challenges, given that the “variability of human sensitiveness and the diversity of cultural contexts influencing what is traumatic” have led to seeking symptoms “rather than connect cause and effect in a predictable way” (Hartman 2003, 260). The element of latency is thus essential as it markedly reveals the posttraumatic effect of racism and marginalization on the daily lives of the disempowered. A constellation of “external” elements has led to the quotidian experience of trauma failing to address these elements. This risks perpetuating the same oppressive conditions that engender the suffering of victims.

Accordingly, though the colonial aftermath solicits a reparative, therapeutic theory tied to the task of remembering the colonial past, for example, it would be far from realistic to attribute decolonization to recovery in unproblematic terms. As David Lloyd puts it, “a non-therapeutic relation to the past, structured around the notion of survival or living on rather than recovery, is what should guide our critique of modernity and ground a different mode of historicization” (2008, 213; see also Duran et al. 1998, 342). Denying the belated aftereffects of trauma exempts one from the responsibility of responding to it, given the impact of various cumulative and complex factors. Such a reassessment delineates the “micro-aggressions” related to segregating and tight economic conditions or “seeing one’s group portrayed in a stereotypical manner in the media,” a fact which does not necessarily “involve direct threat to life or physical safety” (Craps 2013, 26). Such conditions rather invoke a series of unrecognized, broader dimensions that maintain the same cultural and social phenomena inherited from the painful past.

Based on the abovementioned findings, the definitions of trauma produced mainly in the West have failed to account for such after-effects on the daily lives of the disadvantaged as they have been provided by the overgeneralized paradigm of the American Psychiatric Association (APA) in 1980. The latter revised its manual and included what it referred to as Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), which only involves the people who undergo any serious physical threat “outside the range of normal experience” (Luckhurst 2008, xi). Craps (2013) criticizes such definitions that foreground the essential “direct” exposure to the traumatic event which lies outside the everyday experience of the victims. Quoting the 1994 revision, he points to two

major elements newly included: the first one refers to trauma as something unusually experienced firsthand and which can cause injury or death to the self or others, and the second one is the fact that the person responds fearfully and helplessly to the horrifying event (Craps 2013, 24-25). Following Laura Brown's theorization of "insidious trauma", which takes the daily trauma into account, the event-based paradigm, Craps concurs, ignores the culture-specific and the invisible everyday trauma of the oppressed and the disadvantaged (2013, 24). It could also be understood as a conception that refers to the manifest weakening of the collective reaction in postcolonial cases of violence for example, an assumption which disregards the ability of the latter to create "other modes of living on" in the face of everyday hurt (Lloyd 2008, 227; see also Visser 2011; 2014). Hence, it is the limitations and hegemonic paradigms of such trauma theories and parameters of diagnosis constructed to fit the dominant groups that lose sight of, misinterpret, and further block from view the daily-experienced violence by those who undergo oppression.

Critical of such a culturally insensitive definition, Craps refers to a host of research-based types of trauma that do not necessitate direct exposure to extreme events but are rather beyond the event-based model (2013, 24-25). Leela Gandhi's focus on the belated effects may also be stated as one example that demonstrates that these paradigms inscribe the enduring effects of colonialism and slavery through the prefix "post" in terms that transcend the extreme in space and time. Instead of the hyphenated term "post-colonialism," allegedly marking the decisive temporal break with the colonial past

The theory may be named 'postcolonialism,' and the condition it addresses is best conveyed through the notion of 'postcoloniality'. And, whatever the controversy surrounding the theory, its value must be judged in terms of its adequacy to conceptualise the complex condition which attends to the aftermath of colonial occupation. (Gandhi 1998, 4)

The Postcolonial syndrome (Duran et al. 2008) is one such manifestation that places emphasis on the "aftermath" of colonial oppression; it is "delineated as a constellation of features" and as a "historical trauma [...] that is multigenerational and cumulative over time and extends beyond the life span" (Duran et al 2008, 342). Another example is the posttraumatic slavery syndrome; these two examples that have been referred to by Craps may be mentioned as part of various trauma-inducing instances of "everyday racism, sexism, homophobia, classism, ableism and other forms of structural oppression" (Craps 2013, 24-25). The enduring effects of these symptoms still put the psyche of the community at risk. In the case of the black British diaspora, for example, "even if one seeks to dissociate from their slave past, the anxieties bound up with belonging, exclusion and feeling like an outsider are nonetheless at the heart of slavery and are characteristic tropes of [...] diasporic identities" (Walker 2012, 160).

On account of the inheritance of the traumatic effects previously mentioned in the discussion of the prefix "post" in postcolonialism, it should be of pertinence to turn to Hirsch (2008) and how she points through her oft-cited notion of "postmemory" to the inexorably multiple ruptures that govern the rhythms of the diasporic histories.

Displacement illustrates that the smooth connection between “individual”, “family”, “social group” and “institutionalized historical archive” is overdetermined by breaks, albeit aspiring to recovery through mediation and a constant renegotiation of the meaning of the past (Hirsch 2008, 11). A direct link to the extreme remains restrained as mediation is what comes to constitute the selective construction of a communal self. Highlighting the case of African-American “intellectuals for whom slavery was a thing of the past” (2001, 2), Ron Eyerman points out for instance that their ties to the collective identity were articulated only decades after the 19th-century through recreating familial or communal bonds. In view of the belatedness of trauma, he thereby concludes that “if slavery was traumatic for the generation of intellectuals, it was so in retrospect, mediated through recollections and reflection” (2001, 2). In that respect, though the “archive, in the case of traumatic interruption, exile, and diaspora has lost its” communal and societal links to its history, the “postgeneration could and does counteract this act” (Hirsch 2008, 111), given that “Distant social/national” and “archival/cultural” structures are reactivated “with individual and familial forms of mediation and aesthetic expression” even after the death of the familial descendants (Hirsch 2008, 111). The “family space” thereby rises to significance by highlighting the everyday manifestations of the extreme and its haunting specters. It also foregrounds acts of cognitive and affective transfer that call for the postgenerations’ sense of responsibility driven “by the desire to repair” the unspeakable rooted in “the loss of family, of home, of a feeling of belonging and safety in the world [that] ‘bleed’ from one generation to the next” (Hirsch 2008, 112).

On a more complex level that casts doubt on racial politics, a “postcolonial incarnation” of a rethinking of “all the stability of meaning and identity” comes into play in that it “reviews the colonial encounter for its disruption of native/domestic space” (Gandhi 1998, 131-132). This sense of dislocation invokes the figure of the “unhomely” which, as theorized by Homi Bhabha, is emblematic of the “colonial” and “post-colonial” condition, yet should not be construed as synonymous with homelessness (Bhabha 1994, 9). The concept brings the contradictions of the homogenizing and fetishistic narratives that romanticize alterity into the open. Also bringing the notion to bear on the haunting and unrecorded memories of infanticide during slavery in many areas of the Southern part of the USA, he contends that “the unhomely moment relates the traumatic ambivalences of a personal, psychic history to the wider disjunctions of political existence” as exemplified by Toni Morrison’s character “Beloved”, “the child murdered by her own mother, Sethe,” and whose grim tale brings forth a moment that “is a daemonic, belated repetition of the violent history of infant death” (Bhabha 1994, 11). Morrison’s representation of Sethe’s implicated act of shockingly repeated infanticide is not meant to depict the violence inflicted by the racist system transparently; Morrison’s aim nonetheless is to lay bare the forces of forgetting through invoking implication. The brutality of the act impels the haunting of every family space of the African-American diaspora by the questions posed by the ghostly return of Beloved, who presses her sister Denver toward remembrance and whose memory poses the risk of overwhelming the surviving sister. Hence, “even as it insists on inscribing Beloved as unaccounted for and disremembered—one whose story is inadvisable and impossible to transmit—it also transmits that story enrolling the unbeloved as loved, enlarging the sense of ‘my people’” (Matus 1998, 10). The binary of private

and public is thus realigned by the specters of “social death” (Patterson 1982) seeing that the “extra-territorial” and “cross-cultural” engaging condition (Bhabha 1994, 9) spatiotemporally submit “our ethical judgement [to] a radical revision” (Bhabha 1994, 11) by reconfiguring the binary between death and life in a world that still submits the colored subjects to “natal alienation”. This alienation is a trope that, in the vein of the slaveholding enterprise, strips the unrecognized people of color of “their obligations” toward “their remote ancestors and descendants” (Patterson 1982, 5). Against the forces of forgetting, Morrison’s traumatic realism highlights the statistical documentation of the social death that fixes its grip over the African American postgenerations, laying bare its *social* manifestations and implicating the present generations and other identities in the repercussions of the extreme. Well aware of the stakes of representation, Morrison refuses to romanticize the mother/child relationship in fetishistic ways, thereby avoiding the perpetuation of the same objectifying mechanisms that victimized and commodified the image of slaves.

In the case of African subjects, therefore, the issue is not only focused on the family inheritance of a certain trauma, but, in a broader sense, on the shocking repercussions of a black subject caught unawares in the grip of a constellation of elements mobilizing the memory of her/his repressed history. The racist media testify to the pressing need to fight the ideological forces that have contributed to the primal violence, forces that confront the African subject with representations that trigger the scars of a “collective unconscious” whose “drama is enacted every day in colonized countries,” but its manifestations become apparent in the case of a *young* man of color encountered, for instance, by a racist media in the metropolis that instigate trauma as a social construct (Fanon 1967, 144-145; emphasis added). In Fanon’s experience where psychiatry and displacement govern the articulation of his diasporic identity, a rethinking of a smooth transition from the individual to the collective, especially in transgenerational terms, sounds overly utopian. In this respect, Rebecca Saunders and Kamra Scot Aghaie point to the many changes that transcend the individual but which still remain problematic in the shift in the objects of psychoanalysis,

From the individual psyche to a social situation—a reconception that challenges the very basis of psychology as practiced by individuals; from relations within the family unit—a critique aimed at the familial focus of European psychoanalysis and its assumption of a continuity between family and national culture; and from the singularity of traumatogenic event to the pervasive and diffuse inhumanity of racism and colonialism. (2005, 18)

Implied in Fanon’s critique of the civilized world wherein “the family is a miniature of the nation” (1967, 142) is an assault on the politics of race that assumes its power along the preserved legacies of essentialist ancestral bloodlines. Fanon’s clinical work in North Africa illuminates the re-contextualization of the demise of the African subject to foreground a paradigm beyond the simplistic claims to recovery. As a diasporic subject, he is self-reflexively implicated in the posttraumatic manifestations of the drama of the colored oppressed and redefines diaspora through his case where life and professional trajectories have been marred by displacement.

This section has discussed the necessary rethinking of the event-based trauma in terms that delineate the spatiotemporal articulations of its aftereffects by the African postgenerations of colonialism and slavery. My discussion has evolved around the readings provided by the figures of displacement in today's globalized world and the problematic reconstruction of the collective self. A main concern of the hermeneutics of pain lies in the constrained possibility of a "working through", since the ideological frameworks that have led to the African subjects' trauma continue to affect the everyday of the oppressed. Deploying traumatic realism within the framework of the overarching notion of the "implicated subject" aims to attend to the necessity to document the persistence of a painful past; yet, rather than represent the event transparently, the inherent forgetfulness of the event of displacement, with the attendant textual fragmentation, foregrounds the epistemological prerogative to produce the very traumatic effect through a constant reconstitution of the meaning of the past. Moreover, the representation of the African past solicits the movement of the event from the individual to the public, yet it refuses to resort to a realism that perpetuates forces of forgetting that ignore the posttraumatic effects of the colonial encounter.

2.2 AFRICAN REALISM AND THE PITFALLS OF POST-INDEPENDENCE "RECOVERY"

This section will place emphasis on the pitfalls claimed by the African nationalist narratives to full recovery and that have condemned African history to stasis and isolation. On account of a productive intellectual investigation of the moral benefits of complicity, it would be paramount to carry out a critique of hegemonic history that revises its isolating and freezing paradigms. It is worth mentioning once again that the risk of implicating African representation in an essentialized discourse that denies the dialogical necessity born out of the colonial encounter constitutes the binding theme of this chapter. Narratives deploying a realism that purports to guarantee textual/contextual transparency and whose focus is on the plights of the present function as if colonization and slavery were merely things of the past, a narrative wherein the colonial encounter is sidestepped (Woods 2007, 73-98). Such a discourse only sustains the self-isolating paradigms already inflicted by colonial discourse. The critical purchase of Caruth's saliently ethical mandate, in this respect, lies in the need to open traumatic histories to frameworks in which theoretical and literary dialogues need to rise to prominence. Caruth's model attests to her call for a cross-cultural understanding that underlies historical claims expressed through textualist paradigms and their search for "the real" in representation. She is especially right in criticizing the dehistoricizing textual exegeses of trauma dominant in the West. Mounting astute criticism at the poststructuralists, Caruth ascertains that since in their view "reference is indirect, and that consequently we may not have direct access to others', or even our own, histories, seems to imply the impossibility of any access to other cultures, and hence of any means of making political or ethical judgments" (Caruth 1991, 181).

Caruth's critique of poststructuralist tendencies resonates with marginalized histories' concerns, as the unethical claims of poststructuralist criticism sit uneasily,

especially with the postcolonial/post-slavery agenda with regard to the question of history or “‘what goes on in the real world’ (the world outside the text: history, politics, ethics)” (Craps 2013, 1). This is particularly exemplified by many aporetic Holocaust narratives that have been canonized as singularly incomprehensible stories and consider any other formal choices than aporia to be unethical (Luckhurst 2008, 89-90). Caruth’s insistence on understanding is emblematic of the historical role of an emergent hermeneutics of pain in that textualist approaches presuppose morally engaged responses and underlie a desire to alter the dominant worldviews; she thereby uses literature as an arena in which to promote cross-cultural dialogue. Sustaining a productive and responsible interaction between the textualist and the culturalist model would also initiate, in traumatic realist terms, “a search for a form of documentation beyond direct reference and coherent narrative [...] [that does] [...] not fully abandon the possibility for some kind of reference and some kind of narrative” (Rothberg 2000, 100-101).

With particular attention to the African context *vis-à-vis* the modes of address that dismantle the West/Rest binary, Eaglestone’s reader-oriented argument postulates the view that the African trauma narratives written in English are mainly “Western facing,” requiring the readers’ responsibility in that “there is a real sense that there can be comprehension, that a story must be told and can and should be grasped by others in the West” (2008, 82). Eaglestone’s verdict sets in motion the liminality of African literature between theories and languages. Such in-betweenness is prompted mainly by the literary paradigms characteristic of African writings in English and their demands for an ethical, rather than purely realist reading of history. New inroads into inter-textual dialogue are tracked by Eaglestone, particularly when he points to the writings of Africans living in the West that bear resemblance to many Holocaust texts. The “diasporic” nature of their writings about trauma testify to how the literary influences of the Holocaust are shaped by the Western interest in the latter’s trauma (Eaglestone 2008, 78). Implied in such a complex trajectory and its attendant ambivalence is a critique of the Euro-American focus on the Holocaust, since the African texts on trauma seek to redirect the readers’ attention toward their painful pasts.

Emphasis is therefore placed in this section on interventions in African realism that need to take for granted the dialogue engendered by the theoretical and historical contact with the West. Focused mainly on the diasporic articulations of Africa’s painful history, the motivating factor of this productive operation is to initiate reader-centered paradigms that are not at variance with the historical project of postcolonial trauma studies in that they are in a dialogical relationship that further complicates the victim/perpetrator binary. In the course of this discussion, I want to argue that the nostrums of realist renditions of a smooth transition from the individual to the collective self in traumatic narratives are far from realistic in the case of African literature. By virtue of the nationalist writings’ production of the seemingly “realist” narrative of closure, emphasis will be laid on the overarching notion of the “implicated subject” being in constant vigilance against perpetuating the conceptual economy of a racialized discourse of colonialism and slavery. Out of intellectual responsibility, Eaglestone (2008), for instance, warns against recreating the prism that isolates all

African traumas within one bloc. Referring to the rewritings in the English language, which has been the colonizer's very medium of exercising oppression, Eaglestone concurs that

African trauma literature is problematic. It seems to reproduce a nineteenth-century clustering of the nations and regions of Africa into a single, mythical continent and passes over the various complexities and particular situations that range from, for example, civil war and military coups in Sierra Leone, to the work of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in South Africa, to genocides in Darfur and Rwanda. It identifies Africa solely as a place of suffering. (2008, 75)

Eaglestone's call to draw attention to Africa's grim stories is motivated by a growing interest that implicates "campaigns by the NGOs", "formal political action", "media interest" in the representation of "the more complex and hidden tides of migration and globalization" (2008, 75).

Two issues lie at the heart of the caveat against superseding the complexities tied to misrepresenting the fraught dilemmas of migration in the increasingly globalized world today. While the first interrogates the posttraumatic effect of forces of isolation by de-historicizing representations that homogenize African history, the second places emphasis on the risk of perpetuating the victim/perpetrator discourse by the African representations of trauma based on the West/non-West dichotomies. In line with Eaglestone's concerns, it would be of paramount significance to consider the spatiotemporal articulations that throw into question the restrictive paradigms of realism that freeze the colonized culture into homogenizing stasis. By focusing on African nationalisms' writings that perpetuate the same conceptual economy of colonialism and slavery, I want to propose a "traumatic realism" that troubles the dichotomy between the victimizing paradigms of "acting" and the facile, triumphalist narratives of "working through".

Accordingly, in order to avoid the simplistic rendition of the painful narratives of Africa, a need arises to build an intellectual dialogue rather than freeze the continent as a timeless zone that resists cross-cultural understanding. It is assumed then that, "in its therapeutic retrieval of the colonial past" through a theoretical renegotiation of the meaning of its history, postcolonial theory needs to depict a "colonial past [that] is not simply a reservoir of 'raw' political experiences and practices to be theorized from the detached and enlightened perspective of the present" (Gandhi 1998, 5). The implication of art in the detritus of the extreme triggers questions that have a bearing on recovery and its relation to the possibility of converting the individual, psychological trauma into new forms of social and collective reparations of the disintegrated sense of community. Along ancestral lines of identification with the victims of a painful past, the concept of a "carrier group" as the agents of the collective process, "can be generational, representing the perspective and interests of a younger generation against an older one" (Alexander 2004, 11). Yet, if tracing the "real" in narrative thereby claims to be able to guarantee a simple individual/collective transition, then the complexity of the violence of events such as colonialism and slavery is not granted its due

consideration. The term “post” in both events of such magnitude suggests how the continuing dynamics of violence ramify across space and time. It denotes their belatedness and the survival strategies that they constantly summon in order to grapple with the post-generational transmission of atrocity, demanding ways of documentation that bear responsible witness. On account of the urgent necessity to avoid the frameworks that separate the colonized world from Europe and the attendant painful past, Leela Gandhi criticizes the imposed amnesia of post-independence states. She casts doubt on the “sort of triumphalist utopianism that shapes its vision of the future out of the silences and ellipses of historical amnesia”, a conceptual fallacy which is counterbalanced by some sort of “psychoanalytic procedure” or “analysis” deriving from “a therapeutic theory which is responsive to the task of remembering and recalling the colonial past” (Gandhi 1998, 7-8). Gandhi’s accentuation of the aftermath of the contact with Europe, together with the need to “associate the inconsequential details” affecting the everyday “with past situations”, is the result of the implication of the colonizer as well as the colonized, in posttraumatic terms, in “the transcultural dynamics of the colonial encounter” (1998, 131).

The theoretical dialogue between Africa and the West helps demonstrate that the role of critical history does have to avoid adopting the western paradigms wholeheartedly; yet, psychoanalysis borrowed mainly from Western academia does equip the postcolonial subjects to challenge postcoloniality and neo-colonialism since narrating trauma helps fuse the textual and contextual strands (Craps 2013, 35). However, while insisting on the fact that the Western models of psychoanalysis should not be rejected altogether, many postcolonial theorists contest the universalizing schematics that are being imposed (Craps 2013, 34-35). At stake therefore are the cases that account for a border-crossing “diagnosis” that fights the forces of separation and takes on board issues of hybridity, cultural difference, and heterogeneity. Such a necessity also solicits a blurring of disciplinary boundaries between the textual and the psychological dynamics of colonial violence, a revision that calls for a textually-oriented critique of such an imposition, namely the ahistorical tendencies in postmodernism and post-structuralism. In fact, these paradigms have been accused by materialist postcolonial theorists such as Benita Parry and Aijaz Ahmad of being textually biased and belonging to Western academia. This particularist tendency affirms that “Postcolonial theory as conceived by Bhabha and Spivak is seen to mystify imperialism and to deny the agency and voice of the colonized” (Craps 2013, 36).

The accusations above thus perpetuate the forces of separation based on West/non-West Manicheism and are to be initially de-essentialized by the fact that many key figures of poststructuralism came from Algeria and their contributions were primarily against Western systems of thought (Craps 2013, 36-37). As an ongoing narrativization of the past that aspires to “working through” the aftereffects of colonialism, memory is aimed at realigning the boundaries between victim and perpetrator through exploring the terrains of opacity, if over-generalizations are to be avoided. Denying the contamination by the claimed “Western” texts is just another way of playing the role of victim; exempting, that is, postcolonial theory from responsibility and contributing to the dichotomies of Self/Other, Center/periphery which condoned the primal events of colonialism and slavery on racial grounds. Despite the fact that

Europe should not be construed as a “mythic unity”, postcolonial writers’ “attention to hybridity and heterogeneity need not distract from hierarchies of power” that still persist to the present (Rothberg 2008, 228).

In view of the complexity of rendering the painful pasts in representation, a critical point with regard to the two defining strands of postcolonial theory is worth mentioning. I would like to particularly examine the way in which the ethical imperative of African trauma narratives is relevant to the two directions that respectively define historical and textual directions in postcolonial theory. Special attention to trauma usually results in exploring the ambivalence of the narratives, which underlies both unwavering persistence and vigilance. It reveals a concern with the truth of the painful past given that an uneasy position arises between the responsibility to narrate and the concern that the singularity of their narratives be appropriated by discourses that still conceive of Africa and Africans in de-historicizing and dehumanizing terms. As their sense of freedom is overdetermined by a constant struggle against hegemony, their stance has to take responsibility for a past that is neither overwhelming nor overcome. Raising the need for forging communities of survival than recovery through “other modes of living on”, David Lloyd speaks of the transgenerational witnessing in which narratives are passed on, since, “in eviction, homelessness, death and scattering of emigration, there is no recovery to be traced but only the condition of a transformed subjectivity, subdued but not subjected” (2008, 227). Above and beyond the Manicheanism that sets victimization against perpetration, the explorations of the post-traumatic cultures of Africa in complex fashion could be seen in Henry Louis Gates’s (1991) discussion of the critical double bind of representing colonial violence. The postcolonial theory’s complex dynamics at work when revising the colonial discourse is highlighted in the passage below, which posits a caveat against falling prey to the readings that victimize the colonized subject or celebrate textual resistance. As Gates affirms the role of the postcolonial intellectual investigating postcoloniality,

You can empower discursively the native, and open yourself to charges of downplaying the epistemic (and literal) violence of colonialism; or play up the absolute nature of colonial domination, and be open to charges of negating the subjectivity and agency of the colonized, thus textually replicating the repressive operations of colonialism. In agency, so it seems, begins responsibility. (Gates 1991, 136)

The positions explained here foreground two states that characterize postcolonial, especially African, writing and the forms of identification with the native. On ethical grounds, the positions are determined both by the fact that if the African subjects are powerless before the overwhelming and corrosive aftereffects of colonialism, then there is no chance that their narratives could claim any political ability to transform the status quo. It is also set within the Manichean framework of victim/perpetrator, which idealizes, and thus victimizes, the native who ends up being exempt from responsibility by falling prey to an image of cheaply “sentimentalized alterity” of a “para-human creature” (Gates 1991, 138). If it is otherwise claimed that these narratives can easily restore the agency of a communal self through overestimating the power

of counter-discourse, then the atrocities of the colonial past will be irresponsibly subject to neglect by underestimating the magnitude of such a painful past. Likewise, the passage begs the question of awareness of an ongoing epistemic violence; that is, the production of knowledge about the other by a racialized colonial discourse. The misrepresentations permeating the public sphere are reminders that the dynamics of colonial violence persist to affect the everyday of the posttraumatic cultures of Africans. This position thus calls for the postcolonial theory's responsibility through a more self-reflexive rendition of the past.

Gates's (1991) passage is part of his intertextual analysis of different critical positions, postcolonial and other, toward Frantz Fanon's investment in a psychological drama of colonialism, slavery, and racism as their shared kin. By producing a new category that dismantles the victim/perpetrator West/Rest dichotomies which are contaminated by an "aura of racism" (Rothberg 2008), displacement emblemizes a positionality set beyond the victimization-ridden over-particularism of the local and the celebration of being part of the global elite. The posttraumatic effect born out of the dilemma of exile seems to mar Fanon's circumscribed identification with postcolonial identity politics to which he lays claim as an intellectual émigré. Given his struggle to measure the degree of distance and proximity of a black intellectual *vis-à-vis* the realities on the ground in the worlds of colonialism and postcoloniality, Fanon's state of dislocation and an allegedly "Western" intellectual background constantly poses inhibitions to a smooth transition, in posttraumatic terms, from the individual to the collective self of a man who faces alienation by the two poles of West/Rest divide. The experience of dislocation bears important implications as Fanon's sense of responsibility implicates him as an intellectual enabled by his "distanced" rendition of the "negro" question to attack all sorts of ethnocentrism, while remaining faithful to the cause of the alienated black subjects with whom he closely identifies (Gates 1991, 141).

Fanon's case as a hybrid subject testifies to the complicity that calls into question the facile victim/perpetrator dichotomy. It epitomizes the exploration of colonialism and its aftermath based on the examination of "the complex workings of trauma during colonization as in processes of self-construction" given that such issues as "complicity, guilt and agency" (Visser 2011, 276) also foreground the African subjects' need to sense the due responsibility for their demise in the periods of colonialism and postcoloniality. Fanon's empirical findings about the psychology of the oppressed are shaped by the conflictual relations his identity testifies to between the particular and the global. The role of his multidimensional identification is to cast doubt on the polarization of diagnosis by unsettling the dehumanizing schematics of colonialism and slavery at the point where his anti-racially guided conclusions open inroads into unexplored terrains of the colonial encounter. Among the diagnosed and duly documented "borderline cases [that] pose the questions of responsibility in the case of revolution" (Fanon 1963, 185), and which are to be set beyond the victim/perpetrator binary, he mentions a former resistance fighter from an African country. The insurgent dropped a bomb that killed ten notorious colonialist racists in a public café, but was concerned that he might have killed other innocent passersby especially after a friendship that he developed in the post-independence period with sympathizing people from the ex-colonizing nation. In the post-independence period when every-

body was expected to celebrate the victory of the patriots and lay the past to rest, the militant instead was haunted post-traumatically, and spatiotemporally, by the event when guilt caused an overwhelming vertigo (Fanon 1963, 184-185). On the other side of the colonial divide, a French man exemplifies another border case. Working at the police headquarters and torturing potentially insurgent Algerians, he suffered from tormenting tribulations. A markedly fraught moment was the result of an unexpectedly horrifying encounter for both the tormenter and the tormented (Fanon 1963, 194-195). Fanon's border-crossing diagnosis can be aligned with Rothberg, who states that "critics invested in revitalizing both trauma studies and postcolonial studies can contribute to such revitalization [of perpetrator victimization] by developing differential maps of subject position and experience" (Rothberg 2008, 231).

Fanon's subject-position as a bystander of the extreme indicates his cross-cultural stance of a diasporic in-betweenness, since it cuts through a victim/perpetrator Manicheanism that breeds racial divide. Attention to his intellectual and experiential engagement with exile reflects the African intellectual's problematic "distance", which is geographical and, by extension, engenders a troubled relationship with identity. In Stuart Hall's inquiry into a diasporic subjectivity that is constantly produced and in flux, for instance, "narratives of displacement" are always implicated and inscribed within a "discourse" that is "placed" (1990, 223). The politics and poetics of representation thus create a problematic link with the intellectual's identity, an identification setting the artist/the intellectual between the position of a cultural exile deploying the oppressor's language and theory and the native who associates him with the untrustworthy nationalist bourgeoisie who are distanced from the everyday grievances of the masses. Such a *literal* and *critical* distance is revealed through Fanon's refusal to return to the West Indies and to Negritude; not to mention the rejection he underwent by most Algerian revolutionaries who "scant his role and remain irritated by the attention paid to him in the West as a figure in Algerian decolonization" despite his constant "attempts to identify himself as an Algerian" (Gates 1991, 140).

Problematic, as such, is Fanon's critical direction and diasporic subject position that bear the implications of an inclination to identify with diverse identities. His fighting with the French in 1944 where he "was disabused of his notions of belonging to European civilization," his movement to Algeria to work at the psychiatric hospital in 1953 to join the FLN (Front de Libération Nationale) after he resigned from the post, and his estrangement from the Antillean culture because of the French policy of assimilation further complicated his political affiliations, albeit in ways that made him construe the trauma of dislocation through a *realist* lens (Goyal 2015, 5). Most importantly, by alternating self-appellations in different periods using the communal "we", he included himself consecutively with the French, the Antilleans, the Algerians, and the Africans, mapping the posttraumatic effects of a rootless biography onto the legacies of violence in Europe's war and Africa's anti-colonialism and bearing witness to his diasporic experience's fragments as the "transnational or Black Atlantic coordinates" (Goyal 2015, 5). Fanon's dilemma of reconciling the individual and collective self was continually faced with inhibitions as he needed to measure the degree of distance and proximity of a circumscribed allegiance towards the African pasts. His case aligns with what Laura Murphy explores as the present manifestations of

the “Atlantic slave-trade” in West African fictions situated between the “repetition” as “acting out,” and “mourning” as a “working through”, the fact which testifies to the inherent forgetting of the event given its belatedness” (2008, 54). Sounding a cautionary note against the lure of racial exceptionalism, Fanon’s critique of Negritude and a naïve return to a romanticized tradition rests on his articulation of a genuine kind of traumatized “realism” that refuses to be overwhelmingly “imprisoned” by history; it also reassesses the “conventional accounts of nationalism” while seeking structural transformation by keeping a “gaze on the present and the future” (Goyal 2015, 5).

In contrast to the idealization and romanticizing of the past, and out of responsibility, Fanon’s identity epitomizes the African subjectivity that refuses to be overwhelmed by a painful past, yet at once necessitates documenting the “real” represented by the site of extremity to which the witness, or bystander, returns as a kind of “acting out”. It is also concurrently, and eternally, directed toward a “working through” of the trauma of colonialism in counter-discursive terms that shift the ground of bearing witness to the extreme from the individual to the cultural arenas. Dominick LaCapra explains the Freudian terms “acting out” and “working through” as follows:

In acting out, tenses implode, and it is as if one were back there in the past reliving the traumatic scene. Any duality (or double inscription) of time (past and present or future) is experientially collapsed or productive only of aporias and double binds. In this sense, the aporia and the double bind might be seen as marking a trauma that has not been worked through. Working through is an articulatory practice to the extent one works through trauma (as well as transferential relations in general) one is able to distinguish between past and present and to recall in memory that something happened to one (or one’s people) back then while realizing that one is living here and now with openings to the future. (LaCapra 2001, 21-22)

As the passage’s theme deals with individual and collective trauma, LaCapra also speaks of “melancholia” and “mourning” as two juxtaposed processes whereby the former expresses one’s being possessed by the past as a “dehistoricized” nostalgia and political mythmaking while the latter, which “he aligns with cultural practices that allow for historicization, mourning and transformative memory work” (Saunders and Aghaie 2005, 17), is futuristic in outlook, since it is not only defined by its “individual or transcendental grieving but as a homeopathic socialization or ritualization [...] by re-petitioning in ways that allow for a measure of critical distance, change, resumption of social life, ethical responsibility, and renewal” (LaCapra 2001, 66). Refiguring these concepts in terms that pivot on identity claims, Tim Woods rather blends them as a continuum in African literature which should be construed as “more-or-less ‘working through’, more-or-less ‘acting-out’” (Woods 2007, 38). Expressing an initial loss of an “absent cause” engendered by the colonial encounter, African “texts, in their process of searching and exploring themselves *produce* the traumatic object that causes it. They involve us in the exploration and eventually *produce* the desired representation— a witnessing reading” (Woods 2007, 38; emphasis original). Hence, though African writings re-plot the fragmented social tissues of African cultures in order to recover their

“communal and national identity,” one should avoid uplifting narratives of strength and heroism that purport to overcome colonialism (Woods 2007, 40). The issues triggered by Woods in fact bring the importance of the “real” and its ethical demands in representation to the forefront of the discussion of African literature. If the writer is driven by the obligation to “produce” the real in traumatic realist terms, then the pressing demand lies in bridging the writer/reader gap spatiotemporally in order to map the ramifications of the extreme for the reader onto the everyday that is affected in the posttraumatic culture. In tandem with such stretching aftereffects, Fanon points to the return of the repressed in the black subject’s everyday manifestations of a colonial drama reenacted through the Jungian *collective unconscious* (Fanon 1967, 145).

The discussion of the contrived narratives of closure thereby proceeds particularly from a rethinking of nationalist African writings that seek to reach a public in spatiotemporal terms. Attention to traumatic realism is premised on rereading African literature from the vantage point that questions the frozen conception of culture by modernity within the seemingly united nationalist narratives governed by their progressive inclinations. Far from championing such narratives of simplistic recovery or passive victimization, Fanon, for example, posits that the African intellectual who acts like a foreigner and whose use of the techniques and a language deployed by the occupier translate into a “style that is meant to be national but which is strangely reminiscent of exoticism [as] the ideas he expresses, the preoccupations that haunt him are in no way related to the daily lot of the men and women of his country” (Fanon 1963, 160). The stakes posed by such a depiction that loses sight of the “real” contributes to the circulation of images that freeze African history in a remote past. Imbued with qualities that romanticize the native, the images of Africans are circulated through exoticizing and, by implication, commodifying forms that fetishize alterity. The irony lies in the fact that, while the African writer attempts to rewrite the history of modernity, s/he may perpetuate the frameworks that condemn the image of Africa and Africans to frozenness because of the ensuing civilized/backward dichotomy.

Accordingly, the history of African literature with regard to the question of reference and epistemology testifies to the essentialist tendencies that promulgate such frameworks. Critical of the claimed African realism energized by the will-to-truth in the 1960s and 1970s, Anthony Chennells attributes the originality of such a literary direction to the blending of the indigenous narratives of allegory and symbolism with “the modes of European bourgeois and socialist realisms” and every position “among other competing accounts, authoritatively “claimed for itself a correct representation of Africa’s reality” and over-generalized the experience of the local to stand for that of the whole continent’s “black coherent experience” (Chennells 2006, 48). Reference to Hayden White’s “realisms” in the plural implies a revisiting of African literary representations in terms that condemn the censorship exercised by African corrupt elites’ single *telos* against any form that did not portray Africa through ideally allegorical triumphalist forms (Chennells 2006, 49). By the same token, and as will be illustrated in the next chapter dealing with Abdulrazak Gurnah’s writing, the state of “unfreedom” within a public sphere that silences dissent raises the issue of how the corrosive aftereffects of a progressive narrative of modernity find their way into the nationalist post-independence Zanzibar. Confronted with the detritus of the extreme,

Gurnah expounds on different aspects that echo Paul Gilroy's examination of the "camp mentality," which exists within the nationalist regimes whose race politics rests on "coercion" (1999, 193). The discursive construction of such thinking draws attention to the manifestations of a progressive colonialist discourse whose vocabulary holds sway to produce a language that is itself "trapped" (Rothberg 2000, 130).

Central to Chennells's article is the responsibility of many African writers toward the "masses" as the use of the oppressor's language and literary modes risks distancing their writings from the reality on the ground. In their attempt to approach the African subjectivity more closely to fight alienation, "the different histories and different aspirations of people from different parts of Africa and the Diaspora" are glossed over as "the intellectual ignores the fact that they share an identity only within the categories into which white racist theories place them. An ahistoric racism of universalized black resistance provides no solution to the intellectual's cultural estrangement" (Chennells 2006, 50). With such homogenization already criticized by Eaglestone (2008) earlier in this section, a need arises that the intellectuals' role be recast as a socially and historically constructed mission since they act as mediators and translators between the cultural, the political, and other "spheres of activity and differently situated social groups, including the situatedness in time and space" (Eyerman 2001, 3-4). The stakes raised for intellectuals thus lie in the somehow privileged in-between position that they occupy once they are imbued with the power to *represent* the disadvantaged in the postcolonial world, a position that propels them to measure the distance and proximity that often attributes privilege and responsibility to them as the bystanders of the extreme.

The diverse empathic forms of identification with the subaltern might therefore end up denying the enduring after-effects of oppression that stretch well into the African subjects' everyday lives. Akin to the public image of the "comprador bourgeoisie" that is seen to replace the colonial subordination and exploitation of the masses they represent (Chennells 2006, 52), the writers run the risk of contributing to the same paradigms that have led to victimizing and objectifying African subjectivity. Their writings' guiding force is to reconcile, in Fanonian terms, the individual and collective African identities through curing "the psycho-affective traumas of colonialism" (Chennells 2006, 52), but their reconceptualization of a united national history may lead to the construction of a public sphere that instigates the forces of forgetting that shed the moral commitment to remember. Inhibiting the collective memory is the facile resolution enjoying the allure of a contrived realism unable to grapple with diverse African realities that are in constant flux. Emerging narratives seem to warrant a rethinking of the "real" that self-reflexively questions the oversimplified narratives of closure. In this regard, Leela Gandhi states that

The emergence of anti-colonial and independent nation-states after colonialism is frequently accompanied by the desire to forget the colonial past. This "will-to-forget" takes a number of historical forms, and is impelled by a variety of cultural and political motivations. Principally, postcolonial amnesia is symptomatic of the urge for historical self-invention or the need to make a new start— to erase painful memories of colonial subordination. (1998, 4)

Mostly driven by a latent motivation toward a progressive outlook, the narrative of an African modernity constitutes what Simon Gikandi dubs in his tempered critique of nationalism “the absent cause” born out of the discourse of “denial and disavowal” that constitutes a critical reengagement with the history of modernity through the poetics and politics of the pre-modern (Gikandi 2007, 3). The ambivalence of resorting to tradition and customs as a means to reimagine an African modernity seems to suggest that African rewriting is unavoidably contaminated to varying degrees by the progressive legacy of modernity that it struggles to disentangle. African modernity does promise a better future, but if the colonial encounter is denied, the forces of separation that bred the ground for colonialism and slavery are uncritically made to persist.

Parallel to producing self-ascribed identity along the Self/Other spectrum that refuses the cultural hybridity of the continent, such telos also creates a reality within the restrictions of the here/there and Self/Other dichotomies which freeze the space of Africa into stasis and situate it outside of time. Given its sweeping overgeneralizations, the progressive vision of modernity “installs a widening gap between the space of experience and the horizon of expectation, as history becomes ‘a totality opening toward a progressive future’” (Rothberg 2000, 20). Such a neglect of the everyday by writers risks isolating the African space that is schematized it in rigid terms that supersede the particular. Tied to the mechanisms that govern representation is the way the text figures as a somewhat visual reflection of reality. In Rothberg’s view,

The two most common analogies for realist writing come from the field of the visual. The text is described as either a mirror of or a window onto the world, with emphasis in either case on the “picture perfect” clarity of the text. Such figures are obviously inadequate, not least because their metaphorical basis in images does not answer the question of what constitutes a realist depiction. Rather, the “mirror” or “window” metaphor displaces the problem into another medium without making explicit the connection between realistic literary *narrative* and realistic visual *depiction* and without in any way considering the problems specific to the visual medium. (2000, 110; emphasis original)

The passage above thematizes the pitfalls of depictions grounded in the trope of the visual as the allegedly most reliably realist medium. Besides the fact that the narrative and the visual are themselves to be differentiated from each other, the latter poses in mediational terms as a problematic means (cf. Hirsch 2006). In the ostensibly objective *vision* that reveals the world “to a single glance” in the universalized Western tradition of a homogeneous, uniform and absolute space, “the development of perspective is [...] ultimately connected with the separation of time and space that became characteristic of modernity,” thus condemning the space of the other to objectification and stasis with the help of a time-bound civilized/backward logic of progress (Ashcroft 2001, 136). The purchase of the unmediated clarity of vision is here set within the contours of an uplifting, continuous narrative structure that pretends, in its alliance with Benjamin’s coined concept “the homogeneous empty time”, to surmount what Homi K. Bhabha refers to as the traumatic reflected in “the ghostly”, “the terrifying” and “the unaccountable,” since, in spatial terms, the “recurrent metaphor of landscape as

the inscape of national identity emphasizes the quality of light, the question of social visibility, the power of the eye to naturalize the rhetoric of national affiliation and its forms of collective expression" (1990, 295).

The lack of inherent correspondence between realism and the "imagined community" (Anderson 1983) thus poses a dilemma for African rewriting of a territory already frozen in time by the colonial representation that manufactures the experience of the real through superseding the diachronic side in the African space. In its uncompromisingly imposed realist perspective and "as a system intended to reorganize the spaces of the colonized to fit into its own grid of representation, colonialism was itself a mimetic event, tied to the production of a stability, symmetry, and a knowable *socius*" (Gikandi 2012, 318). African representation thus needs to break free from the grip of the homogenizing vision in spatiotemporal terms. Its achievement of a redemptive articulation of the renegotiation of the past seeks to reach visibility by means of constructing new meanings of the past beyond restrictive narratives. Characteristic of the colonized subject's agency is its being set within a restrained context forged by the physical and discursive coerciveness of the intricate "use of power that occludes from public space the social logics with which" the postcolonial subject could 'make sense'" (Lloyd 2008, 214). Lloyd's summation draws attention to how "colonial capitalist modernity" assimilates every element in the colonized culture to its own codes even if the latter may try to *escape* the indicting and infectious "symptoms" of underdevelopment (2008, 219). Within the frameworks that organize the world in terms of "camps", the question of visibility is guided by the isolating and *incarcerating* aftereffects that condemn the colonial other to backwardness based on a myopic progressive narrative that still insists on homogenizing all African histories into one bloc (Eagleton 2008). The role of mediation and the dominant means of representing the past are thus foregrounded since, in Judith Herman's words, "the more powerful the perpetrator, the greater is his prerogative to name and define *reality*, and the more completely his arguments prevail" (1992, 8; emphasis added). Slavery, for instance, is an event that might not be directly experienced by the current generation of blacks in the United States or by their ancestors, but they "were identified with and came to identify themselves through the memory and representation of slavery [...] in relation and response to the dominant culture" (Eyerman 2001, 15).

The constitution of "other" ways of "making sense" in order to recover the "real" counter-discursively lays bare the discursive pitfalls of such an overgeneralization in that they constantly circumscribe the agency of the oppressed. Speaking of the Caribbean diasporic identity's claim on an irretrievable African past, Stuart Hall highlights the creative force of literal and discursive situatedness in "place" as a common denominator of all identity politics, albeit focusing mainly on displacement as "enunciation," which demonstrates that acts of "representation always *implicate* the positions from which we speak or write" (Hall 1990, 222-223; emphasis added). Hall criticizes the oversimplified realist claims in African literature to "bring to *light* the hidden continuities" suppressed by the colonial experience through the cinematic and visual representations of the past (1990, 224; emphasis added). Laying claim to a commonality that reunifies the black subjects, the post-generational, photographic representations by Amet Francis purport to register the experiences of the diaspora of African descent living in the black continent, the Caribbean, the USA, and the

UK within “the underlying unity of the black people whom colonization and slavery distributed across the African diaspora” (Hall 1990, 224). Since they reflect the state of “becoming” as well as that of “being”, ensuing differences are what constitutes the discreet positions that situate the African diaspora within the discontinuities that spatiotemporally relate the future to the past. The “exactness” or the “real” in experience does not apply to the ruptures inflicted by the colonial past; rather, in critical and literal terms, the constant state of transformation is governed by the way colonized subjects are positioned, and position themselves, in order to “understand the traumatic character of the ‘colonial experience’” (Hall 1990, 225). The traumatic realist tendency of such a position consists in the way that the visual needs to be further problematized because the “real” is traumatically *produced* by the fragmentary nature of the re-narrated past as “an object of knowledge” that mediates writers, readers and the event (Rothberg 2000, 103). This engaging undertaking, as it transgresses fixity, demands to be documented by the postgenerations.

This section has investigated the anxieties of exile that transcend the politics of race born out of nation and nationalism in the African cultures. The passage from the individual to the collective has been further complicated by the figure of an African diasporic consciousness that calls into question the homogenizing “realist” depictions that freeze the history of Africa into stasis. Employing traumatic realism necessitates that the forces of forgetting nourished by the colonial encounter implicate the African writers in the detritus of the extreme in post-generational terms. Literary witnessing is thus under pressure to continually fight such forces and open up inroads into a textual “diagnosis” that considers the cross-cultural dialogue at all levels and that takes into account the colonial encounter.

2.3 REVISITING SITES OF VIOLENCE: IDENTIFICATION AND LITERARY CHRONOTOPES

This section seeks to discuss the anxieties of exile from the vantage point of the diasporic subjects who claim an African descent on account of their shared “fate” (Eyerman 2001) of unbelonging. By tracking the irretrievable “real” culture and territory in representations of Africa, the critical imperative to pace a diachronic path constitutes a counter-discursive response to the unitary vision of the synchronic purview endemic in the colonial perversion that isolates colonized histories. As a bequest of the painful past, the forces of forgetting imposed by nationalism are also dismantled by the re-routing of African subjectivity through the multidirectionality of memory (Rothberg 2006) that documents the intersection of African histories beyond national boundaries. Traumatic realism necessitates a definition of realism and its conventions. A definition of realism, especially in relation to the novel, thus calls attention to four aspects:

Plausibility, which means that events are subject to the general rules of everyday life; a coherent and precise representation of time, in which chronology is easily retraceable and any gaps or deviations are accounted for; motivation, or the tendency to give logical explanation of actions and behavior, often in con-

nection to psychology or the specific social and historical conditions in which characters live; and style, with the use of language relatively close to that spoken by the majority of readers. (Mucignat 2013, 1)

My interest is in the realistic depiction of the everyday and the chronological depiction of reality where time is favored. Space is thus missing from the picture as it plays a decisive role in giving a physical shape to the narrative. "Time" as such "is spatial in the sense that the passage of time can only be perceived and given meaning in space, and space is temporal in the sense that movement in space is always also movement in time" (Peeren 2007, 68). In traumatic events, the possibility of keeping track of the chronology of time as separate from space is far from realistic as the traces of time can be perceived in the realities of the present. This reading provides insight into the ruptures imposed by the traumatic events that need a critical framework that transcends the past events spatiotemporally in order to allow for a testimonial representation of past events in the present. The past events should thus be brought to bear on the realities of the African *post*traumatic cultures by spatializing time. In order to pry open the imprisoned space whose peoples have been subject to subordination, it should be convenient to redeem it by turning to Mikhail Bakhtin's salient concept of the "chronotope," which, rather than situate time and space separately, preserves their ability to interact in a dynamic manner through representation. In that respect,

In the literary artistic chronotope, spatial and temporal indicators are fused into one carefully thought-out, concrete whole. Time, as it were, thickens, takes on flesh, becomes artistically visible; likewise, space becomes charged and responsive to the movements of time, plot and history. The intersection of axes and fusion of indicators characterizes the artistic chronotope. (Bakhtin 1981, 84)

Bakhtin's notion proposes the potentials of ensuing temporal and geographical imaginaries based on his special conception of realist representation. He reifies the two intertwined correlates to rescue the event from isolation in order to shift the terrain of investigations from the private to the public sphere. Shifting the focus of exploring the chronotope to the cultural arena, Paul Gilroy (1993), for example, draws upon Bakhtin's notion to delineate the image of "the ship" in the slaveholding history as a lived experience in constant movement, which acts "as the first of the novel chronotopes presupposed [...] to rethink modernity via the history of the black Atlantic and the African diaspora in the Western hemisphere" (Gilroy 1993, 17), not to mention his redirecting attention toward documenting the cultural artefacts of the hybridized black diasporic communities from the "chronotope of the road to the chronotope of the crossroads" (Gilroy 1993, 199). Gilroy's reading of the chronotope is significant here in that it can imply the notion's useful application to the *post*traumatic cultures of African diaspora, as the image of the ship is a microcosmic representation of the restless *lives* of the displaced Africans today, not to mention that it helps forge cross-cultural solidarity in the public sphere. I also want to refer to Esther Peeren, who proposes a paradigm of the chronotope with respect to the life of the diasporic subjects. Her definition is not restricted to the one constitutive of the textual realm, but rather recasts the chronotope

of the diaspora as reflective of “a particular genre of *living* characterized by the chronotope of ‘the changing same’” (Peeren 2007, 69; emphasis added). I want to emphasize that the chronotope signifies the way in which traumatic narratives keep redefining the context where they are produced with the help of their time-space displacement that helps constellate various elements between here and there, or past and present, through the act of writing. Diasporic subjects are set between the “home chronotope” and the “host chronotope,” that interpellates the individuals into a collective space and time (Peeren 2007, 71) that continues to affect their identity formation. Within the post-traumatic cultures, this construction of a new space allows diasporic subjects to break the boundaries between the past and the present, or the extreme and the everyday, given the way they make visible the violence of an allegedly abstract past. In so doing, they reify it by transposing its abstraction onto the actual present realities of the African diaspora and confirm the visibility of time in space as a struggle for meaning, given that “the spatial and temporal frames of narrative are closely integrated (*space as a trace of time and time as a marker of space*) and make up a unique ‘spatial-temporal’ frame (chronotope)” (Lorino 2013, n. p; emphasis original). Bakhtin’s notion can thus be inherent in the belatedness of events that are marked as traumatic because, similar to Visser’s theorization, trauma represents a “knot” that challenges definition, yet constantly engages thinking by taking *displaced* forms that challenge understanding and integration (Visser 2014). It thus reveals that it is perennially linked to “another place” and “another time,” seeing that “the nature of the literal return” of a traumatic event is “displaced by the nature of another kind of reappearance” (Caruth 1991, 184).

I have argued earlier that everyday racism, homophobia, unbelonging, and exclusion typify contemporary manifestations of structural oppression through which the time past “takes on flesh” in the public sphere for the diasporic subjects, since these manifestations stand in displaced forms for the lasting ideological structures of colonialism and slavery (cf. Craps 2013; Walker 2012). As such, in the act of writing about a violent past, the writer is spatiotemporally implicated in the detritus of the extreme and offers new meanings to the new space s/he comes to inhabit in order to lay bare the colonial and slaveholding frameworks that lie at the backdrop of institutionalized injustices in the public sphere. Realism in this sense may be construed in terms that situate the work of art within the discursive realm in which it has been produced. For my purposes here, I also want to deploy Bakhtin’s notion to emphasize the situatedness of postcolonial discourse vis-à-vis other existing injustices in the public sphere. The responsibility that the discourse holds toward other legacies of a violent history is that of a model that anchors a comparison to justice through Bakhtin’s notion of “dialogism,” which, in Michael Holquist’s words,

At one extreme, chronotope has a relatively restricted set of applications that apply to literary texts as conceived as single units. But chronotope may also be used as a means of studying the relation between any text and its time, and thus a fundamental tool for broader social and historical analysis, within which the literary series would be only one of several interconnected types of discourse. It is at this level that the chronotope’s contribution to a historical poetics may best be seen. (2002, 110)

According to the passage, the political purchase of the interconnectedness of various claims shifts the terrain of investigation from the private to the public sphere with the help of the various testimonial claims that counter-discursively and spatiotemporally fight isolation against hegemonic discourse. The underlying premise of the passage explains the fashion in which the chronotope defines the place of the narrative as both a “historical sequence” and as a “transhistorical feature found in works separated from each other by many centuries”, playing as such with different “levels of specificity and generalization” (Holquist 2002, 111). The spatiotemporal approach to works of art, or to the lived experiences (cf. Peeren 2007), of the diaspora is that it allows varying levels of specificity and generalization that, in Rothberg’s application of multidirectionality in collective memory, propel “postcolonial trauma studies (as well as other tendencies in cultural studies) to pursue an approach between homogenizing universalism and nominalist particularism” (2008, 203; see also Apter’s (2006) concept of “incommensurability”). A dialogic approach to history therefore posits paradigms that promise the possibility of historicity in the case of traumatic events out of our complicity in each other’s histories (Caruth 1991). Even if they are removed spatiotemporally from the extreme, the survivors or bystanders are called upon to ensure justice against silence by means of cross-identification. In its multidirectionality, memory promises a new path toward exploring how “everyday life” in and of itself constitutes an urgent “question for survivors” who find “themselves compelled to read their experiences in light of current events in the decolonizing world” (Rothberg 2006, 164). In postgenerational terms, heterogeneously formed publics (Warner 2002) may thus be forged beyond their time and space with the help of the distinct media of representation that seek to act as a means of testimonial. These publics “have an ongoing life: one doesn’t publish them once and for all [...] It’s the way texts circulate, and become the basis for further representations, that convinces us that publics have activity and duration” (qtd. in Rothberg 2006, 173).

The dialogism posited by the chronotopic interaction of different spaces and times sets forth a new literary production that, rather than separates, contributes to an arena where it is made possible for the crisscrossing of a constellation of various elements to bear witness. Memory in literary writing helps revitalize testimony through energizing a once silenced debate and puts together documents that seek a public. In the breaking of forms in which narrative is itself traumatized and solicits attention to ensure justice through reception, the traumatic realist text represents “attempts to produce the traumatic event as an object of knowledge and to program and *transform* its readers so that they are forced to acknowledge their relationship to posttraumatic culture” (Rothberg 2000, 109; emphasis added). New and emerging communities stem from moments of identification that release possibilities for rethinking aesthetics as a vehicle for transformation if ideological uncertainty is articulated to indicate postcolonial disillusionment and its discontents. These moments shake totalizing certainties and yield changing spheres of thought. Human consciousness thereby expands through new forms of empathy that reread the spatiotemporal “borderlines” of the nation to implicate the reader as responsible witness. Rothberg’s notion of “Multidirectional Memory,” a theoretical extension of traumatic realism, illustrates how subjectivities are constituted through textual and contextual encounters by means of promising a politics of shared humanity when the revitalization of

memory promises new ways of understanding. As he puts it, “if neither the space nor the subject of public discourse is given in advance, then the testimonial articulation of memory becomes a site of potential political engagement: it creates subjects and helps shape what counts as the terrain of politics” (Rothberg 2006, 162).

I shall therefore consider the space-time continuum delineating the passing of the colonial past into the postcolonial present as containing both progressive and regressive relationships. African writers mainly between the 1960s and the 1970s, such as Chinua Achebe, Wole Soyinka, Sembene Ousmane, and Mongo Beti to mention but a few, expressed cynicism about the self-serving agendas of selective remembrance of private and public memories under the censorship of monologic sloganeering endemic in such racialized discourses as Pan-Africanism (Chennelles 2006, 49-50). Their assault as “counterpublics” of discourse (Warner 2002) on a single and progressive narrative of the painful pasts promulgated by politicians and a few other writers underwent the pressures of a united public sphere on any writing that was critical of the status quo (Chennelles 2006). Nationalism preached the imperative of fulfilling a complete break with the painful pasts and claimed, through sweeping homogenizations, the end of colonialism and slavery. If many writers’ and critics’ prophesies conceptualized an Africa redeemed by the “healing powers” of retrieved agency, then the massacres committed by the Algerian regime against its dissidents (Chennelles 2006, 56), for example, proved the triumphalist narratives of closure wrong, in that the aftereffects of colonial trauma have come to haunt the national space. In Bhabha’s reference to Bakhtin’s chronotope, “we need another time of writing that will inscribe the chiasmatic intersections of time and place that constitute the problematic ‘modern’ experience of the Western nation” (Bhabha 1994, 141)

A salient example of the spatiotemporal exploration of the posttraumatic legacy of colonialism and slavery is Ayi Kwei Armah’s *Fragments* (1970), which, by ranging through a widely transnational terrain, complicates the passage of African writing into postcoloniality in the phase of disillusionment and corruption. The novel offers a vision that aims to tame the tide of disorder that plagues African nations in that it is part of the body of African literary and critical productions of “Soyinka, Ngugi, p’Bitek, and Liyong [...] who have shown the most bitterness in their response to the plague of dependency that arises from the Africans’ deference to European customs and traditions” (Ogede 1991, 538).

I want to especially explore the imposed amnesia institutionalized in the public sphere by nationalist ideologies and the new ways in which the epistemic violence of colonialism and slavery has been reenacted in the shadow of public disavowal and amnesia. Armah’s experimental novel offers “fragments” of silenced stories that attack head on the lingering aftereffects of slavery and colonialism through the troubled relations between the individual and collective memory. Armah’s writings typify how African literature criticizes the colonial/capitalist modernity in that they peer into the materialism and corruption that run rampant in Ghanaian society. His secondary and higher education in the United States, and his movement to work in diverse African and Western institutions, seem to shape his thematic examination of postcoloniality and post-slavery as someone who inhabits the restless space of the exile and is removed from the reality of his nation. Armah’s text is the story of loss incurred in migration and unbelonging as strongly felt markers of Africa’s grim tales. Marred

by the discontents of border-crossing and its inflicted fragmentation and amnesia, the novel's narrative continues to explore the vexed passage from the individual to the family and community as a whole in quite engaging terms. Above and beyond the comforting promises of post-independence national stability, the sense of a continuing alienation of African consciousness helps bring a constellation of elements on board, namely those tied to colonialism, slavery, and the devastating effects that modernity left in their wake.

Baako is the protagonist who is a "been-to," meaning that he has been to the United States where he has received his education. His story thus makes strong allusions to that of Armah who has found it difficult to re-adjust to Ghanaian society. The "privilege" of exile yields a status that obliges Baako to meet the expectations of his family by providing monetary gifts, prestige, and influence, a situation that implies the spread of corruption within the newly independent Ghana. The novel's literary chronotope clearly attributes the self-enslaving materiality of Ghanaian subjects to the enduring effects of colonialism and slavery. On that account, the text envisions a context in need of documentation as there are

Two distinct worlds, one here, one out there, one known, the other unknown except in legend and dream. But the twilight area between the two is also an area of knowledge, twisted knowledge perhaps, but knowledge resulting from real information in the form of incoming goods, outgoing people. The main export to the other world is people. (Armah 1970, 156-157)

Between the real and the anti-real in a representational framework that troubles chronology, the traumatic realist tendency in the novel wrestles amidst claims that seek to both document and are confronted with inhibitions faced by the narrative when it is confronted with the ramifications of the "real". Mediation in the sense of "twisted" knowledge thus sets the representation between the traumatic event of slavery and its belatedness in the shadow of imposed amnesia and sets in motion the "visual" ramifications of the extreme and the forces that are brought to bear on the *social* and *cultural* arenas of the everyday. Akin to Gilroy's (1993) cultural theorization of the chronotope, Esther Peeren foregrounds the need to elevate Bakhtin's literary paradigm of the concept to "social and cultural categories" as "its constitutive function will [...] apply not merely to plot and characters in literary texts, but to life and collectivity in all worlds, whether intra-or extra-literary" (2007, 68). Faced with the imposed silence on, and rejection of, the issues of the slave trade, Baako thus invests in writing scripts to be turned into visual testimonies against a violent past and the silence permeating the public sphere. In response to forced forgetting and a disavowal of a slaveholding past, he "utilizes the visual juxtaposition that television provides him to map the slave trade past onto the present landscape in order to reveal his critique of contemporary consumer society" (Murphy 2008, 60). Evidence of such silence is provided by the anthropological inquiries of Bayo Halsey, which help in discovering the shocking reality marked by commodifying the memorial sites of the horrors of bondage in that "the high visibility of the slave trade within the tourism industry stands in sharp relief to its practical invisibility, in other arenas of Ghanaian society, where it is rarely mentioned" (2008, 2). Halsey states later in a comment that, as they

disavow the image of Africa “as the land of the slave trade”, “national histories must make the slave trade a minor addendum to the larger story of the emergence of the modern nation-state” (2008, 5). In the backdrop of such a disinclination to remember springs the possibility to unravel the underpinnings of avoiding any attendant “indignation” as they exempt their past from the stigma of slave ancestry. In that respect, the local residents’ reaction is shaped by the “European popular and academic historical narratives about the slave trade. Within these narratives, Africans on the continent are denounced for being outside of the march of progress [...] seen to define human history as both victims and perpetrators of the trade” (Hosley 2008, 2). This kind of “sequestering,” nonetheless, re-invokes the victim/perpetrator paradigms that strip the African subjects of responsibility. It has undertaken to block the events of the past from view and implicates the nationalist institutions and the public in new forms of self-imposed silence.

Baako is also renegotiating his subject-position and his dilemma as a writer in the unpromising period of freedom as his society presents him with the tensions he would experience with the forces that guide his people’s conception of the “been-to”. A closer scrutiny of the history of Ghana would reveal the tenacity of the ritualistic religious expression of the “cargo cults”, a belief of Melanesians that the wealth of the colonists imbued the latter with some divine spiritual connection as saviors (Murphy 2008, 63). Baako, however, desperately attempts to fight these beliefs, a reaction that unravels the dark underside of the enduringly corrupting forces of modernity. Although Western education allows him access to the high ranking people in his society and the benefits of modern technology, a privilege that would satisfy his family, he refuses to sacrifice his personal integrity once he acquiesces in its corruption. Along these lines, the title *Fragments* tends to reflect the nervous breakdown he experiences in both his country and America. The storyline is framed by the unchronological presentation of three consciousnesses that seep through the narrative flow. This multifaceted order of narration is mostly focused on the psychological responses to the world by Baako and Juana, a Puerto Rican psychologist who plays a key part by assuming the role of a close confidante and spiritual companionship for Baako. The third main persona is Naana, Baako’s grandmother, posing as the supposed “custodian of wholeness” (Sougou 2001, 121), as her tribal wisdom imbues her character with the moral authority of Africa’s lost ethos.

From the micro-politics of the loss of familial bonds that leave scars on Baako’s consciousness, to the larger explorations of the nation and nationhood, the novel sets out to draw a tide-bound cartography of West African history. It shows the disenchantment period of the inherited barbaric effects of the materialism of modernity writ large, bearing responsible witness to an everyday reality that is a holdover of the legacies of slavery and colonialism. By situating the consciousness of Juana, the embodiment of the reverse journey into West Africa from the Caribbean across the Middle Passage, alongside Naana’s, the supposed guardian of the past and its lost values, around the pivotal persona of Baako, a prospective writer, Armah deftly redefines the vocation of writing through an experimentation that scrambles spatial and temporal, or rather chronotopic, articulations against a backdrop of the violent history of modernity. In at once exploring the psychological underpinnings of the ills inflicted

by migration and the loss of traditional mores, Baako's story is set in the restless terrain of investigating the interstitial space between "routes" and "roots", persisting in the circumstance of unbelonging, to document the moral values of an irretrievable African past while bringing together the legacies of slavery and colonialism in the transatlantic world. The significance of Juana's presence opens up inroads into a foray of issues, prominent among which is the hybridizing process in Ghana that calls into question the polarized frameworks of identity and sets forth new genealogies that revitalize memories ostensibly far removed in time and space. She is forced to leave behind a tormented personal life and a native country under American imperialism, only to be disillusioned by the striking resemblances the new place bears with the old (Armah 1970, 31). At work is the practice of critical solidarity carried through the multidirectionality of the Black Atlantic memory, as Juana's specializing in psychiatry offers her persona as a case self-reflexively enabled to implement the human implications of fractured histories of "violence", "predation" and "dispossession" (Axiotou 2008, 110) to larger questions pertaining to a mutilated culture rather than merely individual paradigms of psychotherapy set in isolation from cultural trauma. Her "controlled identification", to use LaCapra's (2001) term, with Baako helps forge emergent historical associations and implies a refusal to appropriate his story under objectifying means that are culturally insensitive to his case. Offering close companionship to Baako suffering from the posttraumatic effects of slavery and colonialism, the relationship makes possible new paradigms of understanding that help construct emerging histories in the sense proposed by Caruth (1991). Similar to Baako's return circumscribed by Ghana's mutilated culture, slavery "looms in her musing over" Accra, depicted as a "prolific creator" of devastatingly dehumanizing conditions (Armah 1970, 23). She spatiotemporally bears witness to what remains from the ruins of the past when she gazes at Accra's castle to excavate the hidden side of the history of slavery as "the small form of the distant castle brought memories, and again her doubts returned: why had she really come back?" (Armah 1970, 30). Bakhtin describes the chronotope of the spatiotemporally condensed remembrance in castles as follows:

The castle is saturated through and through with a time that is historical in the narrow sense of the word, that is, the time of the historical past. The castle is the place where [...] the traces of centuries and generations are arranged in it in visible form as various parts of its architecture, in furnishings, weapons, the ancestral portrait gallery, the family archives and in the particular relationships involving dynastic primacy and the transfer of hereditary rights. And finally legends and traditions animate every corner of the castle and its environs through their constant reminders of past events. It is this quality that gives rise to the specific kind of narrative inherent in castles and that is then worked out in Gothic novels. (Bakhtin 1981, 245-6)

In this space that serves as a narrative of a violent past and where, "from a narrative and compositional point of view [...] encounters occur" (Bakhtin, 1981, 264), Juana revisits what remains of slavery and spatiotemporally poses as a witness to the extreme through the narrative provided by the castle. In traumatic realist terms, new

interventions seek to turn the fragments of the past into a meaningful whole out of the demands for documentation that supplement new encounters with legitimacy and meaning. Juana's rethinking of the past inscribes new terms that engage the witness through the chronotope as a bystander of extremity and invokes the overarching notion of the "implicated subject". In many traumatic events, the witness may not have attended to the events in the first place, but is implicated in the legacy of the extreme through shared aftereffects. Rothberg examines the conceptual significance of such a concept to the everyday re-experiencing of trauma that stems from the assumption that the "real" is always what Jacques Lacan refers to as the "missed encounter" (Rothberg 2000, 22). This encounter, by virtue of its belatedness, implicates the witness, who is "traumatized insofar as she lives on beyond extremity into a new world of everydayness" because, while the extreme affects the victims, trauma impacts the non-victims as responsible bystanders over distant spaces and times (Rothberg 2000, 138). The trauma of the past thus implicates both Juana and Baako in the legacies of violent history as an event experienced spatiotemporally. In their chronotopic encounter with social corruption, spaces like the castle bring "in one place at one time the gradations of new social hierarchy [in which] unfold forms that are concrete and visible, the supreme power of life's new king-money" (Bakhtin 1981, 247).

Revisiting Accra's slave castle is meant to conclude that "the extreme's implication in the everyday is spatial, but trauma's relationship to that place is temporal" (Rothberg 2000, 138). All the more so because "despite Juana's remembrance [...] Armah indicates that the replacement of its previous incarnations with a new Ghanaian institutional power [...] over the representation of the country's past and its present erases recognition of the corruption of both" (Murphy 2008, 57). Murphy saliently invokes the lingering aftereffects of slavery protected by the post-independence Ghanaian government that used the castle as its seat after independence in 1957 (2008, 57), the fact to which the novel refers to as the "white form, very small at this distance, of the old slave castle which had now become the proud seat of the new rulers, the blind children of slavery themselves" (Armah 1970, 30). The centrality of "visualized" sites imbued with material evidence in realist terms, resonates with Pierre Nora's focus on the "sites of memory" that attempt at revealing nationalist history's investment in annihilating what has "in reality taken place" through preserving "museums, some medallions and monuments" that as yet empty them of the claims of memory (1989, 9), claims that dynamic memory resorts to in order to "block the work of forgetting [and] materialize the immaterial" so as to constantly work on the retrieval of the value of the past (1989, 18). While nationalist history condemns the significance of the sites to frozenness, the revitalization of memory brings into play a constellation of elements that act as far-reaching manifestations of primal violence.

A moral prerogative thus implicates subjectivities to bear witness as a sign of "responsibility," since memory is made to exist through "individual means" (Nora 1989, 15). Juana's return attests to the Caribbean consciousness harboring a belated trauma that impels her unawares to journey to her lost origins located in "The Black Atlantic", a search for origins when, "in the early days, the forebears sold their kinsmen into slavery for minor items" (qtd in Murphy 2008, 51). Hence, Juana's implication in the detritus of the extreme is located in the middle passage; it sets in motion articulations

that come to mark a chronotopic reworking of the past. Where spatiality is tied to her tormenting dislocation from home, temporality opens insights into a return of the slaveholding past that plagued her country's history. Omar Sougou summarizes the dilemma of exile for the African diaspora in the following passage,

Juana represents a paradigm of the African Diaspora coming home. Her mood and perception of the land, her doubts parallel Baako's trauma on returning home from America and facing the degrading values that have now currency in his society such as greed and corruption, reminiscent of the covetous complicity which helped the slavery enterprise of old. The contiguity of the two protagonists and their apprehension of the social environment they live in illustrate the longing of the Diaspora to re-connect with Africa and the difficult relationship that may prevail in the attempt to do so. The two characters of *Fragments* appear as forlorn subjects drawn to each other for self-fulfillment and healing of their fragmented beings. (2001, 120)

Baako and Juana's ensuing solidary act of identification thus rests on their remotely shared ancestry, together with their lived experience of dislocation that extends over generations and is perennially in need of "healing" forces that counteract the aftereffects of slavery and colonialism. Not only does their cross-identification, which is set at the thresholds, undo the racialized frameworks instigated by nationalist dictums, but it also helps carve out emerging diasporic communities long after the primal event of violence that has fragmented the culture of Africans. The novel then offers new paradigms that promise the multidirectionality of memory even if experiences are far removed from each other. Murphy points out, accordingly, that

Scholars continue to debate to what extent we might be able to extend Freud's theories of the individual to the level of the community. However, his speculation that there might exist "memory traces of the experiences of generations" that affect the lived experience of individuals for hundreds of years provides us with an opportunity to explore the extremely long-term effects of trauma and those traces of memory which might arise to consciousness generations after a traumatizing event has taken place. (2008, 54)

In spatial terms, therefore, only over the course of time does a "place of violence" assume significance in the posttraumatic culture; meanwhile, spaces preserve, in the passing of time which is irretrievable, what *remains* of violence by the help of sites of memory (Nora 1989), for example (see also Rothberg 2000, 27-28). Juana's case testifies to the quest for an identification that complicates the transition from the individual to the collective and which engenders space-time constellations rather than a simplistic telos of linearity. Teleology, in its pretended claim to depict the "real" transparently, imposes identity as an *a priori* and disregards the due justice demanded by traumatized histories. The diasporic subjects can, as a result, construct the sense of community even if their dispersion causes their history to spatiotemporally undergo rupture by the intersection of their histories through points

of identification that lie at the threshold of diasporic interactions. The nuance in the persistent but elusive visual fragments of the past thus lies in their being passed on to us as “points of memory” (Hirsch and Spitzer 2011). These points echo what Hall refers to as “the points of identification” that define cultural identity; they are registered not as “an essence but a *positioning*” (1990, 226; emphasis original) that spatiotemporally reconstitutes the diasporic identity through postmemory. They are thus signposts through which artists, by means of the pervasive images of postmemorial photographs can carry the effect of a fractured process of transmitting the traces of the past through memory that becomes “a social activity” that leads to “the intersection between past and present, memory and postmemory, individual and cultural recollection” (Saunders and Aghaie 2005, 19). By the same token, and in ways that supplement the representation of the past with its duly ethical demands, Hirsch and Spitzer illustrate how cognition and identification are intertwined through the engaging force of “affect” in the viewer,

The term ‘point’ is both spatial (such as a point on a map) and temporal (a moment in time), and thus it signals the intersection of spatiality and temporality that is inherent in the workings of personal and cultural memory. The sharpness of a point pierces and punctures: like the punctum, points of memory puncture through layers of oblivion, interpellating those who seek to know about the past. A point is also small, a detail, and thus it can convey the fragmentariness of the vestiges of the past—tiny images on faded cracked paper. Points of memory can produce insights that pierce and traverse temporal, spatial and experiential divides. As points multiply, they can convey the overlay of different temporalities and interpretive frames, mitigating straightforward readings or any lure of authenticity. (Hirsch and Spitzer 2011, 246)

In the passage, the critic proposes perfectly pertinent paradigms that solicit the intervention of “affect” as the vehicle of transmitting trauma to postgenerations. The spatiotemporal reach of the mobile image fights the forces of “generational amnesia” through relocating ethical responses beyond the limitations of bounded space and time. The “point of memory” is here persistent and is never stable, as it infringes “experiential” divides through transhistorical identification; however, it also rejects authenticating representation and illicit identification lest its specificity be compromised. The two axes thus determine the link to the past with regard to the fragmented yet persistent representation of trauma. As Hall writes: “one gives us some grounding in, some continuity with, the past. The second reminds us that what we share is precisely the experience of a profound discontinuity: the peoples dragged into slavery, transportation, colonization, migration came predominantly from Africa” but share the history of displacement with such subjects as Asians (Hall 1990, 227). This identification thus bears witness to the responsibility assigned to groups for their trauma as their solidary relationships born out of their shared demise “allow them to share the sufferings of others” (Alexander 2004, 1). The underlying structure of the following chapters will therefore discuss the particularity of the historical contexts that the works under study aim to probe into. Yet, they close with a focus on the multidirec-

tionality of memory that testifies to the need to break free from the isolation that often imprisons and marginalizes African narratives of suffering.

The “point” mentioned is thus a concept that functions as a multidimensional reading source that allows the interference and interaction of diverse perspectives on the past, an interpretive operation that enables some sort of collective, postmemorial witnessing able to guarantee the circulation of the image to rescue the event in the African writings from the margins of privacy. Such a perspective brings into the open the contradictions of the “objective” vision, a vision which, from a detached perspective, claims to possess the truth in order to imprison it within totalizing frames of reference. Offering insights that transgress the limitations of hegemonic discourse, the photos, for example, convey an idiom that shifts the terrain of investigation beyond the national space. Through their movement that reflects mobilized memory against official history, they stretch their effects to carve out a space for an emerging sense of community lying out of bounds,

In response and as an alternative to what Pierre Nora, in a profoundly nationalist conception of cultural memory has termed “*lieux de mémoire*,” points of memory, small, fragmentary, mobile and portable, unlike Nora’s stable and nationally sanctioned “*lieux*,” are trans-or supra-national, better suited to the diaspora memorial cultures. (Hirsch 2011, 246)

This passage invokes the diaspora and its members’ constant attempt at finding community as the defining category of the circumscribed sense of identity in the post-modern age. It summarizes the points made in this chapter about the necessity to transcend the nationalist longing for form and the pretended promise of recovery that, in its attempt at uniting the experiences of African subjects, both nurtures the forces of forgetting and condemns the African space to frozenness. The spatiotemporal articulation of the disintegration inflicted by displacement—a phenomenon that unavoidably marks African subjectivity in today’s globalized world—sanctions a more nuanced rendition of the “real” in representation. In the analytical chapters, it will therefore be argued that the fragmentary history of the émigré invokes the ethical prerogative to document the undocumentable “real” in literature, trying as such to constantly construct a collective whose claims seek to reach the public sphere in postgenerational terms. The traumatic realist approach in Gurnah’s, Adichie’s, and Phillips’s works thus responds to such demands of the diasporic subjectivity that calls into question the essentialized articulations of posttraumatic cultures out of the sense of complicity that engages everybody to bear responsible witness. It brings together the transatlantic and the Indian Ocean’s worlds in order to chronotopically claim an African past that needs to break free from isolation.

3 *Abdulrazak Gurnah's By the Sea: Re-territorializing the "Camp World"*

As mentioned earlier in the discussion of the spatiotemporal rendition of voice, the crucial contribution of African rewriting is to pry open a space in which the discourses of colonialism and slavery have imprisoned and secluded African articulations from the public sphere. In my investigation of "traumatic realism" I have connected its epistemology with ethics and justice to represent a persistent and painful past. I have also emphasized the essential role of the irrevocable infusion of the African literary writing with a self-reflexive sense of responsibility with the help of Rothberg's (2000) overarching notion of the "implicated subject". My interrogation of the workings of the nationalist discourse in the theoretical chapter centered on its institutionalized forces of amnesia that are imposed in the public sphere, forces that attempt, through a feigned recovery from the ills of the past, to create a realism that guarantees a smooth passage from the individual to the collective self of African communities. In spatiotemporal terms, such a reality feeds the need to lay claim to the past more critically. Studies on Gurnah's work have focused on the terms of hospitality that have been defined and imposed on the African Diaspora in the British laws of integration (Farrier 2008) and the need to give the Indian Ocean its historical consideration in African literary studies (Steiner 2010). My analysis of the novel, however, focuses on the far-reaching ramifications of the history of colonial modernity. It tracks new encounters between Africa and Europe in order to argue how "traumatic realism" is able to draw new cartographies in literal and discursive terms that trouble the limitations imposed by the "discourse of benevolence" (Olaussen 2009b). They thus embark on reading the everyday of the African Diaspora in postgenerational terms to argue how displacement is still "imprisoned" within the frameworks of the discourse of hegemony. It makes clear the existence of the same restrictive mechanisms that made colonialism and slavery possible.

In the following pages, I will examine the attempt of trauma narratives to free the secluded world in which the mainstream media has secluded the African diasporic subjects. I aim to probe the writer's subject position *vis-à-vis* the space in which s/he has had to be discursively placed. The spatial metaphors predominantly sanction an investigation of the question of exile and the moral obligation to represent the past by the African writer posing as a bystander. Within the framework of maintaining an ethical position toward the past in "traumatic realism", my aim in this chapter is to investigate the critical imperative of the African narratives to break free from the literal and discursive confinement imposed by the claims of the politics of race. In so doing, I will examine Abdulrazak Gurnah's novel *By the Sea* (2001) (hereafter abbreviated as *BTS*), a literary experimentation of entangled memories of the past which reevaluates

the “camp world” by breaking the boundaries between the extreme and the everyday. The text unveils the colonial discourse that continues to limit the space of articulation of the (ex)-colonized subjects viewed as the “white man’s burden”. Yet, out of the African subjects’ complicity in their painful pasts, it bears mentioning that the text’s self-reflexivity implicates African subjects themselves beyond the victim/perpetrator dichotomy. In centering his investigation on the questions of exile, Gurnah’s sense of responsibility holds accountable the racist discourse of nationalism, which does not necessarily emerge as the prime source from the colonial enterprise and which has generated the ethnic conflicts leading to the “pogroms” in post-independence Zanzibar. In Jonathan Glassman’s analysis of Zanzibar’s post-colonial politics, “Even though the links between colonial rule and the contemporary ethnic politics are unmistakable, they alone are not sufficient for explaining the often profound resonance of ethnic demagoguery, especially its ability to evoke ethnic violence” (Glassman 2004, 753).

Due to its complexity, the cartography of the Indian Ocean as littoral space solicits intermeshed temporal and spatial renditions of the post-colonial re-telling of the history of Zanzibar, an island off the East African coast. In spatiotemporal (or chronotopic) terms, I will thus relate the novel’s “traumatic realism” to Gurnah’s exile as an attempt to hold an ethical stance toward the past, given that he seeks to responsibly modulate distance and proximity toward the events of Zanzibar’s painful history. At the center of this discussion lies Gurnah’s attempt to grapple with exile as the posttraumatic effect of the colonial discourse’s pervasive surveillance within what Rothberg denominates the “camp world” (Rothberg 2000, 105). Viewed from its spatial articulations, the colonizer’s language both allows ‘room’ for writing exile and *confines* its African Other within its imposed epistemological parameters that strongly ramify in the post-colonial period. For Gurnah, then, though “English [...] seemed a spacious and roomy house, accommodating writing and knowledge with heedless hospitality”, it has also construed the colonized subjects in objectifying terms as “incidental consumers of material meant for someone else” (Gurnah 2004, 59). The relation of language to migration and hospitality thus brings forth the enslaving discourse of the “host” as the foreigner to the language “has to ask for hospitality in a language which by definition is not his own, the one imposed on him by the master of the house, the host, the king, the lord, the authorities, the nation, the State” (Derrida 2000, 15)

The English language is, as such, viewed from an ambivalent stance, as it is at once discursively objectifying and counter-discursively promising the redemption of the African Other from the shackles of stereotypes (cf. Farrier 2008). It should be mentioned then that Gurnah’s sensing of the confining aftereffects of racial judgments stems from the fact that he had to leave the turmoil of violence that translates in the novel into a primary focus on the posttraumatic effects of the narrative of imprisonment. The ethical purchase of his narrative is that it closely identifies with those stranded, or confined, back home in post-independence Zanzibar. My primary focus on the imprisonment of Omar Saleh, a character in the novel, as closely representative of Gurnah’s life is not to confound the two characters as one. Rather, my aim is to show Gurnah’s ethically controlled identification (LaCapra 2001) with those he left behind as he is implicated in the representation of the political turmoil in which they were stranded in post-independence Zanzibar. Through Saleh’s experience of im-

prisonment within the ongoing dynamics of oppression from the colonial to the post-independence histories, Gurnah's experience of the "real" is expressed in the novel in its oscillation between past and present, the extreme and the everyday. His object is to show, in chronotopic terms, how the discourse of the African other is constantly trapped, or imprisoned, within the space assigned by the sense-making of hegemony (cf. Lloyd 2008; see also Rothberg 2000, 94).

The critical prerogative of re-writing the history of Zanzibar urges Gurnah to reject being referred to as a victim by the discourse of benevolence, a critical position which stems from his growing awareness of the colonial and racial underpinnings of victimization (cf. Olausson 2009b; Farrier 2008). In order to imbue the question of home and belonging with its human aspects, *By the Sea* mixes the extreme and the everyday and uses the trope of family feuds to probe into the conceptual foundations of the alliance of "race" and "nationality" that have permeated the colonial and post-colonial periods. In focusing attention on the violence surrounding the post-independence period, the novel's sense of disillusionment attests to the lingering effects of colonialism, yet it also testifies against the forces of separation that have worsened the relations between members of the same nation.

I will thus explore the far-reaching ramifications of colonial discourse in the first section of this chapter. Gurnah's issue with the fraught terms "refugee" or "asylum-seeker" in England complicates his critical position *vis-à-vis* the question of home and belonging with regard to broader issues of hospitality that center on the shifting contexts that redefine the two terms above. Faced with the victimizing Western media, Gurnah feels *confined* between two inhospitable worlds, thereby sensing the traumatizing aftereffects of the modernizing claims. His refusal to speak about the past in victimizing terms underlies the unavoidable "complicit" subject-position he holds toward his past. Based on the analysis of Gurnah's interstitial subject position towards the notion of writing "between camps" (Gilroy 1999), I will use Saleh Omar's escape from imprisonment to dwell in the restraining world of exile that has led to his undergoing the pressures of a victimizing discourse. The trope of the "open-air prison", yet within a public sphere still perpetuating the terms of the surveillance of dissent, can be used as a springboard for discussing the aftereffects of the violence of colonialism and slavery that ramify spatiotemporally in the post-independence period. I will focus on the way in which Gurnah's critical position that troubles the boundaries between the free and the unfree can be seen through the lens of the character of Saleh.

In the second section, I will investigate the ways in which the individual and the collective are intertwined by conceiving the familial in the light of wider geographical investigations of the gate-keeping industry and its relation to imprisoning conditions. Central to my discussion is Saleh's imprisonment, with the help of larger geographical implications. The intertwined narratives of Saleh and Latif testify to the struggle over the meaning of the past and its need for redemption from the restrictions imposed by geographical boundaries. In this sense, while the fragmented stories try to grapple with the implications of Zanzibari history, a third narrative thread provides the "real" as a parallel narrative. It helps testify against the racial politics of nationalism that transformed Zanzibari realities into closed-in boundaries for those who do not fit within the family bloodline of African descendants.

The third section will show in what sense Saleh's silence expresses the pressing need to investigate the Zanzibari past in terms that go beyond the helper/victim binary. His preference for the investigation of the cultural geography of Zanzibar fits the framework of mapping the history of Zanzibar upon that of Eastern Europe. As African trauma narratives gain currency in Europe, the latter is recast from within its space as other voices promoting solidarity tend to emerge through bringing the histories of violence of Africa and Europe into contact. It also problematizes the boundaries of Europe, given that the narrative of Africa has come to approach Western European space by presenting its eastern counterpart as testimony against its atrocities. The novel as such aims to read colonialism, genocide and slavery in light of each other.

3.1 WRITING EXILE, WRITING THE "CAMP WORLD"

The writing of exile has often been a vexed issue in postcolonial literature mostly because the past remains fundamental in order to hold an ethical stance toward history. As Gurnah's writing is determined by the critical imperative to free writing from the shackles of racial politics, I want to read his novel *By the Sea* in this light. My discussion of displacement will center on the literal and discursive imprisonment that complicates Gurnah's approach to the writing of displacement. In this regard, I want to emphasize the ongoing production of boundaries by the topography of a closed-in "camp world" and the need to rethink its bounded space as this world can be re-conceptualized from the vantage point of traumatic realism. In view of the fact that its "stereotypical trope indexes violence", its porous boundaries can be split open by "the multiplicity of relations within the camps and between victims and non-victimized contemporaries" during and after the traumatic event (Rothberg 2000, 130). Questioning the binaries of the everyday and the extreme, traumatic realism seeks to "reconceive the camp as a hybrid of contradictory elements" in that it offers

a realism in which the scars that mark the relationship of discourse to the real are not fetishtistically denied, but exposed; a realism in which the claims of reference live on, but so does the traumatic extremity that disables realist representation as usual. (Rothberg 2000, 105-106).

Accordingly, as a legacy of the colonial encounter, not only does the "camp world" consist in the physical presence of prisons or camps, but it can also be redefined by virtue of the ongoing ominous conditions constricting the meaning-making processes aimed at redeeming the colonial Other's voice. Trauma is also about the crisis of representation induced in the posttraumatic culture. Using the context of post-independence Zanzibar, I will investigate the critical imperative of Gurnah's writing to probe into the colonial repercussions of forced migration, a discussion that will primarily delve into the questions of "race" and "nationality" in order to raise the issues of surveillance in the "camp world". My discussion of surveillance will emphasize the meaning of displacement already redefined by the colonial geography, and above all the history of modernity. I want to argue that Gurnah's writing of the camp world typifies new inroads that

postcolonial writing can enter by perceiving the narrative of the past through broader geographical explorations. In trying to articulate a counter-narrative spatiotemporally (or chronotopically) against the boundaries drawn by the imposed hegemonic surveillance, Gurnah's writing of exile conjures up a world which unsettles the boundaries, either literal or metaphoric, between the extreme conditions of the sense of incarceration and the everyday concerns with the loss of one's freedom of speech.

By breaking the boundaries between the inside and the outside of imprisonment, a deconstructive grasp of the "camp world" is grounded in recasting the public sphere through the interlinked literal and metaphoric underpinnings of surveillance as a space of punitive functions, not to say the discursive dynamics beyond its contours which threaten to lead to punishment and, above all, silencing of testimony. Speaking of the post-colonial condition, Graeme Harper points out, for example, that "the reach of carceral discourse goes well beyond the physical appearance of the prison and its bars" as "the colonization of freedom" underlies the existence of a public sphere wherein the "day-to-day life becomes an exemplar of a form of colonial subjugation or subservience" (Harper 2001, 1-2).

This bounded space, which creates the isolating geographical and ethnic boundaries, belongs, for that matter, to a stereotypical public sphere and produces an environment of imminent extremity writ large by constantly indexing the possible recurrence of coercive violence. Traumatic realism's rethinking of the "camp world" will be corroborated by Paul Gilroy's (1999) lament against the "camp mentality" that pervades the public sphere in which the coalition of "race" and "nationality" in the discourse of modernity tends to prelude the violence limiting the freedom of both the incarcerated and the seemingly free. It will help illustrate how Gurnah is confined by the politics of race as an African writer of Arab descent. For African subjects, silence may thus be produced by what Paul Gilroy refers to as "camp thinking" whose "distinctive rules and codes" (Gilroy 1999, 189) permeate the discursive sphere of statecraft and its promotion of "race" politics in the 20th-century. Gilroy's words below explain the concept at length:

I want to call the national and racial formations that resulted 'camps', a name that emphasizes their hierarchical and regimented qualities rather than any organic features. The organic dimension has been widely commented upon as an antidote it supplied to mechanized modernity and its dehumanizing effects. In some cases, the final stages in the transformation of the nation into an embattled confluence of 'race' and nation in the service of authoritarian ends. It should be immediately apparent that nation states have often comprised camps in this straightforward descriptive sense. They are involutory complexes in which the utterly fantastic idea of transmuting heterogeneity into homogeneity can be organized and amplified outwards and inwards. (Gilroy 1999, 188)

The restraints enforced by "raciology", which consists in the discursive invention by modernity of separation through "de-natured" race, has constituted "units" of camps that have fostered the forces of exclusion and the incrimination of difference in the public sphere (Gilroy 1999, 185). Gilroy's interrogation is aligned with Harper's

unsettling of the inside/outside dichotomy. In his inquiry of the state of unfreedom permeating the post-colonial subjects' arena, especially with regard to such writers as Gurnah, Harper ascertains that "Although 'who is really free? And 'who is *truly* imprisoned?' are hardly new calls, they do reflect our expectations [...] as to the true nature of colonial incarceration" especially as the (ex)-colonized subject epitomizes those who write from within the modern West (Harper 2001, 3; emphasis original). This inquiry brings the dilemmas of exile to the forefront of Gurnah's concerns with his diasporic subject-position, especially the relative freedom offered by using the language of the oppressor. By dwelling in the constricted world of exile, between an unwelcoming homeland and a resentful host land, the exilic subject constantly dwells amidst the perils of what is referred to as a space "between camps" (Gilroy 1999).

The pressing need to document the silenced history of Zanzibar situates Gurnah's expression of displacement in the oppressive space between homogenizing exclusion and confinement. Sensing the perilous prospect of being incarcerated by the racist regime in his country and the unavoidable hostility of the "white" English society, Gurnah epitomizes the African diasporic subjects whose writing turns out to be a daunting process as, in such situations, he occupies "a space between camps" and is "in danger of getting hostility from both sides, of being caught in the pincers of camp thinking" (Gilroy 1999, 191). In Gilroy's view, there emerges the critical prerogative to probe into the creation of "camps" that can be closely associated with 19th-century modernity and its "de-naturing" construction of "race thinking" in terms of "anatomy, hierarchy and temporality" as they are buttressed by the ability to travel with systems centered on Europe, but moving "beyond Europe's changing geo-body" (Gilroy 1999, 185-186). Besides the camps being construed in their metaphoric sense, Gilroy shifts attention to their physical manifestation in order to engage responsibly in a moral reflection on the diverse body of work emerging from various contexts afflicted by camp thinking and its ramifying in various identity politics. The intersection of European and African traumatic pasts is one such example of the overlap of colonialism, slavery, and genocide, a new remapping of the race politics that solicits the historicity of the African pasts as, in traumatic situations, these camps also translate physically for African subjects into "refugee camps, labour camps, punishment camps, even death camps, as providing opportunities for moral and political reflection" given that the latent aftereffects characterizing everyday trauma need to be recast in terms of a "social death" that "is common to inmates in regimes of unfreedom, coercion and systematic brutality" even if they may not be inmates in the strictest sense (Gilroy 1999, 193). At a larger scale then, and tied to the exclusionist politics of modernity, the spatial manifestation of "camp thinking" is first and foremost produced by the re-conceptualization of "History" with a capital letter "in [the] geographical and geo-political designs" of the superior/inferior dichotomy (Gilroy 1999, 188). The "camp mentality" of racial separation in this sense can also take place at the level of geography and the creation of boundaries.

In this light, Gurnah's literary witnessing against race politics has grappled with the "real" in the lived experience by combining a constellation of aesthetic, geographical and historical interrogations of exile. He thereby scrutinizes the dilemmas of forced migration based on the questions of ethics, epistemology and politics. In his article "Writing and Place", Gurnah acknowledges the fact that the questions he raises

“are not new” and insists “they are firmly inflected by the particular, by imperialism, by dislocation, by the realities of our times. And one of the realities of our times is the displacement of so many strangers into Europe” (Gurnah 2004, 60). Gurnah’s traumatic realism therefore attests to narrating the past through the geographical and historical exploration of post-colonial exile. Within the conceptual constellation of the various dynamics that relate the past to the present and the need to transcend the myth of national boundaries of race, his traumatic realism, to use Rothberg’s words, seeks to “formulate a version of interdisciplinarity attuned to the complexity of extreme events [which] necessitates not reconceptualizing the camp world but reconceptualizing the very tools through which it is thought” (Rothberg 2000, 129; see also Visser 2014). Out of responsibility for his and other displaced subjects’ pasts, the rigorous investigations of trauma points the way toward a kind of documentation that breaks the frameworks of racial separation.

At the age of 18 in 1969, five years after Zanzibar’s post-independence revolution, Gurnah left the terrorizing upheaval that marred the tranquility of the small island where “Thousands were slaughtered, whole communities were expelled and many others imprisoned” (Gurnah 2001, n.p.). The racism directed especially at Arabs was to be featured later in Gurnah’s novel *Memory of Departure* (1987) that dealt with the period of Zanzibar’s independence; it testifies to the hatred instigated by nationalism especially toward people of Arab descent. Hostility was then “unleashed by the removal of the common enemy, the British” and led to “persecutions, imprisonments, murders, and the regime of terror that followed” (Hand 2010, 75). The divide-and-rule policy of the British colonial system in turn contributed to the extreme events with its accentuation of the division of the Zanzibari society on racial grounds, hence mobilizing ethno-racial conflicts with its race politics (Killian 2008, 106). The centrality of exile for Gurnah is governed by his concern with the detritus of the “real” in representation, as facing stereotypical media, either lay or official, provokes a strong sense of entrapment between the literal and discursive underpinnings of colonial and post-independence violence. In fact, it is not uncommon to Gurnah’s fiction to express the sense of entrapment between the colonial and nationalist “dystopic politics of exclusion” (Steiner 2010, 124) which can affect the representation of exile. As Tina Steiner points out,

From psychological character study to family dynamics, national politics of postindependence East Africa and stories of empire and diaspora, his work investigates the intersections of micro-and macro-level constructions bearing down on his characters [...] Offering counternarratives to myths of nation, land and language, Gurnah’s fiction points out precisely the lack of freedom such discourses and politics produce. (Steiner 2010, 124-125)

Gurnah’s fiction on exile, as such, is trapped between discourses inextricably haunted by racial divides. In view of the postcolonial concern with the larger geographical underpinnings of the “camp world”, the sense of being stranded reflects the loss of freedom in spatial terms and constitutes the binding theme in Gurnah’s writing about the forces of separation that afflict one’s identity as an exile. Although leaving for England was first associated with the promising prospect of freedom from an imminent per-

secution and the severe penalties against those who tried to escape (cf. *BTS*, 208), the young Gurnah came to face a resentful political landscape: Enoch Powell's language of incitement gave vent to "fear and loathing" as the "influx" of East African Asians into Heathrow and Gatwick airports solicited every English citizen to act as a gate-keeper when "London dockers, the shock troops of the trade union movement, marched in support of Powell" (Gurnah 2001). Powell's controversial speech nurtured the forces of forgetting and separation between Britain and its ex-colonies out of the underlying necessity to deny its historical responsibility for colonialism and slavery: he "was predictably no supporter of overseas aid, and he was adamant in rejecting the idea that collective historical guilt for colonialism imposed on Britain any obligation to maintain an 'open door' policy" (Murphy 2014, 368). Within the spatial articulations that were legitimated by race and nationhood, military metaphors seemed to prevail as a national arena dividing ethnicities into separated "units" of camps was in the making; it was to launch a war of boundaries that aimed at protecting the national purity of Britain by a dominant public sphere at the service of an institutionalized gate-keeping industry. Their disposition to incriminate difference invokes the connotation of their being "warders" at the service of institutionally imposed restrictions by incarcerators upon their potential "prisoners". It strengthens the conviction that sensing surveillance in the public sphere is what makes its subjects feel confined. The dystopic context described by Gurnah above registers a historical shift in the definition of displacement in Europe. David Farrier locates *By the Sea* in this context and affirms that

It is widely held that the formerly sacrosanct category of "refugee" has since the early 1990s suffered significant erosion; from the 1960s onwards, the increasing interaction of displaced people from around the world to Europe has led to retreat further and further from the definitions laid down in the 1951 Refugee Convention and to qualify the terms by which someone is eligible for asylum. The effect is a schism in the terminology applied to displaced persons knocking at the gates of Europe; no longer refugees, but asylum seekers. (2008, 122)

In such a linguistically fraught reference to the displaced subjects, the deserved responsibility toward the refugees seems at stake given that defining them as "mere pretenders to the title of refugee" (Farrier 2008, 122) tarnishes their image and labels them as opportunists (cf. Nyman 2009, 247). Speaking about the British press where the refugee is often defined as a parasite, Mireille Rosello points out that "the guest is always the guest, if the host is always the host, something has probably gone wrong: hospitality has somehow been replaced by parasitism or charity" (2001, 167). The undeserved hospitality is thus policed by the new terms that are defined by the law as, in Jacques Derrida's words,

All arrivals are received as guests if they don't have the benefit of the right to hospitality or the right of asylum, etc. Without this right, a new arrival can only be introduced "in my home," in the host's "home," as a parasite, a guest who is wrong, illegitimate, clandestine, liable to expulsion or arrest. (2000, 59-61; emphasis added)

The shifting discourse of immigration policies thus constantly poses a dilemma and a threat to the displaced subjects who are at the mercy of the help providers who decide on which terms they would decide the fate of the bewildered arrival. Speaking about Gurnah's previous novel *Admiring Silence* (1997), Farrier states that "on his return to Britain after a visit to Zanzibar, the East African narrator is overcome by the *insecurity* of unbelonging despite his longstanding residence" (Farrier 2008, 124; emphasis added). In hindsight, Gurnah's coming of age has led to discovering his being stranded between two threateningly constricting universes constituted by statecraft, as he has concluded, in his growing grasp of the meaning of "terror", that, for lack of experience, he had "thought about what [he] was escaping from and a lot less about what [he] was escaping to" (Gurnah 2001, n.p.). The encounter with an antagonistic public sphere urges Gurnah, in his fiction, to probe into the colonial past and its pressing questions of colonial epistemology, particularly as to how he has come to be categorized in the most dehumanizing terms. Pondering upon the future is therefore drawn toward the past and the imperative to grasp the complexities of the colonial encounter and its aftermath. At the heart of Gurnah's concerns lie the spatial articulations of race that have come to classify him in similar terms as those constructed by colonial racial politics. So, within the realm of the everyday, Gurnah expresses the sense of being caught by an overwhelming sense of entrapment within an antagonistic public sphere of the country of arrival. As he disappointedly points out,

What a shock it was to discover the loathing in which I was held: by looks, sneers, words and gestures, news reports, comics on TV, teachers, fellow students. Everybody did their bit and thought themselves tolerant, or perhaps mildly grumbling, or even amusing. At the receiving end, it seemed constant and mean. If there had been anywhere to go to, I would have gone. But I had broken the law in my own country and there was no going back. (Gurnah 2001, n.p.)

Gurnah's distaste for the racism he was surrounded by in all walks of life provides a glimpse of the political tenor following the spread of "Powellism" in all walks of life. Within a context that institutionalized violence, people lent legitimacy to racism in "local political and civil institutions, in local government, on school boards, [and] in housing associations" (Schofield 2013, 250). Fortified mainly by the dimensions of separation of Self/Other, civilized/uncivilized, the various media tend to create the bounded space of the "units" of race categorized according to race politics that seclude free speech. Gurnah's encounter with the shocking atmosphere of institutionalized hatred of which he is not responsible raises the dilemma of how to free his identity from the shackles of an environment overwhelmed by stereotypes. In the vein of Frantz Fanon's reaction to the oft-cited scene in which a French child refers to him as a "negro", Gurnah's sense of imposed entrapment stems from the critical prerogative to refer to the seemingly spacious world of England as another linguistic sphere where, in Fanon's words, "the white man [...] unmercifully imprisoned" the black man, the fact which makes the latter "responsible" for his "body", "race", and "ancestors", given the psychological torture and objectification the "uncivilized negro" has come to experience (Fanon 1967, 112). It is thus through the interaction between the everyday and the extreme that Gurnah's stance is conceptually closely akin to that of confinement.

In *By the Sea*, for instance, Saleh Omar is stranded between the harbinger of another incarceration back home, while the refugee camps in England are referred to as “detention centers” of which one had “no locked gates or armed guards, not even a uniform in sight” but rather “an encampment in the countryside” (BTS 42), a fact that invokes the imposed terms of isolation in its silencing repercussions by the state’s institutions. Being under constant surveillance, the refugees have their money and papers confiscated from them and can walk only if “the lads” “stay within sight of the camp” (BTS 43). The significance of depriving the refugees of their money and papers points towards a re-consideration of the “plundering” of their histories under rationalized terms of help. The “refugees” may thus look “like objects in a gallery or a museum, brightly lit and roped off, to celebrate someone else’s cleverness and wealth. Looking like plunder” (BTS 102). Reminiscent of the slavery that has caused its victims’ “natal alienation” (Patterson 1982), the refugee camps are post-traumatic manifestations of the subjugation that has stripped their pasts of documentation or a possibility for social and economic survival through inflicted silence. Following Patterson, Rothberg maintains that forcing Africans into an unidentified genealogy throws into relief the existence of another kind of slavery that provides “legacies of wealth for some” but “strips other people of property, privilege and right” as natal alienation turns “the slave into a genealogical isolate who is socially dead” (Rothberg 2013, n.p.). The issue of being under surveillance within restricted spaces drawn by the terms of guardianship and discipline situates Saleh and other victims, mainly those of post-independence violence back home, within a camp world which warrants a deeper investigation of the notions of documentation or agency.

What is reflected in *By the Sea* is therefore Gurnah’s sense of institutionalized entrapment, which is brought on board by revisiting history through his insistence on documenting the past. The historical imperative to explore the traumatic events that beset the victims of camp thinking in Zanzibar calls for broader spatiotemporal investigations. Omar Saleh’s experiences of incarceration back home and in refugee camps in England serve, consequently, to probe into the re-mapping of territory by virtue of the necessity to engage the reader as a bystander of the traumatic events. In determining the perils of the “camp thinking” that come with the re-drawing of the boundaries of race, Saleh’s exile is invoked as a reflection of Gurnah’s experience of racism. In the latter’s view about the gate-keeping sphere wherein the freedom of the Other is gradually shrinking:

the debate over asylum is twinned with a paranoid narrative of race, disguised and smuggled in as euphemisms about foreign lands and cultural integrity. The Anglo-Saxon species is once again rumoured to be on the verge of extinction, when a glance around the world shows how successfully it has invaded and displaced others”. (Gurnah 2001, n.p.)

Akin to Gurnah’s sense of entrapment “between camps,” between home and away by racist discourses, Saleh’s ageing has contributed to sensing the fact that the colonial language and the cultural baggage its epistemology is loaded with is in fact “steeped in irony” (BTS 18) as, by manifest destiny, an allegedly more superior race is imbued with the authority to re-draw the world of its inferior races. Having learned at an early

age through colonial education to internalize the wonders offered by the “fluency” of the language of the colonizer, Saleh has been made to travel the world through the discursive reconstruction of limitless maps “into territory” as the necessity to foster the separation of race camps pinpoints the way “geography became biology in order to construct a hierarchy in which to place the people who lived in their *inaccessibility and primitiveness in other places on the map*” (BTS 35; emphasis added). Parallel with the internalization of the dominant colonial discourse, a process of enslaving objectification is coupled with the drawing of maps. Within the dominion of various colonial powers of Zanzibar, particularly the Portuguese, the Omanis, the Germans, and the British,

New maps were made, so that every inch was accounted for, and everyone now knew who they were, or at least who they belonged to. Those maps, how they transformed everything. And so it came to pass that in time those scattered little towns by the sea along the African coast found themselves part of huge territories stretching for hundreds of miles into the interior, teeming with people they had thought beneath them, and who when the time came promptly returned the favour. (BTS 15-16)

The re-inscription of a new world map is thus also about carving out frontiers that should not be broken by the colonized, as they have had to accept and venerate the boundaries of a single story’s world in which the language of the oppressor has fashioned them as objects to be owned. More detrimental, in this sense, is the violation of the colonial Other’s right to document her/his past, as the narrative of help has taken charge of the victims’ histories’ ownership. In tandem with the material effect of bounded space, the discourse of modernity seems to run its course as the fact of returning the favor forecloses any possible articulation on the part of the “inferior” colonized to break free from its restraining contours. This is apparent in the colonial education’s contradiction as it tends to preach to its subordinate subjects on how to gain their rights. For Saleh, it seems plausible to have conceded to the “glamour” of “being alive to the modern world” provided by the kind of knowledge disseminated with an assurance by the British whom they “admired for their audacity [...] in being there” (BTS 17). As a sign of self-reflexivity, however, Saleh’s growing awareness of the irony of the myth of credible colonial epistemology leads to his re-reading of the books where, in his words, “I read unflattering accounts of my history [...] about the diseases that tormented us [...] It was as if they had remade us” (BTS 18). Submitting to the subtler restrictions of this discourse, Saleh feels the confining intimidation of the language’s stereotypes which, “because they were unflattering, they seemed truer than the stories” the colonized “told themselves” and had “no recourse but to accept” (BTS, 18). More restraining is the fact that although the British taught them to resist tyranny in the classroom, they ironically imposed “curfew after sunset, or sent pamphleteers for independence to prison for sedition” (BTS 18-19). Thus, whereas the colonized subjects aim to call their campaigns acts of free will, the relative definition of freedom offered by the colonial enterprise is to be inscribed within a discourse of benevolence purporting to free the colonial Other from bondage. In nourishing its subordinate subjects with false hopes about their rights, the

colonial enterprise has constantly underscored the importance of its imposed parameters within the helper/receiver framework.

Bounded units such as “camps” invade the space of the marginalized and re-draw their cartography into gradually closed-in units. In fact, for Gurnah there has not been an experienced incarceration *per se*, but a dominant sense of an “open air prison”, given that in his engagement with Saleh’s imprisonment and camp experience in the novel, for example, he tends to reflect in retrospect upon the way “terror functions more abstractly outside camps through the very logic of identity that laid the groundwork for genocide and has not yet disappeared” (Rothberg 2000, 37). As a writer/bystander, even if he lives at a distance from his native country, Gurnah comes face to face with the more complex repercussions of the politics of race indexed by the colonial enterprise and post-independence violence. He is then seeking the truth of the past through a “traumatic realism” that underlies a witnessing that is morally invested in spatiotemporally returning to the imprisonment instigated by racial segregation “even when” he was not “present in the first place” (Rothberg 2000, 22).

Out of responsibility, therefore, Saleh Omar’s counter-discursive rendition of the helper/receiver binary aims to break free from the shackles inflicted by the discourse of victimization, a long-standing alibi to colonize through the civilizing mission’s allegations. This reading allies with Maria Olausson’s incisive questioning of victimization and European benevolence, offering insightful glimpses into the workings of the discourse of “European rescue and the agency of the victim”: in *By the Sea*, for instance, “the narrator stresses the importance of the discursive frame within which the victim articulates his own position” (Olausson 2009b, 221). As such, confinement in its discursive and physical aftereffects of the civilizing mission constitutes the thematic hub of the narrator’s chronotopic investigation of the question of home as he imbues his forced migration from Zanzibar’s turmoil to the antagonistic society of England with a sense of entrapment in this restless in-between space.

Speaking of today’s figures of displacement caused on an unprecedented scale by “modern warfare, imperialism, and the quasi-theological ambitions of totalitarian rulers”, Edward Said (1994 138) reflects on exiles and their tormenting sense of being politically “punished” as “outsiders” in nationalist discourses. In his view, they have to grasp their exile as “irremediably secular and unbearably historical [because] it has torn millions of people from the nourishment of tradition, family and geography” (Said 1994, 138-139). The historicization of exile thus warrants a critical position that leaves the “safe” haven of writing to delineate the anxieties of “something left behind forever” (Said 1994, 137). Gurnah, by the same token, discovers in hindsight the complexity of existence that has accompanied aging while in displacement and devotes his energy to converting the anguish of exile into memory. He feels that, as he has “thoughtlessly abandoned” his homeland, it was the very lost life that he set out to write about (Gurnah 2004, 59). Yet, out of responsibility for a life that was left behind, he points out that “I was also writing about being in England, or at least about being somewhere so unlike the place in my memory and in my being, a place safe enough and far enough away from what I had left to fill me with guilts and incomprehensible regrets” (Gurnah 2004, 59).

The guilt-ridden grim tale of Gurnah is one of complexity, as the epistemologically challenged memory is here infused with a sense of persistence and responsibility

for those left behind. Since he is driven by the question of distance and proximity, Gurnah avoids falling prey to being defined in heroic or victimizing terms. In problematizing writing in exile, Gurnah resents the way the 19th-century Romanticism still construes distance in terms that provide the writer's "communion with the inner self" by being left "to work in isolation" (Gurnah 2004, 59). This individual, closed-in world is contrasted by the freeing imagination of exile, which provided the early to mid-20th-century modernist writers with the privilege of being the "hero" or "truth seer", a necessary privilege provided by their being "a long way from home in order to write more truthfully as they saw it, to escape a cultural climate they saw as deadening" (Gurnah 2004, 59). But more closely, and in the post-imperial world, another common position ensues when the colonial Other tends to defer to the account of colonial "culture, knowledge and progress" by giving in to self-contempt when seeking recognition, a position which culminates in isolation and alienation by becoming an "embittered émigré, mocking those left behind, cheered on by publishers and readers who have not abandoned unacknowledged hostility, and who are only too happy to reward and praise any severity of the non-European world" (Gurnah 2004, 59). Gurnah's position therefore stems from his constant refusal to be the "object" of subtly renewed fashions of oppressive silence within a colonial discourse waiting for the exile's returning the favor to the master. Nor is he ready to render the traumatic events in the (ex)-colonized countries in a similar colonial fashion to that which has dehumanized the colonial Other. In Harper's view (2001), an uncanny relationship of "labor" emerges between the superiority-laden incarcerators and their enslaved prisoners. The latter's "pleasure-providing" postcolonial literary works have been published in the West and received "enthusiastic critical reception" in order to assume an established

role of the 'integrated' general prisoner who, through their labor, helps maintain the very prison in which he or she is incarcerated and who provides, through their 'criminality', a moral foil by which the incarcerators can define their 'superior' selves, yet is required to aim to reach the ideals prescribed by these same incarcerators. This act of endeavouring to meet an imperially imposed ideal is, in itself a return to the colonial carceral cycle [...] in the 'modern' Western world. (Harper 2001, 2)

The object of this quotation is to lay bare the dynamics that perpetuate the condition of the prisoner/incarcerator and the victim/perpetrator binaries since the ongoing conditions of silence are still carried into effect by the publishing industry in the West. The issue of writers as implicated subjects who represent their history seems to solicit serious academic exercise. In the case of writers constantly viewed as representing the colonial Other, and out of their responsibility toward the trauma victims in the posttraumatic culture, the insistence on remembrance is an act of mourning the dead in a fashion that refuses to perpetuate their inhumanity. All the more so because there arises a need for the writers to redefine their relationship to the institutions of silence through constant resistance. Telling, in this sense, stands as the conceptual kin to surviving the "social death" (see Patterson 1982) inflicted upon the colonial Other through the politics of enslaving labor. Gurnah's insistence on commemoration

with responsibility resonates with the view of Lloyd who points out that the critically impoverished rendition of commemoration embarks on empowering the discourse of the civilizing mission by

thrusting the country uncritically into European and transnational capitalist modernity—uncritical not only of the still uncertain effects of our integration on our own social structures and environment, but also the meaning for ourselves and for others of this alliance with a transnational capitalism whose rapacious, brutal and destructive past is continually reproduced in the present. (Lloyd 2008, 222)

Lloyd's caveat, therefore, lays bare the risks of the three positions mentioned above which, altogether, translate into the construction of heroes and victims who oversimplify and celebrate exile. Their inability to escape the contours of the colonial enterprise's civilizing rhetoric culminates as such in losing the meaning of the past. So, by grappling with the intricacies of the contradictory narratives that are related to the British educational system and that have been provided by Zanzibar schooling and way of life, the driving force of Gurnah's fiction is the "energy to refuse and reject, to learn to hold on to reservations" and to allow "a way of accommodating and taking account of difference, and of affirming the possibility of more complex ways of knowing" (Gurnah 2004, 60). The possibility of making public the political claims on the past is therefore constantly hindered by the oversimplifications typifying the dynamics of silence enforced by hegemonic institutions. The polarized thinking that trivializes the traumatic past contributes to the building of camp worlds with the help of words, as it is under the label of "victim" that Gurnah is constantly supposed to be defined. Wary enough not to fall prey to the pitfalls of the discourse that imprisons him in the refugee camps, Gurnah makes it abundantly clear that,

I would never have described myself as an asylum seeker or a refugee. I was ashamed of my country, of the brutalities and horrors we had inflicted on ourselves, and it would never have occurred to me to discuss them with an immigration officer. For many months, even years, after arriving in Britain, I did not discuss them with anyone. (Gurnah 2001)

Gurnah's issue with being defined in terms that fix his identity resonate with Farrier's exploration of the "encounter between the stranger and the host" as, by drawing on Jacques Derrida's notion of hospitality, he affirms that this encounter is "a contest of definition and, by extension, of recognition" (Farrier 2008, 123). Speaking about the 1960s when he arrived in England, Gurnah is adamant to reject being referred to by such loaded terms as "refugee" or "asylum seeker", which testifies to the need to consider literary representation as grappling with the truth of the past. Of paramount importance to him is the issue of responsibility, as the communal "we" does not exempt him—or his co-citizens—from being complicit, a subject position that stresses that the description of displaced subjects has to be inscribed beyond victimization or perpetration. Equally paramount is the constant struggle against the stereotypical depiction of the African immigrant by the British institutions, restricting the agency of

Africans under the terms determined by the homogenizing discourse of benevolence. Dave Gunning points out that, "the Foreigner is recognized as human by the juridical apparatus of the nation-state and offered hospitality in some cases, but must always be prepared for the sudden withdrawal of this right" (2004, 34-35). Gurnah's claim is thus not to reject the position of the refugees, but rather to resent the homogenization that lacks the particularity of every case of displacement (cf. Nyman 2009), which spatiotemporally fixes the displaced subjects through restraining paradigms of definition that deny the Other the right to citizenship. The meaning of the past oscillates between redeeming one's history in a responsibly complex fashion and the imposed oversimplifications that disregard the moral imperative to represent extremity. Enrica Rigo discusses the spatiotemporal restrictions imposed by such a discourse in that "borders do not only have a physical dimension but also a temporal dimension" seeing that "indefinite temporariness which characterizes the structure of aliens' legal subjectivity, allows for the continual redefinition of the relation between citizens and foreigners" (2005, 15). In rethinking the "camp" mentality that pervades the public sphere to impose silence, "traumatic realism", as Rothberg posits, tends to interrogate the figures of the boundaries that evoke a specific topography under the surveillance of hegemonic discourse, figures that tend "to emphasize the 'closedness' of the camp world, since through them language itself is revealed as trapped within the limited options of the concentrationary" (Rothberg 2000, 94).

Therefore, in this section about the world "between camps" wherein Gurnah's subject-position can be located, I have investigated the underpinnings of the "camp world", its surveillance related to imposed victimization and the discourse of help. Approaching exile through the framework of traumatic realism emblemizes the constant attempt to re-conceptualize the "camp world" beyond the irresolvable inside/outside antinomies. It allows for a recasting of secluded spaces of incarceration through the discursive dynamics that have led to various types of camps, be they "prison camps", "refugee camps", or "labor camps", all of which are physical embodiments of the discourses of "race" and separation, of seclusion and silence. These camps of seclusion are primarily inscribed within the helper/receiver and victim/hero binaries which, through the inclusion of traumatic realism as an approach, are susceptible to being undone by the remapping of the past through testimony. The next section will, therefore, investigate the ways in which Rothberg's "camp world" is construed as "a powerful conceptual constellation" that recognizes the coexistence of what is kept separate through a rethinking of "geography and history" (Rothberg 2000, 290). It will cast light on the legacy of the colonial past(s) that draw attention to the mapping of the family inheritance of the detritus of the "camp mentality" onto broader geographical investigations.

3.2 THE CRISSCROSSING BORDERLAND OF CAMPS

As attention to being "between camps" literally and rhetorically ramifies quite strongly Saleh Omar's story of coming of age, this section will shed light on how his story of encampment nourishes the need to explore the micro- and macropolitics of home

and belonging. Such explorations are important in view of the feuds between the two narrators' families over the ownership of their houses. The memory work of the two narratives of the past foregrounds the testimonial importance of experience which serves as a platform for a *responsible* negotiation of a Zanzibari future that promises forgiveness and reconciliation with the narrators' painful pasts. In broader spatiotemporal terms, they exhibit the ability to render the past in generally intertwined historical and geographical underpinnings of the colonial discourse and its legacy within the post-independence conditions of confinement and racial exclusion. Central to this section's focus on the "camp world" is the need to realign the victim/perpetrator dichotomy. Within the framework of problematized individual/collective coherence in post-independence Zanzibar, the family feuds reveal that both Zanzibari diasporic narrators inadvertently contribute to each other's demise in post-generational terms.

Against an impoverished understanding of history, the conception of the "concentrationary universe" as a borderland separating the extreme and everyday has been the bone of contention among a number of Holocaust theorists (Rothberg 2000). As this bounded universe is generally construed as the setting where the unfit are to be encamped by the forces of separation, its re-conceptualization crystallizes through a traumatic realism that seeks to transcend the frontiers of the overly particular without affecting the singularity of the camps' context. It aims to blast open the restrictions imposed between the extreme and the everyday as a demand for testimony. The inevitably multidisciplinary analysis of the colonial enterprise and its race politics entails the use of this camp world as a concept metaphor for unsettling the forces of separation affecting other traumatic pasts than those centered in the West. As such, there is a need for a rethinking of:

the concentrationary universe as a complex object—at once extreme and everyday, historically produced and reproduced, experienced from a multitude of subject-positions, and accessible through discursive practices [...] there are multiple and crisscrossing lines that divide the world of the concentrationary, both within and without. The concentrationary universe is a specific version of the "borderland" [...]—a space not merely divided between inside and outside, but consisting precisely of the coexistence of that which the border seeks to keep separate [...] Preserving the conceptual openness of that universe means revealing the constant redrawing of boundaries that takes place as that world is produced, experienced, represented, and maintained as an object of memory, discourse and political struggle. (Rothberg 2000, 128-129)

Accordingly, and as I will show in this section, representative of the need to supplement the "real" in history with a critical representation of the past, *By the Sea* subscribes to exploring the world of crisscrossing histories as it pinpoints the constant struggle with breaking the restrictive boundaries of race. The question that arises in the process is not merely contingent on providing the "real" of the extreme, but rather deals with the meaning of the past through profound explorations of the dynamics of the "concentrationary universe". The centrality of the sea and its chronotopic world which figures prominently in Gurnah's fiction points to the theoretical exploration

of a re-territorialized space of the colonial and post-independence race politics in Zanzibar. His works especially align with Isabel Hofmeyr's reference to the Indian Ocean as part of the "transnational forms of analysis" in the academy, which are becoming gradually "prominent" in the studies of current cultures in that it "attracts attention, especially as a domain that offers possibilities for working rich possibilities beyond the templates of the nation-state" (2012, 585).

In the space between the structures of the state, between England and Zanzibar, center and periphery, the interwoven narratives of Saleh Omar and Latif Mahmoud exemplify the differing subject-positions, whose aim is to enrich and document the narrative of the past seeing that their versions lay the groundwork for a multi-disciplinary exploration revolving around Saleh Omar's imprisonment. The two men's conflict over family houses opens avenues into the issue of imposed silence which, in retrospect, is the conceptual kin for the descendants of the inherited legacies where slavery, colonialism and genocide overlap.

In the opening pages of the novel, Saleh grapples with the intricacies of memory narrative, a fragmented account whose chronology is supposed to start in 1960. As anti-linearity traumatically affects the course of the storyline, the two narratives of the past can only be spatiotemporally entangled in the metropolis, the literal and discursive construction of a relative safe haven and its attendant institutionalized silencing hegemony and colonial oppression. The persistence of the memory of incarceration back home drives Saleh to construe the refugee camps offered to him in England as enclaves of "detention". He ends up living in a small and isolated flat in an English seaside town after having escaped a second imprisonment back home. The posttraumatic aftereffects of incarceration thereby constitute the guiding force for the exploration of race and space.

When first arriving at the airport in England, Saleh Omar pretends that he cannot speak English and mentions instead the words "refugee" and "asylum-seeker" to alter the customs officer's alarming decision to proceed in deporting him back to his country lest he would be confined again (*BTS* 9). Out of necessity, and motivated by the narrative imperative to protect segments hidden in the story of the luggage exposed to the immigration officer (*BTS* 8), Saleh Omar protects himself from possible incarceration. As asylum seekers are a category of displaced subjects that "becomes a liability which must be scrupulously policed" and potentially "captured", they "must [...] not betray any information that could be used against them in the asylum process" (Newns 2015, 512). Of significance is also his assuming of a bogus identity. His passport has been confiscated and, as such, he uses that of Rajab Shaaban Mahmud's, a deceased man and a distant relative, whose wife Asha orchestrated Omar Saleh's confinement for eleven years. Saleh Omar has been deceived by the double-dealing of Hussein, a Persian merchant who visits his successful furniture shop and to whom he lends a sum of money for which he will obtain the house of Rajab Shaaban as security. The merchant never returns from his voyages and Saleh Omar claims the repayment of the loan, the act for which he is accused of duplicity, given the conflict already fomented by his allegedly "underserved" inheritance of the house of his stepmother, Shaaban's widowed aunt.

The second Zanzibari narrator, who belongs to the next generation, is Latif Mahmud, the son of Rajab Shaaban Mahmud, who, together with Saleh, struggles to piece together

some of the missing fragments of each other's versions of the past. His tranquility as a poet and professor at the University of London has been interrupted by the second encounter with Saleh, the man he accuses of having stolen their house and property in the period before Zanzibar's independence. Latif's departure from home to study in socialist Eastern Germany in the 1970s culminated in his escape to Western Germany and eventually settles as a refugee in England. Living in exile, he expresses mixed feelings of deep discontent with family feuds towards the society he has left behind. The Zanzibari men's conflicting perspectives of the painful past bear witness to the novel's insistence on blurring the lines between victim and perpetrator as both their families have unintentionally contributed to each other's agonizing conditions back home.

So, in addition to his experience of incarceration back home, Saleh dwells in refugee or—what he insists on calling with a touch of melodrama—"detention" camps before moving to an isolated and small flat by the sea. He is constantly intrigued by maps which constitute the driving force that charts his narrative, thereby struggling to re-draw the terms of the imposed territories of his experience from the colonial to the post-colonial times. His obsession with maps foregrounds the colonial and post-colonial underpinnings of colonial modernity, which has remapped the world to revolve around Europe as the center (cf. Ashcroft 2001, 132). In refusing the epistemology offered by the single story of colonial cartography, the anti-linearity of the plot seeks to bring together a constellation of factors that have contributed to the conditions of exile in the two narrators' versions of the past. Responding to the demands of extremity, the salient approach to the representation of a traumatic event is not premised on pure mimetic representation. Rather, it can be compared to that of traumatic realism "because it seeks both to construct access to a previously unknowable object and to instruct an audience on how to approach that object, the stakes of traumatic realism are both epistemological and pedagogical" (Rothberg 2000, 103). Constantly needing to fill the gaps of each other's accounts in order to grasp the complexity of the "real" in representation, the narrators' crisscrossing stories span the generations between the colonial and the post-colonial in rigorous fashions. The meeting of the two characters in exile underlies the attempt at spatiotemporally exploring the past/present historical mechanisms that govern the camp world. Hence, as it provides two versions of the past, "the chronotope of the narrative relates its interpretation by a reader, a spectator, or a researcher with the broader historic, social and cultural setting in which it is interpreted" (Lorino 2013, n.p.)

The following section will thus first explore the dynamics of space and dwelling as they entail the coexistence of the everyday and the extreme with regard to incarceration. The narrative emplotment covers the wider ground of the geo-political dimensions that parallel the narratives' thread. It contributes to enriching the investigation of the past with the help of the anti-linear narrative of trauma. The blending of the real and the fictional shows that the everyday and the extreme inextricably interact, as trauma narratives both insist on mimetic representation and reflect its fraught nature through fictional experimentation. Hence, "while the traumatic combination of the extreme and the everyday blocks traditional claims to synthetic knowledge, attentiveness to its structure can also lead to new forms of knowledge beyond the realist and antirealist positions and outside of traditional disciplines" (Rothberg 2000,

6-7). This, then, bears close relation to the historical documentation by the novel of the Indian Ocean's context registered in *Periplus of the Erythraean*, which "records Indian merchants and seamen trading on the coast of East Africa as far back as the first century of the Christian Era and subsequently charts events onto a chronological road map" (Hand 2010, 78). The novel's traumatic realism, however, preserves the contradictory real and anti-real in representation as

Gurnah combines both chronological history (dates and facts) and lived sensations (feelings and memories) in order to comment on the narratives of Zanzibari history [...] Apart from the two oral narratives of Omar and Mahmud, the author constructs a third narrative thread, a kind of parallel history, based on easily proved data. (Hand 2010, 78)

The real and anti-real tendencies in the emplotment of trauma narratives, therefore, maintain two paradoxical but tantamount roles. One is ethical and accounts for the poignancy of the human implications of trauma, and the other is documentary in that it seeks justice and public recognition. In order to be in line with the narrator's indirect encounter with the events, the issue of documentation and identification with the victims becomes all the more pressing. Emblematic of being inflicted by the traumatic event, there is a pressing demand for literary experimentation and anti-linearity. Specific to the trauma narratives that reflect on the Lacanian notion of the "missed encounter" (Rothberg 2000, 138) with some of the harrowing events whose scars persist, Omar Saleh's story of exile brings the issue of distance and proximity to the forefront of his interrogation of the past. In his case as a displaced subject, he does not reflect upon the past in order to provide a full account of the "real" events, but rather acknowledges the rupture imposed by incarceration and exile. As he comments on the traumatic telling of the past,

So then these are the events that befell. Many of them are difficult to speak of without drama, and some of them fill me with anguish, but I crave to utter them, to display them as judgements of my time and of the puniness of our duplicitous lives. I will tell them briefly, for many of them are events I have tried hard not to dwell on, for fear of diminishing what little I have left with bitterness and helplessness. I have had many years to think about them and to weigh them in the scale of things, and in that respect I have learnt that it is as well to live quietly with my grazes and sprains when others have to bear intolerable cruelties. (*BTS* 112)

As others have to "bear" the "cruelties" of nationalism, Saleh's traumatic realism is defined by his narrative's holding a morally vexed subject-position as a witnessing bystander from the "relative safety" (Rothberg 2000, 13) of exile. In the situations of extremity, there may be a persistence to bear witness to the "real" events, but the need to document reveals the fact that there is also a necessity to propel the narrative forward in order to provide a sound judgment of the history of his time. The traumatic realism of the novel is reflected in selecting fragments that fit into the framework of

telling the past so that it “does not ignore the demand to confront the unfounded nature of writing, but it nevertheless attempts to develop new forms of ‘documentary’ and ‘referential’ discourse out of that very traumatic void” (Rothberg 2000, 96). In addition to allowing room within the fragmented narrative to grapple mainly with the “real” through the historical and geographical underpinnings of the past, the benefit of leaving some segments of the story untold serves also to surmount the insurmountable in the details that tend to weigh on his telling, a narrative imperative that constitutes both the “acting out” and “working through” the trauma of the past (LaCapra 2001). Saleh therefore does not tell all the events in their literality, but rather reveals the racial frameworks that lie in the background of their occurrence. The interruption inflicted on Saleh’s experience by unjustified atrocity has in fact created a “hole” in his meaning-making processes when representing the “real” past; his as well as Latif’s “stories” stand “alongside each other” to constantly attempt to fill their narratives’ gaps (*BTS*, 207). Ironically enough, the continuity of their narratives relies heavily on the discontinuity that allows access to a multidisciplinary exploration of extremity in order to hopefully fill in these voids. The “real” in Saleh’s narrative of the atrocities committed in the post-independence period, for instance, does not mirror the past in a chronological fashion; rather, it is focused on the events’ effect on the mix of the extreme and the everyday.

So far, my discussion of the novel’s literary experimentation has commented on the mixing of the real and the anti-real as primary constituents that drive home the issue of the mix of the everyday and the extreme within the “camp world”. As mentioned earlier, Saleh’s experience of the political context impinging on the extreme in the prison is filtered through the repercussions of the latent trauma of the everyday as signified in the novel’s family feuds. The struggle over the inheritance rationalized by blood relations opens up new perspectives on the debate concerning discursive indexing of violence through the politics of space and race. The case of the loss of Shaaban’s family house to Saleh synchronizes the climax of the general plundering and chaos taking place in the country after independence. With an atmosphere fraught with the time’s tensions in the backdrop, the overwhelmingly ominous conditions that are preparing the ground for Saleh’s incarceration seem to reach their peak. The politics of race have come to be tied to the problems of the house and, as a result, have given vent to the justification to incriminate Saleh who is thought to have preyed on women. Given that the self-righteous Shaaban laments the loss of ownership of the house out of a closer blood connection to his aunt (Saleh’s stepmother), it is deemed appropriate to claim that the nephew be the legitimate heir. The wider canvas surrounding the feuds attests to the corrupt post-independence system of law that has taken an active part by legitimating Shaaban’s allegations, which have incriminated an “outsider’s” ownership on racial grounds. Although the events orchestrated by Shaaban’s wife Asha, the mistress of the Minister of Development and Resources who has helped indict Saleh, the imprisonment has been made to take broader dimensions that run parallel to the everyday squabbles over the quotidian matters of dwelling. In view of the violence that got out of control to affect the culture at large, Saleh mentions in passing that “Whatever it was she had in mind for me, matters were out of everyone’s hands once the machinery of terror began to grind” (*BTS* 211). Justified in general

economic terms, the pretext for forcing him to pay back the loan for which he has used the disputed house as a guarantee is the nationalization of the banks in 1967 (*BTS* 212). He is then unable to repay the loan which, to his surprise, has to be returned in full before its due period. The only resort for him to avoid imprisonment is therefore to hand over the house to the bank.

As is mentioned in the quotation above about Saleh's attempt at weighing the events "in the scale of things" (*BTS* 112) about the post-traumatic effect of a painful past, a more thorough grasp of the question of space and race needs to take account of the broader dimensions that lie behind Saleh's poor and displaced condition in exile. Both the economic and the geographical are therefore brought to bear on the cultural effect of "camp mentality" and its role in the politics of Zanzibari society. The involvement of history is nonetheless unavoidable through allusions to the spatiotemporal place/time intersection when exploring the disastrous effects of nationalism. Drawing the two stories to form a diasporic community through responsible witnessing implies the necessity to historicize their painful pasts out of their being implicated in each other's traumas (Caruth 1991, 188) in postmemorial terms. In tandem with Hirsch's notion of "points of memory" (2011)—or those of "identification" (Hall 1990)—mentioned before, the "family space" most potently addresses inheritance seen as "symptomatology," since children want to "affirm their victimhood along with that of parents" (Hirsch 2008, 112). In this light, out of the persistence of the traumatic event to be documented and yet defies understanding, Latif wonders why he has come to meet Saleh again in a small flat by the sea after having met him in his other house by the sea back home. In the past, the young Latif tries to retrieve their table upon his mother's insistence. He reluctantly runs the errand to fetch it as it is part of their property when they have lost the house case. It is particularly important as it reminds his mother of his elder brother Hassan. It was a gift from the Persian merchant trying to sexually seduce the young Hassan who fled the country with the merchant. As Latif wonders why it is in exile that he has come to meet the "culprit" who took their house and property, he reflects on the last time Saleh refused to give him the table,

Saleh Omar called Faru and I was escorted out [...] it's as if I went on from Saleh Omar's house and right out of the country, and through the years I have been finding my way to his other house by the sea. It was only a fancy, a momentary despondency that the heaving and straining had been pointless exertion, only to arrive at what was mapped out from the beginning. (*BTS* 104)

The pull of the past seems thus to raise the pressing need to negotiate its significance beyond the contours of national boundaries in a dialogical and responsible fashion. As Omar's houses are located by the sea, Latif Mahmoud's invoking the feuds underscores the unavoidable encounter with the traces of the past, which has been "mapped out" from the very beginning. Between Zanzibar and England, the chronotopic perspective of the question of family feuds has now come to be construed in terms larger than the loss of one's safe abode. Within a broader context marked by the door-keeping industry, the now porous boundary in today's "multiplying [...] home and the accessibility of home [where] the profound homogeneity between the devices of the private, clandestine, non-state network, and those of the police network of

surveillance" (Derrida 2000, 61) is called into question. This encounter that redraws the topographies of memory brings to light what "opens" the nation-state's "controlled and circumscribed space to intrusion," seeing that "in order to constitute the space of a habitable house and a home, you also need an opening, a door and windows, you have to give up a passage to the outside world" (Derrida 2000, 61).

Both narrators seek reconciliation by narrating their pasts whose persistence seems to be tracking their experiences of exile in order to lay bare the ideological structures instigated by door-keeping surveillance. The race-related feuds are thus mapped onto the domain of geography in order to be more largely re-traced through the dimensions of nationalism and its "camp thinking" of which their narratives want to be redeemed. After all, the question that pertains to a spatiotemporal rethinking of racial boundaries through ethical hospitality is that, "the crossing of the threshold always remains a transgressive step" (Derrida 2000, 75). On that account, Faru remains an important element in the narrative of promoting exclusion and separation. Latif Mahmoud refers to him in the most antagonistic terms such as the "bawab" (door-keeper) as he was at the door of Saleh Omar's home and felt humiliated by Omar's refusal to return the table (*BTS* 153). By worsening Latif Mahmoud's feeling of hostility toward Saleh Omar, which has increased all these years before meeting him in exile, the "doorkeeper" comes to stand for the forces of racial separation within both the places of dwelling and the national boundaries, especially as, like the customs officer at the airport who closes the gates of Europe in the face of immigrants, Faru loves "uniforms" and becomes an "officer in the Customs Police," who stands out "at the harbor gates" in order to "keep unauthorized people out" (*BTS* 207-208). Therefore, in remapping the "camp world" that has led to the "gate-keeping" and its close association with the "colonization" of the public sphere, it becomes overwhelmed by the "unforgiving" "civil religion of nationalism: uniforms, flags and mass spectacles [whose] camps are armed and protected spaces" (Gilroy 1999, 190).

The mention of "Faru" thus invokes the micro-and macro-politics of home that underpin the posttraumatic effects of "camp thinking". The oppression of a new order has started to take the place of colonialism in post-independence Zanzibar and its race politics. It seems that the more the reader is made to probe into the etiology of primal trauma, the more s/he is transported to the rich and manifold cultural fabric of the Indian Ocean. It evokes the growing loss of the geographical freedom in the re-territorialized Zanzibar caused by the new directions of the Marxist politics of revolution in 1964 after one month of independence. As Meg Samuelson asserts about the loss of the trading activity, Zanzibar ceded its position as the epicenter of the "musim" trade to the United Republic of Tanzania and lost contact with its hybrid past: The Arab dhows have now "been displaced by cargo ships from Russia, China and the GDR" (Samuelson 2013, 86). Following a description of the maps remade by the colonial enterprise, Omar captures the geo-political tenor of the history of revolution in order to remember the lost period of trading Somalis, Suri Arabs or Sindhis who brought "gaiety" to Stone Town and were soon to be forgotten. In Saleh's words, "they became unimaginable to the new lives we led in those early years of independence" (*BTS* 16). The streets of the town that have become silent reflect, as such, a new era forced to redefine the once "open spaces" (*BTS* 16) into limited ones. The race politics

were translated into the institutionalized creation of space under new terms of national unity of people of African descent. Addressing the question of the Self/Other division related to territorial divisions and the perils of imminent violence, Homi K. Bhabha delineates the potential perils of carving out such an involuntarily nationalist space caused by “feuds” that can produce “paranoid projections ‘outwards’” because “so long as a firm boundary is maintained between the territories [...] the aggressivity will be projected onto the Other or the Outside” (1990, 300).

The nationalist project of “camp thinking” thus comes to take shape in the institutions built to nourish the forces of exclusion and incarceration. In *By the Sea*, institutionalized gate-keeping, or warding, is shown to result in Saleh Omar’s loss of the right of home and belonging when he leaves the safety of the place of dwelling to that of different camps where he has come to live and meet many other victims. Most importantly, the “open air” prison represented by the island where he is incarcerated stands for more than it may literally mean. Beyond the “brick-and-mortar” space of incarceration, the fact that the guards and prisoners eat together on the island in spite of the latter’s sporadic brutalities (*BTS* 227), implies that colonial incarceration holds sway. This fact unsettles “the sometimes ill-defined boundaries between ‘warders’ and ‘prisoners’” as it is “one way of recognizing that some general aspects of incarceration have been integral to the making of colonized societies” (Harper 2001, 1). As it is set by the sea, the island’s uncannily administered prison underlines the chronotopic setting of boats/ships moving into and outside it, thus fostering a rethinking of the logic that has laid the groundwork for the borderland of race thinking by the nationalist regime. After having been locked away and tortured in a private cell where he was isolated, Saleh is moved to another isolating context which is the island used by the government as

a detention center since independence. They rounded up whole families of people of Omani descent, especially those who lived in the country or wore beards and turbans or were related to the ousted sultan, and transported them to the small island some distance off shore. There they were detained under guard, until eventually, several months later, ships chartered by the Omani government took them away in their thousands. There were so many of them that the ships stopped coming. It was known that there were still some people detained there. (*BTS* 222)

It is therefore on the island that the processes of isolation, exclusion, and incarceration have come to intersect as manifestations of the “camp world,” which incriminates racial difference as an endeavor to produce the dynamics of separation. A strong feeling of entrapment is shared by the Omanis as they are forced to migrate to escape torture. They have committed no crime except “the ignoble history of Oman in these parts” (*BTS* 225). As it has stranded them between states, the door-keeping enterprise of nationalism comes to assume its torturing disciplinary dimensions as the commanding officer and his troops devote their special attention to “tormenting them, ordering them to do endless menial tasks, abusing them, and at times beating them” (*BTS* 225). The oversimplification of the binary victim/perpetrator is the logic most closely associated with the forces of separation in this respect. The Africans, once

slaves of the Omanis, are unaware of their use of the victim's role to assume the other role of perpetrator in post-generational terms.

The reductive understanding of the descendants of African slaves of identity formation is also represented by using geographical terms. Saleh decries the insignificance of geographical and cultural division which uncompromisingly settles the question of home and belonging. For him, the victims of severe torture "were no more Omanis than I was except that they had an ancestor who was born there. They did not even look different from the rest of us" (*BTS* 225). Saleh's blurring of the bloodlines of race separation is predicated on the fact of being set between the "them" (the Omani victims) and the "rest of us" (among whom many act as perpetrators). The colonial legacy of Omani history shifts the terrain of Saleh's investigation of the past toward a broader re-drawing of the cartography of race. His subject-position is at once that of a witness assuming the stance of an "implicated subject". Having experienced the repercussions of race politics himself, Saleh Omar's witnessing solidarity seeks to call race politics into question through the spatial unsettling of the boundaries between inside and outside, the everyday and the extreme. The memory of his first moments of unjust imprisonment is told in the most ambiguous terms between opposites. As he is shoved off "in front of everybody", he laments the fact that:

There were *witnesses*, and I am not sure who is worse in such moments, the criminal or the innocents who stand by and watch and act as if nothing evil is taking place. There were witnesses outside, people walking by as if nothing was happening, strolling to their favorite cafés for a chat or to call on family or friends. (*BTS* 216; emphasis added)

Dismantling the boundaries between the victim and the perpetrator, the extreme and the everyday, inside and outside, Saleh aims to bring in justice by implicating the bystanders in the public sphere to bear witness to the atrocities committed in the name of race. Uncertainty about who is criminal or innocent highlights the "unfreedom" that permeates the public sphere without many people's awareness about the perils of the traps of totalitarianism; all the more so because "The punishments were administered in the open yard by people who still walk the streets of that town today, as do some of their victims" (*BTS* 218). The novel's posttraumatic witnessing and its blurring of the victim/perpetrator boundary, aims in this instance to devote much of its energy to shaking more witnesses out of passivity through a traumatic realism that

is not turned only toward the past and its tendency to reappear in haunting repetition. By virtue of its performative access to a posttraumatic context, this kind of writing possesses a future orientation. The traumatic realist project is an attempt not to reflect the traumatic event mimetically but to produce it as an object of knowledge and to transform its readers so that they are forced to acknowledge their relationship to posttraumatic culture. (Rothberg 2000, 140; emphasis original)

In the intra- and inter-camp relations, for instance, the witnessing of heterogeneous experiences of incarceration takes place beyond and within the prison cells. As

various means of punishment and chaos permeate the nation, Saleh recounts the witnessing tales by other inmates, “in their time” in other camps, of “incidents” and “consequences” of torture in “detail” as they have come to take place between camps as particular experiences of imprisonment (*BTS* 218). Not to mention the fact that as “the whole island was out of bounds to visitors”, a picture of the detained Omanis is printed in a newspaper in Kenya; it shows the victims “looking at the cameras with tired melting eyes, some with cautious interest, bearded men capless and worn out” (*BTS* 222). Another Omani too keeps a diary of “all the persecutions that befell them” (*BTS* 223). The import of this witnessing beyond bars and geographical boundaries aims at a circulation that seeks to further its reach in the public sphere. As the meaning of the past constitutes the struggle between the Zanzibaris even today, Saleh and Mahmud embody the post-generational struggle to bring about a dialogue that does not “catch the crook”, but is rather based on breaching the victim/perpetrator boundaries in terms that implicate everybody in the national reconciliation.

So, in addition to erasing the line between the concentrationary and the everyday that solicits others to bear witness, “another line” should be drawn to portray the different trajectories of the prisoners “through the concentrationary that differentiates extreme from ordinary experiences” (Rothberg 2000, 124). The individual stories of the prisoners, and those between the prisoners and the seemingly unfree, have different beginnings and no closure (Rothberg 2000, 138). Saleh Omar’s witnessing of other tortures worse than his, especially those of the Omanis based on racial separation, aims to countervail the homogenization that marks the boundaries between self and other. The heterogeneous histories of experience feed the need to avoid over-particularizing or over-homogenizing histories as there are ways in which they can crisscross in the camp world “from within and without”. To allow a thorough investigation that remaps the “camp world” in terms that account for the particular while seeking to homogenize, trauma studies “can seek to pursue an approach between homogenizing universalism and nominalist particularism” (Rothberg 2008, 230).

The boundaries of separation in the camp world have therefore been unsettled by both Saleh’s and Latif’s spatiotemporally directed narratives of the past. If the “units” of camps have invested their energy in the gate-keeping enterprise, a task undertaken by the prison warders, then the mechanisms that govern such thinking have been resisted by the solidarity of those afflicted by the forces of incarceration. This section’s focus on intertwined narratives and the constellation of mainly the geographical and historical analyses of camp mentality has sought to bring together the micro-and macro-level dimensions of race that have created the constrictive conditions leading to Saleh’s imprisonment. The presence of the imprisoned dissenters reveals the political affiliations that Saleh’s witnessing aims to build against the insignificance of the race politics fermenting the violence against the so-called “non-Africans”. This witnessing is carried out through rigorously documented testimony where dates and facts constitute the “real” in representation. However, out of the human implications of the conflict, a closer scrutiny may be able to show that the extreme events of trauma transcend the walls of prisons and implicate more people who might act as warders at the service of a camp mentality writ large. The next section will delve into the broader dynamics of incarceration, but its central

focus will be on the question of exile, a movement in *medias res* that has always constituted the nuanced trajectories of trauma narratives' search for origins. As traumatic realism does not aim to unite the experience, history and representation of the camp world into one bloc, it seeks "to insist that history is always multiple and uneven" (Rothberg 2000, 177).

3.3 EXILE AND THE "OVERLAP OF CULTURAL MOMENTS"

The above title refers to Rothberg's analysis of the question of exile and how it depends ironically on the writer's "missed encounter" with the extreme events. At the core of post-traumatic writing, the traumatic realist acknowledges the persistence of the events that solicits that the narrative of exile be implicated when encountering the legacy of the extreme (Rothberg 2000, 6-7). The two Zanzibari narrators' absence from other violent histories inflicted on their country and those that have occurred in Africa and Europe brings them face to face with more legacies of which they are descendants. This charged context wherein the trajectories of disparate identities overlap has thus brought about the possibility of sharing the history of the present through displacement. Seeing that it is central to the novel to redeem African and other histories from the shackles of the dominantly single story of European modernity, its crisscrossing narratives are coupled with a sense of responsibility that implicates them to remap the Zanzibari history on other pasts. Myriad trajectories have heterogeneously been tracked by the displaced characters in the novel to highlight the overlap of colonialism, slavery and genocide in Europe and Africa, the fact which sets in motion a non-zero-sum logic that recognizes the particularity of different histories of violence when displacement takes place at the crossroads of culture (cf. Rothberg 2006). This section will thus probe into the growing complexity of representing the extreme in the intertwined narratives of Saleh and Latif. It will argue that the mechanisms of exclusion in "camp thinking" are now to be shared by Africans and non-Africans alike and, as such, provide a charged terrain for reflecting on the crisscrossing legacies set mainly between Africa and Europe in particular in order to resist isolation and silence.

Like Gurnah who left behind the turmoil that has marred the history of Zanzibar, Saleh has run the risk of undergoing another potential persecution when Hassan, the son of Shaaban Mahmud, comes to make a new claim on the previously disputed house. The pushing of Saleh by the island prison's officer to leave the homeland with the deported Omanis seems to foreshadow Hassan's threats to imprison him as a subject unfit to have a home on blood-relation grounds. The irony that characterizes the course of events is that, similar to the political dissidents who have been imprisoned and are to be expelled from the country, the entrapment between home and away also boils down to a double-edged consequence for Saleh. In his words, "it would have been funny had it not been tragic to be detained for so long only to be turned into a refugee from the memories you had clung to over the years" (*BTS* 234). This situation thereby renders matters worse as the dissidents are forced to wait for their visas and discover only later that getting out of prison is "no release at all" (*BTS* 234).

The fond memories that have nourished the hopes of the detainees are therefore dashed as the potential of another silencing context lies in wait in the refugee camps. As one version of the disparate experiences of the (ex)-detainees, Saleh's entrapment has a role to play in a new encounter with the detritus of the "real" when he confronts yet another gate-keeping process at the airport. Faced with another facet of oppression that takes on a subtler guise, he pronounces the words "refugee," and "asylum-seeker" (BTS 9) to avoid being deported back home. Displacement as identified in terms of imprisonment is thus inscribed within the new vocabulary of English bureaucracy whose newfound term "benevolence" turns into an eloquent reminder of the colonial legacy that is a holdover of the *mission civilisatrice*. In an attempt to show to the international community that it is helping the African countries and among them Zanzibar, where the government had "gaoled, raped, killed or otherwise degraded its citizens," Britain exhibits its cheap "stern disapproval" by granting asylum to those who were endangered (BTS 10). Such hypocrisy has not escaped Saleh's grasp when, in hindsight, "the courtesy with which" the customs officer is speaking to him after he pronounces the words "refugee" and "asylum seeker" strengthens Saleh's conviction about his status becoming akin to incarceration: "I was a prisoner, when both he and I knew that I was trying to get in and he was trying to keep me out" (BTS 10). Kevin's gate-keeping might once again be associated with that of a "warder" whom Saleh Omar wishes to send "to some safe place of detention" (BTS 11) or else he will face worse conditions of imprisonment back home.

The irony of Kevin's gate-keeping and his harping on the question of belonging to the European family can be drawn from the fact that his parents have paid the price of atrocities of displacement endured when they were refugees in Romania (BTS 12). For him, then, Africans "don't belong here", but as Saleh suspects that Kevin is Jewish, he laments the fact that the latter forgets that other people have had to pay for Europe's values. Recalling the history of colonialism and slavery, he wishes that Kevin think of him "as one of those objects that Europe took away with her" (BTS 12). By uncannily engaging Kevin to ponder upon the history of the (ex)-colonized/ (ex)-enslaved subjects who have been displaced into Europe, Saleh uses his unspoken and weighed words to indict the forces of forgetting,

Kevin Elderman, the bawab of Europe, and the gatekeeper to the orchards in the family courtyard, the same gate which had released the hordes that went out to consume the world and to which we have come sliming up to beg admittance. Refugee. Asylum-seeker. Mercy. (BTS 31)

As the mechanisms of exclusion in familial terms have come to resurface through the politics of camp thinking, Saleh aims to revitalize the memories of colonialism and slavery susceptible to oblivion through familial bloodlines. He relates the issue of family genealogy to the breaking of the right to morally engaging hospitality by the law as "from the outset, the right to hospitality commits a household, a line of descent, a family, a family or ethnic group receiving a familial or ethnic group" (Derrida 2000, 23). Stating that he will make it hard for Saleh who will "suffer indignities or "violence" (BTS 12), Elderman alludes to Powell's "Rivers of Blood" speech (O'Connor 2007, n.p.)

that made the British society militate against the social wellbeing of the displaced East Africans and Asians based on a law that, to use Derrida's words, may be "determined by a process of division and differentiation by a number of laws that distribute their history and their anthropological geography differently" (2000, 79). Saleh's displacement "between camps" in Zanzibar and later in the metropolis has improved his grasp, in spatiotemporal terms of the perils of the family trope that stretch well into the present to foster the forces of separation in the public sphere. His awareness of the changing dynamics of the colonial discourse of aid propels him to decide that the whimsically used silence is in fact helpful. Refusing to use the oppressor's language signifies vigilance against surveillance, an act which may turn out to be infringement of the refugee camps' rules through silent "insurrection" that could anger their "doorkeepers" (*BTS* 46) offering help. Some sort of pressing resistance thus comes into play as, in Farrier's words, "there is an urgency associated with acting to offer hospitality in spite of the presence of conditions" (2008, 129). Explained more clearly in terms that acknowledge the existence of "contradiction between conditional and unconditional hospitality", the resilience of silence is "a crossing of the threshold" between the two forces that raise the pressing issue of responsibility as "Elderman's decision to admit Saleh is made possible [...] against the impossibility of waiting, a decision has to be made" (Farrier 2008, 130). The "temporariness of hospitality", mentioned above about the constrictions that are both spatial and temporal (Rigo 2005), has its restrictions pushed to the limit in the face of pressing ethical demands for recognition at the crossroads of cultures as a way in which the geographically separate cultures and histories are be linked to ethical hospitality. Ironically enough, the elderly man approaches the language of the colonizer ambivalently as it is both liberating and incarcerating, yet his silence calls into question the terms set by the "colonialism of hospitality; where hospitality remains conditional" (Farrier 2008, 121). As Harper points out in this regard,

A definition of lexical prisons might be: those language conditions where words themselves fail to approach truth conditions, suggesting their limitation as tools within a particular colonial situation. That is not to say that communication is completely impaired; rather, that the communicative possibilities are other than purely lexical. In colonial situations, words often do not so much fail as act to incarcerate meaning, intention, understanding. (Harper 2002, 6-7)

The traumatic realism of Saleh's narrative preserves the contradictions that underlie the use of the language of the oppressor. Resorting to silence also means that traumatic situations "cannot be imitated or reproduced according to the ideals of naïve realism, [as] representation should cease" (Rothberg 2000, 43). Surrounded by the conditions of silence that live on, narration tries to survive by preserving its value against realism's feigned instrumentalism, hence forestalling a predictable failure of communication under the pressure of the sense-making of hegemony. Confronted with the construction of new "camps" promoting the affluent/needy vocabulary of the "white man's burden", Saleh attributes lexical confinement to the dwelling space in England found for him by the refugee organization,

For now I sit in a house that Rachel and the council found for me, a house whose language and whose noises are foreign to me, but I feel safe in it. At times. At other times, I feel that it is too late now, that this has now become a time of melodrama [...] I feel defeated by the overbearing weight of the nuances that place and describe everything I might say, as if a place already exists for them and a meaning has already been given to them before I utter them. I feel that I am an involuntary instrument of another's design, a figure in a story told by someone else. Not I. Can I ever speak of itself without making itself heroic, without making itself seem hemmed in, arguing against an arguable, rancouring against an implacable? (*BTS*, 68-69)

Saleh's dwelling place as hegemonic language and its dominance over the meaning of the past testifies here to the pressing need to summon the metaphorical when addressing the "real". It is thus a world over-determined by a language that has confined the tongue-tied elderly man into silence in a space overwhelmed by a limiting discourse. In the relative safety of this space, then, the semantic dominance of the colonial language subtly imprisons Saleh's articulation of the past events in the uncompromising terms that have decided his existence within the contours of the helper/receiver dichotomy. Though the painstaking process to represent the "real" past has traumatized Saleh's account, a demand for mimesis with regard to the telling of the past still persists in order to retrieve agency. The use of the heroic narrative of closure by the "I" of the authorial colonial narrative needs nonetheless to be constantly problematized within the continuous argument against a long-standing and superiority-laden discourse. By virtue of its traces that are still persistent, "a non-therapeutic relation to the past, structured around the notion of survival or living on rather than recovery, is what should guide our critique of modernity" (Lloyd 2008, 219-220).

This discourse thus seems likely to affect the African subjects within a violence-indexing discourse writ large and which constantly warrants a critical response to its existence as a means to survive its effects. The re-conceptualization of language in spatial terms opens up avenues into a rethinking of the publicly pervasive stereotype on all levels. Latif's confrontation with an old man who addresses him in the words "You grinning blackamoor" (*BTS* 72), for instance, has sent him back to tracing the term's etymological history to find out that it has been in print since 1501, thereby representing a "savage" man who has been "grinning through the canon for centuries" (*BTS* 73). Thus, the African Other has not escaped unscathed from the "terror" induced in a public sphere which is loaded with biased vocabulary associations making racist attributions to the dark-skinned, especially with the help of the English dictionaries. Accordingly, similar to Saleh, Latif concludes that, "This is the house I live in [...] a language which barks and scorns at me behind every corner" (*BTS* 73).

The urge to redeem the past from the shackles of an obsolete discourse of help catalyzes through the silence which Saleh's words are also purposely made to inhabit. As he reiterates the phrase: "I prefer not to" to Rachel who works with the refugee organization, he attempts to draw her attention to the complex dynamics that lie behind his pretended lack of knowledge to speak English. He invokes the phrase as an allusion to the passive revolt of Herman Melville's short story "Bartleby the Scrivener" in order to help her chart his past in terms that constantly resist the victim/helper binary. The

novel thus carries further the attempt at shifting the terrain of past investigation onto a rhizomatic context as Saleh laments Rachel's ignorance of "the cultural geography of the world to make a guess" (*BTS* 66). The preference of the elderly man to tell his story to the other diasporic subject Latif Mahmoud underlies an inclination to "recreate" their "families along new lines of kinship" (Olaussen 2009b, 237) that redeem their stories from racial discourse. So, not only does Saleh's arrival in England nourish the need to free his past from the implications of the camp mentality, but it also contributes to fighting the forces of forgetting that allow the hijacking of the African painful pasts by the gate-keeping industry. His lamenting the loss of the casket of *ud-al-qamari*, the incense that has been "plundered" from him by Kevin Elderman, is one of the last traces of the cultural memory of "a life departed" (*BTS* 31). The role of the incense is that "the sensory memory" related to smell and the vividness of memory "carries the state of decay. The crises many African states are currently suffering have been linked to an endemic corruption and despotism by its leaders," expressed through a guilt-ridden and "strong melancholic ambience in the novel" (O'Connor 2007, n.p.).

The loss of the casket therefore denotes the ways in which the traumas of African displacement have been silenced as objects of the self-serving accounts of the helper/ needy power relations. The implication of keeping the incense constitutes what he "had selected as signals of a story" he "had hoped to convey" (*BTS* 8). Trying to expose the cultural geography of Zanzibar, the narrative of the lost incense he has received from the Persian trader documents the cosmopolitanism and conviviality of the Indian Ocean. The intriguing narratives of travel used by the Persian merchant to exchange the incense for the table that he gives as a gift in order to be able to seduce Hassan means that tales and sales might be intertwined in duplicitous forms. Accordingly, the story of the incense has also remapped the colonial enterprise that traded and "snatched" people and goods with the help of its stories and lies and "a glimpse of learning which was the jewel of their endeavours" (*BTS* 15), leaving behind the politics of race blighting the nation's post-independence period.

The persistence in documenting the history invoked by the incident of the snatched *ud-al-qamari* thus implies the pressing demands of a far-reaching history of the rich culture of the Indian Ocean that has been ignored in recent studies (cf. Hofmeyr 2007; 2012). It invokes the need to *redeem* the archive of the region from the margins of representation. The narrative of help told in the name of nation is called into question in Saleh Omar's attempt to revitalize his cultural memory, which troubles the free/ unfree binary. The epistemological demands of the counter-narrative raise the prerogative to decenter the myth of Western modernity by redefining the Indian Ocean as a site of "alternative modernities" (Hofmeyr 2007, 13). It also calls attention to the need to change gears towards the Indian Ocean region instead of overemphasizing studies that focus on the Black Atlantic. To that end, Omar's memory is provoked by Zanzibar's archive hidden within the casket which is a gift from a

Persian trader from Bahrain who had come to our part of the world with the musim, the winds of the monsoons, he and thousands other traders from Arabia, the Gulf, India and Sind, and the Horn of Africa. They had been doing this every year for at least a thousand years [...] For centuries, intrepid trad-

ers and sailors, most of them barbarous and poor no doubt, made the annual journey to that stretch of the coast on the eastern side of the continent, which had cusped so long ago to receive the musim winds. They brought with them their goods and their God and their way of looking at the world, their stories and their songs and their prayers [...] And they brought their hungers and greeds, their fantasies and lies and hatreds, leaving among their numbers behind for whole-life-times and taking what they could buy, trade or snatch away with them, including people they bought or kidnapped and sold into labour and degradation in their own lands. After all that time, the people who lived on that coast hardly knew who they were [...] Then the Portuguese came, rounding the continent, burst so unexpectedly and so disastrously from the unknown and impenetrable sea [...] Then the Omanis came to remove them and take charge in the name of the true God, and brought with them Indian money, with the British close behind, and close behind them the Germans and the French and whoever else had the wherewithal. (*BTS* 14-15)

This context of alternative modernities is governed by the logic of “circulation” rather than “mobility” as there is movement back and forth (Steiner 2009, 55). Its privileged state of multidirectional journeying has contributed to shifts in the definitions of the itinerant identities in the region. Such a movement has produced various subjectivities whose origins and social statuses could no longer be identified easily as “the meanings of freedom were complex and shifting” (Hofmeyr 2007, 14). Studies about the Indian Ocean have demonstrated that as the subjects’ vocations may broadly be situated between slavery, indenture, seamanship, trade, and imprisonment, their hybrid identities were hardly definable when they, or their ancestors, were displaced. In Isabel Hofmeyr’s explanation of the realignment of the freedom/slavery dichotomy:

The Atlantic model has become invisibly normative. The state of slave and free are clearly demarcated and furthermore Slavery in the Indian Ocean is more complex: the line between slave and free is constantly shifting and changing [...] the bulk of slaves in the Indian Ocean were generally not located in plantation settings and were instead integrated into households. The possibilities for mobility or manumission were consequently greater. Debt slavery or pawning of a lineage member were also strategies followed in times of catastrophe, such as drought or famine. The hope, however, was that these conditions were not permanent. (Hofmeyr 2007, 14)

Saleh’s memory of the past thus documents the period before the arrival of the Portuguese in the late fifteenth century and points to the troubled free/unfree dichotomy. His choice to redeem the Indian Ocean’s history from marginality focuses other non-European encounters marked by violence. Such a realignment of victim/perpetrator binary is geographical in that it sharply brings into light the overlapping legacies not focused on a traditional north-south paradigm of transnationalism emanating from the west. Rather, it redefines the Indian Ocean as the vortex of networks that are both beneficial and detrimental and that constitute “transnationalism in the global south” (Hofmeyr 2007, 3). In Isabel Hofmeyr’s study on oceanic forms of analysis based on

chronotopic analogies, insistence on the study of the Indian Ocean as a model challenges the theories derived from Black Atlantic and highlights other dimensions that are far more complex. Studies have shown that it is an “interregional arena” which is commercial, connecting areas that are linked, but are not restricted to, the Atlantic by bringing into contact “Malays, Chinese, Indians, Arabs and Africans”, not to mention “Britain, Denmark, France, Germany, Holland, Italy, Spain and the USA that came into contact with Africa, the Middle East and the Orient” (Hofmeyr 2007, 6). The novel thus tracks this trajectory which ramifies spatiotemporally in Saleh’s dwelling in the chronotopic world by the sea—first the Indian Ocean, a prison island by the sea, and then an apartment set off an English seaside town—locates his interrogation of the Zanzibari identity beyond the Africa versus Europe dichotomy. These settings mark his shifting identities and statuses as governed by transoceanic rhythms: a trader, a prisoner (and laborer), and a refugee. As mentioned earlier in this study, Latif Mahmoud wonders why the memory of family feuds pulls both subjects into dialogue in the elderly man’s other house by the sea. This second transoceanic encounter constitutes Gurnah’s choice of a redemptive narrative that, in post-generational terms, rethinks the Indian Ocean in terms that can negotiate displacement beyond a north-south dichotomy. Omar’s loss of the incense thus reclaims a past that has been hijacked within such frameworks and brings into focus Zanzibar’s silenced history in the Eastern part of Africa.

Governed by the issue of epistemology, the invocation of the incense and its history of conflicts over the table and property of Shaaban’s family impel Saleh to speak a language other than that of a victim about his past turmoil in prison. Both Kevin’s and Rachel’s families have undergone displacement but Saleh’s invocation of the cultural geography reveals that their histories need to be re-inscribed within a public sphere that fosters cross-cultural solidarity. The refusal to speak about imprisonment signifies the elderly man’s resentment toward confining his status within the subtler conditions of silence that “snatch” and take advantage of the refugees’ histories through the meaning-making processes of the hegemonic discourse of benevolence. The novel’s traumatic realism, in this sense, exhibits its distrust of representation through its “nonsymbolizable” remainder of the real, while it insists on its project of mimesis. By virtue of the prerogative to provide historical cognition through the cultural medium, it shows how extremity “survives” into the everyday world and “is dedicated to mapping the complex temporal and spatial patterns by which the absence of the real, a real absence, makes itself felt in the familiar plenitude of reality [...] By virtue of its performative address to a posttraumatic context, this kind of writing possesses a future orientation” (Rothberg 2000, 140).

This futurist outlook referred to assumes its ethical import by producing new forms of a re-mapped epistemology that engages more subjects to be implicated in the posttraumatic culture regardless of other legacies of violence. This witnessing, however, is also determined by its sense of survival, since narrating trauma always recognizes the stakes of a continuing struggle against the surveillance enacted through the sense-making of hegemony. The skepticism about “transparent mimesis” and the impossibility of direct reference engages traumatic realism as “an aesthetic bound to survival” as it confronts “the dilemma of belated temporality” (Rothberg 2000, 140). In the posttraumatic experience where the shared experiences of displacement en-

gage subjectivities from both Africa and Europe, this kind of witnessing aims to pry open the camp world whose ominous conditions always imprison its other within its imposed logic of separation by the ongoing modern/pre-modern rubric. In so doing, cross-cultural solidarity summons the overlap of genocide, colonialism, and slavery as three main types of violence, an intertwinement that finds its way into the history of post-independence Zanzibar and that warrants the engagement of a wider public. The novel assumes its documenting function since such a historical entanglement is paramount to probing into the confluence of the different types of violence in the throes of the racial conflicts of the nationalist regime that espoused socialism.

The posttraumatic effect of such an entanglement figures the new regime as closely assuming a genocidal bureaucracy akin to that of the totalitarian states in Eastern Europe. In Thomas Burgess's record of Zanzibar's post-independence history, inclination for "racial development" took over during Karum's reign and expertise in "authoritarian rule," with the attendant modernizing methods and austerity measures, was provided by Eastern Germany, China, and the USSR for two decades (Burgess 2009, 22-23). This acquired learning in state tyranny with "an influx of socialist foreign advisors made Zanzibar into something of a regional showcase for revolution" (Burgess 2009, 22-23).

The investigation of socialist nationalism has thus shifted gears towards Eastern Europe by combining ethics, epistemology, and politics. Revisiting the totalitarianism that marked the socialist intervention in Zanzibar in its larger context aims to free the silenced narrative of the past through this re-routing of the novel's focus. It aims to draw a new cartography of the investigation of African displacement through critical solidarity and the urgency to document the pasts of other subjectivities than the African ones. The novel is here intent on digging the archeology of the history of European modernity from the ruins of its eastern part. This new perspective is made possible as Latif is offered a scholarship to study in the GDR in 1966 in order to be trained with other students as a dentist, a promising privilege of cosmopolitan experience and modern scientific expertise. Yet, instead of conceding to the allure offered to the Zanzibari elite scholars who can help mend the ills of society (Burgess 2009, 9), Latif senses the irresistible inclination to learn more about the shocking history of Eastern Europe. He meets and listens to the agonizing stories of Jan and his mother Elleke who live in Dresden, Eastern Germany. Their family members had become refugees as they had to bear the brunt of Europe's history of borders and divisions that brought about a number of traumatic events, such as the demands for Sudeten by Nazi Germany, the bombing of Dresden in 1945, the expulsion and displacement of Germans and the division of Germany in 1949 (*BTS* 136). The possibility of this encounter makes the novel—and the African student—a witness to Europe's atrocities; its ethical purchase is to foster the reader to take part in this cross-cultural witnessing through the everyday. This is made possible by the accidental overseas correspondence between Jan, who has picked up his mother's name Elleke to impersonate a girl, and Latif, an African young man. This written medium with the students from the black continent has been part of the civilizing work the German students are urged to undertake; it is fostered by a man in the Department of Education as a celebration of the GDR's contribution to the development of Africa.

The contradiction of the GDR's modernizing claims is however confirmed at the crossroads of culture. Its repudiation has taken wider dimensions given that, by witnessing from both sides of the divide, Latif is exposed to the harrowing account of the past by Elleke and comes face to face with the suffering of the aftereffects of its totalitarianism which has wreaked havoc in Africa and Europe. Having his foot flowing with blood when he gets to Elleke's flat, the wounds of the colonial past are re-opened as his foot is "throbbing now as much from the pain as from the handling and its implication in stories of antique valour and cruelty" (*BTS* 129). Latif's wounding therefore implies the posttraumatic effect of the history of modernity and its celebrated heroism that has contributed to the silencing of those of Africa. The wounds of the past cannot as such be opened without regard to the conditions that have led to imprisoning and isolating the African histories on all levels. On the side of Latif as a student, there emerges a growing sense of being "held" in the hostel provided by the GDR and where free movement is very restricted; he concludes that they "were beggar pawns in somebody else's plans, captured and delivered there. Held there. Perhaps the scorn was like the prisoner's sly refusal of the gaoler's authority, stopping short of insurrection" (*BTS* 115). Latif thus thinks he is "delivered" and "captured" between camps, between the ironically newfound implications of the Zanzibar politics of race in the host land and the superiority-driven narrative of help in Europe. He is caught up in the delegitimizing aftereffect of the racial stereotype which rationalizes the inefficiency of the GDR teachers' method through the Africans' being thought of as "prisoners to instinct and self-indulgence" (*BTS* 116). The rules of discipline in the educational system of Eastern Germany constitute a conceptual kin of carceral conditions of imposed instructions being institutionalized.

The conceptualization of the Zanzibari politics within the help/need and modern/pre-modern rubrics is thus to be complicated by the acquired knowledge of the social conditions of Latif's new friends. Emerging questions of epistemology entail the necessity to ethically identify with the disenfranchised subjects of Europe out of the urge to politically fight the confining forces of silence and isolation. Both Latif and his European friends have become implicated in each other's overlapping histories. In fact, the colonial education has neither exposed Latif to the devastation that was visited on Dresden where Jan and Elleke live, nor provided an account of the "multitude of Dresdens. They had been there for all the centuries despite me, ignorant of me, oblivious of my existence. It was a staggering thought, how little it had been possible to know and remain contented" (*BTS* 122).

Recovery from the ills of the past through narrative witnessing is however challenged in the posttraumatic context. The victim/perpetrator binary is blurred by the shared experience of silence in both Eastern Europe's post-war Germany and Africa's post-colonial condition through human encounters. Both the African student and his European counterpart suffer from a system of surveillance that permeates the space of unfreedom within the public sphere. They feel that they are under constant surveillance, a posttraumatic effect of Nazi Germany's informing system on the GDR people's everyday life. This regime that is overly pedagogically-oriented and social-scientific in its approach to the denunciatory enterprise thrives with the help of unofficial informing performed everywhere by neighbors, friends, wives and

mothers. Creating preventive measures against organized resistance and free speech, the Stasi (the secret service in the GDR) imitated their Nazi Germany predecessors in denouncing those who might have helped or expressed solidarity with stigmatized groups (Gellately 1996, 967). Though the vast majority of East Germans “felt that they not only had a stake in the system but also were proud of its political and ideological stance in the world” the maintenance of such a system in the 1960s continued to afflict the citizens who were entrapped in inescapably dire living conditions (Gellately 1996, 957). Such realities were as far-reaching as Zanzibar’s everyday lives. Indeed, the country’s post-independence period did not escape unscathed from the social and political effects of such a system due to the teachings on state management of the public sphere especially by the GDR. Quotidian surveillance, fear, and confiscations were estimated to be worse than the violence, rape, and deaths following the revolution. Overwhelmingly characterizing the day-to-day posttraumatic effects of the socialist nationalism, a dark episode of more than a decade of repressing dissent largely affected many Zanzibari Arabs and South Asians on racial grounds (Burgess 2009, 23).

As a result, the alleged celebration of Europe’s modernity comes to be construed in terms of the forces of silencing administered by the GDR to hinder cultural solidarity. The refusal of the social difficulties of the citizens is not only the outcome of silencing dissent, but it is also superseded by the neocolonial interests of Europe’s lauding the narrative of help and superiority over the African Other. The traumatic realism of the novel in this sense situates the posttraumatic culture at the crossroads of cultures in that it

brings together history, experience, and representation, but not in order to unite them. Rather, traumatic realism reveals their overlaps and their tensions. They come together nonsynchronously in the heterogeneous spaces and times of the postgenocidal world. In the case of the concentrationary universe, traumatic realism must answer to a series of conflicting demands simultaneously. (Rothberg 2000, 177)

One demand against silence in this respect is that the colonial discourse of aid has “colonized” the space of the post-genocide, post-war narrative that resists its silencing dissent against daily injustices. As Jan concludes that the Department of Education’s “visiting speaker was talking the usual campaigning rubbish” about offering help to Africa by the GDR (*BTS* 124), his and his mother’s encounter with Latif draws attention to the struggle over the meaning of the past and provides new frameworks that resist the narrative of help that sidesteps the posttraumatic effects of modernity in Europe. It follows then that the second demand is that Europe needs to be rethought through the moral obligation to know about Africa, an imperative that now seems more pressing given the aftereffects of silencing its histories have had upon Europe’s disenfranchised subjects. This simultaneous demand pertains to European history’s contribution to amnesia toward the African traumas in the name of race.

Paramount then is the obligation to render the past in a self-reflexive fashion that redeems the past. Elleke’s tiring narrative of the history in which they were colonial settlers in Kenya when they escaped Europe’s ugly wars has had to start from a guilt-ridden stance. In a sense, they belonged to the European family and, out of racial

difference, they could travel anywhere they wanted and take what belonged to people with “frizzy hair” who were “pacified” and made to be their enslaved servants (*BTS* 131); the meaning of colonialism for Elleke is thus premised on the rationalization of the methods that were committed in their name to torture, murder, expulse and imprison Africans (*BTS* 132-133). Ironically enough, lest they would be interned by the British and mocked at by the “niggers” when the war was about to start in 1939, Elleke’s parents left Kenya to discover that upon Austria’s annexation by Nazi Germany they became victims of the same colonialism that they had inflicted on Africa.

Latif Mahmoud has thus understood, after all the obscenities committed by colonialism, by the Nazi war, the Holocaust and the degradations of the GDR, that what Elleke does not say is that they “manage to do something that makes sense” (*BTS* 135). In this light, the African traumas remain constantly susceptible to silencing racism based on color. The painful fact of being “prisoners” of their colors, and the fact that the “pre-modern” Africans have had to suffer the torturing repercussions of the ongoing discourse of the civilizing mission, further complicate the language in which they could break from the shackles of such an isolating discourse. To use Saleh’s words about the repercussions of both literal and discursive imprisonment, the years that followed

were written in the language of the body and it is not a language that I can speak with words. Sometimes I see photographs of people in distress, and the image of misery and pain echoes in my body and makes me ache with them. And the same image teaches me to suppress the memory of my oppression, because, after all, I am here and well while only God knows where some of them are. (*BTS* 231)

As the psychosomatic aftereffects of a painful past still reverberate in the posttraumatic culture, Saleh’s relative safety implicates his subject-position toward identifying with the Other. The photographs in question in fact include two Jews scrubbing the pavements of Vienna. They are surrounded by grinning Viennese with no Swastika in sight, thereby invoking the camp world created by the forces of racial separation experienced on a daily basis. If the totalitarianism of Europe’s wars has contributed indirectly to his imprisonment under Socialist Zanzibari politics of race, then Saleh’s questions over cross-cultural solidarity may have to be spoken in the traumatized language of the body. Writing exile as a post-traumatic context for Africans will constantly solicit more profound investigations that free African writing from geographical isolation.

In this chapter, I have discussed the forces of camp thinking and its contribution in Zanzibar and Europe to the unfreedom imposed on the racially unfit. The use of Rothberg’s traumatic realism as a theoretical framework has helped discuss the ongoing insistence of the “real” in representation while acknowledging the need to resort to literary experimentation. Writing displacement for Africans is certainly a fraught issue as it reveals that the necessity to write about the African past raises the ethical imperative to take distance and proximity for granted. Such a stance also requires that writing be a political claim, in that it seeks a public. Gurnah’s writing “between camps” constitutes a guilt-ridden subject-position that refuses to refer to the past in terms that still try to imprison him and other exile writers within the helper/receiver meaning-making processes.

4 Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Half of a Yellow Sun:* *Distance and Proximity* *in the Contact Zone of* *Responsibility*

So far, I have argued that there is a pressing need to address the effects of isolation and the will-to-truth in the literatures of the African diaspora. The need is more urgent because their aim is to rescue the cultural significance of their past buttressed by a deconstructionist method of approaching the silencing misrepresentations of African traumas. Rothberg's emphasis on issues of epistemology, politics, and ethics has been paramount to the theoretical framework of the present study, as it places emphasis on how narrating trauma needs to account for responsibility. Alongside their concerns to fight isolation, African diaspora's texts are driven by the responsibility to transcend the boundaries of time and space through fostering cross-cultural solidarity. I have argued that the spatiotemporal, or chronotopic, rendition of the trauma of the past is paramount for exploring the everyday and the aftereffects of colonialism and slavery in African narratives. These narratives thereby stress the fact that complicity, or the notion of the "implicated subject", even on the part of the (ex)colonized, is key to engaging everyone in responsibly bearing witness based on the breaking of boundaries between victim and perpetrator (Rothberg 2008, 232).

"Traumatic realism" as a theoretical framework in African literary studies is thus crucial to grappling with how to approach the "real" in representation. The circulating images about Africa and Africans in the de-historicizing mainstream media, and the persistence of the same ideological structures that triggered the primal violence of colonialism and slavery, raise fundamental questions of holding onto the "real" while attempting to dismantle the conceptual foundations of the dominant discourse. I have also explained that the self-reflexivity typifying African writings of trauma reflects both the return of the persistent "real" in the past which keeps haunting the present and the need to "work through" it by constantly re-evaluating the frameworks of a narrow focus on the traumas of the West.

Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's searing narrative in her novel *Half of a Yellow Sun* (hereafter referred to as *HYS*) (2006) represents one of Africa's most prominent examples of literary witnessing by a diasporic subject. Earlier critics have discussed the novel in the context issues of authorship (Ngwira 2012), literary chronotopes (Ouma 2012), and the intersection of history, literature and trauma (De Mey 2011). My focus, however, will be on reading the novel through Rothberg's notion "traumatic realism"

(2000) and how Adichie as a diasporic subject is “implicated” in postgenerational and spatiotemporal terms in the representation of the civil war in post-independence Nigeria. My focus is on the dilemma of unbelonging that continues to mar her community’s history since the colonial times. Her complaint about the silence wherein the atrocities committed against her people were shrouded is caused by her dispersed community’s inability to account for the nuances of the war. Her people are viewed “in many ways” to be “defeated” (Adichie 2008, 50) because, out of responsibility, she insists that the past be invoked in its complexity (cf. Adichie 2006; 2008). However, her novel is also calling other subjects to take responsibility for the silence inflicted on the claims to justice by her community. Her stance testifies to the dilemma of legitimating her position as a traumatic realist who needs to approach events ethically. The novel seriously invests in revitalizing the memories of the historical events of the civil war in Nigeria between 1967 and 1970. As the country “has never examined officially its wartime history” (Dalley 2013, 447), Adichie’s novel partakes through a trauma-centered “narrative form” in the productive examination of the war as “a subset of postcolonial literature [...] that [...] includes a large corpus of aesthetically varied novels that ‘bear witness’ to the post-independence conflict” (Dalley 2013, 445).

In view of the importance of the everyday which draws the reader more closely to the particularities of African trauma, this chapter will cast light on how Adichie’s novel raises complex issues of witnessing against the frameworks of the narrative of modernity that tends to objectify and distance the African Other. It argues that distance and proximity are to be fairly adjusted with regard to representing the gruesome events in which the diasporic writer was not present. Adichie is thus making a convincing case by modulating the measured range of distance she takes from the events, while she enables the fostering of more subjects to bear witness. These witnesses are enabled to join the cross-cultural arena of the “contact zone” of responsibility. Underneath her call for witnessing at the threshold of cultures lies an urge to prick the conscience of the Western reader, given that the fascination with African traumas within the modern/pre-modern typology bears the influence of Orientalist discourse. The critical purchase of Adichie’s subject position is that she is wary enough not to perpetuate the assumptions of the Orientalist silencing discourse. While the discussion of Orientalism is not the focus of this chapter, I will draw on its underpinnings to discuss the ways in which Adichie calls its founding assumptions into question in order to make her community’s claims public. I will particularly show that Orientalism is part and parcel of modernity’s conceptual foundations that objectify the “abject” and “fascinating” African Other based on the present/past binary. The novel creates a hybridized space of articulation that pries open the inflicted secluded universe through the politics of the everyday. In imbuing the representation of the Igbo people’s suffering with its due human aspect, Adichie’s traumatic realism is not primarily interested in the question of cognition in her approach to the past, but rather in the proper ethical position to espouse in relation to it (Rothberg 2000, 14). My spatiotemporal discussion of Ugwu’s rising to authorship will underscore the image of the “chronotope” represented by Nsukka which, in postgenerational terms, “acts as a toponym that embodies [Adichie’s] familial genealogy and literary and cultural identity through the history of the Biafran war” (Ouma 2012, 35). The case of Ugwu testifies

to the writing paradigm that questions the “voyeuristic” rendition of the Orientalized other, emphasizing the need to question the frameworks that limit the African Other who is objectified under victimizing terms. The underlying principle of Adichie’s novel is therefore to negotiate the politics of space and race in order to fight the forces that hinder the sense of belonging.

The first section of this chapter will then focus on the literary experimentation aimed at taking a reasonable distance with the narrative voice. This section seeks to investigate the way the ground is prepared for the dialogized hybrid space of articulation between Africa and the West through Adichie’s narrative techniques, further highlighting the key role the politics of the everyday is able to play. Out of responsibility, and in order to counteract the frameworks of the modern/pre-modern binary that distance the African Other in tribal terms, Adichie resorts to a *mise-en-abyme* technique in order to problematize the authority of hegemonic narratives and to indict silence. She is therefore supposed to approach the events ethically through witnessing that veers between victim and perpetrator. The narrative voice sets the mood for “the simultaneity of spatial and temporal articulations” (Rothberg 2000, 27) that foster cross-cultural witnessing.

The second section will focus on how authorship in postcolonial writing bears the imprint of influences from the colonial text. Ugwu’s rising to authorship will be discussed in terms of the critical imperative to open a dialogue with the colonial text in order to cultivate cross-cultural solidarity. It also brings the crises inflicted on the continent to the attention of world readers. In light of the notion of postcolonial re-writing, I will discuss Adichie’s inclusion of Richard as a Western witness experiencing trauma through the grittiness of the everyday. The dialogue between Richard’s and Ugwu’s writings foregrounds how identities in the “contact zone” are constantly shaped at the threshold of cultures in order to call into question the underpinnings of Orientalist discourse.

The commodification of the African child’s body will be addressed in the third section. I will argue that, by trying to constantly countervail the objectification of the African child’s trauma by the Western media whose maneuvering evokes “fascination”, Adichie chooses to imbue the narrative of the African child with significance through the authorship of Ugwu in post-generational terms. Based on its articulation of the past through postmemory (Hirsch 2006), the novelist is able to approach the past by acknowledging her complex stance toward the events of the war. Out of responsibility, the novel sets out to stress the necessity to prick the conscience of Western subjects through invoking other proximate histories of violence in both Africa and Europe.

4.1 HYBRIDIZING THE SPACE OF ARTICULATION

Intrinsic to trauma narratives that are identity-related, the novel under study focuses less on the soldiers’ fighting than the war’s impact on the domestic lives of ordinary people who are isolated, probing the invasion of their safe haven by traumatizing events. The latent aftereffects of the war which weigh on the rendition of

the novel's narrative illustrate, to use Rothberg's words, that their absence "signals their overwhelming impact" (Rothberg 2000, 1). Particularly concerned with the human aspects of the war, the work aims to lay more emphasis on mixing the ordinary and the extreme (Novak 2008, 33), as an example of the revision of the event-based model. Accordingly, extremity tends to extend to the realm of the private and the intimate in order to lay bare the atrocious ramifications of modernity in that it "is not something that breaks with the ordinary dimensions of the modern world but exists on a continuum with it" (Rothberg 2000, 4). Another element which recovers the human aspect of African subjectivity is the novel's use of third-person narration, whose limited omniscience abides by the conditions of controlled identification and justice-minded witnessing (LaCapra 2001, 78). This voice seeps through the consciousness of the three characters: Olanna who teaches at Nsukka University before the war; Ugwu, the houseboy of her husband Odenigbo; and Richard, the British character who falls in love with Kainene, Olanna's twin sister. Through these characters, the novel makes a strong political statement by underlying the necessary alliances forged by an ensuing public debate which combines gender, class, and race in African trauma literatures. The work then foregrounds how each of these characters' telling is challenged by the traumatic encounters and the daily fears in the wartime (Novak 2008, 33), thereby probing the traumatizing everyday of these characters through the immediacy of the narrative voice. The paradigm shift that has taken place in Nigerian literature could thus be attributed to the experience of the war that, in traumatic realist terms, feeds the need to anchor historical justice to realism. In Ato Quayson's words,

Whereas earlier fiction had been marked by the conventions of an animist realism and an ethnic consciousness [...], a nationally conscious realism motivated by the desire to highlight the effect of the colonial encounter on the viability of local traditions (Achebe) and finally, by the progressive literary excoriation of the political elites (Achebe, Soyinka, Ekwensi), postwar Nigerian writing was marked by the quest for a strongly ethical framework by which to propound an urgent vision for the endangered nation. (2007, 128)

Attempting to restore the humanity lost to her community, Adichie's most pressing issues include counteracting the objectifying prism of Orientalist discourse. Her critical, and ethical, stance reveals the refusal to impose the paradigms of a single story often characterizing the stereotypes which "straitjacket" the Africans' "ability to think" (2008, 43), a presumption that claims they still live in a state of nature. As will be illustrated in this section, the uneasy stance that characterizes Adichie's critical position testifies to her awareness of the process of ethnocentric self-orientalization especially in that there arises the risk of secluding and, as such, silencing the persistence of her people's painful past. The novel is formally structured in a fashion able to hybridize the arena of articulation out of the necessity to account for cross-cultural witnessing. This witnessing is in fact solicited when embarking on representing the war against the "monoglossic" dominance of conventional Orientalist narratives. The uncompromising nature of such narratives is illustrated by Arif Dirlik who points out that

Orientalism was an integral part (at once as constituent and product) of Eurocentric conceptualization of the world that was fully articulated in the course of the nineteenth century, that placed Europe at the center and pinnacle of development, and ordered the globe spatially and temporally in accordance with the criteria of European development. Non-European societies were characterized in this reordering of the world not by what they had but by what they lacked. (Dirlik 1997, 108)

It bears mentioning therefore that this discourse still persists in condemning the Other spatiotemporally into frozenness. Western Orientalism limits the possibilities of articulation for the African subject as the silencing of the "Oriental" Other's expression is substantiated by a distancing process toward alterity within the framework of the subject/object, here/there dichotomies. The Other in this case is merely the object, rather than the subject, of her/his history given the oversimplifying primitiveness associated with Africans' fashion of thinking. Out of manifest destiny, the superior faculties of Orientalist thinking mono-directionally disseminate knowledge from above. This kind of panoptic authority imbues the Orientalist with the power to "speak for the Other," whose objectification rests on the fact that s/he is allowed only to refer to the past of which "s/he is an embodiment" (Dirlik 1997, 118). In fact, the imposed contours of this de-historicizing process freeze, and thus disrupt, the historical continuity of non-Western histories as the colonial narrative sets Africa, which represents an idyllic past, in stark opposition to its modernizing counterpart: the West as the paradigm of the present and the future. But this denial is also buttressed by the culture/nature binary determined by its psychological and epistemological dynamics to enlighten the backward and desired Other.

The intrigue expressed by Richard as an English man traveling to Nigeria out of love for Igbo art typifies the kind of fascination that Western readers may experience when not faced with the realities of African societies. The effect of the official and popular media that shape their views of Africa may affect even well-meaning subjects as the "exotic" tendency toward other cultures is unavoidable and universal. So, after having read in a Western magazine about ninth-century Nigerian culture and art, Richard embarks on an imaginary journey into the African past through tracing the tribal culture of the Igbo, having imagined "the lives of people who were capable of such beauty, such complexity" (*HYS*, 72). Apart from the ethical interrogation of why it should be Richard who is imbued with better faculties, and not an Igbo subject, to represent the "complex" Igbo art, there emerges a struggle to figure out what to represent, as Richard "speculates to write a novel where the main character is an archaeologist digging for bronzes who is then transported to an idyllic past" (*HYS*, 72).

Alongside this speculation's underlying principle of representing the distant and intriguing loci for its Western audiences, insistence on subjecting the African past to distancing in the vein of the mainstream Western media is under the risk of objectifying the Other through dehumanizing means. In dovetailing the study of the Igbo culture in tribal terms with some sort of fascination, the colonial culture tends to Orientalize and thus objectify the African subjects. It also bears mentioning that, given its Eurocentric tendencies, a "closer examination" of Orientalism shows that "traditions" end up being "invented traditions" (Dirlik 1997, 111) out of the neces-

sity to empower the Self by denying the Other's participation in modernity. Through the contradictory process of repulsion and fascination toward the African Other, the narrative of modernity rests for its continuity on constantly producing its inferior counterpart based on dehumanizing claims. On that account:

The abjected object can never be fully escaped from and, in certain cases, serves equally to fascinate as it does to repulse. Seen as a shadow-figure whose very presence threatens the subject's fiction of selfhood, the abjected object may then be said to function in a manner broadly analogous to the colonized Other [...] where the ascription of negativity onto the dark Other underpins the superior humanity of the white self. (Krishnan 2011, 28)

Due to the pertinence of the above-mentioned complex to the colonial encounter, the colonizer universalizes her/his cultural paradigms that are imposed on the non-Western, pre-modern Other. Africa, as such, is initially "constituted on the basis of the refusal to admit the colonized subject into universality and of appropriating the idea of the human for a specific racially determined, class-bound, and gendered figure" (Olaussen 2009b, x). Disavowal is here based on the process of rejecting the inevitably "threatening" Other since the colonial encounter. The way to handle the question of distance and proximity is predicated on the *modus operandi* of approaching the Other as both inferior to and dependent on Western modernity. At the same time, the colonial other is distanced through the ambivalent stance of abjection and fascination toward subjects still belonging to a backward and "exotic" past. As such, domination takes on the guise of the present/past divide. The control of these complex processes is therefore in the hands of the Western subject who can measure her/his distance or proximity *vis-à-vis* those who count as closer to or further from modernity. Inventing the contours of this divide depends on the fact that an African is "black because the white man constructed black to be *as different as possible* from white" (HYS, 21; emphasis added). In this regard, Gilroy's salient view discusses temporality and its close connection with the "real" in representation in the passage below,

Race is an active, dynamic idea or principle that assists in the constitution of social reality. It is a short step from appreciating the ways that particular "races" have been historically invented and socially imagined to seeing how modernity catalyzed the distinctive regime of truths, the world of discourse I call "raciology" [...] This required novel ways of understanding embodied alterity, hierarchy, and temporality. (2000, 58)

Gilroy's summation seems to delineate the problematic representation of the "differentiated groups" and how, by manifest destiny, they belong to the past (Gilroy 2000, 57). Under this assumption, modernity insists on its continuity by rationalizing its civilizing claims whose neglect of African humanity has led to wreaking havoc in the black continent due to the Eurocentric attention toward events deemed more deserving of empathy (cf. Craps and Buelens 2008; Craps 2013). So much so because the colonial enterprise is premised on the discourse of tribalism as it wrests control over

the mechanisms that decide who is worthy of empathy. Based on its “divide-and-rule” policy, the colonial enterprise was buttressed by the logic of distance and proximity toward the Igbo under tribal terms, thereby bearing witness to the persistent stereotyping by modernizing claims. As can be revealed through the character of Susan, a British woman living in Nigeria, all Nigerians are stigmatized under tribal classifications and, for that matter, empathy, especially after the massacres in the north, is based on their proximity to Europe’s civilizing mission. She thereby identifies less with the “uncivilized Igbo” than “the Yoruba [...] who have had contact with Europeans on the coast for years” (HYS, 154). As a member of the neo-colonial elite, Susan, however, tends to generalize all the tribes. By restraining the possibility to closely probe the violence of the everyday in African societies, the unconstrained, totalizing progressive perspective of narratives of modernity “installs a widening gap between the space of experience and the horizon of expectation” by distancing “itself from the space of experience” (Rothberg 2000, 20-21). Focus on the modernizing claims more than the violence inflicted on Africans reveals that the attention of the reader is steered away to the triumphalism of the master-narrative featuring the West’s mission civilisatrice. Needless to say that this distraction hinges on this discourse’s building a wall that distances the Other. Adichie thus refuses the homogenization and stagnation of her culture within the contours of a “single story” (Adichie 2009, n.p.).

As, in this sense, they try to dismantle the underlying frameworks of the narrative of modernity, the African writers’ stance is rife with complexity. Based on a traumatic realist reading, and in order to revise the frameworks of unethical identification with the African Other, their standpoint, especially that of those who act as “bystanders” of traumatic events, makes them question the teleology of the narrative of modernity, which is based on past/present divisions. Rothberg points out in this regard that:

The very possibility of a break with the modern conditions of genocide must be premised on a ceaseless witness that returns the subject again and again to the scene of the crime—even when that witnessing was not, strictly speaking, present in the first place. (Rothberg 2000, 21-22)

On account of Africa’s being fixed, and thus imprisoned, within images of backwardness, a dynamic narrative, according to the passage above, warrants an analysis that is based on the Bakhtinian “chronotope” that, in traumatic events, transcends the boundaries of space and time as “a form of literary expression in which the spatial and temporal axes are intertwined” (Rothberg 2000, 21). The range of distance and proximity needs however to be handled by the writer even if s/he was not present at the scene of the crime. The questions raised by this range probe into ambiguous terrains pertaining to approaching the event ethically by the writer as traumatic realist representation is not to be determined by purely epistemological paradigms (Rothberg 2000, 22). By ethically approaching the Igbo community’s painful past, the non-linear movement twice between the early and the late 1960s conveys that Adichie is both at a distance from and close to the events.

The charged historical period is featured especially through Ugwu who rises to authorship. Adichie tries, as such, to fight the forces of isolation by her intertextual

redrawing of the topography of the Biafran cause as an immigrant subject who claims Nsukka as a place “where her authorial self is hatched” (Ouma 2012, 35). In so doing, she revisits Biafra as a “site [...] of memory” (Nora 1989) and revives memory by means of multidisciplinary documents, be they literary, historical, geographical, or any other media that negotiate the past. In its multi-generic form, references to other texts reflect her persistence to remember with the help of “the constantly evolving heteroglossia” to contest the orthodoxy of “any direct word and especially that of the dominant discourse” which “is reflected as something more or less bounded, aging, dying, ripe for change or renewal” (Bakhtin 1988, 139). She thereby walks the readers through the human implications of the war, bringing them closer to the social as well as historical tenor of the time. Adichie’s spatiotemporal investigations of the dilemma of unbelonging especially since the war broke are motivated by both her “problematizing the nation state’s spatio-temporality by redrawing its own literary maps” and the micro-politics of “the topoi” that include: Nsukka’s spatial components such as “houses, streets, roads, towns, cities and markets [that] are selected for the achievement of an organic topography of belonging” (Ouma 2012, 36; see also Ouma 2011b, Adichie 2006). In fact, revisiting Nsukka for Adichie is overcome by the sense of guilt as an immigrant Igbo writer whose spatiotemporal examination of the past especially centers on the university as an intellectual and cross-cultural milieu in which “her adultist memory” is projected (Ouma 2011a, 132; see also Adichie 2006).

In addition to the fact that the anti-linearity of the narrative points forward to a re-reading of colonial history, the novel’s witnessing is implicated in countervailing the effects leading to irresponsible silence. Adichie points out in an article in *The Guardian* that writing about the Biafran war needs to be driven by “the burden of responsibility” in order “to take ownership of a history that defines [her]” as many “issues that led to the war remain silent” (2006 n.p). Adichie’s grievances are aligned with the view of Murray Last who states that the failure of reconciliation in post-war Nigeria was due to the fact that “hurt was shifted from the public domain and became a dimension of private memory” (2000, 316). From its implicated in-between position between victim and perpetrator (Rothberg 2000), the stance of the work opens up a dialogue with the readers and urges them to join the hybrid space of articulation in order to ethically bear witness. This call to a potential addressee—which is ironically premised on offering a more legitimate epistemology through problematizing representation—could be glimpsed from Adichie’s attempt at highlighting the ever-growing hybridization of the Nigerian society. Paying tribute to Chinua Achebe’s historical novel *Things Fall Apart*, in which she addresses the changing customs of the Igbo people, or the misleading assumption that they “lived in anarchic darkness before their contact with Europeans,” as the continually dynamic nature of the African cultures especially the Igbo, stems from borrowing diverse cultural components such as stories (Adichie 2008, 48).

Within this framework of textual experimentation aimed at providing more testimony, Adichie’s rewriting of the history further supplements the storyline with other sources that, besides English, also involve Igbo language, namely “The Book” and, at times, poetry, radio announcements of the period, newspaper articles, epigraphs, and Frederick Douglass’s autobiography (cf. 123, 124, 126, 137, 161, 162, 266, 360, 38, 241-412). The object of the novel is, according to Akpome, to forge “relevant connections

between the story and Adichie's personal familial and cultural identity and history that appear in a number of nuanced, subtextual and paratextual ways, and assert the novel's credentials as an example of self-referential writing" (2013a, 151). As a sign of "authorial nostalgia", her "migrant/diasporic disposition informs the return to the narrative of childhood" (Ouma 2011a, n.p.) to revisit Nsukka as the central hub of the traumatic events that have marred the history of the Igbo community. To this end, although the reader traces the lives and inner thoughts of Olanna, Richard and Ugwu, it is the latter who is her "favorite amongst the characters she has created" (Harriss 2011, 26). Ugwu is said to be the character who "carries the burden of writing [...] the 'sudden big traumatic experience' on behalf of other characters in the novel and also as an echo of Adichie herself" (Ngwira 2012, 47). The novel is written almost four decades after the Biafran war as a postgenerational representation of the war and "its privileging of the figure of a houseboy opens up further space for the marginalized voice of the child/domestic worker as an alternative consciousness to an adultist one (of the elite intellectual, military and politician one" (Ouma 2012, 35). In one of Ugwu's comments about the corruption that runs rampant in post-independence Nigeria, the reader is informed through the houseboy's class-consciousness whose "navigation around [domestic] material spaces is mediated by adult regimes of authority" (Ouma 2011a, 27; emphasis added). From the marginal space of the underclass of household chores and servitude, Ugwu who lives daily amidst a medley of private spaces such as the library, the kitchen, and the living-room is able to testify to the fact that:

politicians were not like normal people, they were politicians. He read about them in the *Renaissance* and *Daily Times*—they paid thugs to beat opponents, they bought land and houses with government money. Whenever he drained a pot of boiled beans, he thought of the slimy sink as *politician*. (*HYS*, 126; emphasis original)

As an example of the chronotope that insists on the "real" in representation, the legacies of colonialism are brought to bear on the present context as one way of rendering "visual" the abstractions of time into the space of the everyday of a houseboy. John Marx states, in this respect, that Adichie "portrays life during wartime as both intensely violent and remarkably ordinary" (2008, 597). The critical purchase of Ugwu's depiction of history thus realigns the boundaries between the extreme and the everyday to construe Nsukka as "the chronotope where subject positions interact as autobiographical and historico-political tensions are mapped and remapped" (Ouma 2012, 35). Such a remapping of the events of the past aims to enable the war period to break free from the shackles of isolation with the help of the epistemic journey of a houseboy who poses "as an aesthetic subject and conceptual persona who provokes the rethinking of both the times and spaces of war and peace [...] to [show] Nsukka (as the place of Ugwu's location) as a chronotope where competing subject positions interact" (Ouma 2012, 35). Seeing that the novel is a Bildungsroman, the featured facts, the reading sources, and the debates in Olanna and Odenigbo's home can be construed as signposts for the reader who has been led to tracking the evolving political and postcolonial consciousness of Ugwu across intertextual and

cross-linguistic arenas. In this case, “the literary chronotope is significant because the time of childhood is defined in relation to the worlds and cultures within which it is generated, coded and contextualized” as “the consciousness of place (Nsukka) in the time of the Nigeria-Biafra war (1967-1970) to construct a tension-filled narrative terrain” (Ouma 2012, 33). Instead of accepting an enclosed space that isolates him as an underclass, Ugwu redefines the physical environment in order to lay bare the dynamics that hinder his sense of belonging within a linguistically, socially and culturally overdetermined space.

At the core of the multi-vocal character of the text lies the novel’s ethical imperative to constantly reveal the dynamic nature of Igbo culture against the stale and ongoing colonial representations. The racial divisions in Nigeria attest to “language differences” that “are important markers of group distinctions” (Harriss 2011, 16) that pitted Nigerians against each other. In tandem with the possibilities offered by the multi-generic and cross-linguistic texts, the narrative voice employs three main characters with distinct identity claims. By stating that the three identity-based concerns of gender, race, and class are able to span the stories of the everyday around the world (Adichie 2008, 50), the novelist sets out to breach the national boundaries and seeks a public across vast distances of space and time in order to open up an intellectual debate that constantly militates against the forces of forgetting. The political prerogative to seek justice warrants the evidencing that texts can provide in order to supplement Adichie’s witnessing against inflicted silence. In Akpome’s view, by “using an anonymous third-person narrator who perceives narrative information through several focalizing characters, the novel represents rich analogous personal accounts of historical events through which a number of socio-political concerns are thematized” (2013b, 25).

Paramount to this public witnessing is the revival of the past, drawing on the degree of these texts’ circulation. Transcending the limitations of time and space, the texts’ circulation in fact promises to move beyond the restrictions of “private discourse” in that “it comprehends an audience of onlookers, strangers, and passive interlocutors” as they are constituted through the boundless scope of possibilities promised by the multi-generic space of articulation (Rothberg 2006, 172). In concomitance with the novel’s attempt at spatiotemporally transcending its time by seeking witnesses, the narrative perspective wants to allow room for the involvement of a significant Other. Being referred to as “the middle voice” or “free indirect speech”, the narrative voice in the novel is, to use LaCapra’s terms, “itself hybridized, internally dialogized form that may involve undecidability of voice. In it the narrator interacts with objects of narration in various ways involving degrees of modulations or irony and empathy, distance and proximity” (LaCapra 2001, 196-197; emphasis added). The free indirect discourse’s point of view in the text “moves back and forth between the narrator telling us what the character is thinking and showing us the character’s conscious thoughts, without denoting which thought belongs to whom” (Gingerich 2013, n.p.). This point may be illustrated through Ugwu’s learning enabled by the meetings hosted by Olanna and Odenigbo. As the “connection between [the novel] and Adichie is not so conspicuous” (Akpome 2013a, 151), the narrative presents a point of view that takes a reasonable distance from the events as it veers between the objective and the subjective representation of the houseboy’s inner thoughts:

Ugwu moved to the door to listen; he was fascinated by Rhodesia; by what was happening in the south of Africa. He could not comprehend people who were like Richard taking away the things that belonged to people like him, Ugwu, for no reason at all. (*HYS*, 213)

The naturalness that characterizes Ugwu's remarks is aimed to guide the reader throughout the epistemic journey of the houseboy whose presence in the academic debates points to broader geographical investigations of the post-independence nation. Adichie's implied role with regard to the traumatizing history is to make "her readers aware of the wider politics that have brought about [the] terrible events;" yet, "she does not attempt to explain why it is that the killings take place. She helps us, her readers, however, to reach an empathetic understanding of how it can be that such killings come about" (Harriss 2011, 17). Thus, as the middle voice enables the involvement and is open to the "radical Other" (LaCapra 2001, 197), it can go as far as paving the way for a constructive dialogue with readers beyond its national boundaries. Reflective of Adichie's self-writing in postgenerational terms, Ugwu's "diasporic public spheres" not only testify to his "participatory consciousness in [the] academic community at Nsukka, but also to the globalized sense of nationhood that was in vogue in the early sixties" (Sunday 2015, n.p.).

Being set at a reasonable distance, the narrative voice solicits an implied addressee to enter this space out of responsibility for events that s/he may not have been directly affected by. In traumatic realist terms that insist on approaching the "real" ethically, and with the use of the past in the main story and the present in "The Book", writing becomes an event, not to say a social category, through which the reader is allowed to be "in' the writing process through the use of the present tense, but also at a curious distance through the third person narration" (Ngwira 2012, 48). The reader's reaction to the events is here modulated by the voice to allow a reasonable distance from the war and to approach it in a fashion other than that imposed by the narrative of modernity.

Adichie's insistence on promoting cultural exchange correlates with her use of a *mise-en-abyme* technique which draws attention to its being an artefact, thus investigating the relationship between fiction and truth (Ngwira 2012, 46). The co-existence in the novel of a storyline and historical documents which unexpectedly interrupt the narrative flow shows that these diverse texts mirror each other in a way in which they can move beyond their time and space by means of their circulation. As McHale writes about the technique *mise-en abyme*, "The system of structures en abyme resembles nothing so much as the extratextual world in which" the text "itself circulated" (2006, 186), bearing witness to the fact that, in their multi-generic and spatiotemporal articulations, texts can stand the test of time. In order to proclaim a more legitimate epistemology countering the silence underlying the hegemony of colonial discourse, the novel persists in remembering the Igbo's demanding secession from Nigeria given the discrimination they experienced on a daily basis. This is so because "through the developing consciousness of the houseboy narrator, the novel explores the verbal-ideological warfare preceding the Biafran war" (Ouma 2012, 34). With the help of the inset historical documents within the narrative proper, this kind of literary witnessing

brings the reader back to the traumatic event as the colonial enterprise ramifies even in the post-independence period. In fact, the end of colonialism in Nigeria in 1960 did not seem to bear the fruit of liberating the individual and national identity from the aftereffects of colonialism and oppression. The Igbo were able to outperform the other ethnic groups: the Hausa-Fulani, the Yoruba, and hundreds of other minorities. They reached a high literacy rate and important positions, yet one of the main concerns was about “the northern schools not admitting Igbo children” (*HYS*, 38). Business corporations and government institutions too became a fertile environment for launching an ethnic war. Seeing that the Igbo were viewed as overambitious, their replacement by many of their less qualified ethnic counterparts was promptly welcomed. This suddenly emerging hatred solicits awareness of its colonial implications, as it is the product of what Richard refers to in one of his articles as “the informal divide-and-rule policies of the British colonial exercise” (*HYS*, 166). It brings to light the British deployment of “favouritism policies towards the north” (Ngwira 2012, 50). Following the same line of argument of Richard’s article, the inset narrative states that the north “feared from the more educated South and had always wanted a country separate from the infidel South anyway” (*HYS*, 155). As a result of the governing powers that were granted to the North and “with the British gone, there would be good things for everyone: white salaries long denied Nigerians [...] Nothing was done about the clamour of minority groups” (*HYS*, 155).

Injustices in many other fields pushed the Igbo military officers to lead a coup in 1966. Atrocious revenge was the reaction against the minority group on racial grounds. Massacres were committed to claim the lives of tens of thousands in the North. There were violent riots which were suspiciously government-organized; a stream of more than one million refugees left their homes for the eastern region. Feeling insecure, the Igbo declared secession on 30 May 1967 to create the separatist state of Biafra (Heerten and Moses 2014, 173). The existing tribalism at the time easily confirmed the accusation that the “ambitious” easterners wanted to take control of the whole country after secession (Achebe 1975, 145). By the help of rationalized international indifference toward the Igbo cause, a catastrophic war raged between 1967 and 1970. Over a million people were displaced and starved to death out of the deliberate policy of blockade of the Nigerian government, which isolated the Igbo in all facets of life (Heerten and Moses 2014, 182). What further stranded the victims and brought the perpetrator and witness into common alliance was that the massacres and the world’s silence were supported and inspired by the British government (cf. *HYS*, 256).

In the novel proper, the circulation of texts within a hybridized space of articulation is therefore an attempt to restore the “real” that unsettles the orthodoxy of the discourse of tribalism. In order to destabilize the authority of such frameworks, the novel aims to bring the ramifications of the modern/pre-modern dichotomy to the forefront. It uses “The Book” which, by situating itself in the very moment of its writing, spatiotemporally guides the reader to the colonial times and how the “divide-and-rule” policy instigated violence. By making reference to the cajoling and killing of the British soldier merchant Taubman Goldie and the 1884 Conference where Africa was divided by Europeans, Ugwu addresses himself as the “he” who writes the book. He “discusses”, in an interactive fashion to a potential addressee, the favoring of the

North over the South given its pleasantly dry weather. Moreover, in contrast to the north:

The humid South [...] was full of mosquitoes and animists and disparate tribes. The Yoruba were the largest in the Southwest. In the Southeast, the Igbo lived in small republican communities. They were non-docile and worryingly ambitious. Since they did not have the good sense to have kings, the British created 'warrant chiefs' because indirect rule cost the Crown less. Missionaries were allowed in to tame the pagans, and the Christianity and education they brought flourished. In 1914, the governor general joined the North and the South, and his wife picked a name. Nigeria was born. (*HYS*, 115)

By framing Ugwu's document within the main flow of the narrative, the novel "reflects upon its own making by staging the writing process of "The Book: The World Was Silent When We Died" (Ngwira 2012, 47). As it attempts to mediate its existence within the historical context in which it has been produced, the text reifies the supposedly abstract nature of time and renders visible a discrete historical moment by locating it in space, or rather, in "the zone of maximal contact with the present (with contemporary reality) in all its openendedness" (Bakhtin 1981, 11). Thus, as an extra witness, "The Book" is so essential in that as it situates itself in a dialogue with the context of the events of the narrative. It is able to yield "extratextual" knowledge of the outside world by "entering into more complex structures that may serve to model or map that world cognitively" (McHale 2012, 178). In the different references to the world events communicated to an addressee through the use of phrases such as "he argues", "he writes", "he recounts", and "he gestures", the presence of a debate could be sensed through creating a crucible for public investigation, thereby contextualizing the events surrounding the war. In fact, Ugwu's document spans various dynamics, drawing on other histories of violence as well as on those of Africa in order to investigate the Igbo cause. These investigations mainly include the Holocaust and Rwandan violence (*HYS*, 82), the violence that raged after the Igbo coup (*HYS*, 205), independence in its relation to the Second World War, and the world's silence toward the Igbo cause (*HYS*, 258). Ugwu's fashion of rendering the document reflects Adichie's attempt to recast the Igbo history within a constellation of dynamics that transcend the event geographically and, as such, by addressing an implied audience, reference to Biafra is "not so much to a place as to an event or events" (Rothberg 2000, 28). Biafra can therefore be construed as a "site of memory" (Nora 1989).

The critical purchase of spatially thickening history that becomes dynamic and responsive to the movements of time (Rothberg 2000, 27) lies in shaking the foundations of a dying discourse of modernity. We can sense in the above passage (see *HYS*, 115) a narrative voice that, through parodying the distancing colonial voice, is embedded within the consciousness of the hegemonic representation in order to question the contours imposed by the discourse of administered tribalism. To use the Bakhtinian notion of parody, "every direct word [...] is to a greater or lesser degree made into an object, the word itself becomes a bounded [...] image, one that quite often appears ridiculous in this framed condition" (Bakhtin 1988, 132). In order to contest

the orthodoxy of the monologic discourse, Adichie's voice rests on the multilayered arena of articulation in that her voice is embedded within those constituting the main components of its communication. To put it more simply, Adichie does not possess the last word as regards narrative authority, but, in view of her caveat against the dangers of a single story (2009), she is merely taking part in the debate. Exemplifying an author's aim to criticize the underlying frameworks of master-narratives, Adichie employs this stratified space of articulation which allows her to speak "from behind the transparent screen" of her "second authorship" (McHale 2006, 185) represented by Ugwu who himself refers to his authorship in the third person. His document helps revisit the authoritative "I" used in colonial history and throws the reader anew into regress to re-investigate the past. The voice then probes the workings of the geopolitics of colonial control and the "taming" of the pagans in the South who, unlike the northerners, need religious education under colonial supervision.

Following this line of thought, we sense Adichie's recourse to the human implications, which further re-evaluates the master-narrative of modernity's dividing frameworks in order to bring identities with different affiliations into dialogue. The author then builds a hybridized space of articulation that is located in Olanna and Odenigbo's home, further foregrounding the epistemological part that the politics of the everyday has come to play in cases of extremity. Adichie's problematization of the narrative representation mirrors her attempt at bringing various identities to closely witness the ramifications of the war through an open intellectual debate. Refusing the self-orientalization resulting from the complicit rejection of the Other to maintain the Self within the same frameworks that instigated colonial violence (Dirlik 1997, 120), the hybrid nature of the "forum" counteracts the isolating effects of nationalism and, particularly for my purposes here, tribalism. The attendees of the debates in the off-the-cuff meetings mainly include Igbo participants such as the Igbo poet Okeoma and Professor Ezeka, Indian Dr. Patel, Miss Adebayo, a Yoruba woman who is working at the university, and Richard Churchill, who is researching Igbo-Ukwu art, Professor Lehman from America, and Mr Johnson from the Caribbean (*HYS*, 18-19). As such, their ad hoc staging of the meetings of the various diasporic subjects mirrors Adichie's persistence to investigate traumatic events to an addressee despite their attendant interruption. Hence,

though the war forces them to relocate, and to less welcoming abodes each time, Odenigbo and Olanna continue to preserve a space for political argument among experts. They welcome new interlocutors and encourage old ones to stop by as they are able. (Marx 2008, 614)

The witnessing of traumatic events thus materializes in a hybrid space that is constantly in flux and persists in prying open the secluded universe imposed by economic embargos and military blockades carried out by the nation-state. As a bequest of colonial domination, this isolation is buttressed by the all-pervasive, destructive ethnocentric discourse of colonialism. In fact, Adichie recognizes that choosing Richard, for instance, is evidence of the existence of "outsiders" who "played a major role in the war" (Postscript, 5). In order to question the epistemological foundations of ethnocentrism,

the debates of the meetings hosted in Olanna and Odenigbo's house combine multi-disciplinary expertise with cultural diversity. This domesticated panel, as it entails debates that stage positive negotiations, "distances" the cast of "discussants as expert and ethnic [...] from the citizenry they might otherwise represent" (Marx 2008, 213; emphasis added). Steering clear of the realm of ethnocentricity is thus made possible by drawing together various identities to the "contact zone" of responsibility. Under the assumption that the "contact zone" stresses the improvisational character of the colonial encounter wherein new identities are constituted, Mary Louise Pratt defines the term as "an attempt to invoke the spatial and temporal copresence of subjects previously separated by geographical and historical disjunctures, and whose trajectories now intersect" (1992, 5). Out of responsibility, many of the group members congenially disagree with Odenigbo's pan-Igbo idea as "tribe as it is today is as colonial a product as nation and race" (HYS, 21). The driving force of this hybrid space of articulation lies in the construction of a transnational diasporic community out of solidarity (cf. Nyman 2009, 250). Ugwu has learned the history lessons about tribalism from the meetings that have been experienced directly by its repercussions in his "Book". This fact makes the reader experience the posttraumatic effects with Adichie through directly witnessing its narrative. The history of tribalism is in fact supposed to come full circle to affect more victims as its predicament has taken on new garbs. Adichie's critical position is clear: her aim is to bring more subjects to fight the forces of forgetting through responsible intellectual debates and to bear witness regardless of these subjects' cultures.

In this section, I have discussed the literary experimentation by which Adichie brings a heteroglossia of voices into dialogue. I have tried to argue that Adichie's narrative technique paves the way for a productive dialogue that sets the extreme and the everyday on a continuum. Her traumatic realism registers the traumatic experience of her people on moral grounds by stressing how both cognition and ethics are to be brought on board. In the hope of measuring her distance and proximity towards the events of the past, Adichie has refused to possess the upper-hand of a single voice in order to engage a heterogeneous public. Such a dialogical rendition of her people's polemic seeks to bring the contradictions of nationalism into the open. Its aim is to reach a public against the silencing oppression of nationalism and to foster critical solidarity. In traumatic realist terms, her aim is both to restore the "real" in representation and to attack head on the discursive pitfalls of the single story of the master narrative of modernity.

4.2 TRAUMA AND THE REWRITING OF ORIENTALIST DISCOURSE

As intimated earlier, given that Orientalist representations tend to freeze the history of the Other spatiotemporally, memory in African writings such as Adichie's aims to dismantle the frameworks of modern/pre-modern dichotomies through intertextual paradigms. It has been argued that there is a hybrid space of articulation in which Adichie's narrative strategies have sown the seeds for an interactive space where various identities could intersect and debate. Accordingly, I will argue that the author's

disposition is premised on the need to create a cross-cultural space of articulation that, though it aims to involve other cultures, mainly seeks to shake the stance of the Western subject into entering the in-between space of responsibility. In the process of internalizing the effects of the colonial encounter, both the African and Western subjects may, in varying degrees, undergo Orientalization in the “contact zone”. As Arif Dirlik points out, with reference to Pratt’s concept, this space in which the ideological frameworks that have traumatized the (ex)-colonized, is created out of “conditions of coercion, radical inequality, and intractable conflict” (Dirlik 1997, 118). He thereby illustrates the fact that

The Orientalist [...] is “Orientalized” himself in the very process of entering the “Orient” intellectually and sentimentally. Same with the “Oriental”, whose very contact with the Orientalist culminates in a distancing from native society, where s/he becomes an object of suspicion, and who in the long run is better able to communicate with the Orientalist than with the society of the self. (Dirlik 1997, 119)

The perils of such an incriminating stance are what pushes Adichie to problematize representation with regard to her native culture. Instead of simply taking the Africans who have received Western learning to task, we might draw on this quotation to redirect our attention towards interrogating the degree of Orientalization and its inexorable internalization during the encounter. Such a fraught issue of cultural exchange accounts for the responsibility-laden in-between space in the reasonable distance toward one’s culture as well as that of the oppressor. Equally important is the fact that dialogism here reveals the necessity to shift the stance of the Orientalist views that ignore the particularities of African histories. The emergence of this ambiguous terrain highlights the role of the “contact zone”, especially with regard to her/his responsibility towards events from which s/he is at a spatiotemporal remove. While traumatic events produce complex ramifications of the everyday of the African writer’s community, it is deemed fundamental for them to call the descendants of the perpetrator to attend to these repercussions in order to join this dialogical “contact zone” constructed out of shared responsibility.

The ongoing struggle against the aftereffects of the colonial in post-colonial realities engages both the (ex)-colonizer and the (ex)-colonized who are complicit when creating this interstitial space. In a lecture presented by Michael Rothberg (2013) on the legacies of slavery, the notion of the “implicated subject” either structurally or historically calls into question the victim/perpetrator binary when the descendants of both the victim and the perpetrator are held responsible for the posttraumatic effects of the events. While the victims’ descendants should not be stripped of responsibility for the past, the descendants of the perpetrators are not to be indicted for crimes committed before their birth. Rothberg suggests an in-between stance that engages both parties as implicated in the legacy of the extreme through dialogue especially when the ideological dynamics of violence such as racism still persist in the case of post-slavery societies (Rothberg 2013). By the same token, the novel breaches the neat boundaries between Self and Other by building a dialogical relationship with the (ex)-

colonizer. The use of English by Ugwu to write a book bearing the traces of Richard's contribution testifies to Adichie's awareness of the historical entanglements between Africa and Europe through intertextual influence, thereby typifying the dialogical nature of the colonial aftermath. This critical imperative urges Adichie to ironically open an urgent dialogue with the (ex)-colonizer more than the colonized.

Madhu Krishnan's (2011) salient distinction between Orientalism and exoticism in fact holds pertinence when analyzing this emerging zone of responsibility. Opting for the dialogical nature of representation, cross-cultural articulations need a forum that fits as a framework that cuts through the Subject/Object binary based on the distinction. Unlike "exoticism" which calls the dichotomy into question, "Orientalism" typifies colonialism's superiority-laden narratives of modernity. An interesting precision in Madhu Krishnan's definition foregrounds the risk of conflating the two terms. In respective reference to both, Krishnan states that:

While such a distinction may seem superficial, I believe that the space between the two terms signifies a view of the postcolonial as Other as a purely passive object and a view which may acknowledge his or her centrality in the production of western subjectivities (Krishnan 2011, 27)

Following from the distinction, the Orientalist representations are premised on neat divisions such as modern/pre-modern that are called into question in Adichie's novel through this specific definition of the term "exoticism". Orientalism does in fact rest on the question of power since the Eurocentric narrative of development that reordered the world in the nineteenth century did not judge non-European societies by "what they had but by what they lacked" (Dirlik 1997, 108). More precisely, then, based on the travelers' stories that distance the Other from the European, the narrative of modernity ironically constructed the superiority of the European, since these societies were "in need of European intervention" (Dirlik 1997, 117).

Drawing on the above definition of "exoticism", I will explain how, in the novel's "contact zone of responsibility", the intertextual interventions of postcolonial rewriting make the master-narratives of modernity run aground at the threshold of cultures. Rescuing subjectivity, in Adichie's view, hinges on the textual influence of colonial texts coupled with the writer's wariness against propagating these texts' views. In her article about African authenticity, she laments the misconceptions that, to this day, pervade Western thinking with regard to African authenticity, especially after she personally encountered biased views about Africans in the American media (2008, 50). Since the idealization of a romanticized and idyllic, or "pre-modern Africa", distances the reader from African authenticity, Adichie has opted to write "a book concerned with the ordinary person, a book with unapologetic Biafran sympathies, but a book that would absolutely refuse to romanticize the war" as this unscrupulous "utopia-in-retrospect" can sully "the memories of all those who died" (2008, 50; emphasis original). She then abides by the ethical prerogative to restore the humanity of the Igbo people by bringing the ordinary side by side with the extreme.

Adichie's subject position in fact recognizes the fact that, to come to terms with the past, she needs to avoid a binary-minded militant view that would be unable to

account for the nuances of the war's nature (Postscript, 3). Beyond victimization and heroism that too closely identify with or distance the voice of the victims, Adichie is wary enough of the pitfalls underlying the stance of the surrogate victimization and those afflicting the Subject/Object position toward the people who were present in the war. The fact that African societies are cast as homogeneously traditional and backward brings the dangers of ethnocentrism to the forefront of Adichie's concerns. This position in fact expresses a desire on her part to revise the frameworks that gloss over the repercussions of a complex encounter such as that between the colonizer and the colonized. Fraught as it may be, this subject position underlies the need to interrogate the issues of distance and proximity in representation at the crossroads of culture. Needless to say that the textual repetition and revision of the colonial representations is much less focused on creating a diametrically oppositional stance than a responsibility-minded dialogue. The novelist admittedly points out, in this regard, that reading British children's literature, especially that written by Enid Blyton, for instance, made her think that books written in English had only white people in them. Her first experience of writing at a young age was influenced by what she had read. As she points out,

All my characters were white and had blue eyes and played in the snow and ate apples and had dogs called Socks. My characters drank ginger beer, a staple of Enid Blyton's characters. Never mind that I had no idea what ginger beer was. For many years afterward, I would have a desperate fascination for ginger beer. (Adichie 2008, 42)

Adichie thereby acknowledges the "fascination" she expresses toward the exotic nature and pastoral life of the British world, a world in which she is an absence. She has come to identify with this universe since her first experience of committing her intrigue to paper, given that she tries to open a dialogue with the cultural imagination of English literature. Her having been somehow westernized has contributed to her being somewhat removed from her native culture, a position testifying to the fact that the impact of the colonizer's culture is to some extent internalized. Adichie, however, speculates the risk of replicating the same misconceptions propagated in stereotyped American media, for instance, especially that she runs the risk of being at a distance from her reality. This incomprehension has therefore been the effect of such media on Western audiences as outsiders who have come to see Africans as lacking humanity (Adichie 2008, 45).

Alongside the stakes of internalizing the Western culture, there is a pressing need to restore the voice of the African Other in the sense that the conceptual foundations of the master-narrative of modernity are to be dismantled. Although she is thrilled at the prospect of having African characters gain their subjectivity in Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*, a novel written in English, she is well aware of the dangers of historical representations. Adichie's cautious position can be glimpsed from her caveat against having the Igbo culture fixed within a remotely placed past. In order not to contribute to the perpetuation of misconceptions adopted by the narrative of modernity, Adichie questions *Things Fall Apart* on the grounds that "although" his "characters were fa-

miliar [...] in many ways, their world was also incredibly exotic" (Adichie 2008, 42). As such, her concern reflects a natural reaction to the stereotypes that pervade the Western media after her arrival in the United States, as the American students who met her had expected that she "would step out of *Things Fall Apart*" (2008, 43).

In the attempt to bridge the gap between African and Western cultures through the medium of English and literary expression, Adichie chooses to implicate Richard, the British main character in the novel, to show how African culture may be internalized on ethical grounds. In fact, being mainly drawn to aesthetics aimed at creating a novel about Igbo art, Richard is eager to know about the culture through its idyllic past. His first impression about the culture, accessed through the media, evokes a fascination with the Igbo culture's remote past,

He was not sure where he first read about Igbo-Ukwu art, about the native man who was digging a well and discovered the bronze casting that may well be the first in Africa, dating back to the ninth century. But it was in *Colonies Magazine* that he saw the photos. The roped pot stood out immediately; he ran a finger over the picture and ached to touch the delicately cast metal itself. (*HYS*, 62)

Richard is thus first and foremost a Western reader. His encounter with the Igbo culture initially took place through the popular colonial media which has made him fantasize about the "roped pot" and its association with an idyllic past. Richard's cross-cultural witnessing, nonetheless, promises to narrow the distance between victim and perpetrator through travel. As time wears on, it seems that his willingness to know about Igbo art has swerved him more into the ordinariness of the everyday. Richard's inability to imbue his created fiction about Igbo art with genuineness, especially as he is searching for material related to the "magnificent roped pot" of the Igbo people, is best reflected in the irrelevance of the books and journals brought to him from the "British Council's Library" by his erstwhile lover Susan (*HYS*, 56). The distracting and distancing effect of these references demonstrates Richard's close interest in gaining reliable expertise about Igbo culture, an example further confirmed by his inclination to do more research at the University of Nsukka at the heart of Igboland. This closeness to the realities of the Igbo culture and history both counteracts the effects of Western media's distraction and implies a natural disposition to question the continuity of the master-narrative, as Susan's excitement about his writing stems from the conviction that "the book was an entity that already existed and could therefore be finished" (*HYS*, 56). In so doing, Adichie aims to redirect the Western reader's attention to the particularities of Igbo history through Richard's ability to ethically probe the everyday of the events surrounding the war. In order to dismantle the frameworks of dehumanizing claims, the close identification of Richard with the Biafran cause is based on the familial and cultural bond he has tried to establish with the Igbo culture and language. In this contact zone, therefore, Richard's identity is in constant flux given the knowledge he has been able to acquire in the space of the Other. By supplementing the epistemological dimensions of cross-cultural contact with ethical imperatives, an English subject's close identification with the Igbo culture rests on the assumption that the Western audience should consider the human aspect of the

war and, as such, give up the assumptions that distract their attention. Hence, as implicated subjects and “through the character of Richard Western readers may be led to reflect upon their own roles in other societies” (Harriss 2011, 18).

Yet, and most importantly, cross-cultural witnessing is achieved primarily by calling into question modernity’s claims in postgenerational and intertextual terms. In fact, the novel has come to mean differently from its literary predecessors such as *Things Fall Apart*, a postgenerational witnessing by means of referencing and whose intention is ironically to narrow the spatiotemporal gap between cultures while attempting to come to terms with the posttraumatic effects of the war. In Adichie’s case, the underlying premise of this posttraumatic witnessing of the third generation responds to the belief “that there had still not been enough time after the war to produce the sort of writing that would have sufficient emotional distance to turn suffering and commitment into art” (Hawley 2008, 18).

Under the assumption that the “incredibly exotic” in Achebe’s novel needs to restore the aspects of the “real”, Adichie’s writing conveys the refusal to romanticize Igbo reality as such a depiction perpetuates the polarized Subject/Object frameworks of modernity against tradition. Adichie’s abiding by the “real” makes her create characters that are not built on moralizing frameworks; rather they “are driven by impulses that they may not always be consciously aware of, which [...] is true for human beings” (Postscript, 4). The legitimacy of its claim rests on restoring the human aspect of the war, stressing the fact that the novel’s witnessing draws on the testimonies provided, and photos archived, by Adichie’s family members and other close friends who bear the scars of a painful past. Her acknowledgement that the representation of the past should not lose sight of the complexity of the “real” in trauma narratives and the search for justice resonates with Marianne Hirsch’s deployment of pictures that implicate the descendants of victims in the representation of the extreme in that a reliably realist depiction of the photos is never guaranteed. To the contrary, the images resist the imposition of a single interpretation that may freeze the event in space and time. As they are bound to link their role “to memoir and testimony, and to historical accounts and scholarly discussions, as within new artistic texts, archival images function as supplements, both confirming and unsettling the stories that are explored and transmitted” (Hirsch 2006, 245). By implicating the postgenerations spatiotemporally, memories of suffering typify the trauma inherited from the family and culture at large (Rothberg 2000, 186). The painful past therefore haunts the intimate space beyond the boundaries of space and time of Adichie’s surroundings. In approaching Richard in familial terms, as he is hoping to marry Kainene, while also experiencing the trauma of wartime with the other members, Adichie aims to make a strong claim about the deserved humanity of the traumatized Igbo people through a Western witness.

Drawn to the “contact zone” of responsibility, an Englishman’s direct influence by the traumatic events at the airport is significant in the sense that such a setting where travelers from different cultures may be able to meet with each other further highlights the need for cross-cultural witnessing. Testimony then ties in with Richard’s subject position at the crossroads of cultures and raises complex questions about his identity. In tandem with Eaglestone’s caveat against oversimplifying homogenizations representing African trauma, Richard’s moral stand exemplifies the refusal to offer

the voyeurism often associated with writing about massacres suffered by Africans (Eagleton 2008, 76). Instead, he seeks the possibilities of a far-reaching effect of witnessing as: "He didn't believe that life was the same for all the other people who had witnessed the massacres" while also, self-consciously, he was afraid "at the thought that perhaps he had been nothing more than a voyeur" (*HYS*, 167). Richard's call for more bystanders to bear witness is crystal clear here, but the implied implication of Western subjects in the act is obviously more pressing.

Richard thus alters his stance from fantasizing to conducting serious academic research, and reveals that Adichie anchors knowledge to the sense of responsibility as a collective moral position that solicits everybody to bear witness whatever the spatiotemporal distance. According to Heerten and Moses, Adichie's novel is part of a historical and academic reawakening in recent studies aiming to indict the tragedy by means of the scholarly imperative to classify the gross events of the war as "genocide" (2014, 169). Richard's potential prospect of a grant to carry out research in Nsukka ties in with the novel's concern to connect justice to research. In the view of Heerten and Moses, "the conflict should be considered by students of genocide" as its posttraumatic effects call into question "the founding assumptions" closely tied to the Holocaust (Heerten and Moses 2014, 169) as a dominantly "unique" case (Heerten and Moses 2014, 181). Drawing on Michael Rothberg's concept "multidirectional memory", Heerten and Moses insist that specialized scholars need to redefine the meaning of genocide seeing that the Holocaust as a "model determines their (mis-)apprehension of other cases they discuss—exactly because of this model—fail to discuss" (2014, 189).

In fact, bringing histories into adjusted proximity in cases of violence in inter-textual terms leads to weakening the predominance of a single history that is based on the West/East divide. This empathy-based approach can be glimpsed in Richard's decision to carry out more culturally sensitive research about Igbo culture. He thus shifts his attention from writing an imaginary novel about African art to a refusal to perpetuate Orientalist views that speak for the African Other. Ugwu's taking over is a significant act as the decision to write a book stems from both the acquisition of the worldview of the English language and the inspiring title of Richard. Of paramount importance is Ugwu's homeschooling and the fact that his education is both Westernized and postcolonial. In addition to learning from the intellectual meetings conducted in English in Olanna and Odenigbo's house, he draws on the flowery titles of the various books he struggles to read and understand in his master's library. These books tend to offer a broad spectrum as they span various histories as well as disciplines (*HYS*, 6). In a similar vein, Ugwu has not ceased to express his intrigue at the prospect of mastering the English accent by "moulding his voice after Master's" (*HYS*, 20). His learning tendencies, however, tend also to capture such words as "decolonize" and "pan-African" which seem to have a strong resonance for him (*HYS*, 20). The African houseboy's position abides by the critical imperative of both learning the oppressor's language and emptying it of its colonial essence through parodying "Master's" voice. His writing bears the imprint of postcolonial rewriting as he aims to repeat and revise the founding tenets of the master-narratives.

Analogies between Ugwu's writing bear witness to Adichie's revisions of dehumanizing colonial texts. Richard's cousin's letter delivering the "intriguing" fact of

witnessing the traumatic events in Nigeria, for instance, raises moral questions that grapple with Western literary influences, especially that of Joseph Conrad's Kurtz in his novella *Heart of Darkness*. The letter summarizes many concepts related to the "oriental" Other. As he writes fascinatingly:

Is 'going native' still used? I always knew you would! Mother tells me you have given up the tribal art book and are pleased with this one, a sort of fictionalized travelogue? And on European evils in Africa! I'm quite keen to hear more about it when you are in London. Pity you gave up the old title: 'The Basket of Hands'. Were hands chopped off in Africa as well? I'd imagined it was only in India. I'm intrigued. (*HYS*, 137; emphasis original)

The homogenizing prism which exhibits fascination with trauma is that the oriental Other is still constituted through the binary of an idyllic Africa and modern Europe. In the vein of Orientalist representations, the intrigue about the dismembered hands demonstrates a libidinal investment of Western aesthetics in the fragmentation of the eroticized African body. The literary allusion to Conrad's Kurtz and his witnessing the effects of "European evils in Africa" indicts the perpetuation of an epistemic violence that continues to gloss over the horrors of the colonial encounter. Adichie thus tries to redefine Africa from within the colonial text on humane grounds. Although Conrad's novella may have had "well-meaning intentions" and was "essentially about the evils of colonialism", it did not portray the Africans as humans (Adichie 2008, 44). Adichie's standpoint resonates with Achebe's criticism that lies somewhere between the recognition of Conrad's "considerable pains to set up layers of insulation between himself and the moral universe of his history" (Achebe 1988, 5) and his strong indictment of Conrad's dehumanization of Africans. In Chinua Achebe's words,

It is important to note that Conrad, careful as ever with his words, is concerned not so much about distant kinship as about someone laying a claim on it. The black man lays a claim on the white man which is well-nigh intolerable. It is the laying of this claim which frightens and at the same time fascinates Conrad, "... the thought of their humanity— like yours Ugly." The point of my observations should be quite clear by now, namely that Joseph Conrad was a thoroughgoing racist. That this simple truth is glossed over in criticisms of his work is due to the fact that white racism against Africa is such a normal way of thinking that its manifestations go completely unremarked. (Achebe 1988, 56)

A mixture of fear and desire is thus what governs Conrad's controlled and dehumanizing distance from the African Other. The danger of the lack of responsibility towards African subjects, and the scars that such a distancing view produces, "leads one to surmise that Western psychoanalysts must regard the kind of racism displayed by Conrad as absolutely normal despite the profoundly important work done by Frantz Fanon in the psychiatric hospitals of French Algeria" (Achebe 1988, 57). Achebe is thus well aware of the posttraumatic effects of the silence that still surrounds the critical works produced about Conrad's novella. At stake is the recuperation of African

history as it is frozen in time by the teleology of the history of modernity. He highlights the corrosive effects of the civilizing mission on African culture and translates his concerns into a rewriting of a novella that underscores the failure of the history of modernity. Adichie captures the complexity of such a stance in order to bear witness spatiotemporally. The repetitive pattern of such a discourse that is still in circulation despite witnessing such horrors is revealed through the similarities between Kurtz and Richard as witnesses at the crossroads of cultures. Yet, unlike Kurtz's, Richard's case helps the reader to access the realities of Africa more closely.

Ugwu's writing, which resumes from where Richard's unwritten book about Biafra stops, is akin to the novel's aim to restore subjectivity to the objectified African. The promising author thus "took the sheets of paper from" Richard, given that the war is not the latter's "story to tell" (*HYS*, 425). In fact, Ugwu's trajectory reveals his willingness to assume the identity of his "Master" who, in the novel, is alluded to through the character of Odenigbo. Having been foreshadowed by Odenigbo's statement that "Sir" "is arbitrary" and that he "could be the sir tomorrow" (*HYS*, 13), Ugwu's writing mastery is characterized as being inter-discursive as he reproduces "Master's words [...] with authority, as though they were his" (*HYS*, 295). Insightful implications can then be drawn from Ugwu's dedication: "Master, my good man" (*HYS*, 433). As this way of address has been used by Odenigbo to refer to Ugwu, there is a chance that "the mimicry of Odenigbo's phrase—which mimics Crusoe's phrase [...]—also reflects the overturned 'mentor' and 'pupil' power relations regarding the ability to narrate the Biafra trauma" (Ngwira 2012, 52).

Ugwu's politicized mimicry through resuming ownership previously used by an authority is also manifest in his "rolling the words round his tongue, memorizing some sentences" (*HYS*, 360) which belong to Frederick Douglass. The houseboy's drawing on the latter's *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass* telling of the African-American slave who rose to authorship is quite telling with regard to memory's revisiting of the master/slave narrative especially as he comes across the autobiography as a child soldier. This title which echoes his book's initial title "Narrative of the Life of a Country" and which he happens to find in a government college also directs the identity articulations of African writings toward engagement with the African-American concerns in spatiotemporal terms. It situates the investigations of the Nigerian past within the complex network of the Black Atlantic by mapping postcolonial criticism on a post-slavery grid. Such a critical direction brings on board the transnational construction of the African diaspora through witnessing reading and the attendant solidarity that reconstructs the sense of community between the refugees who were displaced in Nigeria and the slaves who underwent displacement in the middle passage. The problematic passage from the individual to the collective self in trauma narratives over generations is also highlighted in Olanna's solidary act towards Edna, her African-American friend. Pondering upon the devout and ethical determination to revert the effect of a history aimed at obscuring differences, Olanna's relationship with her friend brings the history of ongoing slavery into close connection with that of the Igbo cause. In reaction to Edna's expressing of grief after the 1963 bombing of the Baptist church staged by white racists in her hometown in Alabama, Olanna's helplessness "brought the urge to stretch her hand into the past and reverse history":

she “sat thinking about how a single act could reverberate over time and leave stains that could never be washed off” (*HYS*, 245). Underlined in this attack on the atrocious aftereffects of violent histories is Olanna’s exasperation with the lingering aftereffects of a thoroughgoing racism that has come to haunt every aspect of her people’s life. Similarly, the latent effect of racism can be seen in Ugwu’s narrative where different references strongly exert confluence onto the complex texture of his writing. Akin to the debates from which he has mainly learned history lessons, poetry, politics, and philosophy, Ugwu’s writing promises to capture the critical purchase of the different sources coupled with a heteroglossic arena of articulation that lends vigor to the trauma claims in the public sphere. Setting political claims of writing within a domestic context invests authorship with the politics of the everyday. In her essay “Heart is Where Home Was”, Adichie’s nostalgia for Nsukka is expressed through an admiration of the cosmopolitan nationalities and races within the context of the university (Adichie 2006 n.p.; see also Ouma 2012, 35). Such a “psychological journey” (Ouma 2012) reflects Adichie’s return to the traumatic events of the war and the need to trigger further intellectual debates that problematize the private/public binary. If Ugwu is the persona through whom she remembers the past, then a shift in focus from the micropolitics to the macropolitics of belonging are expressed beyond the claustrophobia of an intimidating space whose terms are set by the “Master”.

Ugwu’s writing materializes through his firsthand experience of the war as a conscripted refugee, further problematizing the binary of the extreme and the everyday in order to contest the stereotypes that attribute violence to Africans. He belatedly remembers his implication in gang-raping the bar girl (*HYS*, 397) and “atones for his act by inheriting Richard’s role as a writer” (Cooper 2008, 133). Similar to Adichie, who feels she is implicated in rewriting the history of Biafra as a haunting legacy, together with her persistence to revisit Achebe’s exoticization of the Igbo culture that risks to promote Western stereotypes (Achebe 2003; 2008), Ugwu becomes responsible in postgenerational terms in guiltily registering the history of the past in order to contest the colonial gaze. The novel therefore realigns the modern/premodern, colonizer/colonized dichotomies, since, through Ugwu’s burgeoning “composite consciousness” that represents the emergent Nigerian nation-state, “there is a [...] visible trajectory of the naïve unconscious of an emergent nation-state struggling with the collective angst of a modernization process” (Ouma 2012, 33). As a traumatic realist narrative defined by anti-linearity, the novel expresses the impossibility of reaching individual/collective coherence, since there are still issues at stake in modern Nigeria (cf. *HYS*, *Postscript*, 2).

Thus, set in the “gray zone” that solicits a responsible stance, Ugwu’s rape scene proves that “the distinction between victim and perpetrator is blurred, and a person can be both of these at the same time” (De Mey 2011, 52) as the perpetrator can be victimized by her/his participation in extreme violence (LaCapra 2001, 41). Based on the need to assume a critical stance that does not strip her as a postcolonial subject of responsibility (cf. Rothberg, 2000), and in “her attempt to wrest authorial power over the African story from the West, Adichie does not create the stereotypical pitiful suffering war victim” (Ngwira 2012, 45). Following Njabulo Ndebele, Ngwira further confirms that, instead of the “spectacle” of oppression, the intricacies of the “ordinary” are accounted

for in the novel (2012, 45). Such a critical stance helps avoid the state of victimization that objectifies the postcolonial subject by exempting her/him from responsibility. This enabled subjectivity allows room for Ugwu's writing as a postgenerational reflection of the experience of the war and displacement that need guilt-ridden narrators who transcend private spaces of servitude. The burgeoning consciousness of Ugwu not only shifts the terrain of investigation from the private to the public sphere for its articulation of a domestic space, but, in hindsight, is able to move from the "voyeurism" that marks his eavesdropping on his master's bedroom or the living-room adjacent to the kitchen (Ouma 2012, 40) to the larger geographical underpinnings of colonialism that continue to condemn the Biafran cause to silence. Resuming subjectivity along cosmopolitan lines of investigation reflects Adichie's rereading of Achebe's exotic depiction of Igbo history (Adichie 2008) and the need to offer alternatives to the representations that idealize and, thus, condemn the past to exoticizing schemes. Yet, like Achebe, she persists in claiming her space as a diasporic subject whose community has suffered from the demise of unbelonging since the war broke (Adichie 2006).

This section has examined Adichie's problematization of the shift from the individual to the collective self in her investigation of the traumatic past of the 1960s. The literary choronotope of her rewriting of the past has helped her modulate distance and proximity as a bystander of the extreme over distances of time and space. Being faced with the detritus of the real, Adichie's traumatic realism insists that the mechanisms that made slavery and colonialism possible still persist through racism as their conceptual kin. She therefore refuses to claim a complete "working through" that promises a simplistic shift from the individual to the collective self in that resort to postmemory feeds the need to continue the investigation of the legacies of colonialism and slavery across generations in African diasporic cultures.

4.3 A WESTERN-FACING AFRICAN ACCOUNT

This section will examine the role of Ugwu's writing as a process of rescuing the African child's subjectivity. The focus is on how he not only redirects the Western reader's attention toward African traumas, but also how he dismantles the frameworks that have led to commodification of the depressing stories of the suffering of the African child. It will be shown that "traumatic realism is not turned only toward the past and its tendency to reappear in haunting repetition. By virtue of a performative address to a posttraumatic context the novel's "writing possesses a future orientation" (Rothberg 2000, 140). The intertextual reverberations of the colonial text mentioned earlier in this chapter have emphasized the need to revise the colonizer/colonized, master/slave oppositions. It is thus to be stated that the ongoing fascination with the African child's trauma warrants a rewriting of the colonial discourse on a postgenerational basis, especially when this discourse tends to commodify the images of suffering from Africa.

Many researchers have drawn attention to the Americanization of Holocaust studies which has turned into "a moral touchstone" and led to glossing over atrocities experienced in non-European countries (Craps and Rothberg 2011, 517-518). But the risk that Rothberg saliently points to is the mass-marketing of genocide in the process of popularization and Americanization, thereby laying focus on the kind of media ma-

nipulation that in addition to relativizing the event also dissolve it in a flow of visually representational networks (Rothberg 2000, 181). Similarly, despite the fact that, of late, the Western conscience has had to redirect its focus toward the various crises blighting the continent, there is a pressing need to explore the reasons why Africans writing in English still lament the scant treatment of their continent's traumas (cf. Craps and Buelens, 2008; Eaglestone, 2008). In further investigating the question of distance and its attendant isolation, a need arises to probe into the commodification of African traumas. The reactions of Western recipients need to be interpreted in terms of their being faced with African traumas through the prism of a media further isolating the victims' cause. The responsibility to revisit the past then fuses epistemology with ethics and justice. The pressing demand in African writing that the continent's gross events earn their deserved empathy underlies a need to determine the way in which the consumption of African suffering has been inscribed in the dichotomous relationship of helper/receiver, or modern/backward. This perpetuation of the narrative of modernity not only objectifies African suffering but also appropriates by using commodifying means to fit the demands of reception, especially that by the dominant Western public.

The way the narrative of modernity is perpetuated requires closer scrutiny at the level of how this discourse holds sway in the post-colonial era. It follows that the ongoing commodification of the wounds of the African subjects brings forth the issue of responsibility by linking justice to narrative concerns for generations to come. Given the fascination with the overwhelmingly mushrooming images of the "spectacle" of the African child's trauma, Adichie addresses the issue of postgenerational witnessing in order to shift the stance of the Western reader/audience to emphasize his/her empathic "response-ability". Her aim is to recast the image of the African child whose images of suffering are often inscribed within the helper/victim binary.

Issues of the posttraumatic effects of colonial misrepresentations convey the dangers of having one's suffering misappropriated to fit the master-narrative of modernity. Olanna's burning of Biafran money after the war begs the debate over the democratization of the post-conflict conditions of telling as this decision is inspired by a refusal to "place memory on things that strangers could barge in and take away" because "memory is inside" her (*HYS*, 432). Symbolic as it may be, Olanna's statement is reminiscent of the recirculation of the Biafran Pound by the MASSOB group in 2006, which implies an anchoring of value to narrative by the post-generations of the war (Owen 2009, 570). It is meant to grapple with the legitimacy of the colonial legacy through economic means invested with narrative value as a redemptive act. Based on the historical references to the war in Nigeria, the Biafran pound may be cast as a kind of epistemology, implying the contestation of colonial dependency in that it is a "physical memorial to the short-lived existence of Biafra itself, not only that, but for those who lived through the experience, and for ethnonationalist-minded south easterners more generally, it is a poignant memorial to the personal and independent wealth of an entire region" (Owen 2009, 586). So, lest the symbolic value of the currency be compromised in the hands of others who might appropriate it, Olanna does not want the attempts to remember the past to go awry. In fact, the continuing Western hegemony, which still victimizes its African other, solicits the younger generation's education to resist the bequest of colonialism through possessing "the tools to understand exploitation" (*HYS*, 11). In other words, Olanna's statement lays bare the exploitative

maneuvering of the embedded effects of fascination in conditions of suffering to an audience that is constantly reminded of the state of stagnation blighting the African Other. As will be explained further, Olanna's concern alerts us to the need to protect the historical significance of the past through the promising postgenerational and more legitimate memory narratives that restore the African child's subjectivity. This redeeming stance exemplifies the African writings' wariness against subjecting memory to appropriation through material abuse. It bears mentioning, however, that ambivalence may characterize such a stance, given that, while the case of the Biafran cause needs a public, it also runs the risk of being subject to media exploitation. By propagating victimizing views of African subjects through images of impoverished children, the discourse of modernity insists on the ongoing plight of a people perpetually in need of the affluent West even for the coming generations. These images stand as exemplars of popularized views warranting the production of new terrains that invade the Western subjects' potentially distant and intimate space.

An instance of investigating the fraught issue of representing trauma is Christopher J. Colvin's article about South African trauma's victims. While South Africa is certainly another cultural context, my aim here is to draw some implications from Colvin's insightful examination of the ambivalence underlying the need to make one's story of suffering public. The title is in fact self-explanatory: "Trafficking Trauma: Intellectual Property Rights and the Political Economy of Traumatic Storytelling" (Colvin 2009). The article addresses the case of the Khulumani Support Group whose victims set out to bring their personal and collective memories to public attention after apartheid and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. In his article, Colvin sketches what he calls "the political economy of traumatic storytelling" in view of the growing circulation of the narratives of suffering solicited by "journalists, truth commissions, academics and therapists" in the post-conflict democratizing societies through a relation of "production, exchange and consumption" (2009, 172). The group's decision to go "market price" for sessions held with the institutions aiming at presenting these stories to distinct audiences worldwide while using Western paradigms of diagnosis and recovery stems from their feeling that "Traumatic storytelling has not brought them reparations" or "eased their poverty, it has not forced perpetrators to confess or beneficiaries to admit their own liability" (2009, 174). So, although trauma discourse and practices seem to have mobilized all possible forms of post-conflict intervention through peacemaking, academic and medical processes set out to ensure the rights of trauma storytelling, the contacts of victims with "researchers, journalists, therapists, politicians and others, were continuing to develop a commodified relationship with their stories of suffering during apartheid" (2009, 179). The narratives of wounding were then subjected to consumption rather than recognition. Discussing the subjection of the images of suffering to the abusive array of a profiteering media, Colvin points out that

This objectification of traumatic narratives and images is dangerous precisely because it obscures the social and political relations [...] that facilitated the production and circulation of the stories themselves, as well as the relationships that enabled the violence in the first place. (2009, 181)

The implications to be drawn from these “transactions” point to the binary of affluence/poverty, a distancing prism that continues to determine the racialized views of the West toward Africans. This fraught in-between terrain solicits that further investigation be carried out as the continuous narrative of modernity still dominates the relationship between the Western, “modern world” and its African “backward Other”. Caught in the web of a global media, the victims’ main target “market” was ironically the Western countries given their high currencies (Colvin 2009, 173-174).

No substantive “follow-up” is thus evident in the reaction of the interested listeners to the stories from Africa with regard to reparations and recovery. Such a transaction creates a distancing perspective overlooking the role of empathy toward the victims is the main determiner of the relationship to the African Other. Lacking the moral obligation to grant their stories recognition, the paradoxical stance of the victims is that while one of the fundamental regulations was to make their stories of suffering “engaging” enough to generate intrigue for a wider public, they were also adamant to wrest more control over their stories, while they were prone to alienation from them as “owners”.

This particular case is a telling example of the complex issues related to African trauma narratives. Discussing the transactions in much detail, Colvin’s article opens up new avenues to address other aspects of the everyday given the fact that “media, technologies and economics always frame acts of representation” (Rothberg 2000, 184). The traumatic realist view of the failed attempt at recovery conveys that the ongoing poverty of the victims implicates the media as the instigators of the same plight. The interviews led to the primal violence that apartheid committed, uncovering the atrocious role of representations in perpetuating the stagnant state of Africans. As such, racism is the prism through which this media can reach the largest audience based on ongoing helper/victim relations. So, lest their narratives be understood as a means of eliciting sympathy and thus continually in need of help, African writers are as well cautious of falling prey to the dynamics determining their relationship toward the Western recipients (cf. Eaglestone, 2008).

Out of necessity to turn history into narrative, Adichie’s novel chronicles a traumatic period in the history of Nigeria in which the Igbo people’s cause demanded legitimacy due to the world’s silence. Her insistence on recognizing the nuances of the war is achieved through awareness raising and the ability to understand the colonial exploitation that lies behind the lack of knowledge (*HYS*, 11). The recovery of humanity is as such a question of epistemology as it particularly seeks to counteract the effects of the dehumanizing master narrative of modernity. As I have mentioned earlier, there are three fundamental demands of traumatic realism: “a demand for documentation, a demand for reflection on the formal limits of representation, and a demand for the risky public circulation of discourses on the events” (Rothberg 2000, 7).

The need to document the past and the exploration of transgenerational witnessing, for that matter, bring forth the confrontation with the “real” in order to peer into the libidinal investment of Western representations into trauma narratives of African childhood. Exemplifying the posttraumatic effects of telling about gross events in the novel, Olanna is able to narrate the story of the little Igbo girl’s severed head only belatedly. Her wariness, however, holds on to the promise of restoring African

subjectivity based on transgenerational witnessing. The inability to tell the story of the girl denotes the imperative to undertake the moral and individual disposition to be a responsible witness. Her incident on the train when she sees the head of a little girl is a telling instance of the fraught issue of vicarious victimization generally experienced by bystanders who identify closely with the victims of trauma (cf. Herman 1992, 140). Upon the mother's request who opens the calabash and shows it to the other escapees from the atrocities committed in the north, Olanna "saw the little girl's head with the ashy-grey skin and the plaited hair and rolled-back eyes and open mouth" (HYS, 149). The fact that the mother asks her with shocking ordinariness to "look" at the head which she says she plaits every day (HYS, 149), lays bare the boundaries between extremity and the everyday and implicates anybody meant to "look" at the "spectacular" body by insinuating that at the age of the catastrophe more traumatic events are spatiotemporally ever-increasing.

Not having been directly affected by an occurrence she could not prevent, Olanna belatedly identifies with the victim and narrates the event to Ugwu, an African teenager and a promising writer. Handing down the story in fact challenges the objectification of the African child and shifts his/her passive and victimizing stance into that of promising subjectivity made possible through restored agency. The horrible sight of the girl's "abject" body (Krishnan 2011) is then not meant to evoke sympathy; rather, it is a dynamic image geared toward shaking the readers from their passive attitude, thereby seeking a justice-minded response. Out of responsible witnessing, the shocking sight of the girl's plaited hair is able to infiltrate Olanna's private domain as she starts plaiting her daughter's at a later time (HYS, 409). Her decision to tell the story of the child's body as the main source of the narrative passed on to Ugwu, her African houseboy, stems from his "earnest" interest in the story, which becomes important and capable of "serv[ing] a larger purpose" (HYS, 410).

Hence, through this narrative of spatiotemporally traveling images of child victimization, Adichie is able to make close allusions to the memory of the summer of 1968. One of the major causes to make of the Biafran crisis the first postcolonial conflict that engendered humanitarian concern was its marking "the age of televised disaster" in that it was able to challenge "indifference to faraway suffering" and went as far as infiltrating the "living rooms of the world television" (Heerten and Moses 2014, 176). Thus, the passage below becomes emblematic of the novel's ethical call, as children's starvation in Biafra "was the Nigerian weapon of war" (HYS, 237), but at the same time, it "sparked protests" and recognition around the world; not to mention that it also brought, in Adichie's view,

Africa into Nixon's American campaign and made parents all over the world tell their children to eat up. Starvation propelled aid organizations to sneak-fly food into Biafra at night since both sides could not agree on routes. Starvation aided the careers of photographers. And starvation made the international Red Cross call Biafra its gravest emergency since the Second World War. (HYS, 237)

As a leitmotif, the undecidability of the word "starvation", used thrice in the passage, indicates its being situated within a context in which it collocates mostly with concepts

opposed to each other. There is in fact a semantic field of conflicting flows in the public sphere, which shows that there is always a risk involved in gaining international recognition. Apart from its invoked activism, this world-famous event also benefited the media and the political careerism of those who used the images they thought were newsworthy for their success. The opportunism characterizing the Western attitude of politicians and photographers in the passage indicates their way of viewing the crisis through a distancing prism. The media agents thus inhabit a safe haven and avoid identification with the victims. This contrast is corroborated by the image of starving African children as a springboard for American children's healthier well-being. Obviously, a self-serving discourse based on the dichotomy of helper/receiver also dominates the Western stance here. Yet, the dichotomy of the white/black child is perpetually sustained through a future that will never change the image of the Western subject as the exemplar of benevolence. The historical accounts, in this regard, conclude that the war in Nigeria did mobilize the NGOs to care for the "far-off communities" of the South, but this move also repackages the image of the third world as always necessarily in need of Western help, as the reasoning which defines the relationship of helper/receiver in fact oversimplifies the complexities characterizing the war in Nigeria for the sake of moralizing and self-serving scenarios victimizing African subjects (Heerten and Moses 2014, 177-178).

The indicting tone in Ugwu's poem included in the novel also underscores the far-reaching image of the trauma of the African child that has come to inhabit the private space of the Western subjects. More dramatized though is the display of the libidinal investment of Western media in endangered African children and their trauma that is set in stark contrast with the world of Western subjects' privacy. The whole poem brings together the above-discussed themes and focuses explicitly on the commodification of the African child's body:

Did you see photos of sixty-eight
Of children with their hair becoming rust:
Sickly patches nestled on those small heads,
Then falling off, like rotten leaves on dust
Imagine children with arms like toothpicks,
With footballs for bellies and skin stretched thin.
It was kwashiorkor — difficult word,
A word that was not quite ugly, a sin.

You needn't imagine. There were photos
Displayed in gloss-filled pages of your Life.
Did you see? Did you feel sorry briefly,
Then turn round to hold your lover or wife?
Their skin had turned the tawny of weak tea
And showed cobwebs of vein and brittle bone;
Naked children laughing, as if the man
Would not take photos and then leave, alone.
(HYS, 375)

The direct “you” in the address of this poem’s rhetorical questions aims to particularly prick the conscience of the Western reader and brings back the gross images of the 1968 starvation in Biafra. An engaging tone is sensed as it incriminates the hero/victim superiority-laden images of Western help which, by taking photos and leaving the “naked” children full of expectations “alone”, further isolates the victims’ cause. Instead of chronicling the particularities of the starvation, focus is on the visual representations deemed sufficient to satisfy the Western audience’s fascination with images concentrating on African brutality. Such representation produces conditions of underserved empathy for the African children and is rationalized by the manifest destiny as their disease is due to their being naturally “sinful”. The passive consumer is spared the trouble of traveling even in their imagination as their “efficient” media will be able to “drive home” the idea of what it means to be an African child. So, the “not quite ugly” picture of the kwashiorkor has been improved by the shine of the deceptively attractive “gloss-filled” pages that help to spark fascination about the images of African terror. The poem further accounts for the violence enacted by the distancing physical portrayals of the bodies of African children. Its voice aims to parody the trivialization undertaken by mundane descriptions of toothpicks and football-like bodies that are now side by side with the other materials in the magazine stand.

The concerns here are thus both ethical and epistemological. There is a direct link between the marginalization of African traumas and the fascination that the colonial gaze primarily inscribes on the African body. “There are,” as such, “possibilities for knowledge even at the most commodified zones of culture” (Rothberg 2000, 184). The double meaning of “your Life” points to the far-reaching effect of African trauma through the “Life” magazine. The gross images are able to access the private “life” of Westerners as the intimacy of lovers has had to be haunted by the events taking place beyond the West. Needing to feel sorry more than “briefly”, the Western subject is implicated in the Biafran trauma as responsible empathy binds everybody to take action.

The direct address of the poem is therefore meant to lay bare the means of rendering the images of suffering in victimizing terms. The writing of a book within a book by Ugwu, for that matter, buttresses the sense of immediacy and makes writing a historical event in itself. In concordance with the “you” as a direct address in the poem, the writing of “The Book”, composed of a collection of materials—either written or oral—synchronizes the act of reading in that it brings “the reader into the moment of witnessing the writing of history” as “the reader becomes an observer of events and of the act of turning those events into narrative” (Ngwira 2012, 43). From the perspective of traumatic realism, the text in itself is a “social category” that engenders “the traumatic event as an object of knowledge” in that it seeks to “program and thus transform its readers so that they are forced to acknowledge their relationship to posttraumatic culture” (Rothberg 2000, 107).

The tiny details are then imbued with significance, and instead of being dissolved they are put together along with the quotidian regularity of Ugwu’s life. The rupture of the narrative linearity, achieved as the houseboy’s book about history is synchronized by our watching Ugwu “come into his own” (Postscript, 5). This fact fuses together the reader’s witnessing of the historical writing process and the recovery of voice by a

predictably objectified subject. The power-relations of the knowing Western subject are re-evaluated by trying to render the predictable authority of the Western representation obsolete. This is apparent in the unexpected rise to authorship of an African writer who is only disclosed in the end. In fact, the readers are made to think that it is Richard, the English character, who is expected to be the writer of the inset document, but this turn of events casts doubt on the appeal to authority in master-narratives. By remaining concealed, Ugwu as a promising writer obliges us to see the process rather than the ready-made images of victimized and passive children. To trivialize the prefabricated images of Africa that condemn the African subjectivity to fixity, "The Book" compellingly guides the reader throughout the process of representing the African trauma in order to dismantle the misleading maneuvers of the predictable representations in the Western media. The dominant form of witnessing is then recast as particular by forcing the narrow attention of dominant views of African subjectivity into rereading the novel in a new light after discovering the rightful author. Under the assumption that the Western reader will identify more with Richard, "The Book" challenges the reading process by foregrounding the element of the unpredictable. In fact, the reader's culturally endorsed conceptions are geared toward a certain closure, but their views are altered by the anti-linearity of the novel and the unexpected authorship of an African boy. Stretching the insight of this writing beyond redirecting the attention of the Western reader, Ugwu mentions the history of the Holocaust and of Rwanda out of the necessity to subvert the isolating frameworks of modernity as the latter affected the European countries:

Olanna tells him this story and he notes the details. She tells him how the bloodstains on the woman's wrapper blended into the fabric to form a rusty mauve. She describes the carved designs on the woman's calabash, slanting lines criss-crossing each other, and she describes the child's head inside: scruffy plaits falling across the dark brown face, eyes completely white, eerily open, a mouth in a small surprised O.

After he writes this he mentions the German women who fled Hamburg with the charred bodies of their children stuffed in suitcases, the Rwandan women who pocketed tiny parts of their mauled babies. But he is careful not to draw parallels. For the book cover, though, he draws a map of Nigeria and traces in the Y shape of the rivers Niger and Benue in bright red. He uses the same shade of red to circle the boundaries where, in the southeast, Biafra existed for three years. (*HYS*, 82)

The currency of the oral tradition is regained here through Ugwu's attempt at committing to paper Olanna's trauma of witnessing the little girl's death and the woman with a calabash. Underneath the wish to restore the cultural value of African storytelling, there lies the responsibility of Adichie to imbue with significance the materials culled from her family and community members. In bringing the materials side by side with events such as the Holocaust and the Rwandan genocide, the novel remaps the Biafran cause on proximate histories of violence; the more so because the shape of the rivers Niger and Benue testify to the redrawing and breaking of the previously imposed

boundaries by the colonial maps. At the historical level and by particularizing and globalizing a past denied to her people, Adichie refuses to draw parallels and thereby fosters cross-cultural witnessing as provided in Rothberg's notion "Multidirectional Memory" (2006). Her underlying premise is that the historical investigation of Biafra needs to regain currency globally while preserving the particularities of its culture which, unlike the commodifying representations, imbue it with significance.

This chapter has discussed Adichie's convincing case against the representations that condemn the history of the African Other to frozenness through the modern/backward binary. I have tried to show how her literary experimentation has proven to be efficient in dismantling the founding principles of the narrative of modernity. Adichie's work is not only driven by the moral prerogative to stake her community's political claims, but also manages to fight the forces that have isolated her history through situating her people's legacy with those of Other displaced groups.

5 *Reclaiming an African Past in the Transatlantic World: Caryl Phillips's *Foreigners: Three English Lives**

As has been suggested in the previous analytical chapters, the posttraumatic effects of colonialism and slavery tend to ramify across time and space in African subjects' realities. In post-generational terms, the literary witnessing depicted in Adichie's and Gurnah's novels reflects on the attempts of African literature to at dismantle the conceptual frameworks of colonialism, racism, and slavery with bullish persistence to document their irretrievable pasts. I have thereby demonstrated that textual experimentation assumes its formal complexity from trauma's challenge to memory, as trauma narratives further exhibit distrust in omniscient representation of the "real". Not to mention that, on moral grounds, issues of distance and proximity govern the ways in which the writers/bystanders acknowledge that they are implicated in the telling of painful pasts despite their absence from the primal events. Determined by the ethical prerogative to attend to the fraught issues of representing the "real", Rothberg's concept of "traumatic realism" has thus proven to be applicable to the writers' critical responses to the silence and isolation inflicted by colonialism and slavery.

In this chapter, Caryl Phillips's *Foreigners: Three English Lives* (2007) (referred to hereafter as *Foreigners*), further complicates the writer's engagement with the issues of belonging and the ethical position to assume in post-generational terms. Struggling in most of his lyrical oeuvres to re-write a distant African past to which he lays claim, the black British writer Caryl Phillips further complicates the question of identity and opens inroads into exploring the chronotopic world of the Middle Passage. The horrors of such a passage necessitate the construction of an African diasporic community that is especially premised on the need to chronicle the forgotten histories of black British subjects. My aim in this chapter is thus to investigate how Phillips's experimental work *Foreigners* dismantles the foundations of the racism endemic in the master/slave narrative of modernity. With a primary interest in Phillips's examination of modernity's perpetuation of the economy of slavery that has stretched well into the present time, my analysis aims to attend to the complexity of the writer's attempt to rework the division of black British identity from its African past. By calling for critical solidarity, the text owes much to Phillips's constant endeavor to construct a writing tradition of the African diaspora based in Britain. Critically linking the distant past of slavery to its new forms, the narrative aspires to break free from the shackles of objectification and silence promulgated by the teleology of mainstream history imposed by centuries of manifest and latent everyday bondage. Phillips's work thus

bears witness to the tragedies of three black people—two from the West Indies and one from Nigeria—whose true stories attest to shared failure to belong in the racist British society despite their occurrence in different times.

The book's manifest "traumatic realism" is reflected in the bold mix of realist and anti-realist tendencies of reportage, fiction, and historical fact that acknowledge both the persistence to document and the perils of appropriation when representing traumatic events. In lending "integrity" to the real characters whose stories are told in fictionalized form, Phillips leaves a mark on the literary productions on trauma as "his montage of historical testimonies in new fictional contexts can be seen as a deliberate ethical choice" (Eckstein 2006, 101-102). Within the framework of a justice-ridden "empathic unsettlement" (LaCapra 2001), he duly readjusts his distance and proximity vis-à-vis the events of the past by devoting his narratives to the deep scars inflicted on the characters by racism. Phillips, however, takes a reasonable distance that does not confound his voice with that of the victims (Eckstein 2006, 102).

As a hybrid of interwoven fictional and factual materials, the book sets out to restore justice to the untold tales of marginalized black subjects in Britain's past and present. Given the book's intent on exploring the repercussions of slavery and colonialism, this chapter will argue that, as Phillips particularly sheds new light on Britain and the violence committed in the name of a seemingly promising modernity, his implied polemic situates his exploration of an African past in what Paul Gilroy (1993) calls the "black Atlantic". It especially tries to throw into question modernity's narrative that submits non-white subjects to the same commodifying dynamics of slavery. Phillips's engaging narrative aims to trace the history of slavery as most received historical references overemphasize Britain's contribution to the abolition of bondage, while the narratives of traumatic experiences of slavery before, and even after, "ending" the trade cede the center stage. This is common to his works that demystify the myth of liberating resistance, as their focus is not on conceiving the "postcolonial moment in terms of full independence", but rather on the traumatic aftereffects of "the centrality of the individual body as commodity within an Atlantic order of globalization" (Saez 2005, 18).

Phillips's avant-gardist writings are especially nuanced compared to such prominent literary predecessors as V.S. Naipaul, George Lamming, and John Hearne (Saez 2005, 17). Reflecting a determined persistence to retell a disintegrated past, the pastiche of the styles of fact, fiction, and citation is meant to document and summon three disparate histories into the splintered time of the narrative in *Foreigners*. Phillips brings on board the issues of exile across space and time and reflects upon his identity that is set "somewhere in the middle of the Black Atlantic" as a writer who "has always stood out from his West Indian peers living in Britain" (Ledent 2002, 4). The work interweaves the life stories of three black subjects in England. The first one is Francis Barber, a child who was offered to the 18th century writer Samuel Johnson whose special affection for his enslaved "negro" culminates in the latter's ragged existence after his master's death. Though he was bequeathed a handsome amount by his master, Francis's eventual ailment was the culmination of the enduring effects of the manacled dependency complex inhibiting his exercise of will. Randolph Turpin is the second diasporic subject, a British-born boxing champion whose life ended in

debt and wretchedness given the white paternalistic system that took advantage of his successful career. The last victim of racism is David Oluwale, a Nigerian stowaway who, after having arrived in Leeds in 1949, was imprisoned and later institutionalized for a number of years. His death at the hands of the police galvanized the African and West Indian subjects into acts of solidarity to form a black African diasporic community.

The first section of this chapter casts light on Phillips's claim to belong to an African past through probing into the legacies of colonialism and slavery under British ongoing paternalism. I will illustrate his insistence on the question of the implicated subject, judging both British imperial power and the African ancestors for their active participation in the slave trade. In the second part, I will focus on how the far-reaching commodifying dynamics in the 18th century that hindered Francis Barber's exercise of will were to similarly affect Randolph Turpin's life in the 20th century. Phillips's documentary reference to the long history of black subjects in Britain and the narrative depiction of Barber's life underlie his attempt to link modernity in its subtly commodifying forms to Britain's colonial and slaveholding history. The third section will shed light on Phillips's narrative attempts to rescue African and West Indian voices from the forces of separation to construct a diasporic community in Britain. Phillips's insistence on fighting the forces of commodification and silence is the connecting thread that helps expose the enduring effects of colonialism and slavery in the "three English lives".

5.1 WRITING AFRICAN ANCESTRY AND COMPLICITY

In this section, I will examine Phillips's implicated stance that attempts at repossessing a lost past to retrieve the humanity of the African diaspora. Given the troubled relationship with his African ancestry, he engages responsibly with the workings of racist discourses in order to lay bare the enduring legacy of slavery. Besides his counter-discursive engagement with colonialism and slavery, he persists in particularly documenting the African history of displacement. The critical position of the West-Indian writer is thus overdetermined by the complexity of the cartography of his country seeing that the Caribbean is essentially marked by forced or volunteered displacement as a tide-bound region (Jagessar 2012). This position thus locates Phillips between the two predominantly polarized strands of the African diaspora with regard to the meaning of the black continent in current negotiations of identity and belonging. Previous studies suggest in this respect that there are differences in the literary rendition of the approaches and histories of displacement between the 'old' and 'new' African Diasporas:

These two categories [...] seem to speak for themselves. The former refers to the descendants of people who were displaced as a consequence of the transatlantic slave trade; the latter designates those who were born (or whose parents were born) on the continent in the contemporary period but left it either as children or as adults. (Ledent and Tunca 2014, 2)

In depicting the geographical positions of the authors writing displacement vis-à-vis the issue of history, Ledent and Tunca (2014) have suggested that the two designations are problematic at best. While the first delineates the representation of history rather than the specific context of Africa, the second claims to pinpoint a “more concrete” Africa that has come to the forefront of its investigations. “The former tendency” as such “may lead one to disregard Africa’s specificities and celebrate its participation in the neocolonial world order, while the latter trend often results in the presentation of Diasporic writers as epitomes of Africanness” (Ledent and Tunca 2014, 3). By embarking on a quest for a legitimate approach to the “real” in history, an urgent need arises to *historicize* displacement as the hallmark of today’s investigations of African identity. This undertaking will materialize through the examination of the terrain between the local and the global. In fact, the expanding African literary diaspora has culminated, since the 1980s, in the emergence of a permanently displaced generation. Buchi Emecheta, Calixthe Beyala, Chinua Achebe, and Ngugi wa Thiong’o, to mention but a few, fall within the category that has renewed and extended the European and North American Literatures, albeit occupying a “no-writer’s-land that is neither African nor European” (Hale 2006, 18). This dilemma nourishes the need to tread a path that can collapse the local/global poles, as it complicates the meaning of the African past for the present authors who have inherited the traumas of slavery and colonialism.

In view of the transnational distinctions that bring distant histories of displacement together, it is necessary to highlight the question of the African and the West Indian subjects’ *shared experience* of the centuries-old displacement. Yet, it also needs to historically, yet mostly geographically, situate itself counter-discursively by virtue of its critical response to the history of oppression. Displacement *is* history, and its construction of emerging diasporic identities rests on highlighting what has been shared as a struggle against the forces of forgetting and the dehumanizing separation of the diasporic subjects from their African pasts. Such a fraught and promising stance has been accentuated by Caryl Phillips as he has charted the specificity of West-Indian and African diaspora’s experiences compared to their African-American counterparts in his works. As he attempts to preserve contradictions between the antinomies of stable histories and the rupture inflicted by displacement, he tracks the African and Caribbean subjects’ shared demise, or “common fate” (Eyerman 2001), which has been particularly forged by the 19th and 20th centuries of colonial exploitation (Ledent and Tunca 2014, 3).

The tri-continental situatedness of Phillips’s works echoes Gilroy’s theorization of the Black Atlantic. Its importance stems from the need to discuss Caryl Phillips’s identity. Somebody may rightly claim that it is problematic to refer to Phillips as an African diasporic subject, a position that solicits the interrogation of the new directions in African literature or literatures. In Michael Chapman’s words,

Although Gilroy neglects Africa, the Black Atlantic depends crucially on Africa as the focus not only of the slave trade but also of cultural migrations (Fanon and Ngugi; creolization in the Caribbean) and artistic syncretisms (the Harlem Renaissance; Picasso; African sculpture and Cubism). In literary studies, a new

alertness to bi-or tri-continental affiliations complicates any single category of belonging in a host of writers [...] Whatever the limitations of the concept, the Black Atlantic has the potential to add energy to the idea of Africa in the next, more global epoch. (2007, 161)

Within the context of these new directions, Phillips's binding theme is African history whose repercussions are situated in the transatlantic world, bringing issues of migration, hybridity, and tri-continental identification to the forefront of his futurist outlook. Phillips's *present* diasporic identity is thus pulled towards the present not only in terms of its belonging to a remote African past; rather, his identity is constructed by writing a self that is always concerned with unbelonging because of the far-reaching ramifications of the colonial past into the present. Furthermore, since it is of paramount importance to study the painful past in terms that spatiotemporally transcend the irretrievable African realist past, the future of African cultures depends on a constant attempt to rewrite a traumatic history or, in Phillips's case, to construct one's identity as an implicated subject over space and time in the rewriting of the history of his ancestry. As has been intimated in this study about the fact that traumatic realism delineates the existence of the same ideological structures that made the primal violence possible, my choice in categorizing Phillips's work as "African diasporic writing" aims to place his articulation (or his writing) of his identity politics in the present-day culture marked by unbelonging; that is, I aim to situate his identity in the *post*traumatic African culture. Because he is implicated spatiotemporally in the representation of the extreme, Phillips's attempt at fighting separation from his African ancestry materializes in the form of solidarity with the displaced African subjects. This identification that raises piercing issues related to African history is not claiming the West Indian homeland, but is rather taking further steps towards seeking shared historical continuities of a lost Africa in the transatlantic world. This gesture is constitutive of a new diasporic identity in the making. As Lily Cho argues, "diasporic loss signals a relationship to history, not land or territory [...] the question of origins is not one of genesis for an established and fixed past, but of a dialectical emergence from a history that is both restorative and incomplete" (2007, 17). For Cho, a diasporic articulation of a history that is not restorative but lost is determined by its vigilance against the possibility of a repetition of the traumatic event in the future. What is at stake is the question of what Melissa Phung refers to as the process of "diasporization" which "entails an ongoing process of discovering and mending an always tenuous relationship to the past" (Phung 2012, 2). As Cho points out, the "diasporic subjectivity calls attention to the conditions of its formation" in that "no one is born diasporic. Rather, one becomes diasporic through a complex process of memory and emergence" (2007, 21). In fact, the current issues of color and racism that have been thematized and experienced by Phillips are similar to those brought up by African diaspora as shared demises. They attest to the construction of an emerging community in postgenerational terms. My aim is not to contrive an African identity for Phillips; rather, I aim to use his example as an extreme case for which belonging to Africa is based on identification in postgenerational terms with other African subjects. As a *descendant* of the black continent who shares the fate of unbelonging

with Africans, he is emblematic of how, in a chronotopic sense, “Diaspora [...] prompts a view of identity not as involving some ‘true self’ that can be recovered by returning to a homeland presumed to have stayed frozen in time-space, but of identity as a continuous becoming” (Peeren 2007, 75).

On the basis of some of the trends in his writings, it will be further argued that, out of responsibility, Phillips’s texts construct the African diaspora by casting more light on the inherited legacies of colonialism and slavery. He has thus been devoted to redeeming his narrative from the objectifying and manacled aftereffects of slavery and the colonial enterprise. This critical position will be discussed in view of its productive engagement with the issues of epistemology, ethics and politics. I will illustrate how Phillips draws upon the fraught curatorial enterprise in order to reinvest the sites where slaves were kept with human value. As a traumatic realist, he may be thought of as holding on to the ethical position of such writers who are “personally implicated in the public confrontation with the traumatic legacy of the extreme” (Rothberg 2000, 23).

Faced with the dynamics that still perpetuate the racialized and commodifying conditions that have instigated slavery, Phillips displays distrust in representation while insisting on retrieving the “real”. It bears mentioning that his life has also been marred by the dilemma of displacement, since the vulnerability of his sense of identity warrants nuanced explorations of an urgent need for stabilizing history. He was brought by his parents from St Kitts to Leeds as an infant, schooled in Leeds and London, and then studied at Oxford before moving on to lecture at American universities and settling in New York. Large portions of Phillips’s writing bear the imprint of an agonizing quest for an identity in constant search for a home on the three shores of the transatlantic slave trade.

In the shadow of the wider historical context characterized by racism before and after the abolition of slavery, Phillips’s examination of the return of the repressed propels him to cast light on today’s issues in Britain. Varied as they may be, the settings depicted in Phillips’s works have as their main object the exploration of 20th century Britain and “the ways in which belonging has been made difficult for non-white citizens” (Ward 2011, 25). As a black Briton who reclaims his African ancestry, his writings mostly seek to reframe the received narratives that ignore the participation of Britain in the slave trade. In fact, much of the focus of mainstream historical records falls on the role of the abolitionists to show how Britain ended rather than perpetuated the enterprise as the received accounts have cast light on Britain and glossed over disturbing developments in the colonies (Ward 2011, 1-3).

Phillips’s writings often feature counter-narratives that spatiotemporally revitalize the memories that reveal Britain’s involvement in the enterprise outside its territories and its aftereffects for the present-day African diaspora. He has made clear the ongoing legacy of the institutionalization of racism by British politics. His investigation of the politics of race has landed in the chronotopic world of the Middle Passage as it mainly journeys the triangular cartography of colonial histories of the Americas, Britain and Africa (cf. Phillips 2004; Wade 2015). In building connections among seemingly far-flung regions and distant times, his articulation of the trauma of the past does speak quite powerfully of the concerns of African diasporic subjects

who struggle against objectification and silencing. It could be said, as such, that writing is not just a form of fighting injustice, but is also intent on constantly laboring to restore human relations against the legacy of slavery that has fractured and scattered the fabric of the familial and cultural bonds in the black continent. After having been turned into thingness, the retrieval of humanity for the British diaspora of African descent determines the desperate need for the construction of a new community. In post-generational terms, these subjects are “haunted not by their own memories but by the memories they have inherited from their families, or [...] from the culture at large” (Rothberg 2000, 186). Accordingly, and based on empirical investigations that link objectification to lost legacies, Orlando Patterson sums up the isolation and excommunication experienced by slaves. In his words,

Not only was the slave denied all claims on, and obligations to, his parents and living blood relations but, by extension, all such claims and obligations on his remote ancestors and on his descendants. He was truly a genealogical isolate. Formally isolated in his social relations with those who lived, he also was culturally isolated from the social heritage of his ancestors. He had a past, to be sure. But a past is not a heritage [...] Slaves differed from other human beings in that they were not allowed freely to integrate the experience of their ancestors into their lives, to inform their understanding of social reality with the inherited meanings of their natural forebears, or to anchor the living present in any conscious community of memory. (Patterson 1982, 5)

This passage addresses two major aspects of slavery: ownership and meaning. What the slave loses in the process of being objectified is not only his familial and ancestral bonds, but also the right to ownership through the deserved inheritance of its meaning in communal terms. The hindrance to memory could thereby be construed as being deprived of the cultural, social and, by implication, the human value of one’s narrative. Thus, as will be argued further, the critical position occupied by Phillips is driven by the ethical obligation to diagnose the dynamics of an enduring master/slave narrative. His primary object as a diasporic subject is particularly to rethink the foundations of racism that form the basis of slavery in order to restore the human value of African subjectivity. In order to document the past, Phillips has drawn on all materials of cultural and historical value that sit in the margins of the human archive. The spatiotemporal explorations in Phillips’s crossings of the Atlantic thus allow for the possibility to document the past. Such an undertaking is made possible by his reworking rather than retrieving the “real” in representation. He in fact states that:

The larger historical question regarding memory has to do with our own collective memory of history as a community, as a society. So my way of subverting received history is to use historical documents, use first-person voices, digest what they’re saying, and somehow rework them. It’s a reworking that can get us to understand, for instance, the rather troubled relationship between captured slaves on the west coast of Africa and those who stayed behind. That’s what I want to do. (Phillips and Sharpe 1995, 157-158)

By toiling to document the silenced and irretrievable “real” in the histories of the victims of the Middle Passage in the mainstream media, especially the British historical accounts that have left the history of slavery by the wayside, Phillips feels that re-emploting the narrative thread links him with Africa through literary experimentation. To use Rothberg’s terms, traumatic realism in this instance “does not ignore the demand to confront the unfounded nature of writing, but it nevertheless attempts to develop new forms of ‘documentary’ and ‘referential’ discourse out of that very traumatic void” (Rothberg 2000, 96). In fact, Phillips is known to have buttressed the structure of his avant-gardist texts with sources that rest alongside each other as a reflection of his nuanced take on the complexity of the transatlantic slave trade. Lars Eckstein rightly attributes the unavoidable fictionality of testimonials and the way in which “what they recall is discursively structured, largely manipulated by psychological processes of amnesia, and [...] subject to ideological constraints and social discourse of power” (Eckstein 2006, 102). Using the work *Cambridge* as an example, Eckstein adds that through the text “Phillips stresses the importance of fiction alongside documentary evidence” as it is “precisely the fictional component of writing about histories of suffering that has endless positive potential compared to the mere focus on documents and ‘reports’ (2006, 102-103). In Rothberg’s words,

If traumatic realism then shares a distrust of representation with modernist formal experimentation and postmodern pastiche, it nevertheless cannot free itself from the claims of mimesis, and it remains committed to a project of historical cognition through the mediation of culture. The abyss at the heart of trauma entails not only the exile of the real but also its insistence. (2000, 140)

In order to historicize the painful legacies of the past, Phillips intends to lay bare the dynamics of the silence imposed by received histories of slavery by providing historical documents that seek to rescue it from the margins of mainstream historical accounts (Sharpe 1995, 157). Phillips has deftly managed to show that it is representation that perpetuates the same economic and cultural mechanisms of exploitation that led to the violence of the slave trade. As a traumatic realist, he makes clear the traumatized nature of his writings, as African representations are susceptible to the same logic that submits African suffering to “the circuits of the public sphere and commodity culture” (Rothberg 2000, 27). Such an undertaking underlies the black British writer’s inclination to reroute his spatiotemporal investigations of the history of slavery as he seeks to claim an already problematic relationship to the African past. In his novel *Crossing the River* (1993), for instance, where he locates the beginnings of the African diaspora in the Atlantic slave trade, Phillips acknowledges the impossible return to an African past. The novel spans two hundred and fifty years of dislocation for the African diaspora and opens with the overwhelming sense of guilt that creeps into the consciousness of a mythical father who has sold his children into slavery following his crops’ failure. This spatiotemporal examination of dislocation for the African diaspora recounts the abandoned children’s separate journeys through different epochs and continents. The narrating voice is overly plagued by the African father’s melancholic memory when the echoes of a distant past are invoked:

In the distance stood the ship into whose keep I would soon condemn them. The man and his company were waiting to once again cross the bar [...] Three children only. I jettisoned them at this point, where the tributary stumbles and swims out in all directions to meet the sea. *Bought 2 strong man-boys, and a proud girl.* I soiled my hands with cold goods in exchange for their warm flesh. A shameful intercourse. I could feel their eyes upon me. Wondering, why? [...] For two hundred and fifty years I have listened to the many-tongued chorus. And occasionally, among the sundry restless voices, I have discovered those of my own children. My Nash. My Martha. My Travis. Their lives fractured. Sinking hopeful roots into difficult soil. For two hundred and fifty years I have longed to tell them: Children, I am your father. I love you. But understand. There are no paths in water. No signposts. There is no return. (Phillips 1993, 1-2; emphasis original)

The passage testifies to a constant struggle over the meaning of African history and underlies Phillips's insistence on responsible witnessing. The father's painful tale attempts to build a spatiotemporal arena of witnessing responsibility as the narrative sets out to draw the reader and the descendants of slavery to a shared space of empathy. It tries to realign the boundaries between the triumphalist claims of a "working through" and the overwhelming effects of "acting out" the trauma of the past as Phillips "leaves the African father's descendants (as well as the reader) in an unresolved middle space between the tragedy of their initial abandonment and the triumph of a hoped-for but unrealized reconciliation" (Bellamy 2014, 130). The underlying object of such a shared space is to redeem the slaves' narrative by recasting the very commodifying tools that made slavery possible. To restore the "real" in representation, this passage does not pursue the trajectory of slavery chronologically, but rather accentuates the perpetuation of the longstanding legacy of slavery. Underneath its apparent melancholy, and in the traumatic realist attempt to produce the trauma of the past as cognition (Rothberg 2000, 140), this agonizing and agonized narrative hopes to track the possibly rhizomatic kinship of African slaves. It thematically binds two brothers and a sister through the enduring post-traumatic effects of slavery across space and time. What cuts the three descendants off from their roots is that they are scattered across the globe at different times. Their trajectories dwell in the transatlantic world and their stories are spatiotemporally set in Liberia in the 1830s, the West of the United States later that century and a Yorkshire village in the Second World War.

The aquatic structure of their voyaged path thus throws the children of slavery into uncertainty, further complicating the dilemma of return to Africa by "fractured" lives and the "many-tongued chorus" of diasporic voices desperately laboring to restore an irretrievable past and reprimanding their implicated ancestors for the shameful enterprise that has reduced them to a commodity. In an interview with Carol Margaret Davison, Phillips ascertains that the fact of writing the novel is not a redemptive act; rather, he wants "to make a connection" which is driven by the moral imperative to acknowledge the sense of "survival" (cf. Lloyd 2008) that guides his writing. It is a connection that is set "between the African world which was left behind and the diasporan world which people had entered once they crossed the water" (Davison 1994, 93). Bringing the ramifications of slavery to bear on the grievances of today's African

diaspora as a way to mourn those who perished in the middle passage, the work may be construed as “an aesthetic bound to survival”, its “traumatic realism meets its limits not so much in the impossibility of direct reference or transparent mimesis as in the dilemma of belated temporality—the impossibility of reviving the dead”, but rather, through exposing the “haunting repetition” of a violent past functioning as a charged narrative that urges the current readers to relate ethically to the posttraumatic culture (Rothberg 2000, 140). In similar vein, Eckstein explores the intertextuality that characterizes Phillips’s literary montage whose dialogism (Bakhtin) “resurrects” archived texts to be currently revitalized in fragmentary memory form seeing that:

Only through his elaborate integration of the sources into more or less coherent, unique narratives can Phillips compel his readers to engage fully with the voices they encounter, and to negotiate their own position ideologically as twenty-first century readers against the ideal readers implied in the older narratives. (2006, 109)

Typifying the African diaspora’s loss of a guiding “signpost” that could anchor the ancestors of slavery back into the black continent, Nash is, for example, disappointed on his arrival in Liberia, which he considers his home. Not only is he alienated from the West Africans who refer to him as a white man, but he also discovers that there is ongoing slave trade activity on the coast. Such a form of complicity allegorizes Phillips’s stance, which attests to the ongoing legacy of slavery that has urged Phillips to anchor human value to restoring his lost Africanness through an unyielding narrative quest for identity. Questions of Nash’s vexed relation to the African past are of close pertinence to Phillips’s belonging to the Middle Passage as they testify to the African diaspora’s confrontation with the repercussions of the primal event of slavery. On a visit to Ghana to lecture at Cape Coast University, a feeling of discomfort seeped between Phillips and his other African fellows who showed him two slave forts and the places where the slaves were kept. The growing realization that ran between him and the other lecturers amounted, in his words, to “a huge unspoken question [which] came between us—how come they remained behind, and I was one of the people who left” (Phillips and Sharpe 1995, 158).

Although Phillips’s natural reaction acknowledges the daunting process of rescuing the African past, an unflinching persistence runs through his writings as he still reclaims “Africa with a certain degree of confidence” even if the African diaspora realize its loss when it has become “shrouded in mystery” on TV shows (Sharpe 1995, 157) and other media of representation. The centrality of representation stems from the ethical and epistemological challenge that such means of representation instigate, especially as the burden of recounting the Middle Passage to which he insists he belongs, engages many other questions pertaining to how Africa figures in the media. About the fact that there’s “a further responsibility”, he recognizes that

The narrative of slavery and the subsequent diaspora has been misrepresented in many ugly and brutal ways over many, many years, so there’s a kind of social and political responsibility [...] to attempt to repair that narrative. But as a writer, the principal responsibility I have is my own inner vision. (Rice 2012, 366)

Central to this insistence is the writer's attempt at rescuing human complexity to the once commodified African subjectivity by means of memory work, an insistence that re-inscribes the meaning of the past on more human grounds. If, in the present conditions of unbelonging and quest for identity, Phillips still continues to reclaim the African past, then this continual turmoil underlies the refusal to give up his humanity, as well as that of the African diaspora. In *Crossing the River*, for instance, though the mythical father believes his "trade for this voyage has reached its conclusion," he discovers that "soon after, the chorus of a common memory began to haunt" him (1993, 2). The transaction in this sense has not come to a close given that, over the centuries, the past that has undergone violation is to be renegotiated to do justice to the dehumanized and objectified African offspring.

One living proof of the continual attempt in Phillips's writings to come to terms with dehumanization against the backdrop of profiteering media is his decision to take a reasonable distance from events. After having written *Crossing the River* (1993) and *Higher Ground* (1989), wherein he invested much of his emotional energy, Phillips decided to practically take a critical distance in *The Atlantic Sound* (2000), in order to see a little beyond the emotional aspects of writing that may romanticize the African past. Implied in this acquired distance are his leveled charges against the pan-Africanists' sentimentalized and essentialized claims of a possible return to Africa. In conjunction with his way of rendering the problematics of "dark tourism" in the African diaspora's cultural imagination, Phillips combines the insistence to remember with the recognizably desperate attempt to recover the past. In the shadow of the mainstream media that deny the West's participation in the slave trade, he has tried to rescue different histories of slavery from isolation and resituates them within the complex network of what Gilroy (1993) terms the "Black Atlantic". A nuanced rendition of the traumatic past refuses both the sentimentalism and the objectivism with regard to revisiting the transatlantic slavery sites. Almira, which is a slave fort that is located on the west coast of Ghana, is one revisited site in *The Atlantic Sound* (2000). As the most important fort in Africa, it has become a key destination for African-American tourists. Located in the American south, Charleston is the other site, which, instead of recording its history of slavery, is celebrated as the city that witnessed the beginning of the Civil War. *The Atlantic Sound* (2000) thus embarks on capturing the complexity of the gritty everyday in order to ponder the economic and cultural factors that govern representation. It peers into the implications of the business of selling tickets, postcards in museums that stand as memorials of the Middle Passage in Europe, the Americas, and Africa. It is a site where tour guides alter their stories according to the visitors. Phillips finds the enterprise of anchoring narrative to value quite pertinent to his case as a writer who campaigns in the fraught terrain of converting stories of suffering into a commodity. Though he finds it hard to give up some of his emotional response "in the presence of dungeons, manacles, chains" (Rice 2012, 364), he tries to recapture the events from a relative distance.

The critical purchase of such controlled identification is that the writer/bystander is made to see how the media benefit from trauma as they make money from the African American, West-Indian and black British diaspora's industry of suffering in Africa" (Rice 2012, 365). In order to capture the complexity of the slavery enterprise,

he brings the after-effects of bondage to the critical attention of the present readers through writing. Similar to the tour guides, Phillips's traumatic realism can be cast, to use Rothberg's terms, "as both an epistemological and a social category" (Rothberg 2000, 109). It is meant to program its present readers to view the traumatic experiences of the diaspora in ways other than those that have commodified and enslaved the victims. This section has thus emphasized how, in claiming his African ancestry in terms that fight the forces of commodification, Phillips counter-discursively holds an ethical view of the African past. In line with his attempt to rework the narrative of the past, Phillips's writing in *Foreigners* abides by the moral prerogative to scrutinize the colonial and slaveholding legacies. As will be illustrated in the next section, the spatiotemporal explorations of two non-white British subjects, Barber and Turpin, will resort to fiction and historical documentation as ways of accounting for the complexity of representing a traumatic past.

5.2 WRITING TRAUMA THROUGH FACT AND FICTION

In accordance with the above section discussing the dispersal that has led to the dehumanization and commodification of African suffering, I will examine the way in which Phillips seeks to spatiotemporally rescue the cultural bonds of what has been devalued among the African diaspora in Britain in his *Foreigners*. To ensure critical solidarity, this work attempts to congregate the once scattered diasporic identities into scrambled voices and fight the forces of silencing and isolating commodification. *Foreigners* as such "might be read as an indirect assertion of the free will of Phillips's characters but also of his own as a writer" (Ledent 2012, 78) who belongs to the African diaspora. This section will first chronicle the mainstream history's denial of the long existence of non-white subjects in Britain. Then it will be argued that the literary experimentation undertaken in *Foreigners* paves the way for documenting the past through a multi-perspectival and multi-generic questioning of the single story that epitomizes the mainstream history as practiced in Britain. It will be argued further that Phillips's pastiche of styles testifies to the way the vantage point of the dominant single story is challenged by a more critically and ethically-constructed rethinking of history. Its critical direction aims to highlight the enduring legacy of commodifying slavery in the two real stories of Francis Barber and Randolph Turpin. I will show how the African diasporic subjects in Britain are continually implicated in fighting the forces perpetuating their inheritance of the repercussions of the paternalistic discourse of Britain.

As Britain's participation in the slave trade has been largely ignored by mainstream historical accounts, its denial of such a history sanctions a counter-discursive rendition of the narrative of the past to fill the void through documentation. To stake a claim against such silence, and to ensure shared African ancestry, Phillips reframes the narrative along largely cross-historical lines to retrace the African and West-Indian shared experiences of slavery and colonialism. His claim is in line with what I have termed as shared displacement and the necessity to recognize the specificity of the black British diasporic subjects of African descent. Two instances of silenced history are thus paramount to excavating what has been unrecorded in British main-

stream narratives' imposed amnesia. One is the fact that it has delineated the British contribution to abolishing the slave trade rather than its participation in, and benefiting from, its production. It is thereby the contention of this section that it is not only racism that has dehumanized the African subjects but also the silence imposed by the mainstream media that has permitted their objectification and commodification.

The other instance is the denial of the black subjects' existence in Britain before 1948, when the African-Caribbean immigrants were asked to help rebuild a country ravaged by WWII. In Ward's words,

If we look at the post-war period [...] there is little sense of the wider history of black residence in the UK. The apparent "forgetting" of this pre-1948 black history in Britain has been crucial in refuting the legitimacy of black habitation in the post-war years. Admitting that black people have lived in Britain since Roman times makes it difficult to cast them as recent intruders to the country. (Ward 2011, 5)

It can thus be deduced that the received accounts deny the black subjects the right to belong in Britain and follow a linear path under the assumption that the African diaspora are rather "granted" freedom and opportunity. This line of thought is inscribed within a continuous history of modernity as it is buttressed by the fact of denying the disturbing events that took place in, or rather took advantage of, the colonies. To reframe the linearity of such a dominant discourse, Phillips's rewriting of mainstream history does not resort to a teleological depiction of the events. Rather, in contrast to the spatial and temporal restrictions of the continuous conventional official history writing, he captures the complexity of the chronotopic world of the Black Atlantic and the enduring legacy of slavery and colonialism.

Out of the need to ensure justice through engaging the reader as a responsible witness, Phillips has tended to lay bare the geographical restrictions inflicted by mainstream historical records. His thematic choices draw a wide-ranging cartography of Africa, the Caribbean Islands, Britain and the Americas beyond the essentialism endemic in nationalist narratives. As such, he has produced a hybridized mix of fiction and reportage that "spans Caribbean independence (*A State of Independence*), plantation slavery (*Cambridge* and *Higher Ground*), migration to Britain (*The Final Passage*, *A Distant Shore*, and *Foreigners*), black minstrelsy (*Dancing in the Dark*), and the Middle Passage (*Crossing the River*)" (Goyal 2010, 206). Not to mention that *The Nature of Blood* treads a solidary path that draws analogies between the African diaspora and the Jewish experience (Goyal 2010; cf. Craps 2008; 2013). Linking such far-flung geographical settings, Phillips's nuanced writing exhibits a critical edge in that he seeks to document the past through avant-gardist experimentation. He thereby confirms the advantage of the multidimensionality that engages more subjects beyond the nation through his texts' circulation. The success of such a literary method is discussed by Rebecca L. Walkowitz, who states that, besides the fact that Phillips's books act as "objects and as containers", of their debated themes, they also "function as world literature in several aspects: they are written, printed, translated, and read in multiple places; and they analyze the relationship among multiple instances of

global travel" (2006, 536). As violence is emphasized in a context where the collective is valued for alienated groups, their "affiliation is fragile, provisional and often temporary" (Walkowitz 2006, 541).

Phillips resorts to accounts that take the everyday idiom for granted, allowing for the complication of the past/present divisions by drawing "upon such existing historical records as a slave-trader's logbook, or the diary of a slave-owner's daughter, or letters from Liberia from African-American emigrants" (Goyal 2010, 207). The creation of fiction out of fragmented narratives affected by the African diaspora's trauma of the past is thus what drives his writing to provide alternating points of view as post-modernist literary strategies. Yogita Goyal further argues for Phillips's "metafictional explorations" aim at rejecting a naïve return to origins in nationalist dictums given that such explorations seek to

stage the limits of realism for representing diaspora, but they also plot a return to familiar oppositions between myth and history, aesthetics and politics, and romance and realism, indicating that the postcolonial moment faces some of the same challenges that plagued the colonial and anti-colonial era. (2010, 24)

In mixing the "real" and the "anti-real" through representation (Rothberg 2000, 7), Phillips's traumatic realism brings to the open the contradictions of realism and its claim to a facile transition from the individual to the collective self of the diasporic subjects. As has been intimated about mainstream history, Phillips's avant-gardism has recourse to postmodernist techniques that allow room for the intervention of an array of voices. In *Publishers Weekly*, his literary experimentation is shown to construct the African diaspora through a rhizomatic renegotiation of received history. He then points out that

The subject of my books tends to be the whole question of broken or diasporan history, of interpretation of personal history and how that relates to the larger official history that's been given. In other words, it's an attempt to reinterpret, and put together, through different voices, a different kind of view of the world, a different history. One of the things I've tried to do with fiction is to try to suggest that there's a great virtue in having roots that come from more than one place. You can make something new of diverse pieces. (Kreilkamp 1997, 45)

Phillips's special interest in narrative experimentation thus figures the existence of diverse historical encounters especially in the transatlantic world. This rerouting of the past has focused on the black subjects' existence in Britain way before the events eclipsed by received historical accounts; its primary object is to build a diasporic African community in Britain through retracing the trajectory of the history of slavery's legacy. In *Foreigners*, such a neglected history is recorded:

Black people have been present in English life since the time of the Roman occupation. There is very strong evidence that black Roman soldiers were stationed near Hadrian's Wall at the northern outpost of England, but the first re-

ally visible, permanent, group of black people in English life appeared towards the end of the sixteenth century. These Africans were brought to England in the wake of Sir John Hawkins' trading missions to Africa and the Americas, and were treated as little more than exotic objects whose main function was to adorn the houses and palaces of the nobility and aristocrats upon whom the "captives" were occasionally encouraged to serve. (*Foreigners*, 85)

The book has thus retraced the genealogy of an African existence in Britain. It seeks to reinforce the evidence of both a history of denial and commodification in the transatlantic world. Central to such a rerouting of painful African history is also an attempt to recast the ongoing racism as the offspring of slavery which, rather than being dead, is only "buried" (Ward 2011, 1). Within the framework of the realist and anti-realist tendencies in traumatic realism, *Foreigners* moves on to the 18th century when it depicts the fictional narrator of Francis Barber's biography. The claimed cogency of a "reliable truth" epitomizing the mainstream paternalism gradually loses momentum to the slave child's tide-bound wish to explore its transatlantic past. It bears noting here that Barber's story initiates the narratives of the two other stories whose points of view seem to unfold into being gradually scrambled and in constant alternation. The narratives are also a cross-over of the fictional and factual representation of three black British men whose African past ramifies powerfully across time and space. The depiction of disparate grim tales of displacement thrown into uncertainty amidst antagonistic environments aims to revitalize the archival role of writing. To ensure justice, Phillips's traumatic realism is a form of "documentation" that

Develops out of and in response to the demand for documentation that an extreme historical event poses to those who would seek to understand it. "Documentation" consists of two elements— reference and narrative— that correspond to its nominal and verbal meanings. On the one hand, the demand for documentation calls for an archive of facts or details referring to the event. On the other hand, the active sense of documentation indicates the need for the construction of a realistic narrative that would shape those details into a coherent story. (Rothberg 2000, 100)

Based on the realist and anti-realist tendencies of traumatic realism, I will illustrate how Barber's and Turpin's stories thematize the legacy of slavery and colonialism through the narrative proper and the documents that record history. I will first examine Francis's lost hope to return to the Black Atlantic which he considers his "home". This hope is a reflection of how the whole book aims to rewrite the African diaspora's history of the Middle Passage against the dominant abolitionist conventionalized history. I will explain that the restrictions faced by Francis's attempt to find a community are behind his traumatic fate as an objectified subject. Posing as the object rather than the subject of representation, Barber has his story told from the colonial first-person point of view of a British 18th-century narrator who wants to revisit the key period in the abolition of slavery in Britain. The "I" of the narrative highlights the history of the deceased Samuel Johnson, the abolitionist who was a devout defender of his

slave, Francis Barber. Opening the pages of the book with this particular period aims to scrutinize what lies at the heart of the paternalistic, linear narrative in Britain at the time. Historical dates, abolitionist figures, and other historical facts are pieced together by the narrative (proper) of a fictionalized teller so that the readers bear witness to the problematic linearity of the truth-claiming discourse of bondage.

In mid-century London, the “not yet refined” young slave who had been sold to slavery on a plantation in his native Jamaica arrives at “the door of civilization” at the age of eight. After having had the chance to learn to read and write “thanks” to the help of his first master Richard Bathurst, Francis is “packed off” to the home of Bathurst’s friend, Samuel Johnson, who defended the social integration of blacks in British society instead of using them as household ornaments (*Foreigners*, 20-21). Apparently, the refusal to objectify the black souls seems to be the main concern of the abolitionists. Yet, given the narrator’s insistence on calling the reader’s attention to the virtues of the English abolitionists the odds are stacked once again in favor of acts of the master-narrative. He seems to celebrate the story of the benevolence of the two Englishmen abolitionists to free Francis from bondage. Johnson, for instance,

Took immediately to the young black child, who was now styled Francis Barber, but like his friend Dr. Bathurst, he too had no desire to impress his peers by dressing the negro as a satin-clad page or forcing the child to wear livery of any sort. He was aware that ostentatiously attired blacks were now commonplace in London society, appearing in law courts, answering doors, marrying servants, running errands, sitting for portraits. In literature, they were making minor appearances in the novels, plays, and the poetry of the age, but to Johnson’s eyes the negro, generally through no fault of his own, often lacked a certain civility. (*Foreigners*, 22)

That the narrator’s voice reeks of racist distancing discourse is crystal clear. However, what is most likely to instigate the marginality of African diaspora is the denial of their existence in Britain given the markedly timid presence of the disadvantaged subjects in British literary representations. Re-inscribed within the civilized/savage dichotomy, this missing recognition is reinforced by the lack of civility which Samuel Johnson himself ascribes to his slave.

Such a discourse thus claims to have granted rather than deprived the slaves of freedom through continuous attempts at civilizing them. Endemic in such an approach is the focus of the historical records on the virtues of the abolitionists who refused slavery rather than slavery itself (Ward 2011, 4). What have further guaranteed the enduring legacy of slavery as inheritance are the wills that were bequeathed to Francis by the two men and which only made his sense of dependency worse. To his demise, the black soul suffered the sad repercussions of their aftereffects. In narrative terms, the quest of the storyteller following Dr. Johnson’s death does not focus on the life of Francis Barber, but rather seeks to see to what extent the latter has been able to comply with the moral obligation to “thank” his master for the bequeathed sum. Following the steps of his abolitionist predecessors, therefore, the narrator has decided to embark on a new “benevolent” scheme with another renowned historical figure, Mr. Granville Sharp. He points out, however, that:

I finally understood that before making any decision about my own future philanthropic investments it might profit me to revisit the past and try to discover what had become of the forlorn negro. I wondered, was he yet another example of a poor transplanted African whose roots refused to properly catch the soil of our fair land? Or had life beyond his master's departure showered the negro with good fortune? (*Foreigners*, 12)

The story of the giving "fair land" therefore eclipses the alienation of the subjects of African descent on British soil. Its discursive tendency testifies to the fact that Barber's belonging in Britain is not a matter of fact, but rather his presence is used to raise the issue of the privileges offered and to address to what extent he is able to use them properly. Central to the discourse of benevolence therefore are philanthropic acts as a means to distract the reader's attention towards what should otherwise have been a historical account that tracks the roots of colonialism and slavery. In the historical allusion to Granville Sharp's "scheme for resettling the blacks on the west coast of Africa in an efficiently managed colony" the narrator thinks of "honorably" investing his "money for profit and charitably passing [his] days" (*Foreigners*, 12). The linearity in this tale, and its discursive alignment with mainstream narratives, pays mere lip service to the plight of the slaves in the West Indies (*Foreigners*, 12) or quotes Samuel Johnson's dissatisfaction with Jamaica's being a "dungeon of slaves" (*Foreigners*, 22). As the events have been stated only in passing, the narrative disproportionately mentions the scheme's virtues to conceal its devastating outcome elsewhere in the colonies.

Attributing profit to charity is another way to reinforce the abolitionists' propagating their unusual sense of moral well-being. This is also made clear in Phillips's *Rough Crossings* (2007), which also traverses the three continents and where he dissects what has been undocumented in the moralizing tale of the resettlement of non-white subjects to Sierra Leone and Nova Scotia. In the context of Britain's seemingly benign imperialism, the two resettlements assembled the African diaspora from Britain and the Americas as it "was founded for freed slaves (some in the American revolution had been promised land and freedom if they fought for Britain, but the land turned out to be Africa)" (Hanlon 2007). Instead of promised freedom, Britain's reluctance to accommodate the non-white subjects pushed them to live in the resettlements which bore unbearable experiences of hardship in both locations (Ward 2011, 1).

Phillips thus probes the state of unfreedom reenacted by the story that limits the scope of investigating the possibility of seeing other unrecorded facets of the history of abolition. The low-profile narrator's main purpose of revisiting Francis's past through the testimony of the latter's wife consists of featuring the "unique place" he occupied by "witnessing" the birth of some of the finest British literature (*Foreigners*, 32), knowing full well that "sketching" this small profile would be met with both fascination and disdain (*Foreigners*, 53). As an implicated subject, the slave's story is restricted to being the adjunct of mainstream literature wherein he has been forced to support and perpetuate, rather than resist, the cause of his demise. Barber as such is still attending to the integrity of the inherited works of his deceased master, works which belonged to a national canon that ignored his existence. Being assimilated

through education, the manservant is therefore not just a former slave of his master, but he is also at the service of a continuing legacy of a literary tradition, which eclipses and thus downplays his claims to freedom. In the vein of the slavery enacted within British households and plantations, Barber's state of unfreedom takes on a new guise. Unable to renegotiate his displacement into the deceivingly stable life with Dr. Johnson, he is made to embark on accomplishing the wishes of a literary figure whose literature has exercised a strong hold on him. In discussing such a fraught condition of attempting to assimilate and civilize slaves, Frantz Fanon analyzes the dependency complex on the part of the black man after the colonial encounter, a state that comes down to the conclusion that the latter:

has been led to ask himself whether he is indeed a man [...] I begin to suffer from not being a white man to the degree that the white man imposes discrimination on me [...] robs me of all worth [...] will compel the white man to acknowledge that I am human. (Fanon 1967, 98)

In the scheme of things, the demise of Barber is due to his loss of humanity. His self-effacing grim tale is of the kind that is implicated in steering the attention of the reader toward the worth of his master's contributions. By struggling to guarantee the continuity of the history of British abolitionists' virtues, Barber perpetuates his enslavement through his acceptance of the status quo and his attending to the British literary canon. As such, he is complicit in shifting the readers' focus from the gruesome events pertaining to slavery in the Black Atlantic, particularly due to the fact that such an enterprise was largely lucrative (Ward 2011, 2). The storyline Barber's biography promotes in the public sphere only acts as a commodified tool promulgating the staple that brings benefits to the slaving British industry from elsewhere.

The confidence of the narrator's story grounded in paternalism has nevertheless been shaken, given the realization that Barber's eventual sense of guilt triggers his realization of the need to have the cartography of his lived experience of displacement redrawn, especially when he faces the narrator with the truth about the source of his demise. As the rebellious Jamaican boy finds it hard to tolerate the housekeeper's patronizing character, he decides to leave his master, to whose shock it is discovered that the sea is the preferred "home" of "his boy". So, "on June 7th, 1758, sixteen-year old Francis enlists in the royal navy in the Golden Sea" and a number of other ships (*Foreigners*, 25-26). Dr. Johnson tries in every way possible to prevent such an adventure that could harm Francis. After long endeavors, the man's and "his" protégé's reunion at last materializes. It is thus particularly at this juncture that the "negro's" life should have taken a completely different direction as, in the narrator's words,

the negro had most likely been destroyed by the unnatural good fortune of many years keeping company with those of a superior rank, thus depriving him of any real understanding of his own true status in the world [...] Yes, the black man should have left our country and journeyed back to Jamaica or to Africa with Mr. Sharpe's expedition. (*Foreigners*, 52)

Barber's wretched state thus needs to be recast in terms of its being instigated by the dependency complex and inferiority within the dominantly white British society. The dislocated subject has already been caught in the grip of the discourse of philanthropy, as he is faced with restrictions on his freedom to choose his own trajectory. The young boy fraternizes with other people of his "own complexion" who live in dire conditions and who need to build a new diasporic community in Britain. The fact that Dr. Johnson offers them a place to share the stories of their predicaments speaks eloquently of their limited ability to articulate their identity claims outside the contours of paternalistic discourse. The temporarily relished comforts are then found to have brought Barber to a primal state of inferiority and deprived him of the ability of assessing his reality. Not to mention that the everyday and extreme are brought together, as their social conditions of inflicted unemployment or menial tasks confine them to living in squalid corners with "beggars", "prostitutes", and "criminals" (*Foreigners*, 28).

In a broader sense, therefore, whether at sea or on the mainland, slavery and its discontents still exert their firm grip upon the African diaspora. Conscious, as such, of the far-reaching power structures that have submitted the African subjects to commodifying means, Phillips exposes the concealed dynamics of class differences that have been instigated and perpetuated by a slaving society writ large. Providing evidence of how capitalism and colonialism gave meaning to the intertwined modern world, slavery is to be considered part and parcel of the larger economics of dehumanization as the slave ship is "a particularly ugly and brutal microcosm of the titanic class struggles that produced the modern world" within the context of a "rising" and "moving" capital (Sweet 2009, 12). As a traumatic realist who explores the ongoing histories and struggles that so densely interweave the past and the present, Phillips testifies to the co-existence of the incommensurable gritty everyday and the extreme as the posttraumatic effects of slavery still blight the experiences of subjects of African descent. His traumatic realism therefore attests to the way diasporan subjects journey to the "borderland of extremity and everydayness" in order to revitalize testimony across space and time and urge more subjects to engage ethically with what Rothberg (2000, 109) calls the plight of the posttraumatic culture.

So, in contemplating the meaning of "real" freedom, Barber is led to conclude that bondage could have been resisted through the once missed opportunity to revisit his past in the Middle Passage through documentation. He thereby points out that

I would have been better served committing to a life at sea, or returning to my native Jamaica. Perhaps it would have been more profitable for me to have established for myself the limits of my abilities rather than having them blurred by kindness, dependence and my own indolence. (*Foreigners*, 51)

The potential retrieval of the sense of self for Barber therefore rests on the possibility of revisiting the past by tracing the littoral connective tissue of the Black Atlantic. However, the certainty of his wished-for journey does not ensure an easy retrieval of the "real" past, but rather acknowledges that it is being set in the Middle Passage and as such it may represent the trauma that dislocation tends to reflect. Besides embarking on this journey, which is Barber's endeavor to counter-discursively show his

distrust for the lies of the discourse of philanthropy, the persistence of the “real” in representation is determined by the potential of documenting the past in the chronotopic world of the Black Atlantic. It is a new route towards exploring what has been hidden from the records of history. On the grounds that economic factors perpetuate the same frameworks that instigated slavery, the co-existence of the everyday and the extreme draws the reader’s attention to the continuing legacy of the traumatizing experiences of the slave ships.

Having grasped the initiation of Barber’s life story into the chronotopic world of the Black Atlantic, which constitutes his place of abode, this section will next shed light on how the spatiotemporal connection of the diasporic subjects’ stories critically probes the legacy of slavery through documentation. Similar to Phillips, Paul Gilroy has traced the cartography of the Black Atlantic through a focus on the social dynamics afflicting the lives of the slaves or their descendants. As he points out, in so doing:

I have settled on the image of ships in motion across the spaces between Europe, America, Africa, and the Caribbean as a central organizing symbol for this enterprise and my starting point. The image of the ship—a living, micro-cultural, micro-political system in motion— [...] Ships immediately focus attention on the middle passage, on the various projects for redemptive return to an African homeland, on the circulation of ideas and activists as well as the movement of key cultural and political artefacts: tracts, books, gramophone records, and choirs. (Gilroy 1993, 4)

Accordingly, the symbolic purchase of the world that the Black Atlantic signifies stretches the insights of the reader of *Foreigners* beyond the limitations of the linear history of abolition. Delineating the missed connections in the history of the diaspora, in this regard, exemplifies some of the self-refashioning of both the individual and the communal self that the blacks in the West locate beyond the confines of “recognition from the grudging gifts offered by the masters as a token substitute for freedom from bondage” (Gilroy 1993, 40).

By inhabiting the critical terrain of the Middle Passage, Phillips shifts the point of view to the third person factual account’s journalistic style that starts the biography of Randolph Turpin, a living evidence of the enduring aftereffects of British racism. His case also attests to the system’s commodification of the stories of the African diaspora that took place two hundred years after Francis Barber. Turpin was England’s first black world champion boxer who made history when he defeated Sugar Ray Robinson in 1951. Similar to his destitute predecessor whose grim tale of dependency reflected a fall from grace, “Turpin is ‘protected’ by white men, his manager and trainer, who are presented at once as further figures of sorts and as creators of the part that the boxer is supposed to play—i.e. ‘the script’ [sic] of his professional life” (Ledent 2012, 80). Inserted in the narrative is also the “I” that refers to Phillips’s parenthetical reflections that disrupt the movement of the narrative when he interviewed the daughters of the champion. Such a textual choice suggests his experimenting with the function of the commentary as testimony. Before his intervention, the readers have been given a chance to make their own judgements that might bring to a close the story of

Turpin's blemishes judged as coming from someone who has been described as "bestially primitive" (*Foreigners*, 116), disregarding as such the human side of the story. In traumatic realist terms that "non-judgmentally" narrate the story self-reflexively, "the use of commentary [...] discourages the facile embrace of closure and coherence found in the typical realist narrative" and "adds a further collective to [...] testimony" in order to lay bare the "contradictions and rifts of the real behind a totalizing organizational principle" (Rothberg 2000, 106). The multi-perspectival, fragmentary narrative lends weight to the testimonial part that the text plays to preserve the family bonds among the African diaspora. By reinserting the unintegrated details of the life of Turpin, the narrative engages the family members in responsibly bearing witness to the more humanized outlook of his featured life.

If Barber's story is made merely adjunct in commodifying terms to the literary history of white protection, then its legacy of objectifying slavery could well stretch to affect the subjects of African descent. The title of Turpin's biography, "Made in Wales", signals the fraught state of Turpin's fame and his being surrounded by the fecklessness of white subjects' opportunism (*Foreigners*, 134). His training and sparring was to take place in Thomas Salts' Gwrych Castle turned into a "Showplace of Wales". Besides its being a building for rides and attractions for children, Salts charged the public to watch Turpin, who turned out to be an ideal "drawing card" for further income through admission tickets and autographed souvenirs (*Foreigners*, 63). Not to mention the sparring shows with underpaid partners used by Salts while promoting his enterprise and to which he would invite spectators with the huge sign: "COME AND MEET A BRITISH CHAMPION AT SUNNY GWRYCH CASTLE" (*Foreigners*, 64). Casting the building as fostering "respite" from the obligations of Turpin's upbringing, past, family and friends, brings to mind the deluding comforts promised sporadically by a deeply slaving white society. Turpin's being turned into a "spectacle" is reminiscent of the case of the prototypical case of Sarah Bartman (the Hottentot Venus), the South African Khoi Khoi woman from the Eastern Cape of South Africa whose commodification stands for the way in which the black body was fetishized by the colonial gaze (Netto 2005, 149). She was brought to Europe exhibited as a "freak" and a "savage monstrosity" around Europe due to the protuberant size of her buttocks" (Netto 2005, 150). Turpin's and Bartman's cases solicit an exploration of how "the Black body, by being constituted as a spectacular object for the gaze of the colonizer, was sexualized and fetishized, how it opened up, through slavery and imperialism and 'ethnographical show business'" (Netto 2005, 151).

The Welsh Castle and its "verdant grandeur" in fact is an architectural reminder that shows how it has distracted the boxer from the realization of his true merit to become no less than a "spectacular" plaything in the hands of opportunists. This further confirms that, besides its promoting the forces of forgetting, "Wales" in the title may be cast, to use Ledent's words, as "the place where his celebrity was literally manufactured by Leslie Thomas Salt, an unscrupulous white businessman, making of Turpin a mere product to be marketed and thus commodified as slaves once were" (Ledent 2012, 81). As has been explained in advance, the renegotiation of the past and its close relation to the reconstitution of the sense of community bears on the meaning of being human.

In the posttraumatic culture of the African diaspora, where Phillips struggles to fight the forces that instigated the commodification of slaves, his reworking of the narrative of the past rests on blasting open the conceptual foundations of official history through revitalizing testimony. The unjustified isolation of the story of Turpin rationalized by dehumanizing claims urgently solicits some sort of responsible witnessing, especially in post-generational terms, to testify in his favor after he had committed suicide. After the unhappy outcome of his unacceptably careless spending, and a life of debt, scandals and destitution, the boxer decided to end his as well as his little daughter's lives. The little girl was luckily saved while his death left a legacy that demanded recognition on the part of a whole society that, to Rev. Eugene Heselden, was also responsible for his failure, since its "spongers" led to devaluing his existence (*Foreigners*, 135). The death of the British hero thus warrants that it shockingly outstrips the readers' narrow attention shaped by the Eurocentric mainstream narratives as it aims to build a new public sphere. The book's use of intertextual experimentation enforces a shift from the psychological arena to the wider political implications of Turpin's death with regard to the critical interrogation of intertwined questions of race and class (*Foreigners*, 142). The congenial discussion with Turpin's family, the historical documents inserted into the text at times and the interviews and commentary seek to foster a multi-testimonial rereading that delves into the human worth of Turpin's act.

As it seeks a public, the engagement of more witnesses into broader questions of identity thus permits new ways of understanding to emerge as the fact that shared humanity necessitates their implication in other histories. In Cathy Caruth's words, "history, like trauma, is never simply one's own," as "history is precisely the way we are implicated in each other's traumas" (Caruth 1996, 24). This political claim is made clear through the questions raised by Phillips with regard to the two World Wars as two shared traumatic events that have shaken Europe but have not given the history of the colonized and enslaved subjects their traumatic due. In that respect, and within a post-generational framework, *Foreigners* raises questions directed at Turpin's family. The questions aim to continually engage them responsibly in the investigation of the crisscrossing legacies of the painful pasts that forge links between the World Wars, colonialism and slavery. His questions are worded as follows in order to open new insights into unduly unrecognized traumas: "Did Iuean [Turpin's grandson] know that his grandfather, and grandfather's brothers, served in the military during the Second World War? Did Iuean know that his great-grandfather was wounded in the First World War and suffered wounds that later killed him?" (*Foreigners* 141). These raised queries seek to fight the forces of isolation and amnesia. They also hark back to the links between the histories of violence enacted in Europe and the legacies of slavery and colonialism (cf. Rothberg 2006). Their aim is to invoke such entanglements by making reference to the war that non-whites fought for Britain as a constant insistence on deserved recognition. Undocumented historical events thus become tantamount to entangling what has been set aside in British history. They initiate debates that set the stage for investigating the unsaid, especially the participation of non-white Britons in the two world wars, not to forget their contribution to building the economy of a nation ravaged by the wars. As recognition is lacking, Len

Garrison concurs that there is a huge “void” that needs to “be filled in Black history in Britain” particularly in the 20th century, as “thousands of men gave their lives in two world wars, and, together with Black women, made valuable contributions through volunteering their services and duties” (1994, 237). Wendy Ugolini also speaks of the “whiteness” that dominated the meta-narrative of British subjects at war. She reassesses the post-war context in 1950s Britain and how the incorporation of non-white subjects was doomed to failure. Bringing the racialized views against the black British to bear on the current debates in Britain, she centers attention on how the same ideological mechanisms have persisted as the:

discussions about the increase of new ‘Commonwealth’ migration to Britain could not be wholly separated from discussions of what it is now meant to be British, and the attempts to regain the sense of wartime national unity encouraged the construction of Caribbean migrants as the internal ‘dark stranger’. (Ugolini 2013, 92)

Since the late 1950s, therefore, especially after the *Empire Windrush* that “welcomed” some 125000 West Indians to the “motherland” that offered a gleam of hope for war-torn Britain (Fryer 1984, 372), hostility was the order of the day. The prejudices of primitiveness and the “inferiority to Europeans” broke the promises offered by Britain as a modern nation, since they were to produce a posttraumatic effect of colonialism and slavery in the British public arenas. Resistance against mixed marriages, contact or communication, hospitality and equality at work, were the product of deep-seated colonial assumptions about the black “other” (Fryer 1984, 374-75). In line with Craps’s theorization of the insidious trauma as the product of “the everyday” collective experience of “political oppression, racism, or economic domination”, a need arises to “situate these problems in their larger historical context” (Craps 2013, 28). These concerns have not escaped the grasp of Phillips, who insists on re-invoking the questions when speaking to Turpin’s grandson. The mechanisms that objectified Turpin into a mere tool in the hands of those who used him contributed to his loss of deserved empathy on human grounds. The notion of a constant “struggle” to gain recognition by a boxer as well as his descendants speaks eloquently of the continuing legacy of a violent past. Hence, lest the people of the African diaspora lose their sense of history through the forces of separation and amnesia, their interrogations of the colonial and slaving enterprises need to open up avenues into exploring what has been ignored as shared history at the crossroads of cultures.

The crisscrossing legacies of colonialism, slavery, and the post-world war Europe have already been brought to the surface by Rothberg’s notion of “Multidirectional Memory”. Though the concept documents the historical context of the 1960s where the Holocaust and colonial legacies intersect in the 1960s (Rothberg 2006, 160), it can saliently provide the framework for re-centering attention toward other legacies, especially the revitalization of memory in the context of post-war Britain and its closer connection with colonialism and slavery. Besides other historical sources, Phillips’s commentary and interviews are examples of how “cross-referencing calls for a new model of collective memory” (Rothberg 2006, 161). Such a textual practice

aims to involve all British nationals, and other subjects, to responsibly witness the posttraumatic effects of colonialism and slavery. Phillips, in this sense, seeks to build a public that brings the far-reaching repercussions of the two world wars to the critical attention of the reader. If the death of Ieuan's grandfather himself was the product of the poverty suffered within a segregating society that denied him recognition, then it would be possible to redeem him from indictment through re-tracing the past's legacies.

The diaspora's relation to the past does not, however, promise a complete recovery from the ills of the past through a smooth movement from the individual to the collective. Rather, it is driven by the moral prerogative to preserve the essence of the past through insistence on survival. Ironically enough, what further confirms such persistence is that Turpin's story was sold by his wife to a Sunday newspaper, an act that shows that, instead of leading to the family's threatened homelessness, the act helps guarantee their survival through difficult financial upheavals. Turpin's shocking act of suicide is thus not to be cast in the narrow sense as leading to shredding the family's fabric, but rather it is shocking to the extent that it is able to continually trigger larger questions relevant for future generations of African diaspora. In the posttraumatic culture that has inherited slavery and colonialism's widespread ills affecting every facet of their lives and challenging their way of making sense of their pasts, the African diasporic subjects appear to be only able to historicize their traumatic pasts if they "recognize the possibility of a history which is no longer referential (that is, no longer based on simple models of experience and reference)" (Caruth 1991, 182).

This section has examined the workings of continuing legacies of slavery and colonialism in Britain's paternalistic discourse as evident in Phillips's narrative of two black subjects. I have discussed Phillips's attempt at fighting the forces of dehumanization and separation in the two stories of Barber and Turpin. Their tales attest to their implication in the perpetuation of the same frameworks that have commodified the non-white subjects in Britain. By refusing to idealize the protagonists, Phillips implicates them as well as other subjectivities to witness the aftereffects of the violence of slavery and colonialism. As the story of more legacies unfolds, the book makes the reader witness a history that moves forward but is still looking more deeply into the African past in an act that both "acts out" the persistent past that needs to be repeated and is bound toward the future as it seeks to "work through" trauma. It exemplifies the integration of the past and the future in complex fashions given that "time recedes on either side of the present running backward toward and beyond [...] and floundering in repetition and rupture" (Rothberg 2000, 81). Given its confused timeframe, the story of Oluwale is a further manifestation of how Phillips lays claim to the past through the chronotopic world of the Middle Passage. It will illustrate how, through building critical solidarity between the African diaspora and other posttraumatized minorities, the West-Indian and African diasporic subjects shake the conceptual foundations inflicted by the linearity of the mainstream paternalistic discourse that has isolated them.

5.3 THE MULTIDIMENSIONALITY OF AFRICAN ANCESTRY

In tandem with Rothberg's concept of traumatic realism as a mode that acknowledges the challenge faced when trying to represent a persistent past, it can be said that narrative coherence loses momentum to more challenging forms of representation. In his view, "when violence takes extreme forms, forms of knowledge are also implicated" (Rothberg 2000, 107). Based on the conviction that the representation of a traumatic past is rife with complexity, this section addresses Phillips's representation of how Oluwale's story engages more diverse forms of testimony to bear witness to the implication of different forms of knowledge in the Nigerian man's tragedy. In this dense and provocative narrative, Phillips seems to gradually widen the circle of witnessing, knowing full well that the West-Indian and African subjects' connections to an African past can only be portrayed through complex means of historical representation.

It is worth mentioning that the closer Phillips gets to the "real" in the painful past shared between the West-Indian and African subjects to form an African diaspora, the larger is the number of testimonies needed to account for the complexity of such an undertaking. This section will thus demonstrate in what ways Phillips's practice of critical solidarity both preserves and exceeds the particular in his practice of subversive literary anachronism. In my analysis of institutionalized racism in Britain in general, and in Leeds in particular, I will show how the text highlights Oluwale's constant state of displacement generated by the discourse of nation and nationhood within the narrative of modernity. The construction of an African diaspora in Britain against modernity's dehumanizing discourse depends as such on rescuing the value of human experience through a counter-discursive practice of critical solidarity. The critical efficiency of intercultural remembrance in Phillips's texts can be addressed by Rothberg's idea that "mobilizing inter-textuality and the fragmentation of narration [...] does not establish an equation between" distinct histories "but rather highlights both similar structural problems within those histories and missed encounters between them" (Rothberg 2009, 137). Following this view, I will argue that the focus of this section on histories of displacement critically empowers the African diaspora's political claims against isolation and, by implication, commodification.

In a new twist of memory amidst jumbled voices, an unusually empathic West-Indian female voice starts the opening pages of the third biography. She recalls her younger age when she was fourteen, which "must have been 1968 or 1969" (*Foreigners*, 150), just a few years after Turpin's death. Unlike the 18th-century first-person narrative, the "I" here self-reflexively shifts to the communal "we". The speaker feels she, together with her West-Indian migrant co-citizens, was to be implicated in the unsatisfactory solidarity towards Oluwale's murder by the police (*Foreigners*, 151). Through the speaker's testimony, the aftermath of Oluwale's tragedy is placed in the political tenor of the period between the date he was murdered in 1969 and the early 1970s when the Black Panthers in The United States persisted in telling the African diaspora that "things could be changed [...] They kept mentioning David, and they were aware of him" (*Foreigners*, 151). Oluwale's story was part of the fever that spilled from the American politics of race into that of Britain against the legacy of slavery. In

Foreigners, the tragic death of Oluwale is recast in terms of its engaging various British institutions responsibly in his death, institutions that mainly include the medical and the incarcerating institutions that conspired to cause his tragedy. More conducive to the everyday insidious trauma are however the social manifestations of modernity's violence on the underclass, especially in racial terms that link the individual trauma of David Oluwale to other similar histories of displacement.

The fact that he goes as a cargo in a cargo ship to a promising, modern British land reinitiates the eighteen-year-old Yoruba man to the perils of the commodifying world of the Atlantic. In a new second-person point of view that opens an intimate dialogue with the silenced Yoruba boy, the new voice empathically tracks his excruciating trajectory into an unpromising future,

You lay, instead, hidden in the bowels of the ship listening to the roar of the malevolent water as the Atlantic Ocean asserted its authority over the vessel [...] Yoruba boy. Young lion leaving Lagos, Nigeria, in the oil-rich heart of the British Empire [...] Yoruba boy traveling to meet his future [...] and an arrival in a moribund grey coastal town in the north of England, among a colorless clutter of wharves and barges, and cranes and container boxes. (*Foreigners*, 154)

As it suddenly whisks between modern Britain and Nigeria, the ironic voice that follows the fortune of Oluwale locates his life between the past and the future life. The stowaway is caught in the grip of a commodifying world of the Black Atlantic amidst "barges, and cranes and container boxes" (*Foreigners*, 154). In bringing the legacies of colonialism and slavery into contact in the Middle Passage, the ship comes to represent a microcosm of the economic and social upheavals the African diaspora have come to confront either at home or in Britain. In Gilroy's view "the ship is the first of the novel chronotopes presupposed [...] to rethink modernity via the history of the black Atlantic and the African diaspora into the western hemisphere" (Gilroy 1993, 17). The critical purchase of exploring this chronotopic world in restlessly constant movement is to bear witness, in traumatic realist terms, to how racism still submits the African diaspora to the same mechanisms that led to their commodification in the first place.

In order to lay bare such dynamics through intricate strands of memory, the book reveals in what ways the functioning of the machinery of new forms of slavery is made possible by the greed of the capitalist system. Carrying Oluwale into the heart of the Empire, the ship, whose belly had swallowed him, "labored away from the Lagos quayside and out into the waters that were slick with spilled oil and clogged with debris" (*Foreigners*, 154). The remains of the ship here probe the inscrutable legacy of slavery and colonialism and lay bare its crummy underside. They provide a glimpse of what the ship dumps as its leftovers from the superfluous oil, which is earned by British neocolonial enterprise, into the sea. The littoral structure set in the in-between world of Africa, Europe and the Americas resurfaces the dark side that the violence of modernity seeks to conceal in British history that has taken place elsewhere.

As has been mentioned earlier about Phillips's writing, archives of different forms, and of "real" and "anti-real" tendencies, constitute the hallmark of his works that con-

stantly involve portions of various materials from the past. In Bakhtin's theorization of the development of the literary chronotopes into generic writings that constantly change to assume new forms, such writings are "adequate to later historical situations [as they include] phenomena from widely separate periods of time, which greatly complicates the historico-literary process" (Bakhtin 1981, 85). Literary experimentation bears witness to how such explorations of identity in the chronotopic world give hope to the stories of the (ex)-colonized and the (ex)-enslaved to be rescued from the margins of history. Seemingly equal to the deject materials testifying to such crimes revealed by the contaminated Middle Passage, the stowaway's story carries the residual traces of the debris shared between the legacies of colonialism and slavery's corrosive structures. By virtue of its invoking the images of an unpromising future reminiscent of a violent past, Oluwale's new dehumanizing journey testifies to how the "real" in his tragic story is subjected to what Britain is trying to dispose of in the Atlantic as it embarks on celebrating its history of modernity. Modernity, as such, does not only commodify its subjugated subjects, but rather owns their stories, since it has appropriated them for the sake of its celebrated tale of prosperity and progress. Gurinder K. Bhambra traces "the sociological understanding of modernity" which rests primarily on the Eurocentric telos that insists on the "insignificance" of the "colonial connection" and, by implication the "contested" contribution of its colonial "others", to the development of the history of modernity (Bhambra 2011, 653). As a result, and traveling the routes of the black Atlantic re-tracing the Eurocentric history of modernity, Gilroy envisions the failure of the Enlightenment project based on Hegel's master/slave narrative "through the lenses of colonialism or scientific racism" in order to bring on board "the issues of brutality and terror which are [...] too frequently ignored" (1993, 54). Such a chronotopic reevaluation of official history provides a critical grounding that spatiotemporally points to the continuous demise of the African diaspora under uncompromising conditions that still traumatize their experience in Britain and elsewhere.

In traumatic realist terms, and because of a continuing racist discourse writ large, the displacement undergone by Oluwale in the streets of Leeds, motivated by the thought to reject his existence on British soil, is just another manifestation of his being confronted with the "detritus of the real" in representation (Rothberg 2000, 2). Having been contaminated by the lies promised by "the rich white man's world" (*Foreigners*, 154), Oluwale's agonizing tale is caught in the grip of its repercussions and is implicated unawares in its perpetuation. In this excruciating context, his first encounter with the English mainland is marked by the shocking contempt he faces in the inevitable and condescending conditions of racism. Upon arrival, the police first imprison him for 28 days before he can enter "British life". The implications of being stranded in the restless terrain of not being cast back into the water to go home and being unwelcome seem to locate Oluwale's story in a mostly perilous state of undecidability in the Middle Passage. They also confine him within the same conditions of being neither here nor there. Oluwale's tumultuous times in England thus do not promise a fresh start nor are they future-oriented. Rather, they are to be regulated by the dislocating littoral structures of oceans and rivers into the violence committed by modernity in the various facets of life experienced by him and other displaced subjects in Leeds.

Phillips opens inroads into the hidden facets of the history of Leeds, once a leading city in English industrialism. A broad sketch of the city's past reveals a history that sprang from the river because without it "the city would never have come into being" as it grows across England from a trickle to a river (*Foreigners*, 156). The first encounter with the British mainland is thus harnessed to the littoral tissue including the River Humber that flows into the east coast of northern England and on which Oluwale first set his eyes. The book further explains its connection with the River Aire which is in Leeds and where a road that crosses the river was built by the Roman Empire (*Foreigners*, 156). Such a geographical depiction of the city's history is punctuated by the river's advantageous position and the major canal system that fostered its industrial boom.

This historical record registers journeying across the waterfront network through real or invoked images of ships between the Atlantic Ocean and other bodies of water. It underlies Phillips's polemic that aims to highlight the downside of Leeds's apparently promising development. In Gilroy's words, which invoke the image of ships and their connection to the chronotope, "ships [...] refer us back to the middle passage, to the half-remembered micro-politics of the slave trade and its relation to both industrialization and modernization" (Gilroy 1991, 17). Oluwale's life has been drawn through displacement into the relentless torrents of the industrialist society's greed. It helps depict an aquatic world that interestingly corresponds to the critical prerogative to probe the dynamics that link race to class as its conceptual kin in British society. The refugee's life also reveals how beneath the surface of its growing economy, the lives of those in the lowest societal stratum increasingly bear witness to the enslaving process of indentured labor. In this respect, Phillips renegotiates his British identity and the violence of its modern history in the transatlantic world. Such a world makes him focus on Britain as it is "the real *engine room* of [his] anxieties" (Ward 2012, 634; emphasis added).

Phillips's use of the trope of water/rivers/oceans may not have been stated explicitly in his investigations of the chronotopic, restless world inhabited by the black British. However, the guiding force of many writings, particularly *Crossing the River*, *The Atlantic Sound*, or the work under study, is to make strong allusions to the import of aquatic structures as trajectories that track the posttraumatic effects of colonialism and slavery within the framework of what Gilroy refers to as the chronotopic "counterculture of modernity" (Gilroy 1993). Such articulations push well beyond the obvious as they constitute Phillips's attempt at bringing to the surface the failure of the civilizing mission and its corrosive effects especially on the black British diaspora. His complex rendition of displacement has come about as the reverse journey undertaken by such characters as Oluwale into the dark underside of the British "modern" world. It would be worth mentioning therefore that in postcolonial criticism the trope of water often invokes Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* as a controversial text that at times is indicted as the precursor of the polarized envisioning of Africa and Europe through the civilized/savage binary. In Maik Nwosu's reading of *Things Fall Apart*, which is an initiator of "dialogue with earlier texts" such as Conrad's novella with the aim of functioning within "a particular sign-system or semiosphere", the river functions as "a privileged [...] semiotic marker" of European colonial globalization as exemplified particularly by the river Thames (Nwosu 2007, 93-94, 96). By the same

token, Chinua Achebe brings the civilized/savage binary to bear on the two bodies of water. In his words,

Heart of Darkness projects the image of Africa as “the other world,” the antithesis of Europe and therefore of civilization, a place where man’s vaunted intelligence and refinement are finally mocked by triumphant bestiality. The book opens on the River Thames, tranquil, resting, peacefully “at the decline of day after ages of good service done to the race that peopled its banks.” But the actual story will take place on the River Congo, the very antithesis of the Thames. The River Congo is quite decidedly not a River Emeritus. It has rendered no service and enjoys no old-age pension. We are told that “Going up that river was like traveling back to the earliest beginnings of the world.” (Achebe 1988, 252)

In spatiotemporal terms that realign the here/there dichotomy and revise the separation that geographically and discursively dehumanizes the distant other, it has been confirmed in postcolonial theory that the trope of water structures sets the stage for critiquing “European Imperialism”, a critique that is warranted to set the Congo River and the sea as a “third relatively neutral and mediating space, positioned between Europe (powerful, dominant, ‘civilized’) and Congo (suppressed, exploited, ‘primitive’)” (De Lange et al. 2008, xiv). It thus nourishes the need to embark on a critical standpoint that is based on a chronotopic analysis that forges links between the two sides of the divide.

In rethinking the here/there and victim/perpetrator dichotomies, Phillips’s chronotopic structures seek, in a literal and metaphoric sense, to provide a nuanced reading as seen in his article in *The Guardian* that brings on board the questions of responsibility and the implicated subject. The primary aim of the article “Out of Africa” (Phillips 2003) is to place emphasis on how Conrad’s chronotopic vision attempts to expose the instabilities of the civilizing mission through a reconfiguration of a constellation of elements over the course of time. Phillips’s tempered response is critically located between Achebe’s barbed critique of the dehumanizing depiction of Africa and Africans and Conrad’s ambivalence best expressed by his doubt about the success of Europe’s modernizing claims. Phillips’s mediating view thus places the prophecy of the novella within the context of a posttraumatic culture that looms just as large:

Conrad uses colonisation, and the trading intercourse that flourished in its wake, to explore these universal questions about man’s capacity for evil. The end of European colonisation has not rendered *Heart of Darkness* any less relevant, for Conrad was interested in the making of a modern world in which colonisation was simply one facet. The uprootedness of people, and their often disquieting encounter with the “other”, is a constant theme in his work, and particularly so in this novel. Conrad’s writing prepares us for a new world in which modern man has had to endure the psychic and physical pain of displacement, and all the concomitant confusion of watching imagined concrete standards become mutable. Modern descriptions of 20th-century famines, war and genocide all seem to be eerily prefigured by Conrad, and *Heart of Darkness* abounds with passages that seem terrifyingly contemporary in their descriptive accuracy (Phillips, 2003).

Phillips's point is well argued. Although he agrees with Achebe on Conrad's due responsibility as a great writer towards Africans for the negative depiction, his reading implies a sense of traumatic realism that summons the seemingly distant legacies of displacement in that it reveals the way in which modernity still continues to wreak havoc for both parties of the divide. Conrad's lesser known short story "Amy Foster", for instance, delineates his personal sense of displacement and cultural difference. The story features the "madness" and "barbarism" produced by "the atopic foreign" for a "Slavic émigré shipwrecked on the English coast" and whose story "is widely interpreted to be a stand-in for Conrad himself" (Griffiths 1995, 16). Traumatized as it is, Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* similarly registers the dilemma of displacement in chronotopic terms that urged him as a non-African traveler to be a responsible bystander of the horrors committed by King Leopold in the first phase of colonizing, or allegedly civilizing, Congo Free State (cf. Harrison 2003).

In a traumatic realist sense, instead of attacking Conrad's lack of the "real" depiction of Africans, Phillips points to the dehumanizing effects of colonialist and slaveholding discourses that lie at the backdrop of the history of modernity and whose mode of thinking of civilized/savage brought about the initial trauma of colonialism. In addition to breaking the boundaries between victim and perpetrator, he insists on the existence of the same ideological frameworks that made colonialism/slavery possible. As it were, and in his controlled identification with both sides of the divide, some sort of exploration of trauma's "border cases" sets Phillips somewhere between his rejection of "the stereotypically reductive images of Africa and Africans" that have led to traumatizing the black subjects, and his interest, as someone who has been brought up in Europe, "in the break-up of a European mind and the health of European civilization" (Phillips 2003). The fact that modernity has had enslaving aftereffects on Britain's white subjects has not gone unnoticed in *Foreigners* when the enslaving conditions inflicted by industrialism upon the white working class is also highlighted (*Foreigners*, 187). The work has spatiotemporally managed to bring into contact the legacies of enslavement and colonialism in the heart of Britain's urban spaces through the chronotope.

In the case of Oluwale, therefore, I want to argue further that the potential lines of connection between the transatlantic slave trade and the development of the "glorious" history of the river-born Leeds appear to open up avenues into scrutinizing the legacy of the violence in Britain's politics of race and class over the centuries. I seek to show how the reader is made to witness the growing greed of capitalism and how it invokes the gradual drifting of Oluwale until his tragic end in the river. The anxieties posed by displacement could well be interrogated in terms that peer deep into the hidden side of modern Europe and its legacies of enslavement. Phillips solicits a reconceptualization of the civilizing mission that is not only based on Conrad's "doubt", but one that also questions "the supremacy of European humanity, and the ability of this supposed humanity to maintain its imagined status beyond the high streets of Europe" (Phillips 2003). The unavoidable confrontation of Oluwale with imprisonment when he first arrives and his being constantly "moved on" by the police (*Foreigners*, 218) reinforces his sense of being caught in a "wave" of institutionalized racism that shakes his belief in freedom. In a sense, he "already" becomes "a veteran

of an Atlantic passage and prison" (*Foreigners*, 156). This thus dissects the legacies of colonialism and slavery through pinpointing the injustices of institutionalized race that proliferate across eras. The Nigerian stowaway has suffered the trauma of displacement between different institutions and has been released from the "the belly of the ship" (*Foreigners*, 154) only to enter the larger prison of British society's racial politics lauded and built like ships in unremitting motion in the name of progress and modernity.

What seems to lead Oluwale to drift into such enslaving conditions is not only the fact that his history has been silenced, but because his vulnerable life story was snapped unawares into a cargo ship to promote the telos of progress as "the language of hope no more sat on [his] tongue. It was difficult to speak in the future tense" (*Foreigners*, 156). The story of Oluwale's high hopes, as such, has undergone rupture to become adjunct to the nationalist narrative of progress, which induced the post-traumatic effect of a painful past. Reminiscent of Enoch Powell's notorious speeches that promulgated rather than healed the aftereffects of colonialism and slavery, a linear narrative of modernity is romanticized by the Minister of Health, the highest authority in charge of the physical and psychological well-being of people on English soil. In nationalistic terms reinforcing the continuity of familial bloodlines by the politics of race, a celebratory tone can be heard,

There they stand, majestic, imperious, brooded over by the gigantic water-tower and chimney combined, rising unmistakable and daunting out of the countryside, the asylums which our forefathers built with such solidity.

THE RT. HON. J. ENOCH POWELL, MINISTER OF HEALTH, 1961. (*Foreigners*, 171)

In tandem with the celebrated work ethic that governs modernity's claim to progress, the underlying othering process fostered by the building of edifices such as prisons and mental asylums contribute to perpetuating the conditions of silence. The imprisonment of Oluwale in the asylum from 1953 to 1961 in conditions that imposed sedation has led to the conclusion that his "time" was "taken away from [him]" while he was suffering in isolation (*Foreigners*, 172). Indeed, the excruciating experience under the unhealthy effect of electro-convulsive therapy in the asylum could also be equated with the everyday insidious trauma experienced in the factories that submit the lives of their workers to inescapably unbearable living conditions.

Carried along the ruthless daily grind toward the unhealthy work in the factories that "choked the lanes and alleyways between Hunslet Road and the River Aire," Oluwale "took the bus to the central bus station, and then walked over Crown Point Bridge to the far bank of the River Aire and past the factory that made engines for trains that would soon be dispatched to India and other far-flung corners of the empire" (*Foreigners*, 161). The isolating monotony in Oluwale's daily life implies that his story cannot take a step forward to the future through a promising "working through". Its course lacks the opportunity to be redeemed from the forces of commodification as its hope for accomplishment is misappropriated by the larger story of an empire that steers its course toward progress earned from silencing its "others". Ironically enough,

the everyday image of Oluwale in the post-colony and in the post-slavery period aims to expose the epistemic violence that mainstream history may still engender. As a diasporic subject whose sense of history is subject to isolation and “rupture”, he is part of the “racially differentiated groups [who] no longer shared the same present” and were treated as “subordinates who belonged to the past and had no future” within modern Europe’s “geo-body” (Gilroy 2000, 56-57). The mention in passing of the machines sent to the Empire seems to allude to the narrow focus on what was produced to help modernize its subjects instead of what was violently stolen from it. As Phillips writes in the *European Tribe*, underlying the educational institutions’ contribution to the mainstream history: “The bloody excesses of colonialism, the pillage and rape of modern Africa, the transportation of 11 million black people to the Americas, and the subsequent bondage were not on the curriculum, and certainly not on the television screen” (qtd. in Rothberg 2009). Thus, the institutions act as fortresses that protect the nation through a discourse encoded in the insider/outsider vocabulary. Beyond the focus on the extreme event of bondage in Ward’s critique of the unacknowledged history of slavery that enabled “the construction of grand houses and primary slavery ports like Bristol, Liverpool and London” (Ward 2011, 2), the posttraumatic effects of slavery are brought to bear more latently on the co-existence of the extreme and the everyday in the lives of Leeds’s disenfranchised. These institutions tend to largely promulgate the forces of forgetting in the linear narrative of modernity that celebrates nation and nationhood in official history.

This section will therefore discuss in more detail how the third section of Phillips’s book moves from the individual to the public as a recognition of the human “experience” of the African diaspora striving to trouble the discourse of nation and nationhood in the institutions of official history. The move from the individual histories of scattered diasporic subjects to the construction of the collective is certainly far from easy, but the process of “working through” holds on to the hope of building solidarity across vast distances and times in order that more witnesses be involved responsibly in restoring the human worth of the once commodified stories of displacement. In David Lloyd’s words,

The individual survivor in therapy comes into relation to her own past through an immemorial history of abuse that has deprived her of the very condition of subjective security [...] the relation to the past is strictly not a relation to one’s own past but a social history and its material and institutional effects and in no simple way a matter of internal psychic dynamics. (Lloyd 2008, 216)

The fact of losing humanity derives, as such, from the state of lacking a social environment secure enough to speak from, since, in Lloyd’s view, colonial violence could be referred to as a “trauma [which] entails violent intrusion and a sense of utter objectification that annihilates the person as subject or agent,” thereby constantly inducing, through its subtle forms of economic and cultural hegemony, the uncanny state of “unspeakableness” (Lloyd 2008, 214). The mechanisms of institutionalized racism are therefore still in existence through the continuous claims of modernity to which the subjugated feel indebted for “offered” freedom. In order to point to “what is missing”

from most investigations of post-traumatic culture, Phillips's marked deployment of anachronism is driven by his main concern with representation that at once grapples "with the referential components of discourse and with the course of history" (Rothberg 2000, 186). In traumatic realist terms, the focus on the "real" feeds the need to both record persistent history and to question its attendant discursive underpinnings. Through the anachronism that throws into question the separation of the "before" and "after" in mainstream progressive narratives, the twists and turns deployed in *Foreigners* seek to fight the forces of silence and separation in Leeds's boasted institutions in discursive terms with the aim to record the unrecorded in the dark side of the history of modernity. Rothberg, in this regard, refers to anachronism as a literary device in line with his conviction "against restrictive conceptions that keep the histories and aftermaths of" different histories "separate" in order to bring "together that which is supposed to be kept apart" (Rothberg 2009, 136). To struggle against silence and isolation, the narrative at times halts its progression in order to allow room for other witnessing documents to revisit the sites that conspire together to induce trauma.

Such shifts in focus thus underlie the urge to stake political claims in order to build a new terrain of testimony that moves forward to the public sphere. In order to fill the void that constitutes the dark side of modernity, Phillips is also implicated in vicariously bearing witness to the history of white British subjects. One such inserted historical document refers to the building of prisons, which was first and foremost a means to enforce silence against dissent. In his analysis of the history of hospitals and prisons, Michel Foucault (1984) brings the issue of poverty to bear on the incarceration of a significant other. The period of economic crisis in the 17th century was to affect the whole of Europe, whose rejection of the vagabond, the poor and the unemployed took new forms of surveillance and confinement. There was a fine line between menial work and incarceration given that there was "cheap manpower in the periods of full employment and high salaries; and in periods of unemployment, reabsorption of the idle and social protection against agitation and uprisings" (Foucault 1984, 132). In a similar vein, the industrial revolution in England in the 18th century was to benefit the progress of Leeds, but the squalid conditions of the poor and the widening gap between the social strata fed the need to foster "charity [which] was motivated as much by goodwill as by a general fear of civil insurrection and disease" (*Foreigners*, 175). Capitalism's benevolence is, once again, to be construed in terms of promoting silence, as it nourishes its greed from the submission of others. More importantly, and years after the forming and armament of the police, who were recruited to stifle the resentment of working-classes, since, as Phillips reminds us, "the new borough jail was constructed to deal with vagrants and other undesirables" (*Foreigners*, 176). By virtue of the new process of othering and imposed silence, the city that once was "a small river crossing" grew into a magical city that denied its dwellers the right to share the social and economic privileges of its adventure (*Foreigners*, 177).

The narrative thus throws into relief the broken promises of the right to equal opportunity and civil rights. In bringing on board the issues of class, the text sets the stage for transhistorical solidarity that calls the critical attention of the British public to the legacy of slavery and colonialism. A new shift to more legacies could be glimpsed in the passage below that reflects another intertextual mix in the text's

anachronism and which connects slavery and colonialism in their posttraumatic displaced forms to labor. Yet, its discursive implications raise more complex issues linked to shared legacies and the risks of competitive memory. In a public address to the British subjects who underwent enslaving conditions at work, the white industrial reformer and abolitionist Richard Oastler, as Phillips shows, often campaigned against slavery as a colonial legacy and expressed dissatisfaction with the broken promises of modernity. This is evident in the following excerpt:

Thousands of little children, both male and female, but principally female, from seven to fourteen years of age, are daily compelled to labor from six o'clock in the morning to seven in the evening, with only—Britons blush while you read it!— with only thirty minutes allowed for eating and recreation. Poor infants! You are indeed sacrificed at the shrine of avarice, without even the solace of the negro slave; ye are no more than he is, free agents [...] Ye live in the boasted land of freedom, and feel and mourn that ye are slaves [...] your emaciated frames are instantly supplied with other victims, who in this boasted land of liberty are hired—not sold—as slaves and daily forced to hear that they are free.

Richard Oastler, Letter to Leeds Mercury, 29 September, 1830
(*Foreigners*, 187-188)

This line of thought thus lays the groundwork for remapping the investigations of the post-traumatic effect of slavery upon issues pertaining to labor. However, though Oastler was an abolitionist, this passage does not exactly pinpoint the ills of the history of slavery proper except through comparison. The over-repetitive use of the word “slavery” does not delve into its particular dynamics of race, but is rather re-inscribed at a superficial level, which relegates it to a mere cliché. According to historical documents, the success of the working classes in expressing their grievances publicly resulted in an *unexpected* anti-slavery movement as racism was not their priority. Radical abolitionists such as Oastler succeeded in their reformist politics thanks to their “appropriation” of “the arguments, moral outrage and iconography for the anti-slavery movement for their own campaigns” (Roberts 2008, 29). Despite the fact that the historical readings of the use of the slavery idiom have varied in their understanding of such a rhetoric with regard to how the public attention is distracted from the ills of the white working classes, evidence has shown that “the more that the abolitionists drew attention to the evils of colonial slavery, the more the radicals were able to make links with domestic forms of slavery” (Roberts 2008, 29). Some ambiguity therefore marks the above passage’s opinion vis-à-vis the question of slavery *per se* in that the story of the “negro” slave is appropriated, not to say taken property of, through use, by the question of indentured labor. Although the above document, as appropriated by Phillips, speaks vicariously and in passing of the black subjects’ drama, it helps chart a new terrain of complexity (and complicity) with regard to the insufficiency of representing the question of racism in its own terms. Oastler’s direct address to the British public in fact bears the implications of what Timothy Bewes refers to as “shame” with respect to the writer being imbued with the privilege of speech. Such an implicated position therefore involves:

The shame of being able to speak, of having the tools to bear witness, and by that same fact, nothing to bear witness to. It is precisely because one has been spared the horror that one is able to speak of it. Shame is not only about having nothing to write about but the materialization of the deficit *in the facility of writing*. (Bewes 2006, 37; emphasis original)

Speaking from a distance and enjoying the privilege of white bourgeois British society of which he was part and whose acts he was ashamed of, Oastler's complicit stance brings the dilemma of testimonial writing to the fore. It puts forward the argument that to appropriate someone's testimony implies having enough authority to own the "negro" other's words. In fact, what was constantly "hired" was not only the labor of the disadvantaged whites, but also the stories of the non-whites who, if it is assumed that they agree to lending their voices to the abolitionists, appear to accept their position as powerless victims. The importance of using the passage, however, is not to invoke the question of victims and their perpetrator counterparts. After all, the white disadvantaged did indeed fall prey to the exploitation of the capitalist system. The question to be raised is the way in which the presumed uniqueness of their plight implicates white subjects themselves in perpetuating the frameworks that victimized and isolated them; if industrialization assumed its power from oppressing its racialized others, then every subject bearing witness to racism should know that, as they are affected by oppressive silencing, they are also implicated in order to fight the forces of separation that weakens their stance. Although class is also a problem for non-white subjects, the politics of race are hijacked in the name of class.

Therefore, in traumatic realist terms that hold an ethical position, it is of paramount importance to "address the difficult questions of how simultaneously to preserve the particularity of the suffering of different groups and to acknowledge the common fate and more general implications of all of the victims" (Rothberg 2000, 275). On this account, a new category beyond the victim/perpetrator demands some form of historical responsibility in which the breaking of the black/white binary is solicited in order that everybody engage as implicated subjects in potential situations where, as bystanders, the possibility of being the victim is as close as the risk of being the perpetrator.

This new fraught terrain thus bears on the question of silence and victimization for the sake of an all-engaging historical responsibility. In her attempt to explore the spectrum of the unspeakable, Vanessa Guignery ventures into the terrain of the unvoiced and confirms that:

In the twentieth-century literature and in the aftermath of colonization, the two world wars and the holocaust, narratives of trauma confront the aporia of speaking the unspeakable, voicing the unvoicable. They reflect the difficulties involved in the process of anamnesis, in the exhumation of the past, be it private or public, and in any attempt to reveal, expose or explore the realm of the intimate and the traumatic. (Guignery 2009, 3)

The passage thus emphasizes the traumatizing effects that are generally related to silence and its attempt at revitalizing memory for political ends. The facts that Oluwale,

for instance, suffered in silence (*Foreigners*, 184) and that he did not want to be referred to as another victim (*Foreigners*, 202) recast his silence in rather posttraumatic terms that set the stage for Phillips's practice of the politics of critical solidarity resisting the forces of isolation in cross-cultural terms. Reflecting on the sense of "us and them" that governed his life in Leeds and the north of England, the Caribbean writer still grapples with the "kind of 'othering,' insider-outsider, and the constant negotiation, the *fatigue* of negotiation, which many people in British society are familiar with" (Ward 2012, 640; emphasis original). The writer's exploration of these aspects in his work thus aims to encourage more subjectivities to be implicated in posttraumatic and post-generational terms in events they did not attend to; it is a means to "recognize our ambiguous distance from the event and inquire into the relationship a work establishes between the past it mobilizes and its contemporary context" (Rothberg 2000, 57).

The same goes for the aftermath of Oluwale's tragic death, which produced the solidarity of the Black Power movement. Most importantly, it urged others, black and white subjects, to speak on his behalf and say "enough" especially to the "white institutions" and the endangered white society after the fact (*Foreigners*, 202). Oluwale thus refused to speak as a victim about his plight and, as his silence implicates others, he was spoken for by the survivors of the traumatic event of racism. By the same token, Phillips's implicated subjectivity is expressed in the impossibility to articulate his traumatized writing in simple terms, the fact which derives from his recognition of both impossibility and persistence in trauma narratives. As characters such as Oluwale are accessible to the reader only through others who speak for them, they lend weight to the materiality of the text as a physical proof of their implication in the events that happened to them. As Bewes confirms in this regard,

In the work of Caryl Phillips [...] the acknowledgement of "a people who are missing" does not take place in anything the text actually says but rather in the "materiality" of the writing, the element in which it most clearly speaks its contemporaneity. Shame is a material entity— not, primarily, in the ubiquity of its appearance in the texts but in two closely related, apparently superficial elements that proliferate inseparably from them: ventriloquy and cliché. (Bewes 2006, 42; emphasis original)

The clichés put forward by Oastler and the polyphony of voices that speak for Oluwale bring forth the possibility of turning the text into an event. The immediacy and poignancy of writing attest to the impossibility of restoring the "real" event as it took place; yet, through its articulation of oppressive silence, produces the traumatic event through embodying the traumatic effect. In Caruth's words, "for history to be a history of trauma means that it is referential precisely to the extent that it is not fully perceived as it occurs [...] that a history can be grasped only in the very inaccessibility of its occurrence" (Caruth 1991, 187). The traumatic past thus determines the fragmentation of the text itself as it sets in motion the spatiotemporal explorations of the various legacies that are allowed room to hopefully fill the voids of unrecorded histories. The epistemological contribution of the book's intertexts thus lies in their ability to bring the reverberations of the long-distance and long-term effects of the traumas of colonialism and slavery

to the attention of the present-day public. In this respect, Rothberg's salient concept "Multidirectional Memory" can be deployed to show how the terrain of investigation shifts from the individual to the social. What this means is that

the interference, overlap, and mutual constitution of seemingly distinct collective memories [...] that [...] define the workings of memory [...] The model of multidirectional memory [...] supposes that the overlap and interference of memories help constitute the public sphere as well as the various individual and collective subjects that articulate themselves in it. (Rothberg 2006, 162)

The aim of the above model in this sense is to spatiotemporally implicate more subjects, be they descendants of slavery or any other violence, to take responsibility as empathic bystanders. By harnessing disparate histories of violence together in this testimonial and documentary text, *Foreigners* involves other displaced subjects undergoing the posttraumatic effects of modernity's violence. Its mobilizing of the memory of slavery and colonialism is set alongside other trauma-inducing forms of displacement. One example of trans-historical solidarity that constitutes the hallmark of most of Phillips's works is the recording of the history of the European Jews. Since his earlier writings, there is "a metaphorical logic underlying Phillips's relationship to Jewish history" (Craps 2013, 90). Following "a winding path through space and time", *Higher Ground* and *The Nature of Blood* are novels that, by borrowing "the structure and strategies of the anthology, sampling and collating stories of racism and anti-Semitism" forge thematic connections between black and Jewish suffering (Craps 2013, 92). The content of *Foreigners* thus also documents the history of Europe's Jews. It is mentioned that, while the first wave of the diaspora who settled in Leeds was made up of middle class German Jews, the second "that followed in their wake was largely comprised of poor Jews from Eastern Europe, often Polish or Russian in origin, who were fleeing pogroms" (*Foreigners*, 188). They worked in conditions as intolerable as those that befell their Irish counterparts who, in their thousands, arrived in the wake of the famine of the 1840s (*Foreigners*, 188; see also Lloyd 2008). Although these immigrants have lived for so long in the industrialized city, they discovered that "resistance to perceived 'outsiders' [...] has always bedeviled Leeds" even in the twentieth century (*Foreigners*, 189-190). Conceiving of writing as an event, Phillips draws the current readers' attention to the repercussions of racism and enslavement whose effects stretch well into the present time. In Rothberg's view:

At stake [...] is less the will to take the place of the other than the desire to map out the uncanny geographies of diasporic life; Phillips's diasporic subject shares spaces and histories with various others without developing a sense of being at home in that terrain. In Phillips's work, metonymic identification helps to capture the contingent contiguities of diasporic experience, its necessarily multiple locations and syncretic cultures [...] The other's history does not screen out one's own past, but rather serves as a screen for multidirectional projections in which solidarity and self-construction merge. (Rothberg 2009, 156; emphasis original)

In his attempt to contrast the model of competitive memory where histories centered in Europe block other traumatic events from view, the founding tenets of the single history of modernity are brought into question. Critical solidarity redirects the attention of the reader toward what has been concealed, isolated, and appropriated in the dark side of the narratives of progress. Wary enough not to establish equivalence among disparate histories of violence, Phillips retrospectively retraces their uniqueness, yet sets the stage for an interaction that can productively build solidarity against the shared demise of displacement. In the dialogical space where the histories of colonialism, genocide, and slavery rhizomatically intersect, Phillips redefines the founding tenets of the history of modernity through making more visible the posttraumatic effect of slavery and colonialism upon the lower-class minority groups.

If the narrative of modernity has deprived the racially disadvantaged of speech, then the historical reference of trauma relies ironically on turning the text, at best or at worst, into an event that speaks its unspeakability in posttraumatic terms to engage its readers (cf. Luckhurst 2008). The multiple voices that are spatiotemporally and culturally separate underlie Phillips's inclination to unite these voices that counter-discursively bring together the black British diaspora against the forces that have scattered the subjects of African descent in the transatlantic world. In response to the perpetuation of slavery in displaced forms by modernity's appropriation of the black subjects' stories, Phillips adopts the discourse of "ventriloquism" to refuse the commodification of speech in any sense at all given its discursive pitfalls. Bewes points out in this respect that:

It is far from clear that the "voices" Phillips gives to his characters meaningfully own the discourses they make use of, or that, as an author, Phillips is remotely engaged in an attempt to capture authenticity of voice —all this notwithstanding his own statements on the matter [...] Phillips [...] is not interested in constructing a people, or speaking on behalf of anyone. The purpose of what has been called "ventriloquism" in Phillips's text is rather the systematic evacuation of every discursive position that might claim freedom from implication in colonialism —beginning with that of the third-person narrator. The authorial voice "disappears into the characters and becomes them. (Bewes 2006, 45-46)

The textualization of politics based on critical solidarity thus problematizes representation in its commodifying forms. Phillips's controlled identification with the African diaspora's plights underlies his wariness against falling prey to the same pitfalls of the master-narratives that tend to appropriate other histories of violence. In making others speak, he urges readers not only to bear witness, but also to acknowledge how writing painstakingly persists in producing the traumatic aftereffects of the unspeakable. Writing silence thus bespeaks the refusal to be spoken for in ways that dehumanize the victims of racial politics. In the hope of laying bare the silence around the legacies of the slave trade, Phillips re-invokes the image of restless torrents that led to Oluwale's murder in the river in that "perhaps the strong current, down here at Leeds Bridge, was intent upon carrying you all the way back to Hull, and then back to the safety of Africa. Away from your home" (*Foreigners*, 230). Phillips's negotiation

of his belonging in Britain is therefore situated in the uncertain, chronotopic world of the black Atlantic, the space between claiming an African past and his British identity's future. Such a chronotopic vision helps level criticism at what has been concealed as the dark side that relegated Oluwale's means of journeying to that of a cargo. Underneath the passage below is therefore a tone of unbridled rage:

Rubbish. Effluvium of an ignorant city. Back then, all those years ago, the hot machinery of Leeds stamped out brand-spanking-new good for colonial use and dumped the waste into this water. Small-gauge trains to transport sugar in the Caribbean. Larger engines to India. Waste into the water. Back then, during the final spasm of empire. Back then, when it was still acceptable to furiously burn both industrial fuel and human dreams. (*Foreigners*, 227)

The voice thus joins in the anger expressed by the African diaspora and others in Leeds to say it was enough to stay ignorant to the administration of racism. Its epistemological demands make reference in chronotopic terms to how exposing the dumpy side of the waterfront network combining the Atlantic and the rivers in Leeds implies insistence on bringing the legacies of colonialism and slavery to bear on other sorts of violence of capitalism.

This chapter has investigated Caryl Phillips's attempt at reclaiming the African past in *Foreigners* in order to challenge modernity's forces of oppression that silence and commodify the victims of the legacies of slavery and colonialism. It can be concluded that he has been successfully able to retrieve the due human aspects to the once commodified African diaspora in Britain. Three lives have been summoned in spatiotemporal terms in order to bring together the once separated African and West-Indian subjects whose ancestry's familial and cultural bonds were severed and, by implication, deprived of the right to speak in their own terms about their cultural heritage as humans. In traumatic realist terms, the traumatic effect the text produces through its digressions and anachronisms aims to pave the way for critical solidarity in order to fight the forces of racial separation. By diagnosing the dehumanizing after-effects, it also fights the very forces that have made slavery and colonialism possible.

6 Conclusion

With the aim of granting the African diasporic posttraumatic cultures their due consideration, this dissertation has sought to provide a reading of the legacies of colonialism and slavery in ways that break free from the confines of isolation. Although history remains paramount to the theoretical framework of this thesis, my focus in the works under analysis is not on depicting the African past transparently; that would mean that postcolonial theory's endorsement of modernity's frameworks irresponsibly submits mourning the dead to the forces of amnesia (cf. Lloyd 2008). Rather, I have tried to argue that realism should anchor representation to justice and ethics in order to locate the legacies of colonialism and slavery in the space between the event and its belatedness. No doubt, much more work needs to be done as, unfortunately, historical contexts marred by violence and displacement seem to loom as large as ever. The world media currently broadcasts how many Africans whose nations have undergone devastation daily risk their lives and dream to find safety and prosperity in Europe. These and many other cases still raise broader questions over the new forms assumed by the colonial encounter. It appears that the trauma of the past needs to be future-oriented as its thought-provoking investigations continue to trigger debates beyond disciplinary and cultural restrictions (cf. Luckhurst 2008; Rothberg 2014; Visser 2014).

The first work analyzed in this thesis is Abdulrazzak Gurnah's novel *By the Sea* (2001). I have discussed the forces of "camp thinking" in which the novel's two Zanzibari diasporic narrators are "incarcerated" on both literal and discursive levels. In postgenerational terms, they try to fight the forces of separation that have blighted the history of Zanzibar through questioning the discourse of European benevolence (cf. Olaussen 2009b). My discussion of the novel has emphasized Gurnah's subject position as a diasporic subject who identifies with the Zanzibaris of Arab descent left behind. His interstitial position between Britain and Africa motivates his chronotopic investigation of the historical entanglements between Europe and the black continent. It allows a rethinking of the competitive models of trauma that are Eurocentric in nature.

The second work discussed is Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's novel *Half of a Yellow Sun* (2006). I have explored the question of authorship and historical responsibility in postgenerational terms that have propelled Adichie to revisit the Nigerian past through *Nsukka*, which stands for her chronotopic engagement with narrating the traumatic past of her community. Her discussion of the Orientalized African is carried out through a literary experimentation that seeks to dismantle the founding principles of the narrative of modernity. By remapping the history of Africa onto that of Europe, Adichie is able to make a convincing case against the representations that condemn the history of the African Other to frozenness through the modern/backward binary. Her aim is to claim the past as the sense of unbelonging that has marred her history as a diasporic subject enforces her to seek a contact zone of responsibility that can stage continuous debates about the history of her community.

The third analytical chapter presents a reading of Caryl Phillips's work *Foreigners: Three English Lives* (2007). It focuses on his attempt to reclaim the African past in order to challenge the forces of oppression of modernity which have silenced and commodified the victims of the legacies of slavery and colonialism. Phillips's work manages to rescue the human aspects of the African diaspora in Britain whose history of migration has been encoded within the paternalistic discourse that centers on abolition rather than the violent history that took place in the colonies. Three lives of the once separated African and West-Indian subjects have been summoned spatiotemporally in order to question the politics of space and race in Britain. The familial and cultural bonds of these subjects were severed and, by implication, they were deprived of the right to speak on their own terms about their cultural heritage as humans. I have argued that, in traumatic realist terms, the traumatic effect that the text produces through its digressions and anachronisms aims to pave the way for critical solidarity in order to remap the past of the black British onto other marginalized histories of diaspora who have suffered distinct forms of isolation in Europe.

The conclusions to be drawn from the three texts are of significance to postcolonial studies on trauma. African writings that center on the trauma of displacement are intimately shaped by the Western history of modernity. I have argued that, by breaking the boundaries between past and present, the extreme and the everyday, the texts under study are able to fight the forces of forgetting propagated by the progressive discourses of modernity in both Britain and the post-independence African states. For the African diaspora, "traumatic realism" holds relevance in the sense that, in chronotopic terms, it is able to make "visible" the ideological structures of colonialism and slavery that are brought to bear on the everyday of the displaced subjects. My analysis of the works aligns with Robert Eaglestone (2008) and Michael Rothberg (2006) about the "multidirectionality of memory" that seeks solidarity in the public sphere. I have argued in this sense that, although the particularities of the African traumas have to be accounted for, it has always been of utmost consideration for the African diaspora to link the legacies of colonialism and slavery to those of the violence committed in Europe. In a nutshell, African writings on the trauma of unbelonging enable literary texts to lay bare the forces of separation that have shaped the politics of space and race on a day-to-day basis. Their futurist outlook that draws new cartographies of linking seeks to forge new historical entanglements that call the history of modernity into question.

The critical purchase of revisiting the Black Atlantic and the Indian Ocean as sites of the diaspora owes a great deal to the emerging cross-cultural and interdisciplinary engagement with trauma. In the chapter on Gurnah's novel, I have explained the importance of a transoceanic comparison that spots the similarities as well as differences between the two oceans. My analysis has focused on how "alternative modernities" may contribute to the troubling of the slave/free, victim/perpetrator binaries. It aims to open avenues into constructing African diasporic communities whose identities are in constant flux. This line of argument has motivated me to think of tracking new routes/roots through an exploration of the possible links between the history of the aforementioned oceans and the Mediterranean. I especially seek to investigate the north African histories in relation to such chronotopic networks.

Debates in literature, psychology, philosophy, geography, history, and sociology have been sparked in this research given the pervasive effects of trauma in all aspects of the lives of the African diaspora (Visser 2014; see also Eyerman 2001). Entangled memories and non-competitive models of comparison have helped reroute the academic investigations of trauma towards forging critical solidarity. Such a reorientation has driven this thesis to emphasize the deserved justice to document the past spatiotemporally. It helps confirm the conviction that the colonial encounter has run its course, in that African narratives continue to insist on creating the unavoidable connection between slavery, colonialism, and the violent histories based in Europe. The theoretical framework I have proposed about the “border cases” in Fanon’s work seems to offer compelling implications as it consists in rethinking the boundaries between colonizer and colonized, or victim and perpetrator (Fanon 1963). It is meant to question the myopia that marks the Eurocentric focus on the Western traumas. Fanon’s case exemplifies the struggle of the African diaspora to fight such isolating forces that have instigated separation by setting their legacies side by side, especially with those of the metropolis. In conjunction with these histories, the investigations of the past translate into an examination of the lasting impact of the colonial encounter upon the cultures of African descendants. I have thus tried to address a number of aspects that characterize the encounter and its effects on the postcolonial times, taking into account that the everyday reaches beyond the event-based model in order to trouble the binary of the extreme and the everyday. Since it has taken displaced forms in most African facets of life, dislocation also marks the textual reflection of the ruptures that keep fragmenting the fabric of African communities. My intention throughout this study has been to emphasize the complexity that typifies the representation of the traumatic events that, in their persistence to be documented, refuse integration and expression in oversimplified forms in the public sphere.

The abiding interest of this work has been to examine questions of the state of “unfreedom” that pervades posttraumatic African cultures. In order to historicize the past, a shift in focus is of utmost consideration, particularly from the individualizing paradigms of diagnosis to those that attempt to construct a collective self by investigating the “real” or “the world outside the text” (cf. Craps and Buelens 2008; Craps 2013). My contention is that a “realist” depiction of the past that easily guarantees a “working through” is far from realistic. The issue of representation as the key object of critical history where “documentation, self-reflexive aesthetic form, and public circulation” intersect is brought on board by traumatic realism, which sets in motion a constellation of “elements that are brought together through the act of writing” (Rothberg 2000, 10).

This dissertation has sought to engage with texts by the writers of African descent who, on moral grounds, bring questions of ethics, politics and epistemology to bear on literary witnessing. The center/periphery paradigm is thus rendered superfluous over distances of space and time through examining the workings of the colonialist and slaveholding discourses. As an extension of traumatic realism that insists that a de-historicized past be brought to light, Rothberg’s notion “Multidirectional Memory” has helped remap painful histories on each other (Rothberg 2006) as it promotes acts of responsible witnessing at the thresholds of cultures. I have demonstrated that

the role of realism is not only to document or bring these pasts to the attention of an emerging public. Rather, I have argued throughout the dissertation that justice may be recovered if the readers' attention is redirected towards the human poignancy of the posttraumatic effects of colonialism and slavery.

This shows that there is much at stake when trauma as a complex concept is brought into focus. Historicizing displacement through writings that foreground traumatic events constantly insists on questions of justice and historical responsibility. The study of trauma today nourishes the need to reflect upon a future that will continue to testify to the scores of refugees who have left their homes to look for safety especially in Europe. After the Palestinians, who have experienced dislocation because of the Israeli occupation, other communities such as the Syrians, and the Yemenis, to mention but two, have lost their homes because of the machinery of terror produced by wars, genocides, and neocolonial violence that has wreaked havoc in their nations. These cases confront us with more pressing questions to bear responsible witness to questions that set us to think about the intersecting legacies that make post-genocide, post-colonial and post-slavery descendants identify with the victims. Africa as well has come to be articulated not as a geographical setting that needs to be recovered transparently. The African descendants have rewritten Africa within the framework of a hybridized space of articulation that counter-discursively questions the lasting effects of the history of colonial modernity. Their new encounter with Europe, as seen in Phillips's and Gurnah's works, makes the violence of the colonial encounter come full circle in the postcolonial times. Forced migration, exploitation, unbelonging, and, most importantly, racism are the new denominators that replace the old forms relating to the loss of home and freedom in the colonial times.

Such anxieties certainly add to the significance of the study of trauma, which in Rothberg's view is about how to assess the future of trauma: "we need to start from the assumption that answers will vary across time and across cultural context. Trauma today is probably not the trauma of twenty years ago and certainly not the trauma of the early twentieth century" (2014, xi). I believe that the irony today lies in the fact that it is the refugees with their displacement and inflicted silence who raise extremely compelling questions as they insist on bearing witness to the new garbs that trauma continues to assume. The poignancy of their wretched state warrants such representation that refuse the objectification and the exploitation of the victims through representation. The legacies of colonialism and slavery certainly translate into cumulated forms of racism, imprisonment, and nation-state oppression and, as such, writing about trauma is synonymous with drawing new cartographies of witnessing as historical responsibility in order to read the past and the present in light of each other.

The argument set forth by Rothberg's traumatic realism has thus been at the heart of this dissertation's theoretical framework. Its insistence on responsible documentation, while duly deserved circulation brings supposedly remote histories into contact. From a relatively safe distance, we are all to be held accountable for events that we may spatiotemporally be at a distance from. The victims of displacement as a traumatic event, either individuals or communities, are affected more by isolation and silence. If they are depicted in the popularized discourse in ways that portray them as a "spectacle", then the responsible representation of their plights should strive for

the frameworks that set them free from the shackles that submit their (hi)-stories to abuse. More work is therefore needed. While trauma narratives may not go so far as to change the status quo, they do redirect our attention towards such unexplored terrains of opacity that can promote cross-cultural witnessing. Trauma studies need to stay faithful to the ethical demands for justice in the public sphere. If the colonial and slaveholding aftermaths are brought into focus with their traumas, a promising path draws attention to the political purchase of critical solidarity generated by the writings of the African diaspora.

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MUSTAPHA KHAROUA

Traumatic Realism in African Diasporic Writing is a contribution to postcolonial trauma studies. By deploying Michael Rothberg's notion of "traumatic realism", it reads three contemporary texts written by diasporic writers of African descent and shows how the works engage with questions of justice and historical responsibility and draw attention to the anxieties of home and (un)belonging that characterize African post-traumatic cultures.



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