

**20th Century African and American Writers:
Cultural Identity, Protest, and Regeneration in a Century
of War**

David T. Lohrey

2012

**Dissertation submitted in fulfilment for the degree of
Doctorate of Philosophy in English.**

**School of Humanities & Social Sciences
Charles Sturt University
Wagga Wagga, Australia**

Abstract

This dissertation examines the relationship between war and postcolonial identity in a range of African and American literature. This inquiry focuses on twentieth century 'literature of the displaced author', as expressed in fictional writings which show the ways personal trauma are reflective of collective experience. This study explores the ways a number of indicative postcolonial writers have presented psychological and political consequences of postwar trauma across generations. It will analyse different forms of violence that animate the genealogy of the postcolonial past and how they impact on the present. It explores the relationship between imperialism and totalitarianism as it is manifested in the British, Nazi and American empires of the last century; it suggests continuities into the twenty-first. It argues that World War I and World War II have had a profound impact on shaping the way life has been lived as seen in work by African writers such as Chinua Achebe, J.M. Coetzee, Nadine Gordimer, and Doris Lessing, and Americans, such as Saul Bellow, Don DeLillo, Cormac McCarthy, Philip Roth, Leslie Marmon Silko, and John Edgar Wideman. Through the critical writings of Edward Said, Achille Mbembe, and Homi Bhabha, to name a few, my thesis considers the centrality of disorder to the formation of postcolonial response. My study develops a method for reading canonical texts of postcolonial writers as narratives of protest, transgression, and regeneration, and it seeks to produce an understanding of the problems of fictionalising complex relations of class, sexuality, gender and race in the context of upheaval.

Acknowledgements

It is a pleasure to thank those who made this thesis possible. I'm especially grateful to my wife Yuka who gave me the moral support I required. She contributed to this project in many ways. My friend Pien van Baggen who encouraged me over the years deserves special thanks. I also would like to thank David Gilbey whose guidance has been invaluable.

Lastly, I offer my regards to all of those who supported me in any respect during the completion of the project.

Abstract.....	i
Acknowledgements.....	ii
Table of Contents.....	iii
Certificate of Authorship	iv
Introduction: Postcolonial Identity in a Century of War.....	1
Chapter 1: War and Protest: Women Settlers Speak Out.....	23
Chapter 2: Postcolonialism and the Legacy of Total War.....	81
Chapter 3: Postwar: The Trauma of Peace.....	120
Chapter 4: Postmodernism: Surviving the Apocalypse.....	163
Chapter 5: Postcolonial Regeneration.....	204
Conclusion: The Other Is Oneself.....	250
References.....	26

I hereby declare that this submission is my own work and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it contains no material previously published or written by another person nor material which to a substantial extent has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma at Charles Sturt University or any other educational institution, except where due acknowledgment is made in the dissertation. Any contribution made to the research by colleagues with whom I have worked at Charles Sturt University or elsewhere during my candidature is fully acknowledged. I agree that this thesis be accessible for the purpose of study and research in accordance with the normal conditions established by the Executive Director, Library Services or nominee, for the care, loan and reproduction of theses.

Signature

Date

David Lohrey
#11366431

Introduction: Postcolonial Identity in a Century of War

In the years before the Great War, at the time the events chronicled in these pages took place, it was not yet a matter of indifference whether a man lived or died. When someone was expunged from the lists of the living, someone else did not immediately step up to take his place, but a gap was left to show where he had been, and those who knew the man who had died or disappeared, well or even less well, fell silent whenever they saw the gap (120).

---- Joseph Roth, *The Radetsky March*

In a recent interview, Homi Bhabha addressed the emergence of cosmopolitanism from the rootless displacement experienced by exiles and refugees as a stimulating if not positive development:

One of the great things that modern literature does is to show you how the human imagination ranges across countries and cultures to extend its inspiration and imagination, so that, while we tend to study history or literature in national frames, writers and artists tend to consider themselves imaginatively to be citizens of the world. So I'm very interested in that aspect of literary culture and the cosmopolitan imagination – what would a global culture be? (Gewertz 2002: 2)

Bhabha's conception of a global culture is expressed with an enthusiasm that possibly diminishes the reality of the emergence in the 20th century of a global culture built on memories of war and genocide; his vision focuses on a striving for the acknowledgement of essentially positive exchanges between cultures in conflict. 'What is theoretically innovative and politically crucial,' Bhabha says, 'is the need to think beyond narratives of originary and initial subjectivities and to focus on those moments or processes that are produced in the articulation of cultural differences' (1994: 2). His argument would seem to forbid dwelling on those

memories which form ‘a crucial but until now unexplored bridge between colonial and postcolonial literatures, discourses, and theories’ (Bluemel 2005: 1).

Taking my cue from David Chioni Moore (2006) in his ‘Is the Post- in Postcolonial the Post- in Post-Soviet? Towards a Global Postcolonial Critique’, I wish to consider the possible postcoloniality of known spheres of imperial domination and their attendant aftermaths. This inquiry examines arenas of displacement and estrangement. It takes as its starting point the proposal of a fully global postcolonial critique of those domains of oppression and liberation occupied by expanding empires: the British, the German, and most recently the American. Like Moore, I believe that expansion of the postcolonial to include the war-zones of clashing empires in the 20th century is appropriate not as geographical areas but as common areas of grievance and trauma that continue to inform and haunt beyond their borders. One is not concerned with geography per se, but with defining areas of common experience and response in which characters move. I am reminded of Nadine Gordimer’s sense of our living in an interregnum, to use her expression from *The Essential Gesture*: ‘It is not for nothing that I chose as an epigraph for my novel *July’s People* a quotation from Gramsci: ‘The old is dying, and the new cannot be born; in this interregnum there arises a great diversity of morbid symptoms’ (1988: 263).

The reverberations of World War I and II have been largely neglected in postcolonial critiques, but close readings of key works of several writers of the postcolonial canon make clear that the postcolonial and the postwar cannot be easily separated. My argument takes for granted Stephen Slemon’s (1995) warnings

against any form of absolutism in defining the postcolonial canon which excludes crucial texts (2006: 104). Violeta Kelertas (2006), Vitaly Chernetsky, et al (2006), and Agata Anna Lisiak (2010) have called for an expansion of the boundaries of postcolonialism, especially into Eastern Europe, where cities such as Berlin, Budapest, Prague, and Warsaw 'are not exclusively postcolonial or solely colonial: they are 'in-between' the two predicaments and, hence, are best described as (post)colonial' (Lisiak 2010: 2).

The key texts studied perhaps test the boundaries of the postcolonial. The arguments of the authors themselves, however, can be said to call for a reevaluation of the discipline's self-imposed constraints. Writers as disparate as the African-American John Edgar Wideman and the daughter of British colonial settlers Doris Lessing see our age as one of having suffered the consequences of imperialism. Both writers draw a direct line from the Scramble for Africa to the New World Order of the American hegemon. It is this line that requires exploration. Indeed, I would go so far as to say that Benita Parry's insistence on an expansion of that territory of investigation be given consideration: 'The absence of such enquires is an index of an insufficient engagement with the conditions and practices of actually existing imperialism' (Parry (74). It is in this pursuit that temporal and geographical borders require expansion. One hopes to make comparisons and juxtapositions 'in the interests of extending to a global terrain the concept of discourse with the constant implication of textuality within networks of history, power, knowledge, and society' (69).

Edward Said has spoken to this issue of an expanding, flexibly interpretive methodology by his use of a comparative scheme he calls a ‘contrapuntal reading’ (1994: 66-67). He calls for seeing texts as requiring a rereading based on his premise that they reveal the workings both known and unknown to the author, of that which the author intends to reveal, and that of which he or she may not be fully aware.

Beyond that, Said calls for an expansion of the scope of postcolonial enquiry:

For the trained scholar of comparative literature, a field whose origin and purpose is to move beyond insularity and provincialism and to see several cultures and literatures together, contrapuntally, there is an already considerable investment in precisely this kind of antidote to reductive nationalism and uncritical dogma: after all, the constitution and early aims of comparative literature were to get a perspective beyond one’s own nation, to see some sort of whole instead of the defensive little patch offered by one’s own culture, literature, and history (43).

Beyond Said’s call for expanding one’s range and his emphasis on the need to see beyond preconceived boundaries, it is my hope that the writers of distant origins can usefully be compared because the worlds they describe share common features, their protagonists have had similar experiences or the political worlds they inhabit possess common traits. Again, Said states the case for expanding the boundaries of the postcolonial project:

I am talking about the way in which structures of location and geographical reference appear in the cultural languages of literature, history, or ethnography, sometimes allusively and sometimes carefully plotted, across several individual works that are not otherwise connected to one another or to an official ideology of “empire” (1994: 52).

Calling for the inclusion of American authors, Violeta Kelertas concurs with Spivak who has argued that new ideas are needed to bring clarity to the notion of a dynamic postcolonial project:

Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak has stated ‘my work has shown me that we must formulate new ideas of nationalism, postcoloniality, and multiculturalism in terms of the diversified, centuries-old imperial history of the Commonwealth of Independent States and the Russian Federation (2006: 4).

A formulation of postcoloniality can be made that embraces geographic expansion. ‘The internationalisation of English literature overlaps with, and perhaps should be seen as encompassing, Commonwealth, Post-colonial, and multicultural literature’ (King 10). Kelertas joins Moore and Spivak in calling for an acceptance of geographic expansion that was promoted by Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin twenty years ago:

...the literatures of African countries, Australia, Bangladesh, Canada, Caribbean countries, India, Malasia, Malta, New Zealand, Pakistan, Singapore, South Pacific countries, and Sri Lanka are all post-colonial countries. The literature of the USA should also be placed in this category. Perhaps because of its current position of power, and the neo-colonizing role it has played, its postcolonial nature has not been generally recognised. But its relationship with the metropolitan centre as it evolved over the last two centuries has been paradigmatic for post-colonial literature everywhere (1989: 2).

The inclusion in postcolonial literature of writers of varying backgrounds is justified by their shared experiences rather than their common national backgrounds, thus reinforcing the interdisciplinarity of postcolonial studies (King 1996: 16). It is also

crucial, especially in the United States, according to James Baldwin (1993), to something of even greater importance, namely, cultural healing and national reconciliation.

An effort will be made to show how policies and practices of imperialism link writers of disparate racial and national backgrounds whose characters frequently are forced to exist ambivalently between the familiar and unfamiliar. However, this is not meant as a survey or a catalogue of grievances or sufferings. What these writers have in common is their shared engagement ‘in making sense of the radical restructuring of epistemic systems and political discourses round them’ (Simoes da Silva 2005: 472). These discourses often express common values, or as Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin have suggested, for ‘the comparative nature of experience’ that transcends national boundaries (1989: 28). One can look, they argue, ‘for the shared psychic and historical conditions across the differences distinguishing one postcolonial society from another’ (1989: 29). Yet, one remains aware of and must guard against seeking commonalities that gloss over real differences or seek an ill-defined ‘universal’ that ignores differences. One should be mindful that crucial differences exist. As Boehmer (1995) has said:

A simple but serious recognition of difference is probably a good starting-point: some preliminary acknowledgement that post-imperial realities are far more contradictory, agitated, and diverse than any one critical approach could hope to describe. As we saw, postcolonial critical discourse trusts to the translatability of texts taken from other cultures. The assumption, predicated on the global event of empire, is that some hybridized version of a Western language or syncretic cognitive framework will mediate gaps in

understanding. The reality is, however, that there are utterances which remain out of reach of postcolonial interpretation (247).

It could certainly seem that the effort to expand the territory of postcoloniality expresses an arrogance of intent; a purpose guided by expansionist tendencies is bound to require restraint.

It is worth mentioning that the concept of a recurring, persistent past is not new. Raymond Williams (1971) emphasises how cultural development maintains a link to the past, describes what is left of the culture of the society as ‘residual’ influence. Williams finds cultural expression in the interaction of the past and present. It is in this interaction that the reverberations of war have their impact, both impeding and stimulating progress. Williams uses his concept of the residual to capture the effect the past has on the present and its hold on the present: ‘The residual has been effectively formed in the past, but is still active in the cultural process as an effective element of the present’ (1971: 122). It is what remains of the past. His notion of overlapping rather than sequential development is what Gillian Whitlock summarises here:

Raymond Williams’ notion of the residual element of cultural processes is useful here. Williams suggests that the residual is a set of values, practices, relationships which has been effectively formed in the past, but remains a significant element of the present. Certain experiences, meanings and values which are no longer expressed or substantially verified in terms of the dominant culture are nevertheless lived and practiced on the basis of the residue – cultural as well as social – of some previous social and cultural formation (2000: 117).

As Whitlock makes clear, Williams' notion of the 'residual' in culture expresses the interplay between social and cultural heritage. He places emphasis on lasting economic influence, while I wish to focus on the way literature explores and expresses emotional consequences of past events, particularly on those that Cathy Caruth (1995) and Vijay Mishra (2006) define as traumatic. It is not a matter, in Caruth's terminology, of one living in the past, but of one being held in the grip of the past, of being unable to shake the past. 'The trauma of the original displacement' lasts a lifetime (Mishra 2006: 450).

This has implications for the individual who has suffered and is suffering, but more crucially for the society whose culture is in a state of crisis:

Consequently, there have been few attempts to relate the dominant phenomenon of twentieth-century barbarism to a more general theory of culture. Not very many have asked, or pressed home the question, as to the internal relations between the structures of the inhuman and the surrounding, contemporary matrix of high civilization. Yet the barbarism which we have undergone reflects, at numerous and precise points, the culture which it sprang from and set out to desecrate (Steiner 1974: 29).

When we look at the 'internal relations between the structures of the inhuman', what we find is that traditional notions of literary distinction and the ways we distinguish literatures of national origin are undermined. To address this, this study draws on Pascale Casanova's effort to point the way toward a redefinition of the study of literature (2007: 350). Casanova's tracing of the emergence of autonomous literatures and her characterisation of that process as a struggle suggests certain convergences that claim our attention.

Casanova's analysis of Kafka is suggestive. She locates in Kafka 'traits proper and common to writers from emerging and dominated nations that 'obliged him to invent a literature that ... raised a universal kind of questioning to its point of highest intensity' (354). Her reading of Kafka and, more importantly, of his reception by the literary community views his work as caught between critics who misrepresented his project and his work's true 'universal appeal' (354). Her analysis of Kafka, it seems to me, offers insight into writers of the postmodern and the postcolonial; the convergence lies precisely in 'the true principle of its universal appeal,' an appeal gained through the depiction of common acts of barbarism, political oppression, and the experiences of war, past and present. Casanova writes:

Writing the history of literature is a paradoxical activity that consists in placing it in historical time and then showing how literature gradually tears itself away from this temporality, creating in turn its own temporality, one that has gone unperceived until the present day (350).

Although coming at this from different perspectives, Casanova and Edward Said seek to draw one's attention to literatures whose study deserves comparison even when they lack obvious similarity. Their argument is that postcolonial criticism should welcome a transformation that embraces a broadening of horizons, methodological, geographical, and temporal. Said in particular welcomes discordant oppositions that may nonetheless be found illuminating:

Neither culture nor imperialism is inert, and so the connections between them as historical experiences are dynamic and complex. My principal aim is not to separate but to connect, and I am interested in this for the main philosophical and methodological reason that cultural forms are hybrid,

mixed, impure, and the time has come in cultural analysis to reconnect their analysis with their actuality (1994: 14).

I embrace Said's point of view, mindful of the argument put forth by Boehmer that so wide a definition may invite a disregard for particularity and historical accuracy. She contends:

It is widely taken for granted that post-imperial cultural diversity is not only comparable across regions, but is all more or less equally transparent and accessible to a European, North American, or Australian reader, especially given a shared history of colonization. What we often find is that an ahistorical hybridity is set up as a universal category or structural principle bracketing together writing from very different countries (Boehmer 245).

This warning is worth keeping in mind, but what Boehmer calls 'a shared history' cannot be allowed to be disregarded, overlooked or mined for potentially distracting details that take one away from valuable commonalities deserving one's attention.

In this connection, David Damrosch's suggestion is worth consideration (2003). He expresses a concern that an essentialist reduction is to be avoided at the same time as warning one to be alert to the temptation to read oneself into texts.

Damrosch seeks to find a way to navigate between these risks:

The issue is to stay alive to the works' real difference from us without trapping them within their original context or subordinating them entirely to our own immediate moment and needs. An emphasis on universality can be a powerful aid in protecting the work from either of these extremes, as long as this universality isn't created by a process of stripping away much of what is really distinctive about the work (135).

It has been pointed out by Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin that one can locate ‘certain features’ in postcolonial writing that, they argue, can be said to be ‘characteristic’ (28). They mention the distinctive use of allegory as one example but identify others as well, such as ‘a predominant ironic mode’ (29). Their analysis of exile as one such recurrent pattern is illuminating; it points one in the direction of locating war as another pattern of experience in need of exploration. It is in this connection that one might give consideration to the soldier as one of the various subaltern categories. As will be argued, there emerges through the literature considered patterns of experience and responses to imperial adventurism, war, and what emerges globally, namely, political domination. The war veteran from the trenches of the Great War to the jungles of Vietnam often proves unable to live again in domestic tranquility; often shell-shocked and now disregarded the veteran lives cut off from his surroundings. His presence, however, serves as evidence of inhuman suffering, unsettles and undermines what the state intended his actions to reinforce.

Analysis can be coloured or even distorted by perspective. This insight has rightly been associated with Said’s works (1994). Occasionally, however, Said’s perceptions fall victim to an insistence on seeing things from one side. Said speaks, for example, to the issue of how the media offers a distorted view of the Arab world, rightly expressing dismay with the ways the media distorts facts for the purposes of entertainment, and is driven by ‘the imperial dynamic and above all its separating, essentializing, dominating, and reactive tendencies’ (37). Said, however, is less alert to the ways the media can be and is frequently turned against those who fail to perform their expected roles. That is, Said has a way of disregarding voices of those made to feel minoritarian by the regime that marginalises voices of discontent. He would be the first to admit that passions are mobilised for war, but

insists that its victims are always to be found outside the West and not within, always among the colonised and not among the colonisers (37).

Said has set out to make clear those ‘processes of regulation and force by which cultural hegemony reproduces itself,’ but he has paid less attention to the excavation of those voices silenced by that apparatus (1994: 304). Soldiers, their wives and children, Doris Lessing tells us, also had voices. In fact, the reverberations of the Great War included the creation of a generation of malcontents, laid waste physically, but through their rage and grief, left capable of spreading discontent, distrust, and suspicion of authority. What is found is that the imperial order grinds down many, but also sows ill will, an undermining product of its hegemony that is the source of its self-destruction.

The literary narratives that emerge from disparate cultures confirm Ella Shohat’s point that colonial oppression has not ended, perhaps even that one can no longer differentiate between the colonised and the coloniser:

The ‘post-colonial’ implies a narrative of progression in which colonialism remains the central point of reference, in a march of time neatly arranged from the pre to the ‘post,’ but which leaves ambiguous its relation to new forms of colonialism, i.e. neo-colonialism (Shohat 1992:107).

Shohat and others make the argument that one ought not be misled by the promise implied in the term ‘post-colonial,’ perhaps mistakenly making a move beyond the degradations associated with colonialism. What Shohat suggests is confirmed by others, such as Arendt and Mbembe, whose historical analysis of colonial imperialism insists on linking the industrial revolution, the First World War, and the Nazi extermination camps (Mbembe 2003:18). Their point is that totalitarianism

does not exist only as part of an identifiable past but as a threatening possibility, as long as the ‘technical mechanism for putting people to death’ remains intact (18). Tony Judt (2008) takes up this question of how to remember the twentieth century and the dangers of allowing it to become no more than a mis-memory:

The problem with this lapidary representation of the last century as a uniquely horrible time from which we have now, thankfully, emerged is not the description – it was in many ways a truly awful era, an age of brutality and mass suffering perhaps unequalled in the historical record. The problem is the message: that all of that is now behind us, that its meaning is clear, and that we may now advance – unencumbered by past errors – into a different and better era (2008: 16).

Is it any wonder that Shohat is reluctant to embrace an implied optimism in the postcolonial project?

In Chapter 1, I want to show how settlers were alienated by their surroundings, but were also tormented by their pasts, that they were both perpetrators and victims of colonial presumption. While there were those who reinforced colonial myths, there were others who undermined them. As writers, many sought and succeeded in revealing the lies that sent them to Africa and around the globe, crippled by imperial expectation. Contrary to any sort of ‘consolidated vision’ as described by Edward Said (1993), settler literature is rich in nuanced, complex reflections and reactions to their surroundings and experiences that bear consideration. Said’s interpretation, Benita Parry (2006) warns, limits our reception of voices which remain outside his conception of singularity (48). Parry suggests that Said’s misreading ‘unifies the subject of colonial enunciation in a fixed position

as the passive object of discursive domination' (48). This will be shown to be true, especially of women writers. Edward Said's analysis of imperial hegemony fails to take into account the yearnings of women settlers; by ignoring them, it will be argued, he misses the anguish behind the transgressive spirit of settlers who were themselves victims of imperial conceit (Smith 2004: 243).

The notion of a community of the 'unsettled' captures in a word the wrecked lives of settlers, but the language of protest that is voiced by the writers expresses far more complex feelings than mere alienation or estrangement from new surroundings (Sakinofsky 2009: 4; Mishra 2006: 449). There are reasons why the inner lives of settlers are often neglected or perhaps unappreciated. Part of this is due to the persistence of binary conceptions of identity. C. L. Innes (1996) makes the point that certain nationalist ideas can be used to justify the settlers' sense of displacement: 'The claim being made in nationalist literature is that *the people and the land* belong to each other. The culture of the coloniser is not only alienated in general, but alien to that particular area: it does not belong *there*' (124).

This sense of being alienated from one's surroundings and of not being welcome contributed to the settlers' way of seeing their world. Disappointment and for some a sense of betrayal shaped their world-view. It is this hardening that I wish to excavate, as I consider the emotional consequences of imperial deceit as well as self-deception. Aritha Van Herk (1996) suggests that what one finds is a general pattern of expression in settler narratives:

The composition of any settler narrative, then, is inflected by both the journey and its self-conscious process, the arrival and its concomitant disappointments or euphorias, and the subsequent act of 'settling' which

is coloured by the trajectory of those previous experiences (1996: 100).

One of the themes that emerges from this trajectory and can continue to be traced through the century is the debasement of language, its hardening, its coarsening, and finally its gradual emptying of its relationship to communication.

Chapter 2, which focuses on imperialism as a part of the Third Reich's territorial ambitions and its racial policies, seeks to show Nazism as a refinement, albeit perverse, of that bureaucratic machinery seen in earlier decades, rather than as a twisted paradigm of dictatorship so easily dismissed as not being a paradigm for power but as a unique instance of the politically perverse. Following the lead of Hannah Arendt and others, I want to argue that the imperial mystique seen in the British Empire found its way into Germany's expansionist ambitions, but in this chapter I am concerned with the emotional costs of oppression. As in Chapter 1, the focus remains on three key writers of the 20th century: Doris Lessing, Nadine Gordimer, and J. M. Coetzee, but their work will be analysed in the context of war trauma and the barbarities associated with 20th century totalitarianism. This chapter's focus will further elucidate the relationship between postcoloniality and the wars that shaped that century. These narratives of distress will be juxtaposed with novels by Imre Kertész and Arnošt Lustig whose writings of the Holocaust and the war atmosphere on the Eastern Front illuminate scenes of trauma and personal anguish that are part of the world described Gordimer, Lessing, and Coetzee. When compared using the method of analysis Edward Said (1994) has called 'contrapuntal', these writers' works can be more fully understood to reveal patterns of personal destruction that are part of living under imperialism. They bring to the

forefront behaviours that expose the debasement and hardening witnessed in the early decades of the century. How does the hardening of the language and of sensibilities evolve into heartlessness; how does one respond to indifference?

The notion of lasting traumatic impact informs Chapter 3, which will focus on the trauma of war and how it comes to dominate the lives of war veterans and those who have intimate relations with those maimed, physically or mentally in battle. Key works by two American writers will be examined. Saul Bellow's *Henderson the Rain King* and Philip Roth's *American Pastoral* both concern veterans of World War Two. Postwar adjustment will be the focus. Despite his stereotyped images of indigenous Africans, Bellow succeeds in creating an American adventurer in an imagined African setting whose activities undermine rather than reinforce imperial conceit; Henderson's intent, despite himself, is to restore rather than destroy. Bellow and Roth create protagonists whose adult lives were dramatically changed by their war experiences. Henderson and the Swede return home with every intention of returning to the lives they had known, but they and the world around them had changed. Their failure to adjust and the ways they choose to respond to these changes are vital to understanding their challenges. Works by Chinua Achebe and José Saramago will be compared to the critical texts of Bellow and Roth. Achebe and Bellow have created heroes whose experiences dealing with postwar adjustment deserve attention, while Saramago's futuristic dystopia bears a resemblance to Roth's descriptions of present-day urban America and scenes of random sexual brutality.

Chapter 4 will show how urban collapse reflects America's continued involvement in foreign wars in the decades following the end of WWII. The war is brought home to America's inner cities and, according to DeLillo, to the suburbs as well. Wideman, Cormac McCarthy and DeLillo depict varying degrees of civic disorder, society at the brink of collapse; their narratives depict an America haemorrhaging as a result of a government no longer able to distinguish between domestic and foreign policies, its citizens victimised by postindustrial militarisation of civic space. Urban collapse is accompanied by the absence of political authority; the society is shown to have deteriorated or to have been destroyed. Bureaucratic neglect, political indifference, apathy and moral degeneration all play their part in what the writers depict as America today or in the near future.

Wideman, McCarthy, and DeLillo create survival narratives with descriptions of America in the midst of imminent apocalyptic threat. Their works contribute to our understanding of the shape of contemporary life, revealing how we live in a hybrid, indeterminate set of interlocking relations, but manipulated by an indifferent state apparatus, and drained by an exploitative economic system. Postmodern depravity has a political dimension that is not unique to our time, but rather shows patterns of manipulation and paranoia that Giorgio Agamben has argued belong to the 20th century (Humphreys 2006: 683). Colonial atrocity, trench warfare, concentration camps (in Kenya, in Germany, in Utah) are underwritten by the state's gradual but systematic stripping away of the civic rights of citizens, reducing them to the status of nonentities:

The 'exceptional' sovereign designation of particular subjects, groups, places and even ideas as 'enemy' – inscribing a whole topology of friends and enemies, freedoms and dangers, norms and exceptions – is used to enable and legitimate forms of violence with little respect to established laws (Neal 2009: 30).

Drawing a direct line from Gallipoli to Guantanamo through Auschwitz, Agamben claims that it is not 'the rights-bearing citizen that marks the beginning of the modern age, but the entry of the 'bare life' of the basic human body into political calculations' (Neal 2007: 5). The postcolonial project faces a new state prepared to reduce the citizen to the status of the refugee, the prisoner killed with impunity.

Andrew Neal argues:

Agamben takes this radical crisis of rights and extends the analysis in terms of biopolitics. The exclusion of human life deprived of all belonging, citizenship and identity is not simply a paradox, but the 'hidden paradigm of the political space of modernity (Neal 2007: 8).

Wideman, McCarthy, and DeLillo consider the extent of this posthumanist turn, but are not resigned to it. While narrating the ultimate application and realisation of extinction discourse which anticipates the disappearance not of a single race but all of humankind, McCarthy seems confident that whatever else might be lost, one can count on familiar habits of thought and feelings to get through. DeLillo is less sure, as is Wideman. Both see modern men and women, people, stripped of citizenship and reduced by an indifferent government to minoritarian survival. Wideman, however, suggests that what is dismantled through analysis and investigation, what is unearthed and disclosed, can function as the transformative ingredient necessary

for sustenance and revival. History is the agency for rebirth; an identity for human beings can be re-formed.

Chapter 5 focuses on Gordimer, Silko and Coetzee, novelists whose recent works consider issues relating to the means by which people adjust to living in new surroundings. These writers describe transformations taking place in response to upheaval, violence and destruction, but participate in a postcolonial project that recognises the destructive forces at work but put forward a radical hope as their response. The fears of the postmodernists are overcome through trials of communication. The postcolonial impulse believes in part in the possibility of recuperation through dialogue, although its premise is that misunderstandings have been wounding. The scope of disillusionment is formidable and acknowledged. This is the starting point. Unlike the apocalyptic authors who prophesy doom, these postcolonial authors, such as Gordimer, Silko and Coetzee, take as their starting point the notion that apocalyptic events threatening human ways of life have already taken place. Their protagonists are victims of such events; they have experienced political repression, been victims of racist policies, left their countries to go to war, or been forced to live in exile.

Exile, it is argued, takes on a different meaning in the context of an emerging international or transnational culture, a space marked by ambivalence, where the essential has been replaced by the negotiable (Bhabha 2004). This will be the focus of Chapter 5. Edward Said speaks of modern life shattering stable lives, and this is part of the story; it was undoubtedly his. When exile means leaving something solid behind, the trauma belongs to those who must live forever separated from what was

once significant and fulfilling. Occasionally Said speaks otherwise, as though current events have forced him to rethink. In a recent essay, he speaks of exile as a contingency closer to what appears in recent fiction. He writes:

The exile knows that in a secular and contingent world, homes are always provisional. Borders and barriers, which enclose us within the safety of familiar territory, can also become prisons, and are often defended beyond reason or necessity. Exiles cross borders, break barriers of thought and experience (2000: 185).

Indeed, Said expresses his awareness of the fact that for some exile serves as a kind of invitation to a second chance rather than a foreclosure on what once was.

Nadine Gordimer makes clear that there is a world of difference between wandering the world having lost everything and living as though one had nothing to lose.

Displacements and negotiated identities bring promise as often as despair, as one finds in the later works of Gordimer, Silko, and Coetzee.

This sense of belonging or not belonging has gradually been replaced by a rootlessness that resembles Hannah Arendt's description of the 20th century mass.

Elleke Boehmer (1995) describes this condition as increasingly endemic:

In post-independence literature, the result has been that the cosmopolitan rootlessness which developed in urban pockets at the time of early twentieth-century modernism has in a sense 'gone global': Cultural expatriation is now widely regarded as intrinsic to the end-of-century postcolonial literary experience, impinging on writing and the making of literature world-wide (232-3).

European exiles of the kind Edward Said speaks, victims of what Said (2000) says characterise our age, namely ‘modern warfare, imperialism, and the quasi-theological ambitions of totalitarian rulers,’ were in a very real sense sent into exile from what had once been a coherent cultural centre, to America and other parts of the world which had once been considered marginal. Said’s notion of exile does not focus on what could be seen as the reverse process, whereby the children of empire set out from the periphery bound for the centre. Gordimer’s *None to Accompany Me* focuses on exiles returning to South Africa, having left under apartheid as political exiles afraid at that time that they would be the next victims of the notorious state police. They find their politics confounded by the personal comforts they enjoyed during exile in Europe. Home offers challenges they had escaped having to face. This is true of Silko’s protagonist who cannot easily adjust to home life after years away in the Pacific as an American soldier. Being a soldier offered if nothing else an identity that grew difficult to maintain back home. He is suddenly adrift. Coetzee in *Slow Man* gives his attention to Europeans who are often at a loss to find acceptance in their new environment as emigrants in Australia.

Fragmentation seems the operative description for the postcolonial point of departure, its starting point. Ella Shohat (1992) articulates the need for turning such shards into an identifiable object, making sense of what has not so much been lost, but what has not been recognised, acknowledged, and rarely understood. Shohat rightly understands the project of understanding as urgent:

For communities which have undergone brutal ruptures, now in the process of forging a collective identity, no matter how hybrid that identity has been before, during, and after colonialism, the retrieval and reinscription of a

fragmented past becomes a crucial contemporary site for forging a resistant collective identity (109).

It is one thing to argue that those cast about by modern events feel haunted by their pasts. It is quite another to argue that they necessarily feel deprived. This is what makes postcolonial literature forward-looking. 'A source of strength in the new literatures is the ways in which linguistic, artistic, moral, and mental structures are present in various combinations, fusions, conflicts, and contradictions' (King 1996: 14). A notion of 'retrieval and reinscription' has pervasive force. The author creates for the reader a desire to get to the bottom of things; there is a pressing political urge to set the record straight. Unlike the apocalyptic explorations which manoeuvre themselves towards an inevitable impotence, the postcolonial project voices its recovery of a language of defiance. According to writers as diverse as John Edgar Wideman, Nadine Gordimer, Leslie Marmon Silko, and J.M. Coetzee, the act of recollecting is itself a form of protest.

Chapter 1: War and Protest: Women Settlers Speak Out

This war, or phase of the Twentieth Century War, laid the bases for the next (84).

Doris Lessing, *Canopus in Argos: Archives*

The principal contention of this chapter is that the reverberations of World War I and II have been largely neglected in postcolonial writing on white settlers. This chapter focuses on literary works of Eastern and Southern Africa in English. Works by European immigrants and African natives of European descent are discussed in an effort to show how the authors of these texts responded to living in rural Southern and Eastern Africa. These authors' narratives describe characters caught between the world they inhabited in Africa and the lives they had left behind. The inhabitants of these disparate lands felt at once drawn to their new surroundings and at the same time estranged from it. An attempt has been made to understand the source and expression of this tension as seen in the work of writers such as Alyse Simpson, Doris Lessing and Nadine Gordimer.

An additional aim of this study is to capture the sense of mystery Europeans felt when confronted by the grandeur of the landscape of the African savannah. The beauty of the land has been demonstrated, not so much as something to be appreciated aesthetically, but also witnessed as a phenomenon testifying to human frailty. The authors provide evidence of the ways Europeans were transformed by their lives in Africa, but their efforts to adjust and make sense of their new surroundings should be seen in the context of the emotional baggage many of them carried. Much of their disillusionment can be traced to their unrealistic expectations.

Assimilation, finally, has been shown to have been the process of adjustment these writers themselves had to undergo in order to capture truthfully the experience of survival. In this chapter, my goal is to analyse the ‘essential gesture’, as Nadine Gordimer (1984) puts it, of writers living at the edge of vast continents distant from political and cultural centres but in the context of the two world wars of the 20th century (1988: 286). These writers provide a voice to the silence and, by doing so, succeed, as André Brink has said, in creating a literature ‘fully geared to the realities of Africa’ and, by extension, to the postcolonial frontier but not free of the terrible events unfolding far away (1983: 15).

An alternative vision of imperial life emerges from settler literature. This vision can be partially explained by seeing their lives in the context of their generation’s memories of world war and the expectations they had in coming to Africa. It is, then, all the more ironic that while postcolonial feminism, as shown by Katrak, continues to draw from Said’s work, he himself has not made use of this significant body of work (1996: 234-5). The African frontier, as experienced by European settlers, was a specific experience and from it developed individual voices; nonetheless, generalisations can be made. Thematic coherence should not be confused with conformity. The literary voices of Lessing and Gordimer, and the narrative voice of Simpson, the autobiographer, remain distinct. The common vision of these authors’ protagonists is one of yearning, constrained by despair. If the ‘invention’ of Africa has been placed in the public’s mind by the Kenya’s Happy Valley’s generation of expatriates and their ‘love affair’ with Africa, this fantasy has privileged male white settlers over indigenous testimonies but also over female

narratives, whose work, taken together, cannot be so easily reduced to romanticised tropes.

Women's lives were profoundly altered by their confrontation with desolate landscapes in the context of unrealistic expectations. Simoes da Silva may be right to argue that 'both colonised and coloniser remain trapped in the hopelessness of their situations,' (2002: 5), but it is less persuasive to claim this for women writers whose protagonists have urges which point in the direction of emancipation. Africans of European descent contribute to what amounts to an assault on colonial discourse, not its affirmation; their 'projects are oriented towards the future, positing societies in which social and political hegemonic shifts have occurred' (Ashcroft 177).

The connection between subversion and subjugation is also worth one's attention. André Brink (1998), for example, has made the case for recognising the place of women in the emerging aesthetic of African letters, on the grounds that women of South Africa, black, white and coloured, have played key roles in dismantling the 'walls of silence' that one associates with the historical evolution of southern Africa (14-28). These works by women authors, while not telling the whole story, laid the foundation for an emerging voice which has come to be associated with that of African writers, both male and female (Kossew 2005: 134). These voices of white settlers and their descendants function as an early expression of now-familiar protest writing against colonialist abuses (Kossew 2005: 138). They may not have belonged in the colonies, but neither did they belong back 'home' – forever divided and hybrid, their voices express a unique estrangement.

Some settlers understood the ways their lives were being affected and changed by what could be characterised as an ordeal. These authors express a variety of possible responses one might have as a European living on the fringe of empire. In Kenya, of course, there existed an enormous range of homesteading experiences, the most well-known being the life of the aristocratic plantation owners, such as Isak Dinesen, Lord Delemere, Denys Finch Hatton, and the rest (Lewis 2009: 68). Simpson and Doris Lessing, however, came from lower-middle-class stock, the daughters or wives of men who were neither inclined nor successful enough to diversify. Each writes of the business of land ownership, the drudgery of farm labour, and the monotony of rural life. For them, it would have been impossible to understand the sentiment expressed by Dinesen in the opening of her memoir: ‘Here I am, where I ought to be’; in fact, Simoes da Silva argues that ‘these are writers for whom white mythographies in the mould of *Out of Africa* are abhorrent’ (2002: 4). Instead, they wrote stories of persons who lacked options, whose lives were monotonous, who suffered from the inability to escape the back-breaking hardships of farming virgin soil. They were pioneers who wrote of their experience out of a bitterness that comes from the profound disappointment of failure.

Part of their disappointment came from their having come to Africa with expectations for renewal; World War I had sent many war veterans such as Doris Lessing’s father to Africa in search of a new life. Simoes da Silva (1999) is right to argue that major postcolonial figures ‘were the product of, or deeply immersed in the profound cultural and political transformations of post-WWII Europe. What

needs emphasising is that this generation was often expressing and building on often-unexpressed feelings of earlier generations' (1999: 5).

When Said speaks of a 'consolidated vision,' what he leaves out is the seismic event of World War I. It makes sense for him to speak of writers 'before the great age of explicit, programmatic colonial expansion,' whom he characterises persuasively as expressing coherent visions of domestic order and moral values, but he never takes up how this vision was disordered by events in Europe in the first decades of the twentieth century (2000: 349). It is not clear how he would account for a narrative vision such as Simpson's whose work Whitlock characterises as transformative:

By transforming her own experiences into those of John and Joan, by using pseudonyms and fictitious places, Simpson is able to mimic and reverse the conventions and tropes of white settler imaginary quite ruthlessly (2000: 120).

Although not possessing the characteristics of magic realism, which are so often associated with the postcolonial corpus, this body of work nonetheless possesses disjunctions which may be said to narrate the long process of colonisation, while showing colonial authority undermined in ways less explicit than what is found in more contemporary narratives. As Sue Kossew (2004) has written, 'It is in their contemporary writing of self and place by these white women that many of these ambiguities, anxieties and dilemmas are articulated' (2004: 15). One does not dispute Said's well-articulated claim that 'there was virtual unity of purpose' in the maintenance of empire (53), but one misses in his argument an acknowledgment that

this 'virtual unity of purpose' created an unsettling burden for those either unwilling and unable to carry it.

Critical studies of Chinua Achebe (1988), André Brink (1983), and J. M. Coetzee (1988) provide a context in which to comprehend some aspects of the estrangement Europeans felt living in isolated regions of Africa. Their insights into the gradual transformation of English usage to the African setting explain why settlers had trouble making sense of and giving expression to their impressions. Coetzee makes his point principally to show the process by which South Africa acquired its voice, while Achebe is, chiefly, determined to show how certain European authors, such as Joseph Conrad, used Africa as a setting while remaining outsiders. But Achebe's idea of an African 'voice' does not exclude non-native authors:

The first point is that the African novel has to be about Africa. A pretty severe restriction, I am told. But Africa is not only a geographical expression; it is also a metaphysical landscape – it is in fact a view of the world and of the whole cosmos perceived from a particular perspective (1988: 92).

Coetzee (1988), in *White Writing*, speaks of an African language as the product of a shared African experience:

The quest for an authentic language is pursued within a framework in which language, consciousness, and landscape are interrelated. For the European to learn an African language 'from the outside' will therefore not be enough: he must know the language 'from the inside' as well, that is, know it 'like a native,' sharing the mode of consciousness of the people born to it, and to that extent giving up his European identity (7).

The landscapes of these distinct but similar regions have been found to have had a profound impact on those living in isolation within them. References within the texts to Africa's vastness show how Europeans felt diminished and threatened living surrounded by the 'strangeness of the encircling veld.' The texts demonstrate how farmers were often fearful of their surroundings. The African plains, ancient and endless, remained a place of mystery for the settlers. Passages from the literature suggest that whites, regardless of the number of years they remained in Africa, continued to feel alienated. On the other hand, the children of European settlers, who grew attached to their surroundings, came to feel estranged from parents preoccupied by memories of their former homes.

The function of silence has been shown to have been complex and of profound importance (Achebe 1988; Brink 1998; Simoes da Silva 2005; Griffiths 2006). Silence accompanied the 'ancient terrors' and the 'hostile bush' in forming the mental landscape of European settlers on the African frontier. The relationship between the daily labours of farmers and the means they found for expressing themselves has been discussed. Taciturnity has been recognised as a response to the desolate landscape, as well as a product of social estrangement and violence (Griffiths 2006: 167).

The connection between silence and fear, combined with the relationship of silence to anger, shows how settlers expressed their anti-social prejudices. Silence reveals itself as a survival mechanism for the victims of prolonged suffering (Van Herk 1996). Alyse Simpson's comparison of her and her husband's return to

England following six years in Kenya, to the experience of soldiers back from war, is significant because it captures the feeling settlers had that there were few words available to describe their sense of loss in the face of natural devastation and the wreckage of their own lives. Seeing themselves as a cross between victims and veterans is crucial to a generation haunted by memories of war (Fussell 31-33).

Alyse Simpson (1985), the author of *The Land That Never Was*, settled in Kenya as an immigrant, a landowner, with her husband from Mannington, England, during the years between the two World Wars. Her autobiography, published in 1937, tells the story of her and her husband's failure to make a success of their homesteading venture. It has been characterised as 'a direct inversion of the romance of Africa offered in *Out of Africa* [Dinesen]' by Tony Simoes da Silva (2002: 1).

Simpson's story and others like it can be found in fictional and autobiographical narratives written by settlers in Africa. This landscape produced a fictional world that Simoes da Silva has characterised as alternating 'between reminiscing and a coming to grips with brutal political contingencies' (2002: 2). I am arguing that the force of these narratives of rural life provides powerful evidence within colonial literatures of an alternative to the 'consolidated vision' Edward Said finds in European writers whose works he characterises as 'implicated in the rationale for imperialist expansion' (2000: 353). That writings can be found to support his argument is not in doubt, but his exclusion of other authors such as Simpson and Lessing from his study, *Culture and Imperialism* (1994), creates the impression that a single body of literature exists (75). I hope to clarify how the

‘unsettled’ among the white colonists, especially women, voiced their struggle to preserve their independence from imperial expectation (Sakinofsky 2009).

Colonialist writings undoubtedly supported the claims of Empire and, thus, served in large measure to give a clear conscience to those whose interests were furthered by it (New 1996). On this point, Said’s argument can be said to be sound. However, a substantial body of literature can be shown to have existed side by side with those writings. One does not want to dismiss Said’s central contention that an imperial culture flourished, maintained, in Homi Bhabha’s terms, by ‘its disciplinary generalisations, its mimetic narratives, its homologous empty time, its seriality, its progress, its customs and coherence,’ but one also finds certain writers whose voices are ‘distinctive, signficatory, influential and identifiable’ (1994: 195).

Part of Said’s tendency to focus his attention away from rather than on the transgressive or discordant voices of women may be related to his sense of himself as part of Fanon’s articulation of a rhetoric of independence, with its concomitant righteous binary. C.L. Innes (1996) states:

Long before Edward Said published *Orientalism*, Franz Fanon had described (in *Wretched of the Earth*) the colonial world as a Manichean world, win which the world of the native is the negation of the world of the settler (122).

In *Culture and Imperialism*, Said, after going to such lengths to define hegemony, or to extend and make use of Gramsci’s initial concept, fails to analyse counter-hegemonic influences, such as the works by the authors considered here. It is perhaps for this reason that one prefers the Edward Said of less ideologically driven

works that privilege, but do not define, an arena of human endeavour that remains outside hegemonic categories. He acknowledges a domain such as this:

In human history there is always something beyond the reach of dominating systems, no matter how deeply they saturate society, and this is obviously what makes change possible, limits power in Foucault's sense, and hobbles the theory of that power' (2000: 216).

In the narratives of settler life, especially those of Simpson and Lessing, can be found voiced the anxieties and frustrations of women who found it impossible to make the adjustments necessary to find acceptance and peace expected of them by their husbands, colonial administrators, and even by distant relatives. As argued by John Kucich, 'we must not forget how powerful a role ideals of virtuous suffering in the consolidation of middle-culture culture[,] even in the remotest outposts of empire (11). The women, unlike their husbands with their military training, were not equipped to suffer in silence as was expected.

It goes without saying, as Spivak (1986) argues, that it 'should not be possible to read nineteenth-century British literature without remembering that imperialism, understood as England's social mission, was a crucial part of the cultural representation of England to the English' (262). At the same time one should be mindful of the centrality of imperialism, one would like to suggest that it should be equally intolerable for one to read twentieth-century literature without being mindful of expressions of discontent. When one thinks of colonialism, one is apt to think of it as a 'by and large male enterprise,' but its depiction has not been limited to male authors (Naudé 2005: 4).

Women authors form an articulate repudiation of the consolidated vision Said encounters. As Ketu H. Katrak (1996) puts it: '[P]ost-colonial women writers enable a reconceptualization of politics...' (234). This body of literature should not be ignored when seeking to explore how an area of conquest, such as Africa, was understood and experienced. They testify through their expressions of estrangement, and can be seen to form, along with anti-apartheid writers, a kind of counter-hegemony (Kossew, 1996:5). Settler narratives have a voice that cannot easily be dismissed as expressions of hegemonic 'normality,' but voices of distress, trauma, and disarming perceptions:

[A] range of contemporary critical theories suggest that it is from those who have suffered the sentence of history – subjugation, domination, diaspora, displacement – that we learn our most enduring lessons for living and thinking (246).

They may be seen to contribute to a process of 'transnational dissemination,' according to Homi Bhabha, who sees in these disparate voices a coherence that defies Said's analysis:

For it is by living on the borderline of history and language, on the limits of race and gender, that we are in a position to translate the differences between them into a kind of solidarity (1994: 244).

Taken together, it can be said that their voices at the very least contest the colonial enterprise and as a result contribute to a significantly different view of colonial doctrine.

The language of the African frontier emerged to meet many needs.

Communication was not necessarily one of them. Coetzee (1988) argues persuasively that the language of the South African novel served to express an absence of social coherence:

What response do rocks and stones make to the poet who urges them to utter their true names? As we might expect, it is silence. Indeed, so self-evidently foredoomed is the quest that we may ask why it persists so long. The answer is perhaps that the failure of the listening imagination to intuit the true language of Africa, the continued apprehension of silence (by the poet) or blankness (by the painter) stands for, or in the place of, another failure, by no means inevitable: a failure to imagine a peopled landscape, an inability to conceive a society in South Africa in which there is a place for the self (9).

Alienation is the true experience of the white settler on the African veld. Silence, perhaps, is the appropriate response to feeling that one does not belong. As the African landscape was experienced as an inhospitable domain, it is all the more comprehensible that it was a challenge to conceive of an African 'society.' There was always just the self and the vastness of nature.

Africa for Alyse Simpson was a setting for despair. The landscape came to serve as a reminder of mental desolation, as she tells us in what Gillian Whitlock calls her 'autobiography of alienation' (119). The land was as empty as their lives, or of the lives of the characters they created. This is how she came to see her life and the land she came to know as her own:

On this, my way to Calvary, I felt profoundly critical of the whole of my existence, as well as my surroundings. It seemed a dead, unreal world...there is no magic in the middle of the day in Africa. A few white butterflies

hovered in the still air; that was all. At noon Kenya leaves you alone to your own devices; like a sleeping cat, it awakes and stretches itself at sunset. A couple of gazelles crossed our path; some vultures dropped from the sky, skimmed above us curiously and then flew off again. We had not met a single soul, white or black (112).

Alyse Simpson was the one for whom Africa never became a second home. It could be argued that her estrangement came precisely from the fact that her real home remained in England and, therefore, her sense of alienation grew from her inability to adjust to the alien terrain.

War veterans and their children came to Africa to make a living, often heavily in debt, with little income and large mortgages; this in contrast to Isak Dinesen who, according to Shiva Naipaul (1980), expressed in her memoir an attitude that functioned as an ‘act of arrogation, an assertion of implicit overlordship’ (147-148). Naipaul, not unlike Said, reads the opening lines of *Out of Africa* (1937) (‘I had a farm in Africa.’) as an appropriative sensibility, expressing a sense of entitlement disguised as sentimentality (3). Unlike her lower-class neighbors, Dinesen belonged more to the hunter class, whose aristocratic sportsmen took delight in bagging lions. Whitlock (2000) argues that ‘The culture of the hunt, translated into a distinctively African variant of the safari, is fundamental to the aristocratic romance of freedom in Kenya’ (121). Although Simon Lewis (2009) persuasively claims that aristocratic recreation disguised the economic realities of the Blixen estate:

In setting the farm up with a fallacious Old MacDonaldesque autonomy as a place where outcasts can feel at home because it, like them, is not really of

the landscape, Blixen significantly underplays the fact that ‘property and profit were among the central preoccupations of the society they made in Kenya’ (3).

One of the extraordinary things about the myth of Kenya’s so-called Golden Years is how much it continues to hold on; the image of the struggling settler has never taken hold as part of the legacy of colonialism.

Yet, even among the moneyed, leisure class, who came to Africa for recreational hunting, the shadow of war exhaustion and the need for escape can be seen. While the narratives of white women settlers remain the focus of this chapter, it is noteworthy that signs of war anxiety overshadow and preoccupy the characters in Hemingway’s short story ‘The Short Happy Life of Francis Macomber’ (1936). The light-hearted banter between husband and wife gives way to questions of fear and preoccupations with cowardice that belong more properly to a foxhole or the not-too- distant trenches of the War. The story, as can be said of much postwar fiction, is ‘steeped in the images and dynamics’ of the Great War’ (Fussell 1975, 319). Macomber and his wife’s inability to shrug off his having flinched at the crucial moment and therefore failed to kill his first lion preys on them, poisoning the atmosphere with petty accusations on her part and crippling self-doubt on his. Even Wilson, the guide and professional hunter, cannot help but blame Macomber:

So, Robert Wilson thought to himself, she *is* giving him a ride, isn’t she? Or do you suppose that’s her idea of putting up a good show? How should a woman act when she discovers her husband is a bloody coward? (10).

Actually, despite the fact that Wilson is the professional hunter, and is, according to Judith Thurman's biography of Isak Dinesen, a character based largely on Dinesen's husband Baron Bror Blixon (1982: 426), he shares with the Maccombers a common language, a frame of reference that suggests a shared experience. That experience includes having lived within the shadow of WWI. Macomber's wife senses that Wilson's expertise goes beyond recreational hunting. She says to Wilson, 'That's Mr. Wilson's trade. Mr. Wilson is really very impressive killing anything. You do kill anything, don't you?' (8).

All three are equally appalled by Macomber's failure. Wilson vows to pull back, to 'see them through the safari on a very formal basis' (7). But he expresses himself in the sort of officious jargon that characterised the postwar era and, according to Fussell, the century: 'Even if now attenuated and largely metaphorical, the diction of war resides everywhere just below the surface of modern experience (1975: 189). Wilson would, he says, accord the Maccombers 'distinguished consideration' and remember to keep his distance (7). The wife, however, engages in cruel mockery, while Macomber himself frets about containing his humiliation and keeping it from getting back to the Club.

Macomber, however, is given a second chance when he agrees to go back out on a second hunt and succeeds rather spectacularly in killing a buffalo. This event changes everything, and when Macomber's triumph is noted by Wilson, he expresses his approval in military terms:

He'd seen it in the ar work the same way. More of a change than any loss of virginity. Fear gone like an operation. Something else grew in its place. Main

thing a man had. Made him into a man. Women knew it too. No bloody fear (33).

The men at this moment share a sense of relief, a sense of triumph; they are, despite the friction that opened between them, in harmony. They share the belief, articulated by Wilson, that through the ordeal, Macomber has redeemed himself. He can once again respect himself and should expect to be respected. It is an event that echoes a long tradition, as described by Kucich, which revolves ‘around the sanctification implicit in the imperial martyr’s suffering – a sanctification that allied imperial pain with redemption...’ (5). That suffering, as understood by Wilson, required silence; Macomber’s refusal to keep his earlier humiliation to himself had earned him Wilson’s contempt. When Macomber finally rises to the occasion and fearlessly kills the buffalo, he succeeds in regaining Wilson’s admiration.

Said claims that imperial hegemony was maintained by what he defines as a formulation of triumph and domination (1994: 8-9). Kucich in his suggestive study of popular fiction finds expressions of what he terms ‘imperial masochism’, pointing to modes of imperial rhetoric that valued martyrdom, honoured suffering, and ennobled submission. It amounted, according to the author, to ‘imperial self-destructiveness’ (8):

Chivalric ideals long held by the upper class, which were appropriated by gentrified and professionalized middle-class ranks in the second half of the nineteenth century, revolved around the honor conferred by both physical and emotional trial (9).

In this passage, we see that it is such a trial that Macomber has been taken through and endured. This makes his eventual success all the more satisfying. Margot Macomber, however, sees immediately the consequence for her of a newly confident husband and is appalled by Wilson's triumphant talk of newly-found heroism. She lashes out:

‘You're both talking rot,’ said Margot, ‘Just because you've chased some helpless animals in a motor car you talk like heroes’ (33).

She intuits immediately how this will change her relationship with her husband and is threatened by the exclusionary banter between the men.

Hemingway's tourists on safari do not stay long enough to develop the anxieties and fears of living in a strange land. They do, however, carry with them the baggage of expectation which in Hemingway's short story plays out so tragically. If tropes of entitlement can be found in Dinesen and Hemingway's world of the upper classes, it is noteworthy how quickly they are lost upon the protagonists of writers such Simpson and Lessing. Part of their suffering derives from their awareness of their failure to achieve the expected. Gillian Whitlock speaks of Alyse Simpson's female protagonist as paralysed by her doubts and fears: ‘Yet in *The Land that Never Was* the female narrator is increasingly silenced, finally reduced to a vegetative state where there is no perception of time or change’ (121).

Settler literature emerges in direct response to imperial myth. It is Said himself who has brought attention to such myth-making (Bahri 2004:205). What he overlooked are the settlers, chiefly women, who were victims of this construct. Characters struggle to find the conviction that they belong on the land they have

settled, but strain before the awareness that they have fallen short. Trained in Victorian parlours to think like Sherlock Holmes, men and women who considered themselves sharp observers suddenly found themselves unable to read the signs. Pre-war tropes of rural entitlement give way to persistent postwar anguish (Fussell 1975).

Doris Lessing and Alyse Simpson created protagonists who rebel against the alien contours of the African land. There was something about the land which created a sense of foreboding and of fear in those who knew it. Ironically, this was not limited to those who came to the land as visitors or as tourists, but stayed with those who lived in Africa for their entire lives. Lessing adds fear to the list of responses the African landscape elicited:

I had read of this feeling, how the bigness and silence of Africa, under the ancient sun, grows dense and takes shape in the mind, till even the birds seem to call menacingly, and a deadly spirit comes out of the trees and the rocks. You move warily, as if your very passing disturbs something old and evil, something dark and big and angry that might suddenly rear and strike from behind (*Stories* 55).

For Lessing, it is as if the longer one lives surrounded by the vast expanse of Africa, the more mysterious it becomes.

Some postcolonial interpreters see these fears as part of the process of 'literary enracination': 'As they seek to understand, name, domesticate, and farm the outback, the bush, the desert scrub, etc., those ecosystems spring traps and surprises' (Hughes 2). Doris Lessing captures this struggle among the settlers to find a way to live in colonial Africa, but became a bit unsure in 1958 that it could be done: 'All

white African literature is the literature of exile, not from Europe but from Africa' ('Desert Child' 700).

The white settlers in Africa experienced oddities of nature that violated their tastes and expectations. Part of the settler experience was not feeling comfortable with one's surroundings. 'A white child,' Lessing writes in 'The Old Chief Mshlanga' (1951),

opening its eyes curiously on a sun-suffused landscape, a gaunt and violent landscape, might be supposed to accept it as her own, to the msasa trees and the thorn trees and familiars... This child could not see a msasa tree, or the thorn, for what they were. Her books held tales of alien fairies, her rivers ran slow and peaceful, and she knew the names of the little creatures that lived in English streams, when the words 'the veld' meant strangeness, though she could remember nothing else... [I]t was the veld that seemed unreal; the sun was a foreign sun' (49-50).

In the first place, one notes how vividly Lessing describes the cultural 'interference' that makes it difficult for this little girl, the daughter of white settlers in Rhodesia, to experience her surroundings directly. Homi Bhabha argues that understanding and tracing the cultural interactions present at this moment of finding such a girl in such a place is problematic (1994: 234). What is foreign carries within a world of such divergent meanings that Bhabha characterises this arena as possessing 'incommensurable differences' (235). The task of making sense of such cultural differences must finally acknowledge that one will always be left with something inaccessible, or as he calls it, 'the untranslatable – alien and foreign' (235). It is my contention that what interferes with this girl's ability to comprehend her

surroundings is made all the more complicated by her past. Fairy tales and the rich imagery of the English countryside was surely part of what made up this interference; in addition, if we understand Lessing's narratives, the reverberations of imperial militarism and war should be counted as well.

In the colonies of Kenya and Rhodesia, the recently arrived of the first and second decades of the twentieth century carried burdens from the old world that weighed down men and women alike. Doris Lessing's father, an embittered veteran of World War I who lost a leg in battle, and her mother, a nurse, struck out soon after the war for Persia, now Iran. It was there that the author was born, although she moved later with her family to a farm in what is now called Zimbabwe. Lessing's memories of her early days in Persia and Rhodesia possess an astonishing emotional vividness and intensity. She begins always with something specific, such as her brother's birth. 'It is your baby, Doris,' her mother intoned, 'and you must love it.' And then she begins to look at the relation between what was said and what was lived:

I remember very well – though how old I was I do not know – leaning against my father's knee, the real one, not the metal-and-wood knee, while my mother chatted on and on in her social voice to some visitor about her children, how they brought her low and sapped her, how all her own talents were withering unused, how the little girl in particular (she was so difficult, so naughty!) made her life a total misery (114).

It is typical of Lessing to fold into her anecdotes references to her father's war injuries even when she is not directly referring to them or to her father. His injuries haunted him and young Doris.

One is not, of course, surprised to find memories of childhood in an author's memoirs, but the interplay of past and present is at the core of Lessing's concerns. Lessing remains obsessed with how memories ultimately shape our dreams. From the memory of an early disappointment at not being able to attend a performance of *Macbeth*, Lessing (1994) contemplates how her values derived from her parents' disappointments:

Unfairness...injustice...the bitterness of it. But what I would like to know is, where did the violence of that sense of injustice come from? I was seven years old...Surely it had to come from my parents, particularly from my father's voice murmuring through my days and through my sleep, too, of the war, the betrayal of the soldiers, the wicked stupidities and corruption of government, just expectation and faith betrayed (226).

Lessing provides a persuasive answer to the question of the source of her father's unhappiness in her memoir of her parents' lives, overshadowed by her father's memories of the trenches in France during World War I. J.M. Coetzee (2002) sees the memory of war as central to Lessing's formation as an author and finds traces of her father's bitterness throughout her work. He quotes from her autobiography:

As a child born in the aftermath of World War I, Lessing is convinced that, through her parents, she too vibrated to the *basso ostinato* of that disastrous epoch. 'I wonder now how many of the children brought up in families crippled by war had the same poison running in their veins from before they could even speak' (241).

The tropes of settler alienation cannot be fully explained without an examination of this war-haunted motif:

Even as a child I knew his obsessive talking about the Trenches was a way of ridding himself of the horrors. So I had the full force of the Trenches, tanks, star-shells, shrapnel, howitzers – the lot – through my childhood, and felt as if the black cloud he talked about was there, pressing down on me (Lessing 2009: 170).

Lessing has an acute eye for identifying the war-wounded. Her father's memories seared themselves on to his impressionable daughter, making her an observant, sensitive witness. The connection between the war-haunted bungalow that Lessing grew up in and the world of Franz Kafka, then, is found in this excruciating event, one that Kafka's biographer, Reiner Stach (2005), has described as comparable only to that of the Holocaust:

The crisis of July 1914 is the most precisely documented, most intensively researched political event in the history of Europe, and yet, with the exception of the Holocaust, it is the event that puts our understanding of history to the harshest test (444).

Admittedly, the Holocaust stands out for reasons beyond scale of normal destruction, touching on issues that may not pertain to the trenches, but Stach seeks to remind readers of the scope of the catastrophe:

...[T]he Great War was different from anything people had been able to imagine up to that point. It went beyond any national or ethnic point of view. During the war, an average of 6,000 soldiers was killed each day and 13,000 were wounded (457).

What is worth emphasising is the lasting influence of the Great War, its reverberations, not only for those immediately touched by it, but well beyond the

armistice. Paul Fussell has said that ‘the Great War establishes an archetype for subsequent violence’ that continues to this day (324). Imagery of the Great War continues throughout the century, Fussell argues that, even after the Second World War, imagery of ‘trenches, wire, mass graves’ is sustained by historical recurrence. One can ‘conceive of the events running from 1914 to 1945 as another Thirty Years’ War and the two world wars as virtually a single historical episode’ (Fussell: 318).

One possibility is that Lessing’s father’s bitterness stayed with him, an internal battle, albeit self-destructive. She makes clear, however, that his torment infected the family, first his wife and then little Doris, whose anxiety-ridden characters should be read in the context of her father’s war obsession. ‘I remember,’ Lessing writes,

crouching in the bush, my hands tight over my eyes: ‘I won’t, I will not. Stop. I won’t listen.’ My mother’s voice? I could have listened, but it was too much. The fate of parents who most terribly need their offspring to listen, to ‘take in’ something of their own substance, is often to be thwarted. My father’s need was, as it were, legitimate. The Trenches, yes, I had to accept that. But my mother also needed a listener, and to her needs I tried to be oblivious (2008: 170).

One of Lessing’s narrative strategies and, more crucially, political sensibilities grew out of her early training as a listener. ‘Later, much later, did I see that my mother’s wartime ordeals were ravaging her from within just as my father’s Trenches were eating away at him’ (170). On this subject of Lessing’s growing affinity for her father’s generation and its terrible losses, Margaret Drabble has perceptively written:

The legacy of two world wars now seems to weigh more heavily than ever on Lessing, as it did on the poet Ted Hughes in later years. ‘Beware, beware the angry dead,’ wrote D.H. Lawrence in poem after poem towards the end of his life. The tragedy of Lessing’s father’s lost and wounded generation became not less, but more important to her with time, and his bitterness more prophetically haunting (*Guardian*: 06/12/08).

This combination of anger and visionary integrity placed Lessing on a collision course with her mother, leading to her departure from the family farm and, eventually, from Africa, as a critic of colonial racism. *Under My Skin* (1994) takes the reader through all this, exploring the causes of her abandonment of her first husband and their young children, analyses the complex relationship she had with Gottfried Lessing, her second husband, and explains their involvement with progressive intellectuals in Salisbury, while providing insights into her development as a young author. This author’s sensibility grew out of the toxic brew that linked Lessing’s parents and, for her, Africa to Europe:

Thinking about those years, it is easy to feel them now like parallel streams of experiences: the books, the talk of war, the reminiscences, then, the illnesses, physical and mental. Stronger than all of these, the bush, being in it (2008: 172).

For Doris and her family, however, it was not the little flowers gardens set up as remembrances of the good old days back ‘home,’ but rather the bush as refuge from the agonising memories of the trenches.

It might be comforting to think that the horrors of the trenches had been confined to Europe and its victims to ‘the lost generation’ of whites. It would

certainly make the World War a less certain topic for postcolonialists. The European war, however, not only unsettled the colonists but the indigenous populations as well. In fact, according to Anna Dao in her story 'A Perfect Wife' (1999), the impending news of the coming war dominated village life:

War! The word had now become official. From now on, war was a reality. Fear hung like a big rain cloud in the sky, ready to burst wide open. It slammed down upon their faces. A unified silent prayer rose and spilled over everyone's lips as a rumbling ground: 'War! Soubahania! God save us! Protect us!' The elders knew, the women understood, and the youth would soon find out (160).

In reading the following passage, one might be unsure whether the author is the white Doris Lessing or the black Anna Dao. Certainly, the bitterness is shared by the two authors, as well as the awareness of the ironies of a colonial power conscripting soldiers from the indigenous peoples. This shared awareness confirms W.H. New's insight, quoted in *The Empire Writes Back*, into the ways 'time, place and community ... give rise to comparable attitudes and constricting dilemmas' (Ashcroft Griffiths Tiffin 1989: 28). This is again from Dao's 'A Perfect Wife':

'They' the people, who had practiced hospitality and welcomed 'visitors' only to wind up intruded upon, disposed of, shunned and set aside, were being called out and forced to defend the now anxious and nervous coloniser. The coloniser, who was afraid of the same fate he had once inflicted, now demanded 'their' assistance to help drive away and keep out a new intruder who was threatening to invade and take away his homeland, his history, and his lady love (164).

Dao puts her finger on one of the means by which colonialism thrived, that is, through its ability to adopt and manipulate its own myths. Imperialism, Elleke Boehmer (1995) points out, developed a mechanism of adaptability by which its control was maintained:

The *transferability* of empire's organizing metaphors is one of the key distinguishing characteristics of colonialists discourse – one that made possible the intertextuality of writing under empire. Itinerant and adaptive, focusing colonial myths, activating imperialist energies, what we shall call the *travelling metaphor* formed an essential constitutive element of an intensely imagined colonial system (52).

Along with the myths would come the haunting, unshakeable memories. Just as the seeds of discontent were planted by releasing thousands of war-ravaged European veterans with their unrealistically high hopes raised, African veterans of European wars returned home unwilling to remain obedient for long.

Alyse Simpson speaks of the way words slowly fell away from her husband like a shell-shocked war veteran. Only their relatives in England had much to say about Africa, precisely because they knew next to nothing about it. Silence accompanied the isolation experienced by the Simpsons on their Kenyan homestead; John Simpson's only form of communication was the daily log he kept, in which he recorded the mundane events which stretched between intermittent crises. As with Lessing's autobiographical writings, Simpson equates life in the bush with a kind of war:

The everyday task of a pioneer on the Equator, his Sisyphean labour, will not encourage him to talk about himself; like the soldier back from the war or the

sailor back from the sea, he will keep silent. It is not he who will tell you of this distant Eldorado. Let others write of giant elephant-hunts, of facing charging lions and rhinoceros, or the love-life of the natives and other interesting facts. His concern from day to day is, 'will it rain soon?; will the 'fly' get the coffee?; shall I have to write home for more money?; or shall I keep within the limits of my overdraft?' he cannot ease his burden by leaning over the garden gate in the pleasant cool of the evening, discussing his day's work with a neighbor (6).

It is not so much that these authors do not give voice to human triumphs, but that they expect every pleasure to be followed by a greater disappointment. Every victory is won in the context of human defeat.

In her short story 'The Second Hut' (1951), Lessing fictionalises the conflicts one imagines she witnessed in those early years as a settler in southern Rhodesia. One might expect to find Lessing's views of racial dynamics, but the central conflict in this story does not involve race. Although there is a racial incident, between blacks and whites, the central conflict springs in fact from class prejudice. And this conflict, in turn, arises from deeper antagonisms which have as much to do with the protagonist's military service and his expectations which make it impossible for him to make a new life among the 'natives,' black and white.

'The Second Hut' provides a vivid narration of the sort of 'problem' that Homi Bhabha identifies as cultural: 'Culture only emerges as a problem, or a problematic, at the point at which there is a loss of meaning in the contestation and articulation of everyday life, between classes, genders, races, nations' (1994: 50).

The story concerns a former British soldier, Major Carruthers, his wife, and two children who have spent several years trying to make a go of running a farm in an unspecified British colony in Africa. The Major is described by Lessing as someone who had been a soldier but who had not fully been a part of the military:

He had been a regular soldier, not an unsuccessful one, but his success had been at the cost of a continual straining against his own inclination; and he did not know himself what his inclinations were (75).

The tension Lessing describes in the Major's makeup explains the strain between him and wife on the one hand, and the crisis that arises between himself and his overseer, the Afrikaner Van Heerden, who arrives at the farm with a pregnant wife and nine children. Lessing describes Carruthers as a torn character, as though he were not comfortable with himself, as soldier or as a farmer:

Something stubbornly unconforming kept him apart from his fellow officers. It was an inward difference: he did not think of himself as a soldier (75).

He had completely given up the outward appearance of his soldier's past, looking at least the part of an impoverished farmer: 'Now, in his farm clothes there was nothing left to suggest the soldier' (75).

Gradually, however, the Major will find himself at odds with his newly hired overseer, a conflict that pits him as much as anything against the lack of discipline and order in Van Heerden's personal life, a failure of discipline that he increasingly finds intolerable in himself. His wife is bedridden with numerous unidentified ailments, which he believes to be a product of despair and alienation. She has, in fact, many of the symptoms Lessing describes her own mother to have had: 'My

mother was ill all the time. She had ‘neuralgia’, ‘sick headaches’, ‘a heart’ (2008: 182-3). Their children, who are away in England at boarding school, would have to be brought back to Africa, and he is no longer able to endure the demands of trying to run the farm virtually alone.

Carruthers, despite all claims to the contrary, never intended to succeed as an African farmer. His heart, like his wife’s, is still in England, which has remained for all their years in Africa, home. Both the Major and his wife are consumed by hesitations, resentments, and anxieties which derive from their insistence on seeing themselves, their farm, and their failures through the eyes of their relatives in England. The story captures what Coetzee has described as ‘the class obsession of [Lessing’s] parents’ (2002: 234). Even their farm house takes on the look of its inhabitants, who care more about maintaining their social standing than about facing up to their immediate concerns:

The house had that brave, worn appearance of those struggling to keep up appearances... Inside, good but battered furniture stood over worn places in the rugs; the piano was out of tune and the notes stuck; the silver tea things from the big narrow house in England where his brother (a lawyer) now lived were used as ornaments, and inside were fits of paper, accounts, rubber rings, old corks (78).

Carruthers’ need to hire professional help, that is, in addition to native workers, comes about because of the absence of a wife as a full-time helper. The loneliness, despair, and hopelessness she suffers clearly are exacerbated by her husband’s attitude:

Children had no right to feel the aching pity which showed on their faces whenever they looked at him. They were too polite, too careful, too scrupulous. When they went onto their mother's room she grieved sorrowfully over them, and they submitted patiently to her emotion. All those weeks of the school holiday after she was taken ill, they moved about the farm like two strained and anxious ghosts... He was glad they were going back to school soon... (79).

But the father misses the point entirely. All of these tensions could have been eased by the decision to keep them at the farm. It was precisely because their parents had turned them into guests that they had become so neurotic and trying.

The problem, in fact, could have been anticipated as soon as he brought his wife to the farm and asked her to give up what was familiar to her.

That pleasant conventional pretty English girl had been bred to make a perfect wife for the professional soldier she had imagined him to be, but chance had wrenched her on to this isolated African farm, into a life which she submitted herself to, as if it had nothing to do with her (78).

As this passage quotes suggests, the Major himself was no more able to make adjustments than his wife. In the final analysis, his ability to persevere probably had to do with physical stamina and the fact that unlike his wife he had been better trained than she to suffer. As Kucich shows, the Victorian middle class placed great store in one's ability to suffer:

The ideals of stoic masculinity exalted by late-century adventure fiction were already present, in one form or another, among all Victorian social classes, including work-class cultures, whether conservative, militaristic, or radical (9).

The Major found this easier than his wife to suffer in the ways expected of a soldier, whereas his wife fought back with everything she had. The soldier in Major Carruthers knew to accept his lot, thus creating in him an odd sort of passivity or certainly a willingness to accept his fate. His wife, like many of Lessing's female protagonists, accepts nothing. In 'The Second Hut' the wife gets through it, but elsewhere the women express frustrations that develop into rage and in others into insanity.

As shown repeatedly, the Major and his wife were equally closed to Africa, to the land, and to its people. This is how Carruthers greeted his new assistant in his own mind: 'Major Carruthers instinctively dropped his standards of value as he looked, for this man was an Afrikaner, and thus came into an outside category' (81). He later considers how he might have treated the man had he been an Englishman. As an Afrikaner, although Carruthers did in fact hire the man, Van Heerden was given an old tool shed to live in:

He could not have the man in the house: the idea came into his head and was quickly dismissed. They had nothing in common, they would make each other uncomfortable – that was how he put it to himself... Underneath, Major Carruthers knew that if his new assistant had been an Englishman, with the same upbringing, he would have found a corner in his house and a welcome as a friend (82).

Even the Major's squeamishness reveals an effete mannerism which can be interpreted as a sign of his feeling superior to the less refined Afrikaner assistant. It

is an elegant detail which captures in essence why the Major was bound to fail as a farmer and also, perhaps, why he never felt comfortable in the military:

Van Heerden did what Major Carruthers would have died rather than do: he tore the web across with his bare hands, crushed the spider between his fingers, and brushed them lightly against the walls to free them from the clinging silky strands and the sticky mush of insect-body (82).

Rather than admiring the Afrikaner, if for nothing other than his fearlessness, the Major notes the act as an example of Van Heerden's crude inferiority.

This circumstance brings to mind Achille Mbembe's central insight into what he calls the obscenity of power (2006).

It is here, within the confines of this intimacy, that the forces of tyranny in Africa must be studied. Such research must go beyond institutions, beyond formal positions of power, and beyond the written rules, and examine how the implicit and explicit are interwoven, and how the practices of those who command and those who are assumed to obey are so entangled as to render both powerless. For it is precisely the situations of powerlessness that are the situations of violence par excellence (69).

Mbembe speaks directly to his concerns regarding power relations in Africa, but it seems to me that his insight can be applied more broadly. Be that as it may, it is germane to relationships seen in Lessing's fiction. One of the core emotions driving Lessing's protagonists is this realisation of powerlessness, in the women particularly, the sense of having no control over their lives and of being totally dependent on their often unreliable husbands.

The Carruthers embody this dynamic of impending violence arising from paralysis and an hysteria from helplessness. The Englishman's wife is ill in bed, the children away at school, and Carruthers is feeling rather satisfied with himself for having hired an assistant and for overlooking the fact that he has hired an Afrikaner. Carruthers likes Van Heerden. Things begin to go wrong, however, when Carruthers discovers one of Van Heerden's children playing around in the bush and then, going over to the assistant's hut, finds the wife doing some cooking and the rest of the brood running around. The sight of the Afrikaner huddled in such squalid surroundings unnerves Carruthers and sends him off in an introspective rage:

Fear rose high in him. For a few moments he inhabited the landscape of his dreams, a grey country full of sucking menace, where he suffered what he would not allow himself to think of while awake: the grim poverty that could overtake him if his luck did not return; and if he refused to submit to his brother and return to England (84).

The dilemma of sorting out opposing values and contradictory interests drives the Englishman to distraction. On the one hand, he wants to dismiss Van Heerden for misrepresenting himself or for allowing Carruthers to believe that he was single. On the other hand, he is paralysed by guilt and perhaps some compassion. He is also frankly impressed by the Dutchman's ability to stand up to the enormous strain of responsibility. Compared to the Major, the Dutchman bears up well, looks fit and undisturbed, while the Major knows for himself that he has begun to show the strain of trying to manage a family of only four.

As a result of these mixed feelings, the Englishman decides to have a second hut built for the Dutchman's family. To arrange this, he must ask his native workers

to pitch in on what effectively would be their only day off. But the problem was that the natives loathed the Dutchman, who, unlike Carruthers, was disrespectful towards them, shouted at them, and ‘treated them like dogs.’ So what he would have preferred to have been a request turned into an order. It is in fact the moment when the Major asserts his former identity as an officer. It is as if in the face of this alternative life, the farmer’s existence, he suddenly finds himself reverting to the behaviours of a military officer demanding obedience and order.

This is for Lessing an internal struggle played out by those colonists of the postwar generation who, like her father, had come to Africa and found it a lifetime struggle to impose themselves on the environment. This is expressed in her description of Major Gale, the officer-turner-farmer in her short story ‘The DeWets Come to Kloof Grange.’ Unlike Major Carruthers, however, Major Gale had a much clearer idea of how to maintain order, beginning with personal appearance. Lessing describes him as representative of a type, perhaps more common than the non-conformist Carruthers, who for all intents and purposes had decided to let himself go:

Major Gale was a tall and still military figure, even in his khaki bush-shirt and shorts. He changed them twice a day. His shorts were creased as folded paper, and the six pockets of his shirt were always buttoned up tight. His small head, with its polished surface of black hair, his tiny jaunty black moustache, his farmer’s hands with their broken but clean nails – all these seemed to say that it was no easy matter not to let oneself go, not to let this damned disintegrating gaudy easy-going country get under one’s skin (105).

That Sunday morning, things got off to a slow start, but with the Major supervising the work himself and therefore taking responsibility for whatever resentment the natives might have felt, progress was made on the structure throughout the morning. When the midday break came, Carruthers went back home to relax, but fell asleep and did not awaken until late afternoon. He made haste to the work site only to find what he had dreaded already under way, namely, mutiny:

There stood the Dutchman, in a flaring temper, shouting at the natives who lounged in front of him, laughing openly. They had only just returned to work. As Major Carruthers approached, he saw Van Heerden using his open palms in a series of quick slaps against their faces, knocking them sideways against each other: it was as if he were cuffing his own children in a fit of anger (92).

While the fire itself shocks Carruthers, what disturbs him to the point that he decides finally to give in and return to England is a combination of factors. But what brings him closer to his final defeat is the death of one of Van Heerden's children, who was singed by falling thatch. This incident clearly throws the Englishman off balance, only adding to his sense of frustration and helplessness. But what brings home to him the futility of his task is the moment he realises that the trauma of the fire and the death of her child has somehow forced Van Heerden's wife into labour, one month early. He had up to then no idea that she was pregnant. It is as if he were wound up and then let go:

The idea had never entered his head; it had been a complete failure of the imagination. If nine children, why not ten? Why not fifteen, nor that matter, or twenty? Of course there would be more children (97).

The impact of this news has everything to do with Carruthers' guilt, his misplaced sense of responsibility, his own children, the resentment he feels towards his successful, scornful brother (the lawyer), and the complex feelings he has for his dispirited, unsupportive wife. He is simply maddened beyond reason, but allows his feelings to turn in upon himself, making him feel helpless. He resolves in the face of Van Heerden's revelation to return to England. He writes a letter and then enters his bedroom to inform his wife. The story concludes with these lines: 'He watched curiously as her face crumpled and the tears of thankfulness and release ran slowly down her cheeks and soaked the pillow' (98).

Lessing's two short stories 'The Second Hut' and 'The De Wets Come to Kloof Grange' express her interest in the cultural clash between the English and the Afrikaners. In 'The De Wets Come to Kloof' that conflict is nicely captured by Lessing in her description of the interior décor of Major Gale's house: 'Africa and the English eighteenth century mingled in this room and were at peace' (104). But it is also seen in his fastidious bush 'uniform' and its sharp creases. In the case of the Carruthers, they are brought down and defeated by a life they cannot tame. The Gales, on the other hand, are survivors, but their struggles are not dissimilar. As colonists of military background, they live at odds with their surroundings which they seek to monitor and command. Lessing shows how the expectations and pretensions of the military class is embraced and enforced by the colonial women. Major Gales's wife sees it as part of her job to maintain her idea of English decency among the blacks but chiefly among the Afrikaners. When she finally gives up, her efforts to help rejected as interference, she speaks to her husband the Major as

though she were giving orders: 'Next time you get an assistant,' she said finally, 'get people of our kind. These might be savages, they way they behave' (128).

In her study of colonial women's autobiography, Gillian Whitlock focuses on colonial writers of European decent (Karen Blixen (Dinesen), Simpson, Beryl Markham and the prolific Elspeth Huxley), seeing their work as exemplars of colonial discourse, but she does not venture beyond their generation to see the emergence of voices dedicated to a disavowal of white supremacy (123). Unlike Edward Said's 'consolidated vision,' Whitlock finds in their work 'a complex intersection of very different fantasies,' which constitutes an 'invention' of Kenya (123). Their writings, which Whitlock acknowledges for their individual strengths, nonetheless are seen 'as coordinates within the same discursive web' (123).

Whitlock's demurrals strike me as largely persuasive. Simpson may not break fully with the values she comes to hold in contempt; what is significant is the fact that her writings seek to undermine the colonial project to which she and her husband fell victim.

Alyse Simpson and her husband's real life drama parallels those portrayed in the fiction; after waging a heroic struggle against the elements, they finally lose their farm, as did Major Carruthers and his wife, and are forced to return to England. In Doris Lessing's *The Grass Is Singing* (1948), the young, desperately unhappy farmer's wife is murdered by the black African servant she has taken as a lover. Each story deals with hopelessness; a desperate struggle is followed by defeat or death. But what is of particular interest is the fact that the protagonist is defeated ultimately by Africa itself, by the elements, by one's effort to cultivate the soil, or to

build a meaningful life in a setting which defeats toil, which overwhelms the striving of individuals, which reduces civilised life to savagery. 'One of the tropes of Simpson's narrative is degeneration, sterility and the perversity of the natural world in Africa' (Whitlock 122).

Mary Turner, the protagonist of *The Grass Is Singing*, yearned for a husband, but dreaded having to return to the farmland of her youth, because she feared somehow the power of the land to engulf her, to wipe her out, even to overgrow all human life:

She had never become used to the bush, never felt at home in it. Still, after all this time, she felt a stirring of alarm when she realised the strangeness of the encircling veld where little animals moved, and unfamiliar birds talked. Often in the night she woke and thought of the small brick house, like a frail shell that might crush inwards under the presence of the hostile bush. Often she thought how, if they left this place, one wet fermenting season would swallow the small cleared space, and send the young trees thrusting up from the floor, pushing aside brick and cement, so that in a few month there would be nothing left but heaps of rubble about the trunks of trees (187).

The Grass Is Singing, one forgets, begins with a murder that from the start the author makes clear nobody intends to solve. There is a sense of foreboding and hopelessness that accompanies the desolate landscape. Instead of the expected pioneering spirit, one is confronted by a peculiar lack of confidence, almost a kind of fatalism that leads to the corruption and nonchalant corruptibility expressed by the investigators who conspire to hide the motive for Mary Turner's murder at the hands of her domestic worker.

In *The Grass Is Singing* silence functions in the service of the social taboo against miscegenation. When the butchered body of Dick Turner's wife is found, the farmer's recently arrived foreman is eager to regale the authorities with his story of how Moses, the house servant, had been taken by Mary as a lover, but nobody was interested in hearing what he had to say. The authorities planned to write their crime reports with the same degree of clarity and brevity found in John Simpson's farm log. The real brutality is to be found in the language itself, as can be found in other crucial works from *Heart of Darkness* to Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*. Lessing's work both echoes and anticipates this insight into the source of colonial brutality. Of course, just the facts obscure human motivation, which is what was intended by the local sheriff when he directed the foreman, who had been a guest in the Turners' home, to choose his words carefully:

'Go ahead. Only remember, I don't want to hear your fancies. I want to hear facts. Have you ever seen anything definite which would throw light on this murder? For instance, have you seen this boy attempting to get at her jewelry, or something like that? Anything that is definite. Not something in the air' (18).

Of course, one could account for the hopelessness and fatalism of these fictional characters and of John and Alyse Simpson's by pointing out peculiarities in their personalities. Africa could be shown to be incidental to these narratives, rather than a force of real importance. It is worth emphasising, however, that even historians of African colonialism use terms similar to the ones employed by novelists to describe the effect of the African landscape on early pioneers.

Errol Trzebinski (1986), in his study of the settlement of the East Africa protectorate between 1896 and 1920, finds evidence in the lives of the early pioneers for expressions of the kind of despair, loneliness, and desperation discussed already. The fear of oblivion is mentioned, as if to confirm Mary Turner's fears, as well as such signs of mental collapse as alcoholism and anti-social eccentricities. Reading Trzebinski makes one doubt that Simpson or Lessing had to draw deeply on their imaginations:

The early pioneers and administrators lived mostly alone. Few men had white female companionship or domestic ties. They were free to travel, at liberty to mock authority, to take an African girl for the night and remain as anonymous as they wished. They could pan for gold or peg for minerals or they could experiment with crops without emerging from their *shamba* for years. Their lives were their own to put at risk and sometimes they died as a result. The possibility that Africa would swallow them up without trace was always present; a dozen or more men vanished over the next thirty years. A few men turned into eccentrics, others became drunkards; but they cannot be dismissed as nonentities simply because they carried a rifle in one hand and a whisky bottle in the other, or were hungry for land, or because they took an African wife (31).

The fear of actual physical peril is emphasised by Trzebinski. Lessing although aware of and even preoccupied with physical danger, were primarily interested in the phenomenon of the emotional debilitation.

One story in particular by Doris Lessing (1951), 'Plants and Girls', captures dramatically several of the points raised thus far; there is the anger touched on earlier which farmers felt toward the encroachment of the suburbs; the inexplicable

fear one had of the bush; the odd disorientation experienced upon leaving an area of familiarity; and finally that sense of menace not easily accounted for. In this story, a young orphan boy becomes increasingly unbalanced in response to the deaths of his parents. He expresses his grief and sense of loss by physically holding and hugging the trunks of trees, as if he felt that he might lose the land as he had lost his family. A young girl he meets falls in love with the seventeen-year-old, and for a while it appears he may snap out of his despair. But, in fact, his behaviour becomes more erratic and bizarre. In the end, the girl falls victim to the boy's savagery, mauled in a weird scene of love-making, where the boy loses all contact with reality:

She saw the hazy brilliant stars surge behind his black head, saw the greenish moonlight pour down the thin hollows of his cheeks, saw the great crazy eyes immediately above hers. The cages of their ribs ground together; and she heard: 'Your hair, dead hair, bones, bones, bones' (617).

Then, suddenly, as if the boy were transformed into a leopard on the attack, he kills her: 'The bared desperate teen came down on her throat, and she arched back as the stars swam and went out' (618). When the boy is found in the morning, he repeats what he had said always when making love to the trees:

When people glanced over the hedge in the strong early sunlight of the next morning they saw him half-lying over the girl, whose body was marked by blood and soil; and he was murmuring: 'Your hair, your leaves, your branches, your rivers' (622).

It is as if the boy had become what has been shown to be a common fear among those living in the wilds of the African veld. Lessing and Gordimer create characters who fear the land because of its power to cast spells on those who enter it

unescorted. The boy, alone in the bush, appears to desire to become a part of it. He submits to what others resist.

Measures, of course, were taken to resist the wilds. It has already been indicated that blacks and whites entered the bush with caution. An effort was made to secure oneself psychologically against the alien land by creating a small oasis of the familiar, by domesticating one's surroundings, thus building a kind of protective barrier between oneself and the bush. This was not to keep out wild animals, although fences were constructed for that. Rather, gardens were built to give newcomers a sense of being somewhere else:

The first thing she did on arriving was to change the name of the farm from Kloof Nek to Kloof Grange, making a link with home. One of the houses was denuded of furniture and used as a strange space. It was a square, bare box of a place, stuck in the middle of the bare veld, and its shut windows flashed back light to the sun all day. But her own home had been added to and extended, and surrounded with verandahs and fenced; inside the fence were two acres of garden that she had created over years of toil. And what a garden! These were what she had lived for: her flowering African shrubs, her vivid English lawns, her water-garden with the goldfish and water lilies. Not many people had such a garden (Lessing 1951: 110-111).

It was as if some settlers arranged their land as an extension of the ways they organised their social lives. Attempts were made to domesticate Africa. Class divisions were maintained, along with strict separation of the races. The landscape was made to conform to rigid notions of domestic tranquility. The English gardens described above can be seen as an effort to confine the vastness of the African veld,

to impose the familiar on the exotic, quite literally to build a garden in what to many was seen as a wasteland (Van Herk 1996).

But there were exceptions to those who preferred the familiar. Alyse Simpson admired the kind of men and women who welcomed life in Africa as a chance to break through social barriers. She turned every opportunity for human contact into a celebration, precisely because she felt so desperately lonely. Her isolation on the homestead made her savour human contact in ways which were not easily understood by those living in more populated areas. She longed for companionship, particularly among persons of a similar temper:

One poor heroic woman I found was a class entirely for herself, being the wife of a small greengrocer. The men, I noticed, would probably have mixed; but the women, exiled though they were, remained pathetically middle-class, each trying to surpass the other. It was only the pioneer type of women, the women who knew how to rough it and had at one time or other grown conscious of her lonely plight, who rose above such things. She and only she gained a proper sense of values (38-39).

Of course, such a woman was Simpson herself. One suspects that in this regard Africa was rather good for her. Without the experience, she may not have found cause to rise above the middle-class values of her peers.

While estrangement, isolation, and loneliness took their toll on those either accustomed to social intercourse or fearful of the possibility of disappearing into the vastness of the African terrain, there were others who relished rural life. Adjusting to such a life had its rewards for those individuals who expected little from others, but it tried those who relied on their companions for emotional support. There was

something about the African landscape which made those who loved it less able to endure human contact. It was partly the strain of daily labour. These authors describe daily life on the African plain as one of relentless demands, which broke the spirit as well as the backs of even the hardiest. The land also grew on certain individuals who could never feel at home anywhere else.

The trouble between Mary and Dick Turner can be traced to the enormous gap between their responses to the land. For Mary, there would always be something deadly about it. It made her sick and, finally, drove her insane. Tragically, for her, city life was no real alternative, because the despairing isolation of her childhood had made her uncomfortable around people. Dick on the other hand, could not live away from the land. He was maddened by the distractions of the town. In the following passage from *The Grass Is Singing*, Lessing describes the kind of man who was not unusual among the first and second generation of European settlers:

He certainly could not think of himself anywhere but on this farm: he knew every tree on it. This is no figure of speech: he knew the veld he lived from as the natives know it. His was not the sentimental love of the townsman. His sense had been sharpened to the noise of the wind, the song of the birds, the feel of the soil, changes in weather – but they had been dulled to everything else (142).

By ‘everything else’, the author means to include Dick Turner’s miserable wife. The African stories of Doris Lessing are filled with the victims of human neglect. Her women live desperate lives, holed up in shabby hovels without the protection of a decent roof, whose only opportunity for companionship came from native works with whom they were forbidden to become familiar.

What sickened Mary Turner about her husband, however, was not merely the fact that he insisted that they live on his farm. She was willing to give that a try. Nor did she hate him for being so poor. She believed in him at first. What she could not abide was his rapport with the native workers and his insistence that she make an effort to get along with them. This she could not bring herself to do. It was as if the natives brought the land she loathed into her home. She found them disgusting, but gradually she came to find her husband just as revolting, because she began to see in him the characteristics of the blacks. It was as if she were married to one. These are her thoughts:

Why, he seemed to be growing into a native himself, she thought uneasily. He would blow his nose on his fingers into a bush, the way they did; he seemed, standing beside them, to be one of them; even his color was not so different, for he was burned a rich brown, and he seemed to hold himself the same way. And when he laughed with them, cracking some joke to keep them good-humored, he seemed to have gone beyond her reach into a crude horse-humor that shocked her. And what was to be the end of it, she wondered? And then an immense fatigue would grip at her, and she thought dimly: 'What does it matter, after all?' (161).

This is certainly one side of Mary Turner, perhaps the side that reveals a settler norm. Most settlers seem to have maintained their identities by separating themselves from the indigenous peoples and from the land. Mary stands out because she could not resist her urge to have a human relationship with a male domestic. She is uncomfortable with playing her role. She violates codes of the dominant race; her breakdown is a sign of her thwarted impulses. Part of her attraction can be attributed

to her loss of confidence in her husband who failed to live up to her image of white masculinity.

Stephen Naudé (2005), in his study of South African novelist William Plomer, analyses the relationship between colonialism and the primitivist setting of adventure romances (5). In his discussion of what he terms ‘the problematic reality of interracial sexual relationships,’ the author focuses on popular novels by H. Rider Haggard which, he claims, are ‘infamous now as much for their misogyny as for their racism’ (4). His analysis sheds light on the sexual dynamic between Doris Lessing’s protagonists. Unlike the Haggardian trope of white English males sexually attracted to African women, Lessing upsets the accepted taboo by creating a woman attracted to a black male. While it may have been well-known if not accepted that white male residents of the colonies kept black mistresses, Lessing moves into far more dangerous terrain by creating a woman with sexual needs, however ambiguously expressed, in defiance of her own ingrained moral and ideological values. Naudé (2005) claims that such a relationship touched two interwoven chords of colonial repression:

The conquest of African peoples in the colonies and the domestic oppression of women in Europe were justified through appeal to a view the particulars of which were at the same time shaped by that which required justification. In particular, the subjection of women went hand in hand with the stigmatization of female libido. Female virginity and chastity were revered, while for a woman to enjoy sex, or to have more than one sexual partner, was a sign of savagery. Accordingly, the combination of the categories ‘woman’ and ‘black’, occupying the bottom rung of the evolutionary ladder, was characterised as pathologically libidinous (5).

Racial taboos as identified here by Naudé explain a great deal of what is happening in this story; they do not go to the heart of the impulse to fantasise that turns Mary from reality.

John Kucich offers an explanation that gives insight into Mary's sexual paranoia, but his study goes further and has wider implications for our understanding of the kind of life depicted by Lessing in *The Grass is Singing* as well as in her *African Stories*:

Through masochistic fantasy, the pain of impotence and abandonment is transformed into fantasies of total control, the fear of annihilation into fantasies of absolute destructive power, the agony of helplessness into fantasies of benign dependence, and the pain of solitude into fantasies of splendid isolation (26-27).

'The agony of helplessness' captures the experience of many of the protagonists examined in this chapter and beyond. These torments, Lessing tells us, defined the lives of her parents (2008). Mary Turner, Mrs. Carruthers, Major Gale's wife: they all display to varying degrees the suffering of Lessing's father's post-traumatic stress disorder and depressions and the consequences of her mother's emotional breakdown (2008: 154-155).

Apathy and fear seem to have been dual reactions to living in isolation. Some fears were, of course, concrete, such as the fear of wild animals. But this apathy is as often an indifference to, even a contempt for patriarchal authority, conformity and social expectation. Mary Turner is finally apathetic to her husband's wishes or to the neighbours' good opinion, but not to personal desire. Living on the edge makes

Lessing's Mary not in the least apathetic to her own personal desires, but indifferent, impudently and perhaps imprudently, to social convention and to the stigma of transgressive behaviour. Mary Turner has broken one crucial middle-class taboo: she simply no longer cares what other people might think.

Edward Said's analysis of imperial hegemony has no room for female desire, but by ignoring it, he fails in his claim to take full measure of colonialism. Said fails to acknowledge this impulse to act outside what is expected and, by doing so, to lay claim to a kind of personal integrity. It is this impulse which writers such as Lessing and Gordimer consistently privilege. Said makes a strong and persuasive case for the ways imperial hegemony was established and maintained (1994). His central thesis is not in dispute:

The continuity of British imperial policy through the nineteenth century – in face a narrative – is actively accompanied by this novelistic process, whose main purpose is not to raise more questions, not to disturb or otherwise preoccupy attention, but to keep the empire more or less in place (1994: 74).

However, the evidence provided, consisting of post-WWI fiction, suggests the presence of highly disturbing narratives that undermine one's sense of empire. These accounts, written by women, form what amounts to a counter-narrative. The picture that emerges is one of discord and underlying these voices of disquiet are those imperial expectations that were undermined by the Great War. That the authors are women adds complexity to their works' possible meanings; issues of race and gender cannot be ignored, but again and again one finds that the despair was heightened by the clash between reality and the unreal expectations created by the

monumental disaster of the War. The writers analysed in this chapter fascinate because of their commitment to understanding the desperation and yearning around them.

Silence was not to be taken as an expression of indifference (Ashcroft Griffiths Tiffin 79). Silence was often the language of disquiet, not only among those who missed their homes abroad, but among those who could not adapt to the rapid development in areas of Africa where land and the pioneering way of life were rapidly disappearing. The sense of being engulfed, came from two sides: one came in response to the vastness of the land itself, while the other developed in response to the invasion of newcomers. The literature suggests that silence grew out of isolation; unarticulated rage sprang from the assumption held by settlers that social intercourse was synonymous with intrusiveness. For every one of Lessing's paralysed females, brooding in nostalgic reverie, there is an angry man, too angry for words:

When Dick Turner saw them, and thought of the way people lived in them, and the way the cautious suburban mind was ruining his country, he wanted to swear and to smash and to murder. He could not bear it. He did not put these feeling into words; he had lost the habit of word-spinning, living the life he did, out of the soil all day (1948: 45).

Like many of Lessing's war veterans, Dick Turner could give orders, but he could not talk. Words do not come easily to those who, like Lessing's Dick Turner, wish to dominate others, who demand silent obedience, who are unpracticed in the arts of persuasion. Turner's desperate, even maniacal effort to save his farm resulted in the

virtual abandonment of his wife, who, tragically, sought the affections of the only other person in her life, namely, her black houseboy.

What unsettled the individuals living surrounded by thousands of acres of uninhabited land were often their unjustified fears, moments of terror for which they could not account. What can be seen as a recurring pattern emerges. The ‘hardening’ of the language, to use Nadine Gordimer’s expression, was, evidently, a response in part to the hardening of the inner lives of people forced to adjust to the demands of living in Africa. Apathy grew from their having felt that there was nothing to be done to make themselves feel at ease. When Mrs. Gale, the protagonist in Lessing’s ‘The De Wets Come to Kloof Grange’ panics at the disappearance of her servant, she realises that some of her anxieties had no basis in reality:

She might be screaming for help somewhere for fear of wild animals, for if she crossed the valley into the hills there were leopards, lions, wild dogs. Mrs. Gale suddenly caught her breath in an agony of fear: the valley! ...Anything might have happened. And worse than any of the actual physical dangers was the danger of falling a victim to fear: being alone on the veld, at night, knowing oneself lost: this was enough to send anyone off balance (129).

Lessing’s collected short fiction in the context of her autobiographical writings taken collectively suggest that there was a strong interplay between her war-stricken home, with its own nightmares and the free-floating anxieties that dominate writings of the open veld.

Trzebinski,, author of *The Kenya Pioneers* (1986), concentrates on the glamorous aristocrats of the pre-War Highlands, such as Isak Dinesen, and early

trekkers, whose memories are filled with first impressions, rather than on middle-class farmers, whose experiences were often so disillusioning. Nonetheless, his insights into the hold Africa had on some Europeans confirm certain aspects of the lives found depicted in the literature.

Nostalgia played a large role in shaping the memories of these forced to leave Africa, just as homesickness was suffered by those stranded there. Trzebinski suggests that some of those who abandoned Africa looked back on their lives in the bush somewhat forgetful of the hardships. This tendency cuts across class lines:

To be one's own master in Africa was heady and they yearned for the magic of open spaces, where aloes blossomed red in clumps among the rocks and there was joy in the sound of the spurfowl going up and down the chromatic scale after the rain. The longing was like an undulating fever for which there was no real cure... In Europe too they missed the thundering of rain on the corrugated iron roof. As they sheltered from the wet even the walls of their primitive homes spelled adventure. These were adorned with ever-growing collections of animal horns, hooves, reptile skins, ostrich eggs, lion claws, the pelts of colobus monkey, lion or leopard... Europe was more secure and comfortable but undeniably less exciting (103-104).

No doubt some former settlers remembered Africa in this way, particularly those who had roofs over their heads. While 'magic' may capture the allure of Africa's open spaces, the literature suggests 'dread' as a more apt expression. This historian, as others, seems to have been taken in by the reputation of Africa created by the upper-class sportsmen as a place of natural wonder and adventure. To be sure, Alyse Simpson and her husband did not return with memories of this kind.

Doris Lessing's stories indicate that a harsher reality was faced by earlier settlers. What Trzebinski's description does confirm, however, is the way many Europeans hoped life in Africa would be. Such hopes were exploited by those who had an interest in the sale of land in Africa. The profound disappointment experienced by immigrants is a major element informing the literature of settler colonialism.

In point of fact, a vast propaganda machine was at work in the service of European colonialism. Evidence of its success can be found in the patterns of immigration to the African colonies. Alyse Simpson makes clear that this was what lured her and her husband to Africa. What so appalled women like Alyse Simpson was the enormous gap between reality and what they were told to expect. She was guided, Whitlock writes, by the

desire to unravel the vision of British East Africa as a lost Eden by pursuing the other term of the oppositions which are the repertoire of the East African dream: regeneration and degeneration, freedom and imprisonment and eloquence and silence (118).

The emotional letdown was so great that the Simpsons never recovered. For her and her husband, it meant the loss of their youth, as well as their life savings. The disappointment embittered Simpson to those whose efforts had succeeded in convincing people like her that paradise could be found in Africa. Lessing, too, now several decades later, remembers the promises made to settlers, mainly war veterans, whose war-shattered spirits were no doubt intoxicated by the lure of certain wealth:

My parents, on leave from Persia, were at the Empire Exhibition, and the Southern Rhodesian stall had great mealie cobs, and the invitation: 'get rich

on maise.’ Do you mean to say those idiots believed a slogan on a stall at an exhibition? (2008: 173).

The point, of course, is that such ‘idiots’ made up the bulk of the postwar immigrants and their disillusionment, their disappointment, and their discontent did much to inform the disquiet that informed settler writings in the next generation.

There is no mistaking the rage confronted in the literature of Africa. Rage against social injustice hardly requires discussion. What is interesting is the tremendous anger directed against words, rather than against acts. Simpson’s memoir is a virtual diatribe against the lies of colonial publications and the rhetoric of Empire.

The dilemma facing the writer in such surroundings has to do with forging a vital language out of an essential banality. The paradox facing white Africans grew out of the conviction held by blacks and whites that English had functioned in the service of lies. The profound distrust between the races evolved gradually into distrust for words themselves. The challenge taken up by African writers can be understood as an effort to find an adequate means of responding to the vastness of the African setting rather than shrinking from it. The dilemma lay in restoring the relationship between meaning and words which had been lost when language was reduced to empty rhetoric.

Many authors wrote as a means of setting the record straight, and in direct opposition to the kind of safari memories and literary works by authors such as Hemingway and Dinesen which glamourised African life as it had been lived before the Great War. Again Whitlock:

The imperfect Kenya of *The Land That Never Was* is in a kind of dramatic dialogue with that other Kenya of the booster literature and the travelogue, a dialogue which places the reader at a site of ambiguity, irony, and difference (119).

In contrast to Jane Austen's imperial assumptions, as described by Edward Said (2000) when he claims that 'the importance of an empire to the situation at home' is vital to Austen (358), Alyse Simpson's work shows these assumptions undermined by staleness and hypocrisy. Whitlock finds this expressed by Simpson's protagonist who at once experiences homesickness and rage:

Joan [Simpson's pseudonym] is scathing of the blinkered, self-serving ways in which those who remain in England – their family, the public, the government – use the Empire as a panacea for social and economic problems which need to be addressed in Britain itself (122).

In *Islands of White* (1987), Dane Kennedy's history of the European settlements in Kenya and Southern Rhodesia, evidence of early publicity campaigns shows how years of organised efforts by governmental and entrepreneurial agencies sought to depict Africa as a kind of paradise. Indeed, figures show that the number of immigrants to Rhodesia, for example, more than doubled between the end of hostilities in 1918 and 1920 (Mlambo 1998). Kennedy provides numerous examples which confirm the Simpsons' testimony of having been victimised by a campaign to exploit their naïve dreams and their ignorance:

One of the most imaginative methods employed by the Kenya Association to attract settlers was through various subsidiary organizations with specialised publicity appeals. Retirement! Why not in Africa?, a pamphlet published by

the East India Association, consisted of testimonials about the good life its members had found in Kenya...Come to Kenya and visit Njoro was the title of one pamphlet, a slick solicitation of retirees with secure pensions. They were beckoned, in the effusive praise from the text, by the colony's climate, spectacular scenery, affordable housing, abundant servants, luxuriant gardens, and multifarious sports... (84).

Of course, what the typical immigrant actually faced were relentless rains, failed crops, disease, and the threat of death. The relevance Kennedy's research has for this discussion pertains to the ways such inflated expectations altered the ways the colonists actually experienced life in Africa. Many of the descriptions of the African landscape and of the colonists' responses to it suggest not only that white settlers missed their familiar surroundings, but that they were shocked by the kind of terrain they were expected to call home. A more honest description of the African landscape may have made the adjustment easier to handle.

Even though the Simpsons escaped from their disastrous experience in Africa, Alyse could not free herself from the lie which had sent her there in the first place. From this she suffered more than the ordeal of Africa itself. Having endured the hardships and, it must be said, the exhilaration of pioneer living, she was denied the chance to tell her story. Her life, like Kurtz's final message, was distorted by those who had not the courage to face her horrible message. Back in the comforts of England, Alyse was forced into the role of Conrad's Marlow, telling comforting lies, or made to fall silent before those who were convinced they knew better:

They still strongly advocated emigration – for others. Their theories were wonderful, but wildly off the mark. John refused to talk about his doings of

the last six years: never to this day has he spoken of them to anyone. In many ways it was a pity, for lacking imagination as well as information, our elders formed their own opinions and judged us harshly... We had suddenly become of no account, having failed to return with our fortunes made... 'If they weren't happy out there,' I heard a voice from the cloakroom saying, 'they should have been! Not everybody has a piece of land, a thousand acres, at their disposal, to just do as they like with. Mark my word, they'll regret leaving....' (270-271).

Simpson's testimony, as she herself attests, is easily dismissed or marginalised as evidence of her and her husband's failure of will. Her experience in England suggests that the publicity machine was hard to break. It was successful in creating an image of Africa which was difficult to counter. Then, too, the idea of a distant paradise may have satisfied the needs of those who want to believe that such places exist. Whitlock points out that

[b]y transforming her own experiences into those of John and Joan, by using pseudonyms and fictitious places, Simpson is able to mimic and reverse the conventions and tropes of white settler imaginary quite ruthlessly (120).

This chapter has demonstrated that the reverberations of World War I and II have been neglected in postcolonial writing on white settlers. By focusing on narratives of white settlers in eastern and southern Africa, I have attempted to illuminate the conflicts settlers experienced making a new life on the plains of Africa. Works by European immigrants and African natives of European descent have been discussed in an effort to provide an accurate understanding of how the authors of these texts responded to living at in rural southern and eastern Africa.

These authors' narratives describe characters caught between the world they inhabited in Africa and the lives they had left behind. The predicament of the settlers was often made more difficult by their inability to unburden themselves of their pasts, which often included war wounds, physical or emotional.

In this chapter I have not proposed a radically new set of conclusions about the settlers, but I have sought to show how war memories affected and shaped settlers' lives. The inhabitants of these disparate lands felt at once drawn to their new surroundings and at the same time alienated. An attempt has been made to understand the source and expression of this tension as seen in the work of writers such as Alyse Simpson, Doris Lessing and Nadine Gordimer. I hope to have shown how the experience of living in Africa both exacerbated and relieved anxieties and fears that may have been part of the burden of being part of a war generation. In proposing these arguments, critical neglect has been considered and attributed to an impositional tendency in analyses of imperialism, which emphasise affirmations of cultural hegemony. It has been a principal aim of this chapter to show how settlers responded to their experiences by creating lasting impressions of discontent. Anxieties often turned into transgressive behaviours which undermined rather than strengthened assumptions of imperial authority. These writers, in fact, produced narratives of distress that undermine rather than reinforce hegemonic forces.

Chapter 2: PostColonialism and the Legacy of Total War

With the world's cultures being ravaged and destroyed, from end to end, by viciously inappropriate technologies, with wars raging everywhere, with whole populations being wiped out, and deliberately, for the benefit of ruling castes, with the wealth of every nation being used almost entirely for war, for preparations for war, propaganda for war, research for war; with the general levels of decency and honesty visibly vanishing, with corruption everywhere – with all this, living in a nightmare of dissolution, was it really possible, it may be asked, for these poor creatures to believe that 'on the whole' all was well?
(85-86)

----Doris Lessing, *Canopus in Argos: Archives*

Displacement and estrangement are central themes in the literary works analysed in this chapter; my focus will be on personal estrangement in the context of social upheaval and political oppression at mid-20th century. It can, in fact, be argued that writers who explore 'the costs of Britain's ideology of racial supremacy' do so through the prism of mid-20th century experiences, which include both the disintegration of Europe's failed empires and the rise of the century's 'most malignant imperial power, the Third Reich' (Blumel 1). Recent events have left some people wondering if this statement can be left unchallenged (Chomsky 2008; Pinter 2005). As in Chapter 1, the focus remains on three key writers of the 20th century: Doris Lessing, Nadine Gordimer, and J. M. Coetzee, but their work will be analysed in the context of war trauma and the barbarities associated with 20th century totalitarianism. This chapter's focus will further elucidate the relationship between postcoloniality and the wars that shaped that century.

Imre Kertész, Nadine Gordimer and Arnošt Lustig were all born in the 1920s. Doris Lessing was born in Iran (then Persia) in 1919, but later emigrated with

her English parents to South Rhodesia. J. M. Coetzee, was born in 1940 to a family of Dutch settlers in South Africa. Gordimer's parents were both European. Her Lithuanian father had been a Jewish refugee in czarist Russia. Lessing was a communist at one time; she and Lustig both left their native lands to live in political exile. Lessing left Rhodesia for London; Lustig left his native Czechoslovakia for the United States in 1968. George Steiner was born in 1929 in Vienna, the same year as Kertész. His family fled Hitler's armies, making their way first to Paris and then to New York. Edward Said became an American citizen, although born to a Christian family in Jerusalem. Homi Bhabha, who is from Mumbai, teaches in the United States, as do Chinua Achebe and Chenjerai Hove. The tensions they narrate between estrangement and human connection may be traced to similarities they share as refugees, émigré and exiles. The Europeans come either from Austria, Hungary or Czechoslovakia, including those areas at the borderlands of the Habsburg Empire, such as Lithuania, the area Gordimer's father fled to come to South Africa. George Steiner has characterised his generation of Europeans in such a way as to redefine what it means to be an artist in such a time: 'It seems proper,' he writes, 'that those who create art in a civilization of quasi-barbarism which has made so many homeless, which has torn up tongues and peoples by the root, should themselves be poets unhoused and wanderers across language' (1971: 11).

These narratives all depict humans in various states of incapacity, held against their will, bewildered by the unknown and unrecognisable. Moments of intimacy are both treasured and lost. The possibility of human contact is foreclosed. That authors of such diverse backgrounds should situate their protagonists in such

familiar states of distress invites comparison. What they have in common is what Said (1993) has said characterises the 20th century, namely, ‘modern warfare, imperialism, and the quasi-theological ambitions of totalitarian rulers’ (174). That world, although acknowledged as fractured, is to be renewed, according to Homi K. Bhabha, in his effort to reassemble a world of shared meanings:

What must be mapped as a new international space of discontinuous historical realities is, in fact, the problem of signifying the interstitial passages and processes of cultural difference that are inscribed in the ‘in-between’, in the temporal break-up that weaves the ‘global’ text . It is, ironically, the disintegrative moment, even movement, of enunciation – that sudden disjunction of the present – that makes possible the rendering of culture’s global reach (1994: 310).

It is also to be considered that aspects of this discontinuity offer opportunities for reformulation. When considered in light of the trauma and repercussions of war, some of what looks to be inexplicable may be traced to the catastrophes of the 20th century.

One way these authors express the coincidence of their backgrounds is through their anatomising of themes of reeducation and adjustment to new worlds. Fourteen-year-old George Kovacs, the young protagonist in Imre Kertész’s *Fateless*, experiences the labour and death camps where he was held as opportunities for learning. ‘What was important,’ young George learned and now seeks to pass on, ‘was that you should not let yourself go: somehow things would work out, because it never happened that they didn’t work out. So Bandi Citrom taught me as he, in turn, had been taught this wisdom earlier in his labor camp’ (1992: 100). It is doubtful

that it does in fact always turn out this way, but like a traditional coming-of-age novel, *Fateless* functions much the same as *July's People* and *Lovely Green Eyes* do, namely, as primers for living, offering advice, as it were, on making-do, facing the facts, and surviving in a new world, while enveloped by brooding anticipation and memories of death.

In Kertész's 2002 Nobel Prize acceptance speech, the author of *Fateless* reviewed his experiences in the camps and his writing process:

I might have tried to break up time in my novel, and narrate only the most powerful scenes. But the hero of my novel does not live his own time in the concentration camps, for neither his time nor his language, nor even his own person, is really his. He doesn't remember; he exists. So he has to languish, poor boy, in the dreary trap of linearity and cannot shake off the painful details. Instead of a spectacular series of great and tragic moments, he has to live through everything, which is oppressive and offers little variety, like life itself (*Heureka!*).

Kertész, a concentration camp survivor, connects *Fateless* to the novel's attempts to address the truth of his own experiences. That experience demands, according to the author, its own artistic form, for the sake of the reality of the experience. What the author was trying to capture was the unbelievability of the experience. He feared through abstraction that merely the 'idea' of the camps would survive, so he chose to concentrate on the details, even those that were unimportant.

Now I understood how and why in those humiliating twenty minutes of idleness and helplessness, clarity faded from their memories. And when I thought how all this repeated the same way for days, weeks, months and years on end, I gained an insight into the mechanism of horror; I learned

how it became possible to turn human nature against one's own life
(*Heureka!*)

Perhaps the author means that the experience in Auschwitz cannot be made to rise to any conceptual clarity, perhaps that its extraordinary specificity must be given its place in everyday experience, perhaps that we must simply make room for it as a reality.

Kertész wants the extermination camps to be remembered, but not as an idea, not as a conceptual event that happened back then, but as actual experience, an extraordinary actual experience that not only happened, but happens. Kertész's efforts spring from his awareness of a phenomenon identified by Dori Laub (1995) as belonging to traumatic events, namely, in a 'collapse of witnessing' (68). This can be described as a crucial aspect belonging to events like the Holocaust; they resist comprehension. 'The force of this experience would appear to arise precisely in other words, in the collapse of understanding' (Caruth 1995: 9). Kertész's literary strategy arises from this insight. 'In my writings the Holocaust could never be present in the past tense' (*Heureka!*).

The themes of dislocation and trauma that are found in the writings of Gordimer, Lessing, and Coetzee can also be seen in writers such as Kertész and Lustig who, according to Sven Lindqvist, have lived in political environments of striking similarity:

Lindqvist shows how there was a remarkable congruence between the language employed by the colonial apologists and the language Conrad appropriated for the insane ramblings of Kurtz. Lindqvist maintains that the

colonial racism of the Victorians was a precursor to the Nazi quest for Lebensraum and the extermination of the Jews.... (Marrouchi 2008: 4).

The trauma of survival and annihilation is one link between these authors.

For authors of European descent and backgrounds, themes of alienation and political discord may also reflect sensibilities that belong to the age. Colonial racism may be shown to be a foreshowing of the brutal genocides of the 20th century, but of equal importance may be experiences of dislocation and deracination. David Adams (2003) makes this claim, arguing that,

rather than using adventure as a means to invest the colonies with the fullness of romance, the modernist British odysseys employ a parallel manoeuvre with opposite results; they project onto colonies the discontent of modernity (25).

The catalogue of colonial crimes is long, as Caroline Elkins (2005) shows in her history of British detention camps in Kenya:

There was the French disaster in Algeria, where by the end of 1959 a reported 20,000 Frenchmen and 150 Algerians had died – largely as a result of France’s draconian tactics of quelling dissent, they’re eerily similar to those the British had employed in Kenya and elsewhere in their empire (355).

What can be seen in the Europeans administration of their colonies, whether one is talking about Germans, the Dutch, Belgians or the British, is an efficiency and ruthlessness which foreshadows 20th century atrocities. Concentration camps, box cars, and mass killings play in one’s mind as images of 20th century totalitarianism,

but the horrors experienced precede the rise of Nazism by decades. One prisoner was traumatised for life:

For days on end he lay, pressed against other prisoners, the wound festering on his arm, his eyes wide open, in a carriage filled with vermin. He remembered with particular repulsion the rats running over his body... (Waugh 2009: 76).

The prisoner was Viennese pianist Paul Wittgenstein on a POW train on its way from the front to a Russian camp. Paul had been captured during the Galician offensive along with some 100,000 Austro-Hungarian soldiers. It was out of this clash of empires that many of the tropes of 20th century dehumanisation were formed.

The link between Nazi Germany and imperial atrocities of the 19th and 20th century can be found explicitly in the aims of the German regime. Historians of the Nazi rise to power draw a direct line between Nazi ambitions in the 20th century and those of the British and American in the 19th. Richard J. Evans (2007) in a recent article states that Hitler was inspired if not guided by 19th century examples of imperial expansion, if not imperial genocide. First came the American model:

For Hitler, who read the Wild West novels of Karl May during his childhood and adolescence, it seemed obvious that America had achieved its industrial advantage and high standard of living through its conquest of the West and its extermination of the Native American population (76).

According to Evans, Hitler drew inspiration from imperial models both near and far, with an eye less on mythology than on political expedience:

Far from being the revival of some medieval dream of conquest sparked by the example of the Teutonic Knights, Hitler's drive to conquer eastern Europe was based on a very modern model, a model of colonization, enslavement, and extermination that had its parallels in the creation of European empires in Africa and Australia, or the nineteenth-century Russian conquest of Central Asia and Siberia (76).

Max Hastings (2008), in his recent review of Mark Mazower's new history titled *Hitler's Empire: How the Nazis Ruled Europe*, suggests that there was a direct line from inspiration and policy, that Hitler was indeed modeling his vision of empire on past episodes of empire building:

Hitler was impressed by the manner in which a few hundred British administrators governed the subcontinent of India. While he had little notion of, or interest in, the details of how the raj worked, he envisaged an elite of Nazi officials ruling the newly annexed lands of Poland and Czechoslovakia in the same fashion (46).

In another recent study, Timothy W. Ryback (2010) has been able to examine the books that Hitler read, thus confirming the formative influences on Hitler, including his pleasure reading. Ryback says Hitler 'mastered' the adventure stories of the American West by Karl May (201).

Whatever Hitler's models may have been, Richard J. Evans (2003), in his multi-volume history of the Nazi regime, sees the drive for empire rooted in the historical drive for expansion, an urge that paralleled that seen in the 19th century when the Europeans competed to establish colonies in Africa:

The Germans, in the view of some, needed more 'living space' – the German word was *Lebensraum* – and it would have to be acquired at the expense of

others, most likely the Slavs. This was not because the country was literally overcrowded – there was no evidence for that – but because those who advanced such views were taking the idea of territoriality from the animal kingdom and applying it to human society (34).

Indeed, what was planned was systematically put into practice. The genocide of populations in the New World inspired an actual policy carried out by Nazi planners with ruthless precision, with the result that the presence of survivors of Germanisation policies of the conquered territories in the East was proof of Hitler's failure, while 'a long-term accommodation or at least legal protection of the subjugated population in the African and Asian colonies had always been part of imperialist ambitions in the 19th century' (Ziemann 2008: 2).

Ethnic cleansing on the Eastern Front lies at the heart of Arnošt Lustig's fiction. In *Lovely Green Eyes* (2000), the protagonist witnesses first-hand the extermination camps and survives by sexually pleasuring the men responsible. After the war, Rabbi Schapiro tries to make sense of what had happened to this most vulnerable witness, but he has trouble taking it all in:

He had heard, though not at first hand, how the master race had populated the lands between the Elbe and the Urals by clearing them of their original inhabitants. How the armies of the Herrenvolk had opened the spaces in the east in order to turn them into a home for 200 million Germans by exterminating tens of millions, from infants to the elderly (158).

Genocide and mass killings are not easily made the subject of fiction. In the context of such overwhelming barbarity, intimate moments may be shown to illuminate the wider destruction.

One key is to be found in the following description of a hospital ward at Auschwitz in which Kertész's protagonist finds himself. George's bewilderment and his own recognition of the utter arbitrariness of his situation is a persistent theme:

Still, I came to think, this place is no stranger, really, than all the other strange possibilities, one way or another, good or bad, in a concentration camp. On the other hand, this place disturbed me, made me uneasy, and undermined my sense of security. After all, if I examined it logically, I could find no acceptable reason for finding myself here instead of somewhere else (151).

He can no more make sense of his present surroundings than the doctors who work in the hospital. The following exchanges between the boy, who is only 14, and the adults who work in the ward would make for hilarious comedy in the hands of a clever satirist. Here, in Kertész's fiction, the material is more disturbing than funny.

It is as though the doctors and nurses were psychologically crippled, incapacitated by an emotional reaction they had long forgotten. Kertész's protagonist sees in the adults at the clinic a striving for sympathy, but it somehow remains at a distance:

I felt that somehow they felt good about, even received some pleasure from, this feeling of sympathy. Maybe I was mistaken, but I didn't think I was. At other times when they asked me questions, interrogated me, I had the impression that they were actually exploring the opportunity to find a way, an excuse, for feeling this emotion, looking for some reason, some need of a proof of something, perhaps of the fact – who knows? – that they were still capable of feeling sympathy (155).

One wonders if they are capable of feeling anything, least of all sympathy or compassion for others. 'In the age of the concentration camp, castration is more characteristic of social reality than competitiveness' (Jay 1973: 105). This statement made by Sigmund Freud summarises the mental as well as the physical conditions described by Kertész, and points to the signal characteristic of the totalitarian state, which is, according to Hannah Arendt, to 'liquidate all spontaneity' (Heather and Stolz 1979: 14).

The experiential link between victims of the Holocaust and those traumatised by colonialism and apartheid can be found in the ways language was used to erase human feeling. Achebe's harrowingly accurate rendering of administrative rhetoric expresses the distance colonial authorities placed between themselves and the native populations (New 1996). In *Things Fall Apart* that distance is made explicit. Colonial discourse overwhelms Achebe's recreation of an indigenous voice (Innes 1996: 134). According to James Snead,

political appropriation and co-optation as historical fact here are mirrored in the insistence of white discourse; the attempt of the 'white' narrative to usurp or 'universalise' the 'black' one, with all its quaint heritage of 'Native customs and idiom' (1990: 243).

The District Commissioner in *Things Fall Apart* is no more able to express compassion than the doctors at Auschwitz are able to express sympathy for a young boy who does not understand why he has been taken from his family. The Commissioner's resolve to write a book to be entitled *The Pacification of the Primitive Tribes of the Lower Niger* captures the sensibility of inhumane

indifference. The Kafkaesque cruelty finds many forms in the 20th century; here it is shown with devastating perception as an arrogant nonchalance in the face of human tragedy:

Every day brought him some new material. The story of this man who had killed a messenger and hanged himself would make interesting reading. One could almost write a whole chapter on him. Perhaps not a whole chapter but a reasonable paragraph, at any rate. There was so much else to include, and one must be firm in cutting out details (Achebe 1994: 209).

Achebe succeeds at so many levels in getting right the inhumanity of the exchange. A new 'English' suddenly intrudes itself on the scene, spoken by an agent of imperial power, his language of indifference cutting as deep as the blade of a guillotine. The scene resonates because it is at once of the moment and frighteningly expressive of an entire age.

As Snead (1990) points out, what is taken over and eradicated is the capacity to express the human. George Steiner (1998), on the subject of the degradation of the German language in the 20th century, speaks directly to this process of deracination, arguing that a rhetoric of indifference replaced the once humanistic language of the German poets:

Thus university, officialdom, army, and court combined to drill into the German language habits no less dangerous than those they drilled into the German people: a terrible weakness for slogans and pompous clichés (Lebensraum, 'the yellow peril,' 'the Nordic virtues'); an automatic reverence before the long word or the loud voice; a fatal taste for saccharine pathos (Gemütlichkeit) beneath which to conceal any amount of rawness or deception (97).

The jarring contrast between Achebe's native idiom and that of the colonial administrators is found by Steiner in pre- and postwar Germany. It is one feature of our current 'global culture' that has emerged, if not of the one envisioned by Homi Bhabha, that bureaucratic rhetoric debases communication.

According to Truusje Roegholt, one of the Holocaust survivors interviewed by journalist Geert Mak, 'People simply didn't talk. The Third Reich was a dictatorship based, to a great extent, on silence' (2008: 245). According to Max Hastings's review of the recently translated volume of *Germany and the Second World War*, German wartime society is described as having engaged in a systematic conspiracy of silence; most of the society, in fact, colluded in Nazi crimes through their enforced silence, having participated in or benefited from the regime's policies:

The 'collective silence' that took root in the two German societies did not cover just the crimes of the Nazi state; it took in as well the perpetrators of them, those who profited from them, and their minor accomplices. Perhaps this was because everyone had, before 1945, themselves benefited from the Nazi regime in one way or another (2009: 18).

Dutch novelist Paul Verhaeghen (2007) reflects back on the connection between silence and atrocity, concluding as do Geert Mak and Max Hastings, that silence gave cover to the Nazis; it was a vital part of the terror because it enabled the perpetrators:

In other words, violence reigned, and it was freely expressed in all its explosive force. The SA had a town full of accomplices. Screams can only blossom in silence. Friedrichstraße, Rosinestraße—these streets lie in the very

heart of the city. The nighthawks who roamed from jazz club to beer cellar must have heard the cries of pain. They chose to remain deaf (129).

The issue of estrangement or ‘extraterritoriality,’ as it called by George Steiner (1971), is both central to writers of war trauma, political oppression and genocide. Central, because each author creates a setting and a narrative that invites the protagonist(s) to learn and adapt, as an adventurer does, and because writers such as Gordimer and Lustig consider the implications of their protagonists imprisoned among strangers. In this connection, they belong to the idiom of Kafka. Kafka’s work embodies what Deleuze and Guattari have called ‘minor literature,’ because, among other things, it is characterised by ‘the deterritorialization of language’ (1986: 18). This description can be applied to writing that captures experiences of estrangement: curiosity, a sense of wonder if not of bewilderment but, most importantly, the sense either that one can no longer communicate or that one cannot make oneself understood in an alien and alienating environment.

Because the world itself can no longer be comprehended, the authors’ project is described by Deleuze and Guattari as a ‘literature of lament and of mental restlessness’ (1986: 46). This project of discovery and exposure, however, does not extend to human sexuality. That this is true for these authors suggests a link between the political and cultural impoverishment of the lives depicted and the end, temporary or permanent, of sexual intimacy.

The innocent have a lot to learn. Lustig wants to takes things back to their origins, not just to first principles, but to one’s instincts for survival. Everything has to be learned anew, but in matters of life and death a reliance on animal cunning

may get one through. Hanka Kaudersová, a 15 year-old Jewish girl known as Skinny, is eager to be accepted as a Feldure, or army prostitute:

Skinny had already lost everyone she could lose; but she had not yet lost herself and did not wish to. It was a primitive instinct, but it was the only thing she could hold on to. She refused to let it distort her outward appearance: the Hauptsturmführer mustn't suspect what she was feeling. Pity was not a Nazi characteristic. She was going through a selection, of a kind they had at Auschwitz-Birkenau every Monday, morning and evening (15).

She knows that she must pass for 18 and as a gentile in order to work in Feldbordell No. 232 Ost, serving officers. As is the case for Maureen and Bam Smales, Gordimer's protagonists in *July's People*, the obstacle to understanding things as they are is often one's reliance on the past. One is unable to see what lies right before one's eyes because one wants to hold on to what is familiar and comfortable.

Skinny, soon to be accepted as a field prostitute on the Eastern Front, knows that if she falters or is detected, she'll be sent to the gas chambers, where her family has been killed:

There was no way back now. She gave her old Prague address to avoid making a mistake later on. She heard herself speaking as if the voice were not her own. Her blood was no longer throbbing in her temples as it had while she was waiting her turn. She tried not to think of their Prague flat which had been taken over by the Zentralstelle für jüdische Auswanderung. The Germans had made sure that the flat would go to a German (16).

Gertjeanssen's research confirms that hardships of this kind were common to the lives of female Jews, Balts, and Slavs who were taken into what she calls 'a horrifying workload' (2004:2). To survive, Skinny learns to lie, and lives. By the

logic of the screening officer, Skinny's previous work in the hospital caring for the sick and dying qualified her to service the sexual needs of officers at the front (16).

She would soon know the reason:

The troops come here shaken by the battering they've received, confused by defeats for which nothing has prepared them. They no longer look like the flower of Germany, as they had after defeating Poland and France. They no longer believe that nothing could stop them until they reached the foot of the Urals. Now they were a master race with sore bottoms, inflamed foreskins and swollen feet, with water on the knees, with prominent varicose veins. Their eyes are bloodshot with fatigue. They come to the brothel as if to a field hospital (192).

Despite the weakened condition of the Nazis, Skinny and her fellow prostitutes were in no position to resist their demands and were brutally whipped when their services fell short of expectation. Catherine A. MacKinnon (2007) reminds readers that prostitution has more to do with domination than with pleasure: 'As it is in this war, prostitution is forced on women everyday: what is a brothel but a captive setting for organised serial rape?' (161).

The Smales, on the other hand, have lived a lie, and must now face painful truths. Thus incarcerated, the protagonists undergo an education in living in a real world, which may or may not resemble the world of their experiences or of their imaginations. As the Smales make their adjustments to living in the bush, as they are re-educated in the ways, if not of the world, then of life in a small village, they grow less and less able to think of each other sexually. It is as though in direct proportion

to their loss of worldly possessions, they become physically less attractive to each other:

The baring of breasts was not an intimacy but a castration of his sexuality and hers; she stood like a man stripped in a factory shower or a woman in the ablution block of an institution (90).

Curiously, the imagery is reminiscent of the institutions described by Kertész and Lustig. She is depicted as a prisoner, institutionalised and dehumanised. She has become a thing in Bam's eyes, perhaps like Kafka's Gregor Samsa. She is repellent:

The tight T-shirt dragged down her features, distorting eyes, nose and mouth. It was as if she grimaced at him, ugly; and yes she was his 'poor thing', disheveled by living like this, obliged to turn her hand to all sorts of unpleasant things (1971: 90).

Bam sees Maureen as a repulsive creature, made so by the contingency of a changed environment. Bam's notion of intimacy is dependent on circumstance. Evidently, he can live with this. It is less clear that Maureen can.

Maureen's self-recognition undermines her capacity for intimacy. Impotence accompanies powerlessness. Before the revolution, as it were, Maureen had operated on a concept of universality which made it possible for her to set moral absolutes by which to live and love. 'The humane creed (Maureen, like everyone else, regarded her own as definitive) depended on validities staked on a belief in the absolute nature of intimate relationships between beings' (1981: 64). She comes to see that her absolutes are dependent on circumstance, perhaps on race, but certainly on chance:

‘We’ (Maureen sometimes harked back) understand the sacred power and rights of sexual love as formulated in master bedrooms, and motels with false names in the register. Here, the sacred power and rights of sexual love are as formulated in a wife’s hut, and a backyard room in a city (65).

Maureen comes to the realisation that her universals are merely circumstantial; everything has depended on their having belonged to a colonising nation with a racist national policy. This discovery for her is a matter of shame if not of disgust. Maureen can no longer love her husband, nor can she make love to him, for reasons as simple as the fact that they are both filthy, the hut is full of fleas, but more importantly because July, by taking away their car and gun, or in permitting these things to be stolen, has undermined their authority, and to their minds, their humanity. In the Smales, one can almost hear Gregor Samsa’s plaintive cry to be allowed to live as he had always lived:

Did [Gregor] really want his warm room, so comfortably fitted with old family furniture, to be turned into a naked den in which he would certainly be able to crawl unhampered in all directions but at the price of shedding simultaneously all recollections of his human background (Kafka 1971: 116).

To ‘understand the sacred power and rights of sexual love as formulated in master Bedrooms’ requires that there be a bedroom but, much more importantly, that there be a master. Although Gordimer may be the kind of writer ‘for whom White mythologies in the mould of *Out of Africa* are abhorrent,’ she is unwilling to consider the possibility of making July Maureen’s new master (Simoes da Silva 2002: 4).

Gordimer moves away from the stereotype that is so commonplace in the literature of empire, that of the servants who remain silent and have no right to voice their own opinions. Gordimer does not reverse this order, but in Maureen the author has created a character with the intelligence to recognise, if not accept, her own loss of authority. Although supposedly trusted by Maureen, July was never treated as an equal. Now living away from home in the village of July's people, the Smales must watch as July takes over. Maureen, July tells her, used to check her things back in town just as she and Bam 'check' their things while in July's village. It is the loss of the gun and their car keys that make them see the writing on the wall. It is July and not Bam who actually holds power in the village where the Smales are staying:

And here; what was he here, an architect lying on a bed in a mud hut, a man without a vehicle. It was not that she thought of him with disgust – what right had she, occupying the same mud hut – but that she had gone on a long trip and let him behind in the master bedroom: what was here, with her, was some botched imagining of his presence of his presence in circumstances outside those the marriage was contracted for (98).

If Maureen has become less of a woman in Bam's eyes, he has become less of a man in hers. They have become less attractive to each other, are in fact no longer attracted to each other in large part because they no longer recognise each other's worth. As words left them, so did physical intimacy, because both had been inexorably linked.

This kind of repartee belonged to the deviousness natural to suburban life. In the master bedroom, sometimes it ended in brief coldness and irritation, sometimes in teasing, kisses and love-making of a variety suggested by the opportunities of the room and its rituals – a hand between her legs while she

was cleaning her teeth, the butting of his penis, seeking her from behind while she bent over the bath to swish a mixture of hot and cold water (89).

Without the domestic rituals, the coordinates of love escaped their attention. Their intimacy depended on bath water:

They had not made love since the vehicle had taken them away. Unthinkable, living and sleeping with the three children there in the hut. A place with a piece of sacking for a door. Lack of privacy killed desire; if there had been any to feel – but the preoccupation with daily survival, so strange to them, probably had crowded that out anyway (79).

Between Maureen and Bam Smales, there had, in fact, been no intimate relations since leaving their home and their possessions. Their dispossession had left Bam impotent; without their home they no longer have sexual desire for each other. Nor did they have sexual feelings for others. They had both been effectively neutered by their dispossession, a critical part of their identities erased.

In contrast, what inflames the passion of Mary Turner, Doris Lessing's protagonist in *The Grass Is Singing*, cannot be reduced easily to a single cause. One of them is certainly her servant's raw physicality. Unlike Bam Smales' observation of his wife's body, which he found a gross turnoff, Mary is intoxicated by the presence of Moses:

She used to sit quite still, watching him work. The powerful, broad-built body fascinated her. [His clothes] were too small for him; as he swept or scrubbed or bent to the stove, his muscles bulged and filled the thin material of the sleeves until it seemed they would split (161).

Mary's fascination can be understood as an exchange by which the observer, in this case, Mary Turner, is altered by what she sees. While fascinated, Mary was also repelled, both by the man and by her reaction:

Vividly she pictured the broad muscular back, and shuddered. So clear was her vision of the native that she imagined she smelled the hot acrid scent of native bodies. She could smell it, lying here in the dark (184).

Mary's racism makes her quite literally hysterical, as she is unable to cope with her sexual attraction to a black man:

It was like a nightmare where one is powerless against horror: the touch of this black man's hand on her shoulder filled her with nausea; she had never, not once in her whole life, touched the flesh of a native (172).

Feminist critics such as Gilbert and Gubar (1984) in their classic study of nineteenth century writers have identified the psychic turmoil engulfing women like Mary Turner, who has had to endeavour to regain her equilibrium alone and loveless on the veld. As Mary sinks deeper into her isolation and dementia, she embodies what the authors identify as a trope of Victorian women's literature, namely, maddened women whose anxieties express 'feelings of social confinement and their yearnings for spiritual escape' (86). Lessing's protagonist is the perfect exemplar of this dual striving, at once unfulfilled and driven by ill-defined yearning (Bahri 2004: 205; Katrak 1996: 243; Van Herk 1996: 95). Rightly, the critics see the use of spatial imagery by writers like Lessing to capture the spiritual reality made physical. 'Women authors, however,' Gilbert and Gubar argue, 'reflect the literal reality of

their own confinement in the constraints they depict, and so all at least begin with the same unconscious or conscious purpose in employing spatial imagery' (87).

Gilbert and Gubar explain how stories like Lessing's *The Grass Is Singing*, share with Brontë's *Jane Eyre*, and other classics of the 19th century, an atmosphere of constriction:

But in examining these matters the paradigmatic female story inevitably considers also the equally uncomfortable spatial options of expulsion into the cold outside or suffocation in the hot indoors, and in addition it often embodies an obsessive anxiety both about starvation to the point of disappearance and about monstrous inhabitation (86).

John Kucich (2007) explores this subject as it relates to sexuality in his new study of the conjunction of class identity and imperial ambition:

In particular, glorified suffering had a prominent history in nineteenth-century conceptions of social class, most of all among the middle classes. Of course, a variety of British class ideologies reserved a place for the moral exaltation and social authority that might be conferred by suffering (9).

Sexual proclivities are shown in Kucich's study to reveal in imperial Victorian literature an expression of imperial yearning, both accomplished and thwarted, and the acceptance of if not pleasure in imperial suffering.

Mary Turner's confinement is not an elaboration of a visionary theme, but 'social and actual' (86). Mary's alienation is not only internal, but physical in the sense that she is living in isolation on a piece of land that is literally nearly featureless. At the same time, her mental torment moves from the real to the

fantastic. She imagines that she will be ensnared by the black man who has become as object of revulsion in her mind, a giant insect, waiting to devour her:

Now it seemed as if the night were closing in on her, and the little house was bending over like a candle, melting in the heat. She heard the crack, crack; the restless moving of the iron above, and it seemed to her that a vast black body, like a human spider, was crawling over the roof, trying to get inside (234).

This provocative, frightening imagery reinforces one's sense that her imagination offers no hope for escape. She simply cannot imagine her way out of her desperation, and yet her nightmare comes to an end, albeit brutal.

Mary Turner and Maureen Smales are both overtaken by the force of nature, freed in a sense from the annihilating power of domesticity. They escape their respective traps. Mary is murdered. 'The trees advanced in a rush, like beasts, and the thunder was the noise of their coming' (236). Maureen takes off. Both acts are assertions of desperation. Gilbert and Gubar identify these 'moments of escape' as projections of the female author:

For it is, after all, through the violence of the double that the female author enacts her own raging desire to escape male houses and male texts, while at the same time it is through the double's violence that this anxious author articulates for herself the costly destructiveness of anger repressed until it can no longer be contained (85).

Mary and Maureen lose whatever powers they once had or imagined themselves to have had. They found themselves living in triangles of increasing powerlessness at

the hands of men, black and white. They both lost confidence in their husbands but could not cope with the possibility of relations with a black man.

Mary's breakdown is closely observed by a young Englishman. Tony has occasion to evaluate Mary's relationship with Moses, which has grown intimate, but assumes it is limited to her allowing Moses to undress her. He comments that Mary's behaviour reminds him of European aristocracy. He says, 'There was once an Empress of Russia who thought so little of her slaves, as human beings, that she used to undress naked in front of them.' Mary Turner, although no aristocrat, fancies herself the superior of the natives. Her sexual fantasies clash with her racist fancies. ('A white person may look at a native, who is no better than a dog' (163).) What she finds unforgivable in Moses is his assumption that he is a human being.

Nudity cuts both ways. Mary's loss of shame is related to her dehumanisation of Moses, but it is also related to her estrangement. Her mental breakdown grows out of her isolation, social and sexual. Tony sees Moses' undressing of Mary as a profound transgression, immediately recognising Mary's intimacy with Moses as a breakdown of barriers with wide-ranging implications. Tony's mind wanders between Moses' threatening gaze and Mary's apparent indifference. In *The Wretched of the Earth*, Fanon (1990) argues colonial relations were ruled by an awareness on the part of settlers like Lessing's Turners and Gordimer's Smales of their vulnerability:

The zone where the natives live is not complementary to the zone inhabited by the settlers. The two zones are opposed, but not in the service of a higher unity. Obedient to the rule of Aristotelian logic, they both follow the principle of reciprocal exclusivity. No conciliation is possible, for of the two

terms, one is superfluous. The town belonging to the colonised people, or at least the native town... is a place of ill fame, peopled by men of evil repute... The colonised man is an envious man. And this the settler knows very well; when their glances meet he ascertains bitterly, always on the defensive. 'They want to take our place' (39).

Doris Lessing's Mary Turner pursues her servant with the eyes of a paranoid, precisely, as Fanon insists, because of his threatening self-confidence.

Lessing exposes through what Tony witnesses in Mary's bedroom the vulnerability of the colonial edifice. By his having seen Moses helping Mary into her clothes, Tony intuits that far more is at stake than the loss of her husband's honour. The personal becomes political, as it does for Chenjerai Hove (1990). The image of the exposed female alerts the male to alterations and usurpations of power. The man recognises that it is he who is unmanned by the presence of the naked woman:

Manyepo, look at my bare breasts, and these cracked feet, do you not think that my feet should be covered so that I can work better in the muddy soil of your fields? All the children staring at a woman's bare breasts, do you not think it is shameful? Why do you not give your own wife that chance to go around half-naked with flies cleaning their coats on her nipples? (1990: 17).

The issue of nakedness is made relevant by inequality and exploitation. It is not that she is naked, but that the overseer's inhumanity makes her feel vulnerable and mortified by his indifference.

Such experiences as described by Hove and Lustig may make one wonder about Young George's observation in Kertész's *Fateless*, to the effect that

‘somehow things would work out, because it never happened that they didn’t work out’ (100). Here we find events described with such lacerating pain that it not only discredits George’s momentary optimism as a kind of lapse, but it brings into question Bhabha’s tendency to locate in the postcolonial project signs of hope. At other times, however, he advocates relationships ‘where non-consensual terms of affiliation may be established on the grounds of historical trauma,’ which seems more persuasive, as does his borrowed expression, ‘freak social and cultural displacements’ (1994: 17).

There may, however, have been more at stake in the postcolonial analysis of settler discomfort, even with its menacing implications. The silences and distances have also to do with reminders of racial prejudice and miscegenation. Fear is something that dominates and finally overwhelms. This is the experience July has over the Smales; it is new to them and utterly unsettling. The silences and awkwardness are products of man’s doings; they are part of the discourse of colonialism, part of the rhetoric of death. Benedict Anderson (2006) ties colonial racism’s disturbing conceit to European anti-Semitism:

The fact of the matter is that nationalism thinks in terms of historical destinies, while racism dreams of eternal contaminations, transmitted from the origins of time through an endless sequence of loathsome copulations: outside history Niggers are, thanks to the invisible tar-brush, forever niggers; Jews, the seed of Abraham, forever Jews, no matter what passports they carry or what languages they speak and read (149).

Racism’s ‘eternal’ characteristics may be what Anderson claims them to be; what concerns us here is racism in the historically specific moment of colonialism.

One can speak of an entire generation having shared a world haunted by war. People lived haunted by the spectre of war, its propaganda, and then its consequences. Richard J. Evans, in his recent *The Coming of the Third Reich* (2003) suggests that the atmosphere for Hitler's rise was established early in the century: 'The First World War legitimised violence to a degree that not even Bismarck's wars of unification in 1864-70 had been able to do' (72). The War brought out the worst in people, creating an atmosphere of incivility and incipient violence that ran from the streets into parliament. Evans continues:

Those who carried out these acts of violence were not only former soldiers, but also included men in their late teens and twenties who had been too young to fight in the war themselves and for whom civil violence became a way of legitimizing themselves in the face of the powerful myth of the older generation of front-soldiers (72-73).

This coarsening of civic life will be seen later in an America crippled by decades of wars. Non-combatants, men and women, came to share the life of veterans, either in anticipation of impending conflicts or in memory of those already endured. Men and woman became veterans, even if it only meant having to live among those ravaged and unable to adjust to so-called peace.

Shared political realities make comparison possible between peoples of disparate ancestries and origins. An effort has been made to show how displacement and estrangement characterise victims of colonialism. Physical withdrawal and isolation were both a consequence and a cause of such estrangement. Mary Turner's isolation and gradual madness are both cause and effect of what Homi Bhabha has termed 'unhomely moments,' which occur 'in fictions that negotiate the powers of

cultural difference in a range of transhistorical sites' (13). For Mary, isolation began sexually, as she forfeited passion as a survival strategy:

It was not so bad, she thought, when it was all over: not as bad as that. It meant nothing to her, nothing at all. Expecting outrage and imposition, she was relieved to find she felt nothing. She was able maternally to bestow the gift of herself on this humble stranger, and remain untouched (56).

Of course, Mary is not able to 'remain untouched.' She has in fact negotiated an isolation that violates her equilibrium. Mary's transgressions were engendered by her humiliation.

Emotionally, this estrangement could be experienced as lovelessness.

Gregor Samsa felt unloved. The brooding despair that links these disparate authors of far-flung empires, that of the Habsburg, the British, and of the Third Reich, centres on the sense of living in loveless lands, among people incapable of expressing or even of experiencing love. Wislawa Szymborska (1995) of Kraków tries to capture postwar cynicism in her poem 'True Love,' with rare humour:

True love. Is it really necessary?
Tact and common sense tell us to pass over it in silence,
Like a scandal in Life's highest circles.
Perfectly good children are born without its help.
It couldn't populate the planet in a million years,
It comes along so rarely (90).

It is a death-haunted land that Paul Celan (1988) finds himself in. 'Death Fugue,' which was first composed in 1944 or 1945, Coetzee tells us, 'is one of the landmark poems of the twentieth century' (2007: 119). Celan writes:

death is a master from Germany his eyes are blue
he strikes you with leaden bullets his aim is true
a man lives in the house your golden hair Margarete
he sets his pack on to us he grants us a grave in the air
he plays with the serpents and daydreams death is a master from
Germany (52).

Its sombre, explicit condemnation of Germany contrasts with Ingeborg Bachmann's poem with its mood-creating sense of cultural malaise:

All life has wandered off into blocks;
New misfortune is softened sanitarily; in the streets,
Chestnut trees bloom odorlessly, and the air no longer
Tastes of candle smoke. Above the ramparts
In the park, locks of hair blow lonely. Balls sink
In the water past children's hands
Down to the bottom; and the dead eye meets
The blue one it used to be (1988: 15).

These writers find words for the unspeakable, but what is striking is how familiar those words are to readers of postcolonial literature. Melancholy and dread become recapitulations of shared responses to common experiences:

In literature, silences and fragmentations always carry the double weight of striving to find a language that expresses the horror (if not the sorrow) even while caught in self-absorption and revealing unconscious blind spots that bar access to a genuine working through of the past (Schlant 1999: 242).

In Hove's *Bones*, the protagonist cries out in protest against a willful, humiliating heartlessness on the part of his field boss that at once dehumanises and emasculates. He is unmanned by helplessness:

My own wife has been telling you these things for a long time, but you dared call her wide-mouth. You even insulted her with her private parts in the presence of all the men and women of this farm.... You only care to have your work done in the fields. They called you Manyepo because you think we are always lying to you.... You say we smell of things you do not understand, we lie, we are lazy as children and we should always have someone to make sure that we work, do you think we are children with all this beard on our faces? Have we, the men, not made our wives pregnant and have the wives not become pregnant after we slept with them? Then how do you come to think that we are children? (18).

The struggle of Marita and her husband to find a human life mirrors the inhumanity experienced by July as a domestic servant at the hands of Maureen and Bam who never treated him with respect because they did not trust him as a man. Maureen is stunned when July describes their relationship in the base terms she had trained him to accept:

– She speak nice always, she pay fine for me when I'm getting arrested, when I'm sick one time she call the doctor. – He gave a laugh like a cry.
– You worry about your keys. When you go away I'm leave look after your dog, your cat, your car you leave in the garage. I mustn't forget water your plants. Always you are telling me even last minute when I'm carry your suitcase, isn't it? Look after everything, July. And you bringing nice present when you come back. You looking everywhere, see if everything it's still all right. Myself, I'm not say you're not a good madam – but you don't say you trust me. – It was a command. – You

walk behind. You looking. You asking me I must take all your books out and clean while you are away. You frightened I'm not working enough for you? – (70).

July's treatment cannot be compared to Marita's or to Skinny's, both of which involved rape and the threat of death; his humiliation was profound but, as the Smales might rightly insist, was not physically violent. But July has been made numb to Maureen's desire to be understood. He cannot see her as anything other than what she was to him.

In their discussion of Hannah Arendt's *Origins of Totalitarianism*, Heather and Stolz describe Arendt's concept of 'world alienation' in such a way as can be applied to Bhabha's search for a global culture living in the shadow and under threat of war:

The events, [Arendt] argues, that favored the triumph of total domination (war, revolution, vast economic dislocation) all combined to shatter the normal structures of social and political order. They produced, as a consequence, a society flooded by atomised masses who felt themselves powerless before events Arendt labels 'world alienation.' All this, she writes, 'sprang from a chaos of mass perplexities on the political scene and of mass opinions in the spiritual sphere which the totalitarian movements, through ideology and terror, crystallised into new forms of government and domination (1979: 16).

Despite living in a world of 'mass perplexities', these writers have not succumbed to Steiner's 'temptation of silence', but rather have worked to give voice to their experiences of the era's special brand of hell. Silence has, however, not been rejected as a strategy of survival, as will be shown in Coetzee's own *Disgrace*.

Lustig, like Coetzee and Gordimer, invents a kind of hell on earth to expose the cost of remaining silent for too long.

These works of fiction share settings of social discord in times of real or imagined crisis. Lustig and Gordimer create environments of confinement in the larger context of upheaval and revolution. These authors use individual struggles against hopelessness and powerlessness. *Fateless* and *Lovely Green Eyes* are set in or near Nazi concentration camps. Lessing's protagonist remains confined by the circumstances of rural isolation and by social conventions of colonialism. In J. M. Coetzee's *Disgrace* (1999), these themes are developed further to include a consideration of the moral dimension of resignation. The gap that opens up between the married couples in *The Grass Is Singing* and in *July's People* parallels the gulf between David Lurie and his daughter Lucy. An awakening occurs in the women, however subtle, which results in an awareness that their own identity is inexorably tied to racial subjugation, an awareness which is confirmed by MacKinnon's research on the subject of rape as an instrument of genocide (2006).

David Lurie and his daughter Lucy experience a sense of increasing isolation and fear. Intruders finally break in. First, they kill Lucy's dogs, and then attack and burn David, while others take Lucy to a back room to have their way with her. Paralysed as much by confusion as by fear, David's reaction is that of the intellectual who suddenly recognises the limits of a lifetime's cultivation of the mind:

He speaks Italian, he speaks French, but Italian and French will not save him here in darkest Africa. He is helpless, an Aunt Sally, a figure from a cartoon, a missionary in cassock and topi waiting with clasped hands and upcast eyes

while the savages jaw away in their own lingo preparatory to plunging him into their boiling cauldron (95).

Coetzee explores in *Disgrace* what he has called elsewhere 'the underside' (*Slow Man* 2006: 125). In *Disgrace*, and according to David Lodge, elsewhere, Coetzee depicts sex as 'phallic, compulsive, obsessive, and rather joyless....' One might add: helpless, forced.

This is quite suddenly Gordimer's world. Lustig's. Professor David Lurie and his daughter Lucy have been reduced to objects. In *July's People*, the Smales fall apart when they lose control of their car, when they could no longer control their lives. As in *Bones*, *Disgrace* and *Lovely Green Eyes*, women are reduced to sexual objects for barter. They are rude commodities savaged by force or by consent, in episodes of commerce. The disgrace is not that of individual immorality but of a disordering of meaning. They are victims of a kind of code of annihilation that barter's dignity. As Catherine A. MacKinnon has written, 'Women are abused by men in these ways every day in every country in the world. Sex has also been used before to create, mobilise, and manipulate ethnic hatred, from the world of the Third Reich to the world of *Penthouse*' (161).

Coetzee, Gordimer, and Lessing seem determined to display the ambivalent effects of colonisation. Lucy, Maureen, and Mary are forced to see themselves and respond to their respective shocks of recognition in different ways. Maureen and Lucy eventually come to see themselves, in Albert Memmi's words, as usurpers (1967: 9). Lucy sees all too well what has happened to her as a political act. There has been a seizing of control in the act of violating her. Lucy stops her father from

calling the police when he sees that the men who raped her are known in the neighbourhood:

‘Don’t shout at me, David. This is my life. I am the one who has to live here. What happened to me is my business, mine alone, not yours, and if there is one right I have it is the right not to be put on trial like this, not to have to justify myself – not to you, not to anyone else’ (133).

Unlike her father, who believes he is acting out of personal concern and love, Lucy recognises that her violation represents a transfer of power, one that she chooses not to resist:

‘As for Petrus, he is not some hired labourer whom I can sack because in my opinion he is mixed up with the wrong people. That’s all gone, gone with the wind. If you want to antagonise Petrus, you have better be sure of your facts. You can’t call the police. I won’t have it’ (133).

The stakes, Lucy recognises, are high. According to Catherine A. MacKinnon (2007):

Violating other men’s women is planting a flag; it is a way some men say to other men, ‘What was yours is now mine.’ He who gets away with this, runs things. Doing this institutionalises the rulership of some men over other men even as it establishes the rulership of all men over all women (171).

Lucy understands this and accepts it. She sees her acceptance as a political act of a kind, an act of reconciliation. Her father, the intellectual, does not and cannot.

It is as though sex is a thing to be possessed and owned, or that through possession or dispossession, one gains or loses sexual power. MacKinnon’s analysis goes right to the heart of the exchange between Lucy and the men who raped her;

she has been taken over by them, along with her house and her land. Now that they have the land, Petrus promises, they will leave her body alone (*Disgrace* 138).

This inquiry has ventured into areas of contemporary literature that reflect the phenomenon of the displaced author. Each author, although unique, expresses a collective preoccupation with cross-cultural and transnational experience of loss. In what Homi Bhabha described as ‘mimicry’, they are confronted and challenged by losses of autonomy and threatened by forces that are deeply subversive and which bear traces of mockery and menace. Consequently, the authority of colonial discourse as represented by these authors is threatened and the colonial domination is weakened if not overcome. Still, the authors share in a desire to force a recognition if not an action. They are hopeful that the discourse of regeneration can be forged without denial. Holocaust survivor Imre Kertész concludes his Nobel Lecture by asking that the Holocaust not be cast as an historical event, but as something we can come to terms with in the present:

The problem of Auschwitz is not whether to draw a line under it, as it were; whether to preserve its memory or slip it into the appropriate pigeonhole of history; whether to erect a monument to the murdered millions, and if so, what kind. The real problem with Auschwitz is that it happened, and this cannot be altered – not with the best, or worst, will in the world...since Auschwitz we are more alone, that much is certain (*Heureka!* 2002).

From this the importance of the Holocaust is clear. It is present, and its presence not only defines us but, if Kertész is right, limits us. Hannah Arendt (1964) sees a loss of freedom in our isolation. She writes:

What prepares men for totalitarian domination in the non-totalitarian world is the fact that loneliness, once a borderline experience usually suffered in certain marginal social conditions like old age, has become an everyday experience of the ever-growing masses of our century (475).

The isolated, politically atomised man can still work, or labour, can still fall back on the intimacies and support of private life, as men have done under many tyrannies. But totalitarianism is not content with creating isolation. It invades the private sphere as well. It is based on loneliness dominating both the political and social spheres of life. As a result, Kertész locates the Holocaust in the present as a condition of our times and as a warning:

Remembrance of the Holocaust is important to stop such things from happening again. But, in fact, nothing has happened since Auschwitz that would prevent another Auschwitz from happening. On the contrary. Before Auschwitz, the extermination camp was unimaginable. Today, it can be imagined. Because **Auschwitz really happened**, it has permeated our imagination, become a permanent part of us. What we are able to imagine – because it really happened – can happen again (2006).

Professor Gabriel Motzkin (1998) extends Kertész's point when he makes the following statement:

This means that we are a new event after the Holocaust. In other words, it means that I am a post-Holocaust, a post-war person, a postwar post-Holocaust person, and so is everybody else (*Interview*).

What Motzkin articulates from one perspective can be recognised as an affirmation of the concerns of Homi Bhabha and the attempt by postcolonial writers to establish

connections between colonialism and globalism. That connection must be made through the 20th century, two world wars, and the Holocaust. As Bhabha writes: ‘This global link between colony and metropolis, so central to the ideology of imperialism, is articulated in Kurtz’s emblematic words – ‘the Horror, the Horror!’’ (304).

In this chapter, I have attempted to show how memories of war play out psychologically, revealed in intimate moments, where vulnerability and powerlessness are shown to be the cost of political oppression. The rise of German tyranny in the 20th century is found to be the template for inhumanity, not an historical anomaly but a model of brutality. The postcolonial writers of Southern Africa, Lessing, Gordimer and Coetzee, are seen to produce works that echo the narratives of brutality produced in central Europe in the wake of Hitler’s armies. Their works, too, are seen in light of their own histories, their European backgrounds, an inheritance of displacement and dislocation. Critics may seek to draw absolute distinctions between political regimes, suggesting that personal experiences cannot so easily be compared. In this chapter, I have suggested that such comparisons deserve consideration as a way to better understand continuity in politics. I have tried to promote an interpretation of imperialism that recognises the imperial dynamic of oppression. This argument rests on an interpretation of imperial intent offered by Hannah Arendt and others who see totalitarianism as a political means of destroying human spontaneity of action irrespective of its peculiar historical characteristics. In this connection, the Holocaust cannot be dismissed as an historical anecdote, but recognized as offering a prism through which to understand

threats of political domination and dehumanisation. Thus anchored, a coherent, multifaceted attitude toward imperial power emerges.

One sees in Gordimer's, Lessing's, and Coetzee's works an alertness to the fragility of human freedom. This awareness echoes and reinforces depictions of human exchange by Holocaust survivors such as Imre Kertész and Arnošt Lustig. Theirs are narratives of frailty and survival. These works show how the machinery of the state breaks people personally. The violation of an individual's dignity is experienced profoundly, while the state's propagandists proclaim the diminishment of the individual. These works collectively call for the need for vigilance, aware as they are that what we have is easily undermined and destroyed. The juxtaposition of authors of different lands offers one a fresh perspective. I propose new understandings of the ways individuals experience political domination. These authors offer new insights into the ways rapid social change can undermine human rights. These authors test our ability to believe in the myth of progress. At the same time, their works emphasise the chance for survival through awareness and responsible action. Hopelessness is not their message, but neither is hopefulness. Their works reverberate with past trauma and there is no sense in their work that the worst has been done and is now behind us.

Chapter 3: PostWar: Escape and Confrontation

When a war was over, or a phase of war, with its submersion in the barbarous, the savage, the degrading, Shikastans were nearly all able to perform some sort of mental realignment that caused them to ‘forget.’ This did not mean that wars were not idols, subjects for pious mental exercises of all sorts. Heroisms and escapes and braveries of local and limited kinds were raised into national preoccupations, which were in fact forms of religion. But this not only did not assist, but prevented, an understanding of how the fabric of cultures had been attacked and destroyed. After each war, a renewed descent into barbarism was sharply visible – but apparently cause and effect were not connected, in the minds of Shikastans (89).

Doris Lessing, *Canopus in Argos: Archives*

This chapter focuses on the trauma of war and how it comes to dominate the lives of war veterans and those who have intimate relations with those maimed, physically or mentally in battle. Key works by two American writers will be examined. Saul Bellow and Philip Roth have created protagonists whose lives were deeply affected by war. In addition, Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* (1994) deserves attention. It is the aftermath of war experiences that is of concern in this chapter. Bellow, Roth and Achebe create protagonists whose struggle derives from an inability to cope with domestication. They have survived battle; their ability to adjust to peace is in question.

These writers focus on characters whose inner torment brings into question the ability of survivors of extreme circumstances to function beyond them. Discovery and reclamation become part of the project of survival; violence and self-destructive behaviour continue to threaten. Problems of social class will be addressed, but of central concern will be issues of masculine identity in the context of peacetime, issues of adjustment to postwar life, and the long-term reverberations of war trauma. My argument is simply that war-time injury resonates powerfully through postwar literature and plays a powerful part in the shaping of masculine identity, especially in the literature that emerges after World War II. This discursive resonance presents writers of fiction with the opportunity to create male protagonists with powerful drives for self refashioning. In this sense, I am arguing that war time experiences, trauma, and recovery played a vital role in the shaping and reshaping of social identity at the imperial periphery. The success or failure of efforts at recovery

forms the heart of these narratives. The men's injuries come to have consequences in domestic, postwar culture.

Postcolonial identity was forged in a postwar environment. The disparate voices that make up postcolonial discourse share the grief and grievances of modernity. In *The Location of Culture* (1994), Bhabha correctly identifies suffering as an informing experience that cuts across national lines, gender, race, and aspirations:

In this salutary sense, a range of contemporary theories suggest that it is from those who have suffered the sentence of history – subjugation, domination, diaspora, displacement – that we learn our most enduring lessons for living and thinking (246).

Grievance as a response to suffering is vital to grasping what the sensibility of postcolonialism is about.

The notion of lasting traumatic impact informs this chapter. It is fundamental to accounting for the experiences described in postwar fiction of war veterans and their struggles to find a new life in more peaceful times. Rong Cai (2004) gives a useful account of the ways writers in China have sought to incorporate experiences of almost unbearable suffering into their fiction. Rong Cai (2004) deftly summarises the features of literary currents in contemporary China informed by those who suffered during the waves of radicalisation that left so many in a position of marginalisation and oppression:

Literature of the wounded turned into a lamentation on a national scale. Saturation with tears of rage, frustration, and pain, this form of literature is a political expression via an artistic channel. The victim's cry, the underlying

tone of the literature of the wounded, is that of anger, indignation, and accusation (42-43).

A 'literature of the wounded' usefully describes literatures of the world beyond China. It is an expression that captures a survivors' literature that emerges from periods of political turmoil. In this chapter I would like to adopt this terminology and apply it to certain American postwar writers and consider what such a literature of the wounded might look like.

Peter Hays in his *The Limping Hero: Grotesques in Literature* (1971) establishes the literary and anthropological antecedents of the maimed hero, producing a wide-ranging study of numerous contemporary works of literature. He divides his study into three major parts, all dealing with limping heroes, but differentiated by their symbolic meanings. The first group includes those authors whose themes relate primarily to spiritual regeneration through the restoration of sexual vitality. Hays is concerned with the pattern, as he calls it, of the dying and the reviving hero, with reference to the decades immediately following the Second World War. He analyses the lame son in Tennessee Williams's *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* (1958), as well as in *Henderson the Rain King* by Saul Bellow, published in 1959, focusing on the spiritual regeneration of these heroes which accompanies their physical (sexual) revitalisation. These works dramatise the lives of returning veterans as they struggle to adjust to domestic life; Williams' drama about a football player who will never again experience the thrill of 'battle' shares with Bellow's WWII veteran the inability to live at peace (Williams 1958).

Eugene Henderson is a limping hero, having been wounded by a land mine in the battle of Monte Cassino during the Second World War. Henderson had, however, recovered from his war wounds; his most recent injuries were self-inflicted, when he fell off his tractor while drunk and ran himself over. But Bellow's central character sees himself as a fighter:

I have always had a soldierly rather than a civilian temperament. When I was in the army and caught the crabs, I went to get some powder. But when I reported what I had, four medics grabbed me, right at the crossroads, in the open they stripped me naked and they soaped and lathered me and shaved every hair from my body, back and front, armpits pubic hair, mustache, eyebrows, and all. This was right near the waterfront at Salerno. Trucks filled with troops were passing, and fishermen and paisanos and kids and girls and women were looking on. The GIs were cheering and laughing and the paisans laughed, the whole coast laughed, and even I was laughing as I tried to kill all four. They ran away and left me bald and shivering, ugly, naked, prickling between the legs and under the arms, raging, laughing, and swearing revenge (1976: 22).

Henderson tells us that he brawled in public with his wives, fought with the local police and went after people as he had back in Italy during the war. Once home, however, his behaviour lands him in jail.

Bellow's protagonist's life as a soldier lies chiefly in the past, but he could not stop himself from battling on. He is described, in fact, as a man who was at peace with battle, understood it; he was in fact an embattled personality, torn and pressed by inner demons that were quieted by conflict. This Bellow shows by placing

Henderson's war experiences in conflict with his domestic tranquility. What he could not, in fact, do was to live in domestic tranquility:

Soon after I came back from the war (I was too old for combat duty but nothing could keep me from it; I went down to Washington and pressured people until I was allowed to join the fight), Frances and I were divorced. This happened on V-E day (8).

Bellow's Henderson describes himself as a brawler, a womaniser, and a drunk. Everybody in up-state New York seems to know him or to know of him, as his exploits with the sheriff's office, among others, are, according to Henderson himself, legendary. He is a land-owner, a musician, and a pig-farmer, but he is not satisfied and cries out for fulfillment, or escape.

Bellow sets up what in fact is a quest narrative, having established certain features of his hero. That he represents the limping hero, as Hays makes clear, is certain from his already specified wounds, but more important to his characterisation is Henderson's mental anguish, his frustration, his inability to connect with others, to abide the social, and most importantly his inability to accept his mortality. He is guilt-ridden, has an inferiority complex, and is haunted by the death of his elder brother. It is his belief that his father would have preferred for him to have been the one to have died. Therefore, Henderson's key disabling wound is psychological, and his quest, which is self-acknowledged, has to do with his search for inner healing and, perhaps, or a kind of redemption, or, what Lemuel A. Johnson calls, 'release through transcendence' (1984: 45). Henderson asks: 'Is it any wonder I had to go to Africa? But I have told you there always comes a day of tears and madness' (32).

Brigitte Scheer-Schazler (1972) goes so far as to call the novel a redemption quest narrative, drawing parallels between it and the Percival legend in which the Fisher King's wound can be seen as a kind of divine punishment for the King's failure to protect his sacred trust (19). For this neglect on the King's part, the land is laid waste and the people made to suffer. In Bellow's version, it is Henderson rather than the land around him that has been laid waste and, therefore, his quest is for personal healing, a kind of inner peace. It is also true that he is nobody's victim, but rather suffers from his own restless heart:

I have to cry, 'No, no, get back, curse you, let me alone!' but how can they let me alone? They belong to me. They are mine. And they pile into me from all sides. It turns into chaos (3).

His often-repeated phrase, 'I want' can be read as a cry for healing (Miniotaite 2005: 112). His journey to Africa (always a reflection of himself) and his travels among the tribes of the Arnewi and Wariri symbolise his confrontation with two opposing mental states, which are reconciled in the return of Henderson by air to the United States (Gruesser 1992: 39). In the end, Henderson's mental health is restored, having purged himself not so much of memory itself, but at least of regret, shame, and guilt. It is as if by going to Africa, Henderson had experienced by the end of the journey the equivalent of spiritual healing:

So we were let out, this kid and I, and I carried him down from the ship and over the frozen ground of almost eternal winter, drawing breaths so deep they shook me, pure happiness, while the cold smote me from all sides through the stiff Italian corduroy with its broad wales, and the hairs of my beard turned spiky as the moisture of my breath froze instantly (340).

As a result of this healing, Henderson is ready to renew his vow of marriage, return to a peaceful, domestic life with a woman.

Bellow's *Henderson the Rain King* centres on a man whose wounds make it impossible for him to live comfortably around women. The novelist creates a character whose behaviour makes him a danger to himself, to women, and to the world of domestic tranquility. He becomes a kind of menace of society. Henderson acts according to type, even wielding an archetypal six-shooter:

But as it got her nowhere to discuss it with me she started to cry, and when I saw tears I lost my head and yelled, 'I'm going to blow my brains out! I'm shooting myself. I didn't forget to pack the pistol. I've got it on me now' (7).

Henderson himself relates one of the incidents that drove him out of the country:

There I was at that resort with my sweet-faced anxious second wife who was only a little under six feet herself, and our twin boys. In the dining room I was putting bourbon in my morning coffee from a big flask and on the beach I was smashing bottles. The guests complained to the manager about the broken glass and the manager took it up with Lily; me they weren't willing to confront (7).

Henderson's actions take place in the context of Henderson's own exacting mental life; to some extent the novel is about the toll such self-consciousness takes. But one parallel that stands out can be found between Henderson and Twain's *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court* (1963). At the beginning of Bellow's novel – in fact, in the opening four chapters – Henderson undergoes his crisis. He is overwhelmed by memories, history, and in a sense by the burden of memory itself.

We hear of his numerous fights, moments of humiliation, of his father's disappointments in him, his brother's early death, and Henderson's failed marriages, the last of which he hopes to restore. These passages taken as a whole remind us of the Fisher King's barren landscape (as described by Hays) and, and in terms of Henderson's personal despair, we are reminded in the opening chapters of Melville's *Moby-Dick* of Ishmael's desire to strike out to sea, to the wilds of nature.

Africa for Bellow serves the purpose that Melville found in the sea. Africa for Bellow contains the mythological substance the American West once had and still possesses for some. Africa appeals to Henderson because he imagines it to be big enough for him, in contrast to America, which represents constriction, repression, and domestication. Toni Morrison's reading of American literature can be used to explain Bellow's choice of Africa as a setting for Henderson's redemption. Henderson is restored by his Africa, by forces that resemble the regenerative powers once found in the fictionalised West. Bellow imagines an Africa that Morrison claims remains fixed in the literary imagination as 'primitive', the construct of American whites who insist on seeing Africa as raw, 'uncivilised,' and savage. Morrison's claim is suggestive for understanding Bellow's place in American letters:

I want to suggest that these core concerns – autonomy, authority, newness and difference, absolute power – not only become the major themes and presumptions of American literature, but that each one is made possible by, shaped by, activated by a complex awareness and employment of a constituted Africanism. It was this Africanism, deployed as rawness and savagery, that provided the staging ground and arena for the elaboration of the quintessential American identity (44).

Bellow can be said to fit into a tradition of American letters that is race conscious, but Henderson's journey undermines rather than confirms certain racial preconceptions. It is clear that Henderson's blundering, however well-intended, is meant to enforce the reader's view of him as less 'civilised' than the Africans he meets; whatever assumptions he or the reader may have are undermined. It is Henderson's 'savage' arrogance, his destructive willfulness, and lack of wisdom that are revealed in the course of the narrative, not his superiority.

On the other hand, he may not be entirely at peace. Richard Slotkin's study (1973) of popular fiction in the 19th century and of the emergence of the myth of the heroic backwoodsman offers a suggestive context in which to consider Henderson (512-513). Slotkin states:

A new captivity, a new hunt, and a new ceremony of exorcism repeat the myth-scenario on progressively deeper, more internal levels. Wars are followed by witch-hunts. Moby Dick is both a creature of external reality and an aspect of his hunters' minds. It has been said that men 'make a waste land and call it peace'; and the desert is not simply that of a savaged landscape but of a tortured mind (564).

Part of Henderson's character is exposed by his radical break with father, a man who in many ways Henderson resembles but is also a man who Henderson sees as having little to offer. This can be said of Henderson's attitude toward his family in general, his inheritance, and his ancestry. Henderson's despair is not lessened by his awareness of his heritage. He has a former Secretary of State and several ambassadors in his paternal line, but he is unable to turn their accomplishments into

something for which he can feel pride. He is unable to draw from his past, abandons everything, and goes off, instead, in search of himself. *Henderson the Rain King* can be read as ‘a morality play in which good usually wins over evil, the hero rides on into the sunset and there is an implicit faith not only in the promise of human possibility but also in environmental abundance, an underlying optimism’ (Edwards 2003: 8). According to Georg Lukács (1983), such a figure should be seen as Romantic, the type of character who emerges from chaos, freed from constraints to wander in search of himself.

Henderson heads for Egypt, accompanied by his pal Charlie and his wife. Henderson objects to the trip organised by Charlie and ultimately leaves. In the following passage certain clues reveal Henderson’s own plans:

The expedition that Charlie organised had all new equipment and was modern in every respect. We had a portable generator, a shower, and hot water and from the beginning I was critical of this. I said, ‘Charlie, this wasn’t the way we fought the war. Hell, we’re a couple of old soldiers. What is this?’ It wounded me to travel in Africa in this way (42).

Henderson has, of course, no intention of travelling in post-colonial, 20th or 21st century Africa, but rather intends to travel back in time. His interest, in fact, is not in Egypt at all, which is filled with historical references, Biblical, Greek, and Roman. Instead, Henderson is in search of a pre-historical, perhaps even pre-lapsarian, primeval past which exists unburdened, as he wishes to be, of memory, of expectation, or dread. It is, in fact, as Dutton (1982) calls it, a world of ‘pre-Adamic conditions’ that Henderson’s soul cries for (51). This world which Henderson seeks is the world found in Cooper’s America (New 1996). That is what Henderson is

looking for, and Bellow, unable to create persuasively such a world in America, sends Henderson to the 'Dark Continent' to find it (Shukla 2005: 175; Lamont 2001: 129).

Bellow's motivations for locating his novel in Africa may be found in the restlessness of the postwar decade. Of course, one cannot speak of the use of Africa as a setting without mentioning Chinua Achebe's critique of Conrad in 'An Image of Africa' (1977). Achebe's objections to Conrad were based largely on his accusation that Conrad had depicted Africa as 'the antithesis of Africa and therefore of civilisation, a place where man's vaunted intelligence and refinement are finally mocked by triumphant bestiality' (2). Given the fact that Bellow wrote of Africa without ever having been there, his descriptions of Africa may be naïve or even altogether mistaken; they are no doubt stereotyped. Henderson, unlike Conrad's Marlow, comes to Africa a broken man, lacking confidence and clearly in search of guidance. Henderson comes in search of a reality-instructor, someone who can give him guidance in how to live. What little confidence he does have is quickly shaken. His arrogance derives not from self-confidence, but in his naïve belief that he possesses a practical knowledge that can solve problems for others. This final conceit is shattered. Unlike the Conrad described by Achebe, Bellow's binary is not based on a racist conception of the civilised and uncivilised; his is based on a binary of wisdom and ignorance which each individual possesses to varying degrees (Miniotaite 2005: 112).

Emotionally and personally Henderson seems to have pondered 'to what peril of extinction' his life in upper-state New York had been taking him:

When I think of my condition at the age of fifty-five when I bought the ticket all is grief. The facts begin to crowd me and soon I get a pressure in the chest. A disorderly rush begins – my parents, my wives, my girls, my children, my farm, my animals, my habits, my money, my music lessons, my drunkenness, my prejudices, my brutality, my teeth, my face, my soul! (3).

What war does to the individual, among other things, is to teach the soldier to live without, so precious does life become. The adjustment to things as part of postwar life leaves one disconcerted, especially when those things are meant to be all that life offers.

Henderson follows a peculiarly American trajectory of seeking male companionship. As Tompkins explains, in Westerns the woman's point of view must be disregarded: 'Indeed, the viewpoint women represent is introduced in order to be swept aside, crushed, or dramatically invalidated' (41). In this regard, *Henderson the Rain King* can be read as a Western set in Africa. Bellow assumes that the American frontier has disappeared, but not the masculine hero in search of himself.

Henderson fits into

the masculine narrative of American adventuring, from the exploits of James Fenimore Cooper's Natty Bumppo, Melville's Ahab and Twain's Huck Finn, each with their coloured companions, each fleeing the 'centre' represented by woman, responsibility and civilization, to their continuing descendants in comic books, popular literature and film (Edwards 3).

As Tompkins says, 'Repeating the pattern of the domestic novels in reverse, Westerns either push women out of the picture completely or assign them roles in which they exist only to serve the needs of men' (39-40). Bellow's ending can be

read in this connection. Once Henderson heals his 'wounds' and sees himself as, in a sense, fit to live among other people, to accept and be accepted, he fashions a reconciliation: 'Lily will have to sit up with me if it takes all night, I was thinking, while I tell her all about this' (339).

D.H. Lawrence's description of the sort of masculine bonding found in James Fenimore Cooper's fiction appears in Bellow's novel (1977). Henderson has to break with his friends because he is in search of the sort of relationship that he believes can only exist between men when they are away from women, away from civilisation, perhaps as he had experienced as a soldier. In his classic appraisal of 19th century American fiction, Lawrence captures the sublime eroticism of non-sexual male relationships in the Natty Bumppo-Chingachgook relationship:

What did Cooper dream beyond democracy? Why, in his immortal friendship of Chingachgook and Natty Bumppo he dreamed the nucleus of a new society. That is, he dreamed a new human relationship. A stark, stripped human relationship of two men, deeper than the deeps of sex. Deeper than property, deeper than fatherhood, deeper than marriage, deeper than love. So deep that is it is loveless. The stark, loveless, wordless union of two men who have come to the bottom of themselves. This is the new nucleus of a new society, the clue to a new world-epoch. It asks for a great and cruel sloughing first of all. Then it finds a great release into a new world, a new moral, a new landscape (59-60).

Lawrence may be right that the male bonding is sexless; it certainly seems to be so in Henderson's relationships, although it is worthwhile to consider the argument put forward by Leslie Fiedler (1998), in his essay of 1948, 'Come back to the Raft Ag'in, Huck Honey!' In his essay, the author considered the homoerotic

implications of the sometimes lovingly protective relationship between Huck and Jim. Henderson, however, has a relationship that suggests something closer to that of a son seeking guidance and protection from a father.

The relationship between Henderson and Dahfu also brings to mind that of a soldier and his immediate superior. Henderson certainly wanted to be seen as a soldier, identified with the military, and sought the king's respect on those terms:

'Here,' I said, 'I am ready to do almost anything you say. I've taken a lot from life, but basically it hasn't really scared me, King. I am a soldier. All my people have been soldiers. They protected the peasants, and they went on the crusades and found the Mohammedans. And I had one ancestor on my mother's die – why General Grant would even start an engagement with him' (257).

When Henderson runs into Romilayu, the reader finds someone who certainly could be a Sancho Panza, as Brigitte Scheer-Schazler argues, but could also be Bellow's version of Cooper's Chingachgook. The trust and respect Henderson develops for Romilayu parallels the high regard in which Chingachgook is held. This is how Bellow describes him:

Old tribal scars were cut into his cheeks and his ears had been mutilated to look like hackles so that the points stuck into his hair. His nose was fine-looking and Abyssinian, not flat. The scars and mutilations showed that he had been born a pagan, but somewhere along the way he had been converted, and now he said his prayers every morning (45).

Their relation is that of soldiers, essentially that of two soldiers surviving together, battle-ready, relying on each other, protecting each other. Although not equals, they are shown to be committed to each other:

I said, above the drums, 'Romilayu, where is my man Romilayu?' I was worried, you see, lest they decide to hold him to in connection with the body. I wanted him by my side. He was allowed to walk behind me in the procession, carrying all the gear. Tried in strength and patience, he bent under his double burden; it was out of the question for me to carry anything. We marched' (149).

This relationship resembles that of those soldiers Paul Fussell calls products of the front line experience: 'The object was mutual affection, protection, and admiration' (1977: 272).

Cooper, describing Chingachgook, emphasises his influence on others more than his physical aspect, but both characters function as intermediaries between civilization and the primitive. Here is Chingachgook:

'Not so Hurry, but the best of loping redskins, as you call'em. If he had his rights, he would be a great chief; as it is he is only a brave and just-minded Delaware, respected and even obeyed in some things, 'tis true, but of a fallen race and belonging to fallen people'(1980: 26).

The parallel between Henderson and the Deerslayer, Romilayu and Chingachgook, and between the two African tribes, the Arnewi and the Wariri and their American counterparts, the Delaware and the Herons, is worth attention because Bellow sought in placing Henderson in a pre-colonial setting to locate an arena, as it were, in which conflicting forces could be placed in opposition. If Malcolm Bradbury

(1982) is right in saying that Bellow was preoccupied with ‘the hope that the imagination might generate at last the saving fable,’ then it makes sense that he would test Henderson’s humanity by having him visit two communities which pull him and tempt him toward extremes (66).

The opposition can be seen in the two crucial scenes of Henderson’s adventure. The first takes place at the end of his time among the Arnewi tribe, a matriarchic society ruled by an archetypical Mother Goddess named Queen Willatale. Bellow has Henderson attempt to solve the tribe’s clogged cistern, which had become overrun with frogs, by setting off an explosion, creating a scene which reminds one of Mark Twain’s *Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur’s Court* (1963). Like Twain’s Hank Morgan, who uses his knowledge of 19th century industrialised techniques to set Camelot straight, Henderson believes that he can be of assistance to the locals by applying his knowledge of technology; in fact, he believes so strongly in his superiority that he conceives of his application of elementary engineering as transformative and liberating for the people. Filled with Yankee confidence, they both use explosives with nonchalant abandon. The catastrophe that ensues can be read as Bellow’s critique of violence applied in the service of progress, a possible reference to the development of nuclear weapons and the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki or, more generally, as with Twain, a criticism of the conceit of science as a source of superior knowledge.

Henderson is convinced that his skill will rid the cistern of a blockage. The dynamite, however, more than kills the frogs, cracking the cistern itself and loosing the water onto the parched earth (Shukla 2004: 213). Henderson, instead of solving

the village's water problem, has effectively destroyed the village's only source of water:

The explosion had blasted out the retaining wall at the front end. The big stone blocks had fallen and the yellow reservoir was emptying fast. 'Oh! Hell!' I grabbed my head, immediately dizzy with the nausea of disaster, seeing the water spill like a regular mill race with the remains of those frogs (109).

It is a miserable moment and, if the story ended there, Henderson would, according to Lawrence, belong to his list of white killers, who make up the American psyche. Instead, Henderson sets off in search of redemption.

This incident, however, induces feelings in Henderson that resemble the guilt perpetrators of war crimes often feel. This is not to say that Henderson sees himself as a criminal in any way, but he does see himself as one who has done harm. The wreckage of the cistern leaves the village in such a dire condition that its impact can be said to resemble a battle scene. Certainly, Henderson recognises the importance of his recklessness and emotionally absorbs its consequence:

This was nothing but God's own truth, as with the cistern I had blown up everything else, it seemed. And so I held my face in the bagging, sopping shirt with the unbearable complications at heart. I waited for Itelo to cut me open, my naked middle with all its fevers and its suffering prepared for execution. Under me the water of the cistern was turning to hot vapor and the sun was already beginning to corrupt the bodies of the frog dead (110).

The incident fits into a pattern of irresponsibility. The wreckage of a lifetime haunts Henderson and he wants to escape blame. When he and the young boy finally are

airborne, returning finally to New York, he felt he could finally forgive himself, and be forgiven for all his misdeeds, and it had come to him through recognition, not escape. Rather than enforcing the colonialist claim of the 'improving power of work,' Henderson's blundering arrogance reinforces Bellow's notion of imperial humility, by which colonial assumptions are undermined (Boehmer 1995: 39).

The cistern disaster sends Henderson packing and he wanders with Romilayu to the village of the Wariri. Hays is right to see Henderson's function as a fertility figure, since he does make rain for the Wariri and with the death of the King is next in line of succession. The scene in the lion den is important because it is there that Henderson overcomes his fear of death and where he seems to recognise his ultimate humanity. Brigitte Scheer-Schazler (1972) makes a persuasive case for the transformative powers of Henderson's primal recognition of his frailty before the king of the beasts, but her analysis of Henderson's acceptance of mortality is more compelling (34). She sees these themes played out in Dahfu's death and more importantly in his acceptance not only of the possibility of that death but of his refusal to escape it by rejecting the rites and customs of his community (83). He faces death, then, as a choice and as a duty. The connection between duty and redemption is central to Bellow and explains Henderson's decision at the end of the narrative to return to America (the modern world) to attend medical school. It is in keeping with one motif which is sustained throughout the novel, namely, those references to Albert Schweitzer, which are meant to embody Henderson's weakness for modern legends. In Schweitzer and in the example of Dahfu, a strong connection

is made between greatness and service to others. Scheer-Schazler captures the theme well in her brief summary passage:

By returning from civilization into the wilderness of this tribe, by willingly submitting himself to possible death in the framework and context of his culture, by living joyfully ‘in the knowledge of annihilation’ and by avoiding all easy escapes, Dahfu bears witness to the possibility of a more brilliant reality and thus becomes the agent of Henderson’s redemption (85).

Henderson’s reclamation of self fits, according to Coetzee, into a series of Bellovian characters who discover the need for individuals to find a place for themselves in society, to locate the centre of freedom in responsibility, and to face death squarely (2007: 215). Henderson’s struggles can be seen to reveal a distinction important to Bellow. As with other protagonists, Coetzee believes that Bellow ‘draws a distinction between a mere self-obsessed individual like himself wrestling with his thoughts and the artist, who through the demiurgic faculty of the imagination turns his petty personal troubles into universal concerns’ (215).

These concerns may or may not be ‘universal’; what can be said is that they become preoccupying for this postwar generation. This type of figure was made familiar to readers of postcolonial literature by Chinua Achebe in *Things Fall Apart*, originally published in 1959, coincidentally the same year in which Bellow’s novel appeared. His tragic hero Okonkwo shares many of Henderson’s traits. Okonkwo, too, cannot adjust to peacetime. Although not physically maimed as Henderson was, Okonkwo shares his destructive, anti-social urges. He prided himself on his hardness, his ruthlessness, his love of combat and those other characteristics associated with the warrior male, the combatant and hunter. Okonkwo, like

Henderson, is a violent man, a wife-beater, with the capacity for unrestrained outbursts that will ultimately bring him down:

And so when he called Ikemefuna to fetch his gun, the wife who had just been beaten murmured something about guns that never shot. Unfortunately for her, Okonkwo heard it and ran madly into his room for the loaded gun, ran out again and aimed at her as she clambered over the dwarf wall of the barn. He pressed the trigger and there was a loud report accompanied by the wail of his wife and children. He threw down the gun and jumped into the barn, and there lay the woman, very much shaken and frightened but quite unhurt. He heaved a heavy sigh and went away with the gun (39).

Okonkwo's troubles, not entirely unlike Henderson's, had to do with his inability to submit to authority, especially to a father he did not admire, or to domestic authority or communal order which, in the case of Okonkwo's land, refused to submit to a willful, disobedient male.

Bellow fills in Henderson's background with details which make him a larger-than-life figure like Okonkwo, the village's wrestling champion. Henderson is a millionaire, an aristocrat, and at 6'4" and a neck size of 22, a kind of giant among smaller, lesser men. Okonkwo, too, seems set for life:

Okonkwo was well known throughout the nine villages and even beyond. His fame rested on solid personal achievements. As a young man of eighteen he had brought honor to his village by throwing Amalinze the Cat. [Okonkwo] was tall and huge, and his bushy eyebrows and wide nose gave him a very severe look... He had a slight stammer and whenever he was angry and could not get his words out quickly enough, he would use his fists (1994).

Despite his lack of discipline and uneven temperament, Okonkwo lived in a community where his personal accomplishments were appreciated and honoured. He in fact flourished:

Okonkwo was clearly cut out for great things. He was still young but he had won fame as the greatest wrestler in the nine villages. He was a wealthy farmer and had two barns full of yams, and had just married his third wife. To crown it all he had taken two titles and had shown incredible prowess in two inter-tribal wars (6).

The descriptions of Okonkwo remind one of Bellow's larger-than-life protagonist and, although not as one-dimensional as Bellow's, Achebe's women play a far less central role in this novel than his male protagonists. In fact, both novelists concentrate on male protagonists and are concerned with issues of masculine identity in the context of shifting priorities. The rebellious, anti-social, self-destructive behaviours exhibited by Henderson and Okonkwo have to do with their inability to accept having to live in domestic tranquility, where traits other than toughness, a muscular physique and expressions of masculine superiority are honoured. The very quickness of physical reflex that made Okonkwo a hero in war makes him a violator of community custom. When he ignores the warnings offered by the Oracle to stand aside and passively witness the ritual killing of Ikemefuna, Okonkwo exhibits signs of an impulsive violence that will eventually cause his demise.

Contrary to Charles Larson's insistence, Henderson and Okonkwo have much in common (2006: 79). Larson states that the concept of the hero, which he defines as 'the belief in the individual who is different from his fellowmen', is alien

to African life, and argues further that ‘the hero in contemporary African fiction is for the most part non-existent’ (79). Unlike the isolated figure found in Western literature, Larson goes on, the anti-hero of Western contemporary fiction is not to be found in African fiction because ‘it is the group-felt experience that is all important (79). This may be true for the most part, but Achebe’s protagonist has precisely those characteristics of the isolated figure who, like Bellow’s, cannot cope with living in the village and is as a result thrust out to make it on his own. Tragically, Okonkwo does not make it. His violent outbursts lead first to his exile from the community; his indulgent brooding and unwillingness to live obediently within his mother’s clan and to acknowledge matriarchal authority threatened to make him an outcast for life.

Henderson possesses characteristics of the postwar returning veterans whose combat experiences leave them with lasting wounds, be they physical or emotional. Speaking of the experiences of Holocaust survivors and in general of ‘the mental state of victims of persecution,’ W.G. Sebald (2004) has described the permanent damage violence inflicts (149). Sebald, who has written extensively on the Holocaust’s victims, lived, he has said, in the shadow of WWII and the memory of those terrible events (Self 2010: 3). He says:

Islands of amnesia do develop in them, but that is not at all the same as being genuinely able to forget. Rather, it is as if a diffuse ability to forget goes hand in hand with recurrent resurgence of images that cannot be banished from the memory, and that remain effective as agencies of an almost pathological hyperamnesia in a past otherwise emptied of content (149).

And indeed, Sebald himself has testified to the impact such events had on his own life:

‘While I was sitting in my pushchair and being wheeled through the flowering meadows of my mother, the Jews of Corfu were being deported on a four-week trek to Poland. It is the simultaneity of a blissful childhood and those horrific events that now strikes me as incomprehensible. I know now that these things cast a very long shadow over my life’ (Self 3).

Sebald’s insights into the lasting effects of war come from his own experiences. His work is devoted to uncovering the impact of war on human consciousness – that of victims, perpetrators but, most importantly, on the successor generation. His analysis can be applied in general to understanding trauma and how it can shape literary expression. The powerful testimony of this youth’s overwhelming, life-threatening experience recalls Cathy Caruth’s formulation of the traumatic ordeal, as an event that lives on in memory out of proportion to present circumstances. One, in a sense, comes to live in the past, taken over by one’s trauma (1995:4).

Sebald’s analysis of postwar Germany is instructive and applicable to an understanding of the postwar literary types. His analysis of the German people’s reaction to the horrors of war and the development of social codes of silence explains well the maimed hero’s reticence. He describes postwar rebuilding as ‘tantamount to a second liquidation in successive phases of the nation’s own past history’ which, he argues, ‘prohibited any look backward’ (2004: 7). The trauma of postwar assimilation and reconstruction necessitated a grim foregoing of nostalgia and regret. ‘It did so through the sheer amount of labour required and the creation of a new, faceless reality, pointing the population exclusively towards the future and

enjoining on it silence about the past' (7). He goes further, offering a description of how people coped in postwar Germany; his analysis can be applied to war veterans elsewhere; in short, it was one that enforced 'individual and collective amnesia – a means of obscuring a world that could no longer be presented in comprehensible terms' (10).

The desire to be heard combined with the refusal to speak creates a tension found in a literature of the wounded. His take is that one never escapes unscathed. It is, finally, for Sebald a matter of ethics; it is also a matter of identity, one that can be resisted but never shaken. Yet it would be mistaken to believe that the revulsion belongs to the victims and witnesses alone, that it is innocence or distance that informs the moral disgust. Perpetrators and victims alike can be found to suffer feelings of shame and guilt. Survivors may question why they were spared. Perpetrators may also seek to justify their actions, but they are just as likely to be tortured by guilt.

The themes that Philip Roth brings up and ties together in *American Pastoral* are by no means new to his work. As early as 'Defender of the Faith', Roth wrote with similar concerns. The settings are not the same, of course, but the world depicted in his short story of the 1950s lives in his novel. While the short story is set in the Army training camp in 1945, *American Pastoral* takes as its setting the anti-war movement of the 1970s. The Swede is a veteran of WWII, while his daughter is a war protester turned domestic terrorist. War as a metaphor is crucial to how the characters see their struggles. It was in fact out of the uncertainties of WWII that the complacencies of the Swede were bred.

And it all began — this heroically idealistic manoeuvre, this strategic, strange spiritual desire to be a bulwark of duty and ethical obligation — because of the war, because of all the terrible uncertainties bred by the war, because of how strongly an emotional community whose beloved sons were far away facing death had been drawn to a lean and muscular, austere boy whose talent it was to be able to catch anything anybody threw anywhere near him (79-80).

Seymour Levov is transformed into the Swede, not just by the chance words of an admiring high school gym coach. The Swede becomes the embodiment of the all-American suburban everyman by a war that asked its heroes to suppress their identities (especially if they happened to be Jewish). His generation did their duty and kept their mouths shut. They were united in silence. His generation of fighters saw it as their duty to suppress their memories, to ignore and forget what they had seen and what they had done. These veterans committed themselves to a willed forgetfulness, a collective act of amnesia.

War is what unites the Swede to his mad and maddening daughter. The Swede excelled because he and his generation promised not to bring the war home. His daughter, on the other hand, was determined, as were other youths, to do exactly that (76). That was their battle cry. If her father was bred in an atmosphere of ‘circumstantial absurdity,’ so was she. Roth sees war as a testing ground for community. World War II functions as a historical reality for the Swede’s generation but also as a metaphorical proving ground for what Roth sees as human community. ‘Let’s remember the energy,’ Roth’s narrator tells us:

Americans were governing not only themselves but some two hundred million people in Italy, Germany, and Japan. The war-crimes trials were cleansing the earth of its devils once and for all. Atomic power was ours alone (40).

Jews of the Swede's generation were under enormous pressure. The entire generation of Jews was asked, just as Grossbart had been, to submit to the authority of the anonymous mass and to become just like other Americans, and thereby less conspicuously Jewish. When Grossbart wrote his retraction letter to the U.S. congressman, although a self-serving act, he was speaking the new party line, the accepted wisdom of a generation. Grossbart wrote: 'So many millions of my fellow Jews gave up their lives to the enemy, the least I can do is live for a while minus a bit of my heritage so as to help and end this struggle and regain for all the children of god dignity and humanity' (2213). And so Roth through Nathan Zuckerman remembers '[a] whole community perpetually imploring us not to be immoderate and screw up, imploring us to grasp opportunity, exploit our advantages, remember what matters' (41).

In 'Defender of the Faith,' Nathan Marx, a U.S. Army sergeant in a Missouri training company near the end of World War II is confronted again and again by the demands of Private Sheldon Grossbart, who seems to be an Orthodox Jewish kid devoted to his religion. He appears at first to be the defender of the faith or certainly of his right to partake of its rituals. He also takes the role of the instructor, who must teach Marx what it means to be Jewish. But then having been victimised by Grossbart's selfish manipulation, the Sergeant finds himself in a role reversal,

whereby he is forced to discover and to reassert the value of community over the individual. Grossbart reacts by saying, ‘that’s right, twist things around. I owe nobody nothing. I’ve done all I could do for them. Now I think I’ve got the right to watch out for myself.’ To this Marx replies, ‘for each other we have to learn to watch out, Sheldon. You told me yourself’ (2221). Marx winds up defending the faith taught him by Grossbart who wanted ultimately nothing more than to escape military service.

In this debate between Grossbart and Marx, we can see traces of the conflict between the Swede and his monstrous daughter. The conflict between the individual who wants to serve the community and the one who strives to serve himself or herself lies at the heart of Roth’s early short story as well as his later novel. Grossbart plays the role of the righteous dieter, even if only for maximum affect. ‘I eat because I have to, sir,’ says Grossbart. ‘But Sergeant Marx will testify to the fact that I don’t eat one mouthful more than I need to in order to survive’ (2210). This turns out to be a lie, but in the case of Merry Levov, it is taken up with deadly seriousness. Here, however, it is not to serve the self as with Grossbart, but to serve a cause the Swede finds more heartless, namely the cause of selfishness. She is starving herself to prove a point. And she does so with no regard for others. Such sacrifices are the ultimate act of selfishness, ultimately the most destructive act the individual can pursue. She ‘found in the library the books that led her to leave behind forever the Judaeo-Christian tradition and find her way to the supreme ethical imperative of ahimsa, the systematic reverence for life and the commitment to harm no living being’ (262). Roth’s ironic take on this belief system as revealed

in its embodiment in Merry Levov is that lives are destroyed by the quest for perfection. Merry's father is left reeling from the catastrophe of having a daughter who not only cannot adjust, but one who acts on her discontent violently:

It was beyond understanding, not only how Merry could be living in this hovel like a pariah, not only how Merry could be a fugitive wanted for murder, but how he and Dawn could have been the source of it all (238).

Merry is not only a perpetrator of violence, having participated in two bombings which left as many as four people dead, but she is also the victim of a brutal gang rape. The knowledge of these events leaves her father devastated and paralysed, unable to function, to react, or to intervene. The Swede had survived the war, had lived through the destruction of his beloved Newark in the greatest race riots America had ever endured, but the knowledge that his sweet daughter had been brutalised flattens him:

And then they left, everyone, fled the smoldering rubble – manufacturers, retailers, the banks, the shop owners, the corporations, the department stores; in the South Ward, on the residential blocks, there are two moving vans per day on every street throughout the next year, homeowners fleeing, deserting the modest houses they treasure for whatever they can get...but he stays on, refuses to leave, Newark Maid remains behind, and that did not prevent her from getting raped. Not even during the worst of it does he abandon his factory to the vandals; he does not abandon his workers afterward, does not turn his back on these people, and still his daughter is raped (269).

The Swede is quite simply overcome by the knowledge of what has happened, overcome precisely as was Coetzee's David Lurie who had survived a savage

beating and had been set on fire, but whose greatest shock came when he learned that his daughter had been taken by the intruders to the bedroom and raped:

His pleasure in living has been snuffed out. Like a leaf on a stream, like a puffball on a breeze, he has begun to float toward his end. He sees it quite clearly, and it fills him with (the word will not go away) despair. The blood is leaving his body and despair is taking its place, despair that is like a gas, odourless, tasteless, without nourishment. You breathe it in, your limbs relax, you cease to care, even at the moment when the steel touches our throat (*Disgrace* 1999: 107-8).

The central insight these men experience is that they are helpless. Helplessness is what they have in common and what they share finally with their respective daughters. As Roth says, 'The man grows crazier and crazier to do something just when there is nothing left for him to do' (270). It is also worth noting that both authors have their male protagonists express alarm over incidents of rape and seem to suggest that the fathers experienced the greater sense of violation. This would not surprise Catharine A. MacKinnon (2006), whose key argument is that men can never comprehend the equation of sex for survival because they are only very rarely part of such an equation (218).

Coetzee and Roth cannot think of anything more personally burdensome than the knowledge that their daughters have been brutalised, but in a work by Nobel-laureate José Saramago, the men seem to be more than able to live with their bargain. In *Blindness* (1997), the men vote to send their wives, girlfriends, and daughters to act as sexual slaves to a gang of thugs in exchange for food. The

writer's contention, in the end, is not far from that of the Swede's daughter, whose new-found philosophy sees the world in much the same way:

A risk to own anything: a car, a pair of shoes, a packet of cigarettes. Not enough to go around, not enough cars, shoes, cigarettes. Too many people, too few things... Not human evil, just a vast circulatory system, to whose workings pity and terror are irrelevant. This is how one must see life in this country: in its schematic aspect. Otherwise one could go mad. Cars, shoes; women too (98).

Saramago's use of barnyard metaphors hangs heavily over the narrative and fills the minds of his female protagonist who is always mindful of the power of animal urges. The threat of the physical looms large. The asylum for the blind, unlike Kertész's Auschwitz, does not have the discipline of a concentration camp, although one is reminded through Saramago's use of metaphor that once law gives way, human beings are reduced both to inhuman savagery and to animal passivity. Coetzee (2003) has Elizabeth Costello give voice to this insight when she says, 'Denunciation of the camps reverberates so fully with the language of the stockyard and slaughterhouse that it is barely necessary for me to prepare the ground for the comparison I am about to make' (64-65). Here, returning to Freud's insight, competitive lust rules, while 'castration' is a self-imposed restraint against chaos.

Saramago conceives the threat of the inhuman as the unleashing of uninhibited human drives. In *Blindness*, the doctor's wife is full to bursting of human emotion, but controls her sexual urges to maintain her sense of human dignity. Abstinence is a kind of discipline of decency, a way to hold on to the

'furniture' of the master bedroom Gordimer's Maureen couldn't protect. Saramago describes her frustration as an act of will:

Lying beside her husband, as close as possible given the narrowness of the bed, but also out of choice, how much it had cost them in the middle of the night to maintain some decorum, not to behave like those whom someone had referred to as pigs, the doctor's wife looked at her watch (95).

One lapses into the inhuman. One is overtaken. One is raped. Rather than being drained of human sympathy, the blind inmates can barely contain their feelings. When a young girl stumbles upon the doctor and his wife attempting to console each other, she is overcome by sympathetic feelings and spontaneously reaches out as if wanting to join them.

You're upset, can I get you anything, she asked as she advanced, and touched the two bodies on the bed with her hands. Discretion demanded that she should withdraw immediately, and this certainly was the order that came from her brain, but her hand did not obey, they simply made more subtle contact, gently caressing the thick, warm blanket (95-96).

Discretion and decorum function as crucial devices in the defense of civility. When all is lost, Saramago seems to be saying, sex is the opposite of intimacy. When the competitive lusts of the confined men are finally unleashed on the women, Saramago describes the scene using language reminiscent of Gordimer's when she described Maureen with her top off:

The girl with dark glasses got in behind the doctor's wife, then came the hotel maid, the girl from the surgery, the wife of the first blind man, the woman no one knows and, finally, the blind woman suffering from insomnia, a grotesque line-up of foul-smelling women, their clothes filthy and in

tatters, it seems impossible that the animal drive for sex should be so powerful, to the point of blinding a man's sense of smell.... (177)

The men who inhabit Saramago's hell seem not to have the inhibitions imagined by the mediaeval theologians Saramago mocks. Sex becomes an animal feeding frenzy:

The blind woman suffering from insomnia wailed in desperation beneath an enormous fellow, the other four were surrounded by men with their trousers down who were jostling each other like hyenas around a carcass (179).

The image of that most African of carnivorous animals, the hyena, rounds the picture Saramago paints of the human animal unleashed. It is not far from the Swede's haunting imagery:

There were the sounds – the thud, her cries, the careening in a tiny enclosure. The horrible bark of a man coming. His grunting. Her whimpering. The stupendousness of the rape blotted out everything. All unsuspectingly, she had stepped out of her doorway and they had grabbed her from behind and thrown her down and there was her body for them to do with as they wished (270).

This traumatic event leaves the Swede's daughter with scars, but it is the knowledge of the event, if not of its details and its perpetrators, that wakes the Swede up. If what he did and experienced in battle had left him unsure of who he was, this event has the lasting impact of an awakening.

If Grossbart and Merry Levov play the extremists, and Marx and the Swede take on the role of the compassionate enablers, the third side of the triangle has its parallel as well. In 'Defender of the Faith,' Captain Barrett plays the role of a kind of Bellovian reality instructor, teaching Marx how to see through the shenanigans of

Grossbart. Barrett represents Roth's simple man who does not let himself or anyone else be taken in by destructive frauds, be they malicious or well-meaning:

Barrett blew up. 'Look, Grossbart, Marx here is a good man, a goddamn hero. When you were sitting on your sweet ass in high school, Sergeant Marx was killing Germans. Who does more for the Jews, you by throwing up over the lousy piece of sausage, a piece of firstcut meat — or Marx by killing those Nazi bastards. If I was a Jew, Grossbart, I'd kiss this man's feet. He's a goddamn hero, you know that? And he eats what we give him. Why do you have to cause trouble is what I want to know! What is it you're buckin' for, a discharge' (2211)?

In Barrett's world, people are never motivated by principle. There is no such thing as tradition, religious or otherwise. 'Seems awful funny how suddenly the Lord is calling so loud in private Grossbart's ear he's just got to run to church' (2204). According to Barrett, faith is just another scam.

In *American Pastoral* (1998), the role of the reality instructor is performed by the Swede's brother, Jerry. Barrett and Jerry Levov possess the highly developed 'crap detectors' that Marx and the Swede seem to lack. It is a brutal world, in which, among other things, 'Adolf Hitler had the time of his life...shoveling Jews into the furnace' (361). A point of common reference for Roth's characters is often Germany, the Nazis, and more frequently Hitler himself. He is the omnipresent measure of all things evil. When Jerry hears from his brother that Merry is alive and living in Newark, he, unlike the Swede, does not hesitate. He is not frozen by self-doubt. He knows what to do and gives the Swede a piece of his mind:

Fuck what she wants. Get back in your fucking car and get over there and drag her out of that fucking room by her hair. Sedate her. Tie her up. But get

her. Listen to me. You're paralyzed. I'm not the one who thinks holding his family together is the most important thing in existence — you are. Get back in that car and get her! (273)

Despite the harshness, Jerry has his own sense of compassion, but not for the girl. He sees the cost of his brother's transformation from Seymour into the Swede, the war hero, whose life and reputation resemble Sergeant Marx's, as described by Captain Barrett. The Swede may have effortlessly gained the love and admiration of the community, but he seems to have earned his brother's resentful envy and open contempt. Jerry says:

You wanted Miss America? Well, you've got her, with a vengeance — she's your daughter! You wanted to be a real American jock, a real American marine, a real American hotshot with a beautiful Gentile babe on your arm? You longed to belong like everybody else to the United States of America? Well, you do now, big boy, thanks to your daughter. The reality of this place is right up to your kisser now. With the help of your daughter you're as deep in the shit as a man can get, the real American crazy shit. America amok! America amuck! (277).

Brother Jerry's rant has a compelling persuasiveness, but one wonders finally how and at what point the 'American berserk' could have been avoided.

Jerry, unlike his get-along-with-everyone brother, is a loudmouth, a fighter. Jerry, who fights for himself, will not tolerate disagreement, and is feared, evidently, by patients and staff alike at his hospital in Florida. He has been married several times. The Swede, an ex-marine, on the other hand, does not know how to defend himself. Jerry describes his brother's life as a war, a losing a battle to keep 'his

family together.’ At the high school reunion, where the narrator/author meets his former friends, and inquires about the former athletic star, Jerry describes his brother’s life in strikingly martial terms:

In one way he could be conceived as completely banal and conventional. An absence of negative values and nothing more. Bred to be dumb, built for convention, and so on. That ordinary decent life that they all want to live, and that’s it. The social norms, and that’s it. Benign, and that’s it. But what he was trying to do was to survive, keeping this group intact. He was trying to get through with his platoon intact. It was a war for him, finally. There was a noble side to this guy. Some excruciating renunciations went on in that life. He got caught in a war he didn’t start, and fought to keep it together, and he went down (65).

Yet, the protagonist’s military background often is confused with that of Zuckerman, who has his own memories:

Now I couldn’t sleep— the last thing I could remember was the parking valet bringing my car around to the steps of the portico, and the reunion’s commander in chief, Selma Bresloff, kindly asking if I’d had a good time, and my telling her, ‘It’s like going out to your outfit after Iwa Jima’ (56).

The narrator has nostalgic memories of the war, and identifies his high school reunion with that of an imagined get-together with long lost buddies, but the war at home occasions little nostalgia. The Swede’s family business was one of the few to survive the Newark race riots, which left much of the city in ruins:

The surreal vision of household appliances out under the stars and a gleam in the glow of the flames incinerating the Central Ward promises the liberation of all mankind. Yes, here it is, let it come, yes, the magnificent opportunity, one of human history’s rare transmogrifying moments: the old ways of

suffering are burning blessedly away in the flames, never again to be resurrected, instead to be superseded, within only hours, by suffering that will be so gruesome, so monstrous, so unrelenting and abundant, that its abatement will take the next five hundred years. The fire this time – and next? After the fire? Nothing. Nothing in Newark ever again (268-9).

The Swede's memories of an abundant Newark kept him going throughout the war. It remained in him so vividly that he could almost taste it. By the time his daughter and her generation finish through with it, everything that the Swede had looked forward to returning to would be gone. The war at home would bring back *his* war, only there would be nothing left to return to. The past would be gone, too.

In 'Defender of the Faith', the war setting is the Pacific theatre of WWII, not that of the war in Europe. There are a few references to the Holocaust and the Nazis, but Roth seems to want to avoid the cultural weight of those events and, instead, to engage the war as an all-American experience. 'Never caved in, 'Jerry says of his brother's emotional strength. 'He could be tough. Remember, when we were kids, he joined the marines to fight the Japs? Well, he *was* a goddamn marine. Caved in only once, down in Florida' (70). But the Swede does 'cave' with the realization of what his daughter has done and more importantly when he realises what has been done to her. It was the Vietnam war that did it, *that* war radicalised her, not from battle fatigue or trauma, but from watching television. This is what set into motion, from the Swede's point of view, the events that radicalised his daughter, drove her to commit terrorist acts, and then to renounce materialism, subjecting herself to a way of life that left her both unable and unwilling to defend herself against attack. It was as though she simply turned over night into a ranting monster:

Vehemently she renounced the appearance and the allegiances of the good little girl who had tried so hard to be adorable and lovable like all the other good little Rimrock girls – renounced her meaningless manners, her petty social concerns, her family’s ‘bourgeois’ values. She had wasted enough time on the cause of herself. ‘I’m not going to spend my whole life wrestling day and night with a fucking stutter when kids are b-b-b-being b-b-b-b-bu-bu-bu- roasted alive by Lyndon b-b-b-Baines b-b-b-bu-bu-burn-‘em-up Johnson!’ (101).

Eventually, as the Swede attempts to find an explanation for the incomprehensible acts of his daughter, he finds himself echoing the thoughts of his father. He lost his daughter when he lost himself. Jerry, and Seymour’s father before him, disapproved of the Swede’s obsession with the beautiful Catholic girl from Elizabeth. Jerry accuses his brother of losing far more than he bargained for when he moved into the Republican Country Club counties of suburban New Jersey, WASP territory:

Out there with Miss America, dumbing down and dulling out. Out there playing at being Wasps, a little Mick girl from the Elizabeth docks and a Jewboy from Weequahic High. The cows. Cow society. Colonial old America. And you thought all that façade was going to come without cost. Genteel and innocent. *But that costs too, Seymour* (280).

For Jerry, there is a direct link between the Swede’s loss of Jewish identity and his daughter’s rage. Jerry, too, seemed to think Merry’s afflictions could be traced to her parents’ effort to escape their pasts. Jerry described her as a loaf of wonder bread that has fallen. ‘She’s post-Catholic, he’s post-Jewish, together they’re going to go

out there to Old Rimrock to raise little post-toasties. Instead they get that fucking kid' (73).

The Swede, though, is not so sure about his brother's brutal attempt to blame the Swede for his daughter's unhappiness. The Swede sees many possibilities, one of them being the war itself, this time the Vietnam War, which haunted the girl and her generation. But neither the Swede nor Nathan Zuckerman seems to be completely convinced that evil deeds can be traced to a single cause. 'He had learned the worst lesson that life can teach — that it makes no sense' (81). The banality of evil, Hannah Arendt's theoretical explanation for the Holocaust and the men who participated in it, comes to one's mind as Roth explains what befell the Swede:

The nice gentle man with his mild way of dealing with conflict and contradiction, the confident ex-athlete sensible and resourceful in any struggle with an adversary who is fair, comes up against the adversary who is not fair – the evil ineradicable from human dealings – and he is finished (81).

The Swede certainly had always resisted explanations for his daughter's stuttering. Still, the Swede seemed ready to take the blame, whether for Merry's stuttering or her rage, if he could find a compelling explanation. And so like the Swede, one is driven to ask what might have taken root in little Merry Levov and changed her life? This is the question that drives the narrative; this is the question that drives the Swede to an early grave.

One possibility is suggested by the relationship between two seemingly disconnected points of contact between the Swede and his daughter. As freakish as

Merry's newly adopted philosophy seems to be to the Swede, he cannot help but notice that while describing it, she speaks clearly and plainly, without stuttering. The only other time in her life that she was able to do that was when she and her father, many years earlier, played marines in the comfort of the family home. The two walk hand in hand in a derelict section of Newark where he has finally found her after several years. As they walk together, the Swede remembers their having enjoyed war games in the garden when she was a child:

Would have brought him to tears because when she was six and seven years old she'd loved to play marines, either him yelling at her or her yelling at him – 'Tenshun! Stand at ease! Rest!'; she loved to march with him – '*Forward* march! To the left flank *march!* To the rear *march!* Right oblique *march!*'; loved to do marine calisthenics with him – 'You People, hit the deck'; she loved to call the ground 'the deck,' to call their bathroom 'the head,' to call he bed 'the rack' and Dawn's food 'the chow'; but most of all she loved to count Parris Island cadence for him as she started out across the pasture – mounted up on his shoulders – to find Momma's cows. 'By yo leh, rah, leh, rah, leh, rah o leh. Leh, rah, yo leh....' And without stuttering. When they played marines, she did not stutter over a single word (234).

And now years later, she has taken up a philosophy of life that commands her to renounce war and all actions that threaten harm to all living beings. She is living in an urban war zone, where her father and his friends are afraid to go. She is filthy, unwashed and starving, somewhat like a soldier or a prisoner of war. She is a perpetrator of murders against innocents and cannot function in a world largely created by her father's generation of war heroes. She and her father are both killers, but while her father returned home as a distinguished, model citizen, she remains in

the battle field of Newark, a bombed-out shell of a city, long since abandoned by the people who once thrived there.

Roth reduces Merry Levov's radicalism to an adolescent fanaticism with no feeling for human life, including that of her loving father who is literally dying to bring her back home safely. Merry Levov, who sets off a bomb in a small-town post office in rural New Jersey, later joins up with a fellow radical who extorts money from her doting father, a local hero of WWII. Her actions make no more sense to her father the Swede than they do to anyone one else. In the end he and his wife cannot even communicate with her; she is reduced to hand-to-mouth subsistence under a highway crossing as if in a bomb shelter:

Could he bring Dawn here to see her, Dawn in her bright, tight new face and Merry sitting cross-legged on the pallet in her tattered sweat-shirt and ill-shaped trousers and black plastic shower clogs, meekly composed behind that nauseating veil? How broad her shoulder bones were. Like his. But hanging off those bones there was nothing. What he saw sitting before him was not a daughter, a woman, or a girl; what he saw, in a scarecrow's clothes, stick-skinny as a scarecrow, was the scantiest farmyard emblem of life, a travestied mock-up of a human being, so meager a likeness to a Levov it could have fooled only a bird (239).

One finds this sense of cultural despair in Roth's *American Pastoral*. Roth cannot find room for breaking out of the spiral down toward bedlam and collapse. When the protagonist's daughter joins a cult, she is characterised chiefly as a tormentor, not a saviour, neither of herself nor of others. Roth in his creation of the character of Merry Levov, suburban terrorist and communal runaway, shows readers

the Vietnam War protester as a monster to paternal authority, as someone who ravages domestic tranquility.

There are instances of commonality that make these writers worth comparing. As writers of the postwar era, Bellow and Roth focus on characters who have seen battle. Henderson and the Swede return to their respective homes physically intact. Henderson is described as an aristocrat with family property, while the Swede comes from a prosperous bourgeois family, his father a prominent merchant. Both are described as physically imposing, with athletic bodies. Upon his return from Europe, Henderson was at odds with his surroundings, while the Swede, who was stationed somewhere in the Pacific, fell slowly from his youthful heights as an admired sports star. The Swede's collapse was occasioned less by his inability to adjust to domestic tranquility than by his inability to understand how his ease of assimilation had alienated him from those around him, especially from his daughter and his brother. While Henderson might have done well in the turmoil of the sixties, the Swede, a great defender of the status quo, found himself at a loss and suffered the consequences.

Theorists such as Sebald, Elleke Boehmer and Caruth have been used to make my case for seeing the behavior of Henderson and the Swede in the context of their war experiences, as men typical of their generation who failed to face up to their actions and to those of others. Bellow's and Roth's protagonists exhibit common behaviours found among those traumatized as perpetrators or witnesses of war atrocities. Henderson's extreme acting out and the Swede's near refusal to discuss his experiences are typical of their generation's responses to war. Much of

the Swede's inability to cope with the postwar era, especially during the upheavals of the sixties, can be attributed to his mistaken belief that the past can be forgotten without consequence. The Swede's confidence in his daughter's generation's willingness to ignore the atrocities of the Vietnam War as his generation had ignored those of the World War II lies at the heart of his personal anguish.

Recognition of the significance of their war experience is central to creating a full portrait of these complex characters. By acknowledging the context of war as central to an understanding of these characters, critics' understanding of Bellow and Roth would improve and their interpretations, reconceived. Critical neglect of the connection between postwar American writers such as Bellow and Roth in the context of the traumas of World War II can be partially explained by the failure to challenge conceptions of the postmodern as essentially removed from history.

Slotkin, Tompkins, and Lawrence offer interpretations of masculinity that place these very Jewish writers in the broader context of American letters. The ramifications of the myth of masculinity are shown to draw from themes found in 19th century canonical works. The specific context of World War II and the immediate postwar period confirm established conceptions of masculinity. Their novels reveal how this myth operates under stress, showing the ways assumptions of masculinity are undermined and tested. In this sense, these authors contribute to an unmasking of American claims of what masculinity means and how these conceptions are formulated. The tension between the self and canonical expectation creates another layer of distress that undermines the so-called hero in his quest for redemption. He struggles against what he conceives to be his role. The inability of

the masculine hero to perform in the face of mounting expectation is critical, as is the inability of the returning hero to adjust to living within cultural norms that conflict with those of the battlefield.

Chapter 4: Postmodernism: Surviving the Apocalypse

Chaos ruled. Chaos economic, mental, spiritual – I use this word in its exact, Canopean sense – ruled while the propaganda roared and blared from loudspeaker, radio, television (92).

---- Doris Lessing, *Canopus in Argos: Archives*

This was the century of the borrowed skin. Men who knew their fathers or had come of age in a single house were freaks. The poplars were down, their roots a dead tangle sticking out of ditches. It was a good time for the long-legged and those who could make a bundle of their shadows. The roads themselves had begun to move under the persuasion of the bombs (85).

----George Steiner, *The Portage To San Cristóbal of A.H.*

The echoes of 20th century war can be heard in narratives of late century American fiction by John Edgar Wideman, Don DeLillo, and Cormac McCarthy. This chapter will show how accounts of urban collapse employ imagery from the First and Second World Wars to express the authors' contention that the types of political disorder seen earlier in the century can be found today in America. These three writers depict varying degrees of civic collapse. Depictions of urban collapse are juxtaposed with scenes of the absence of authority or the abuse of power in the hands of those whose authority lacks legitimacy. The society is shown to be under

assault. Problems of social class are addressed, but the authors are more concerned with the emergence of the American mass, ill-defined, undifferentiated, but equally helpless in the face of abuse and neglect.

These three writers come to the same conclusion: authoritarian government cannot protect its citizens and, more provocatively, has no intention of doing so. In their narrative, Wideman, DeLillo, and McCarthy describe failed systems in which citizens in the face of civil disorder are left on their own. The authoritarian government that proves able to wage foreign wars resorts to abuse of power domestically in desperation to maintain order but finally collapses; in moments of crises government fails to govern. These narratives show scenes of modern society *in extremis*. These writers can be said to participate in a rigorous interrogation of the American myth of imperial innocence. Each author offers through his analysis of contemporary and historical events an interpretive revision of American power and how that power has been used domestically and internationally. Wideman, DeLillo, and McCarthy can in the end be said to address America's self-definition and by doing so participate in a redefinition of its identity. Through recovery and revision these writers can be read as participants in a project aimed at undermining hegemonic structures.

Political theorist Sheldon Wolin identifies a tendency in modern letters to find signs of emancipation where he sees global confinement:

Although Nietzsche never claimed that the powerful would have the scales lifted from their eyes by reading *Zarathustra*, the intellectuals and students of literature and culture find themselves flourishing because the world, far from

being meaningless, appears as a world where the manufacture of meanings is a thriving industry' (584).

What Wolin speaks to echoes Lukács' notion of that 'historical moment' which in our time resembles what Lukács once characterised as 'the writer's tragic estrangement from popular life, his isolation, his complete dependence on himself' (1983: 335). The postcolonial landscape constrains and isolates men and women authors, whose visions rarely embrace fully conceived expressions of liberation, 'because of the inner dialectic of the writer's struggle against the socially isolated position of literature under imperialism' (335). European historian Tony Judt (2008) warns against our developing a pedagogy based on a 'serviceable Chamber of Historical horrors,' from which 'we have now, thankfully, emerged,' without having learned anything (16).

Tony Judt may be right to make this warning, but perhaps more correct than one might expect. The idea of attaining glory through war is dead. The suggestion that one is in any way enhanced by war experiences has come to an end. One often associates the idea of regeneration through violence with war novelists, but it is rarely to be found in the postmodern novelists. It is not that war propagandists do not fill the airwaves, but that the ears of postmodernists ring with other memorable phrases from the 20th century and they are not inspiring. Péter Nádas (2007) tells us what remains that is worth remembering: 'I should like to say some familiar words. Defeat. Loss. Collapse. [...] Fear. Anxiety. Breathless. Sham. Lack. Suffering. I haven't even mentioned a few, more painful words. Interrogation. Beating. Torture. Execution. And deathly silence' (336).

The century began in an altogether different mood. Richard J. Evans in *The Coming of the Third Reich* (2004) tells us that despite the unprecedented horrors of the First World War, school children in Germany greeted remilitarization with glee:

Not untypical was the experience of the young Raimund Pretzel, a child of a well-to-do senior civil servant, who remembered later that he and his school friends played war games all the time from 1914 to 1918, followed battle reports with avid interest, and with his entire generation ‘experienced war as a great, thrilling, enthralling game between nations, which provided far more excitement and emotional satisfaction than anything peace could offer; and that’, he added in the 1930s, ‘has now become the underlying vision of Nazism.’ War, armed conflict, violence and death were often for them abstract concepts, killing something they had read about and had processed in their adolescent minds under the influence of a propaganda that represented it as a heroic, necessary, patriotic act (73).

If the lesson was not learned by the 1920s, WWII showed that the promise of war’s inevitable triumph to be an empty lie. One can, in fact, trace the process by which the experience and memory of war progress gradually in virtually all countries in stages from that of war-entranced to war-weary and, finally, to war-haunted. As is so often the case, it is Doris Lessing (1992) who, like the Trojan women, grasps the lesson of war:

A war ends, you bury the dead, you look after the cripples – but everywhere among ordinary people in this army whose wounds don’t show: the numbed, or the brutalised, or those who can never, not really, believe in the innocence of life, of living; or those who will forever be slowed by grief (249).

Another lesson learned is that things can get worse. The century has shown that however corrupt ‘civilisation’ may be, the possibility of descending into something far worse is commonly recognised and feared. Whereas World War I had been greeted with relief and hope, with its promise of renewal and regeneration, some survivors of the Second World War surely came away with a clear sense that much more can be lost to war than can be gained. Who today would greet world conflagration with the naïve hopes and aspiration of someone like Thomas Mann, who said on the eve of WWI:

This world of peace, which has now collapsed with such shattering thunder – had we not all of us had enough of it? Was it not foul with all its comfort? Did it not fester and stink with the decomposition of civilization? Morally and psychologically I felt the necessity of this catastrophe and that feeling of cleansing, of elevation and liberation, which filled me, when that which one had thought impossible really happened (Waugh 2009: 66).

It would be fair to say that not only has militarism been debunked, but so has the tendency to devalue civil society. It is not the stink of an over-ripe ‘civilization’ that one smells, but that of rotting corpses.

Visions of the apocalypse frame our age. Cold War preoccupations with nuclear war and its prophesied aftermath maintain a secure position in the popular imagination (Shaw 2001). One’s ability to clearly conceive of victors in a global war has been undermined, replaced by the even more difficult problem of imagining what it might be like to survive a nuclear holocaust. Harlan Ellison’s classic ‘A Boy and His Dog’ (1951) juxtaposes the devastated world with a utopian remnant, in this case surviving below ground. What these utopian visionaries seek is not the world

immediately prior to the imagined Third World War, but one before the twentieth century, that is, before 1914: 'The best time in the world had been just before the First War, and they figured if they could keep it like that, they could live quiet lives and survive' (1985: 356).

Cormac McCarthy takes this image of an apocalypse and shows in *The Road* (2006) that in his vision of a world laid waste there will be little left standing:

The world soon to be largely populated by men who would eat your children in front of your eyes and the cities themselves held by cores of blackened looters who tunneled among the ruins and crawled from the rubble white of tooth and eye, carrying charred and anonymous tins of food in nylon nets like shoppers in the commissaries of hell (181).

Cormac McCarthy gives his protagonist, who has had to bury his own wife, the burden of protecting his son from being eaten alive by roaming, cannibalistic predators:

People sitting on the sidewalk in the dawn half immolate and smoking in their clothes. Like failed sectarian suicides. Others would come to help them. Within a year there were fires on the ridges and deranged chanting. The screams of the murdered. By day the dead impaled on spikes along the road (32-33).

The entire organising principles, not to mention common institutions, of society have all but disappeared. McCarthy conjures sole survivors, the last remnant of civilisation, a loving father and his helpless son. The deplorable thought that these are the last of the human race is made palatable by the sentimental love that the author uses to describe their relationship. McCarthy's willingness to contemplate

the end of the world can be seen, Andrew McMurry tells us, as a perfect example of a genre that captures, if perhaps embellishes or intensifies, ‘the current contradictions of late capitalism and the limits of instrumental reason’ (1996: 4). Civic order and the rule of law are gone; even rudimentary communication has vanished:

They began to come upon from time to time small cairns of rock by the roadside. They were signs in gypsy language, lost patterns. The first he’d seen in some while, common in the north, leading out of the looted and exhausted cities, hopeless messages to loved ones lost and dead. By then all stores of food had given out and murder was everywhere upon the land (McCarthy 2006: 180-181).

Yet, as disordered and therefore unfamiliar as McCarthy’s vision would appear to be, readers find themselves on familiar ground.

In this connection, Brantlinger’s analysis of extinction theory provides a way to understand McCarthy’s terrifying landscape. What Brantlinger (2003) seeks to find the historic roots of has been succinctly described by Mike Davis (1999) as ‘doom’ literature, ‘rooted in racial anxiety’ (281). This anxiety, although partially expressive of an existential insecurity, can be found as a bridge linking the imperial and the apocalyptic imaginations.

Such fears become McCarthy’s, fully realized in his recent *The Road*. If one reads McCarthy’s novel as an apocalyptic nightmare which lays out the last days of the human race, there is much to find unsettling. Brantlinger (2003) sees this type of vision as disquietingly familiar, placing it well within the tradition of discourse devoted to depictions of cultural demise:

The national mourning involved in proleptic elegy, whether in the United States, Australia, or South Africa, is always also, whether explicitly or not, nationalist celebration. The creation first of the new white colony in the wilderness and then of the new nation-state demands the vanishing of the primeval others who cannot become or supposedly refuse to be part of its future. The most lethal aspect of extinction discourse has probably been its stress on the inevitability of that vanishing. The sense of doom has often been rendered all the most powerful by the combination of three elements: belief in the progress of at least some (chosen) peoples from savagery to civilization; the faith that progress is either providential or natural – God’s or Nature’s wise plan; and the idea that the white and dark races of the world are separated from each other by biological essences that, translated into Darwinian terms, equal ‘fitness’ versus ‘unfitness’ to survive (189-190).

McCarthy’s vision takes 19th century extinction theory and applies it not to one race as opposed to another but to the entire human race. McCarthy reverses one crucial element of extinction theory, the belief in progress, thus creating a picture of ‘civilization’ at the mercy of the savage. According to Davis’s analysis, McCarthy’s apocalyptic narrative can be traced back to what he calls ‘the modern fascination with dead cities’ (1999: 282). It is a haunting view, doom-laden and death-haunted; it entails no concept of renewal. James Wood (2009) observed in his review of *Blood Meridian*:

But there is often the disquieting sense that McCarthy’s fiction puts certain fond American myths under pressure merely to replace them with one vaster myth – eternal violence, or Bloom’s ‘universal tragedy of blood.’ McCarthy’s fiction seems to say, repeatedly, that this is how it has been and how it will be (9).

It is also profoundly comforting:

In *Colonial Desire*, Robert Young notes: ‘There is always something comforting about the doom and gloom that the threat of deterioration holds, providing a solace of inevitability as it re-affirms the fall’ (100). The mode of proleptic elegy, typical of extinction discourse, is indeed ‘obliquely comforting,’ even when its object is not some dark, supposedly inferior race, but the supposedly superior white race, founder and ruler of civilizations and empires. The mourning and moralizing doomster loses his or her sense of personal inadequacy in the grand apocalypse of nations, empires, or races. Noting can be one’s personal fault if everything is falling to pieces. This is one reason why ‘terminal visions,’ to use Warren Wagar’s phrase for end-of-the-world fantasies, have flourished for the last century and more (Brantlinger 198).

What one comes to see is that the postmodern and post-apocalyptic overlap and converge; what has already happened to some people is projected in end-of-the-world fantasies; what has occurred in the past awaits all humankind in the near or distant future.

What makes McCarthy’s post-apocalyptic vision unusual is that it mirrors his vision of life on the plains at mid-19th century. His imagining of a post-nuclear catastrophe bears a remarkable resemblance to the blood soaked border-wars he described so hauntingly in his epic novel *Blood Meridian*, once described as ‘the bloodiest book since the *Iliad*’ (Stacey Peebles 2009: 231). Clearly, he sees the future as some sort of reversion to the past, an unleashing of forces many hoped had been left behind, as though a culture were capable of developing itself to the point that violence itself might become a distant memory. McCarthy sees it as embedded

too deeply to be left behind. His description here depicts both where we come from and where we are headed:

They found the lost scouts hanging had downward from the limbs of a fireblackened paloverde tree. They were skewered through the cords of their heels with sharpened shuttles of green wood and they hung gray and naked above the dead ashes of the coals where they'd been roasted until their heads had charred and the brains bubbled in the skulls and steam sang from their noseholes. Their tongues were drawn out and held with sharpened sticks thrust through them and they had been docked of their ears and their torsos were sliced open with flints until the entrails hung down on their chests. Some of the men pushed forward with their knives and cut the bodies down and they left them there in the ashes (1992: 227).

What is described in the paragraph above was to have taken place over a century ago, if the author is correct, one incident among many, meant 'to make visible those violent episodes that accompanied the fight over land' (Eaton 2008: 157). In the aftermath of a similar battle scene evidence is found that might further illuminate the stakes:

They set out across the fields wrapped in their blankets, carrying only the pistol and a bottle of water. The field had been turned at last time and there were stalks of stubble sticking out of the ground and the faint trace of the disc was still visible from east to west. It had rained recently and the earth was soft underfoot and he kept his eye on the ground and before long he stopped and picked up an arrowhead. He spat on it and gave it to the boy. It was white quartz, perfect as the day it was made. There are more, he said. Watch the ground, you'll see. He found two more (McCarthy 2006: 203).

This scene, in fact, is not of the 19th century. It is instead a scene from McCarthy's apocalyptic novel set at an undisclosed time in the future, yet what they have in common is that the predominant evidence of strife is the arrowheads left behind by warriors, ancient or modern.

The Western hero, of course, had traditionally been depicted as one who fell intact. The gruesome realities of the heroes' domain had been minimised. McCarthy (1992) has made the cruelties of the American West, especially the genocidal border wars of the Southwest, part of his literary project. This project entails what Brian Edwards describes as

the interplay of reality and romance, of the historical and the imaginary, such that borders give way to the dynamics of shifting cultural processes as they invite, simultaneously, and with considerable nostalgic investment, continuing construction and deconstruction of identity, traditions and the past (2).

The mythopoeic impulse behind this project admittedly participates in a valuable deconstruction and as such adds to a revision of past myths, but this impulse also goes a long way toward explaining the silences of McCarthy's heroes with their archetypal refusal to say much about what they have seen and done:

At the first fire we killed a round dozen and we did not let up. Before the last poor nigger reached the bottom of the slope there was fifty-eight of them lay slaughtered among the gravels. They just slid down the slope like chaff down a hopper, some turned this way, some that, and they made a chain about the base of the mountain. We rested our rifle barrels on the brimstone and we shot nine more on the lava where they ran. It was a stand, what it was. Wagers was laid. The last of them shot was a reckonable part of a mile from

the muzzles of the guns and that on a dead run. It was a sharp shootin all around and not a misfire in the batch with that queer powder (1992: 134).

Descriptions of slaughter such as this have a way of diminishing issues of agency and responsibility. Peebles argues that this is accomplished by McCarthy's descriptions of human slaughter unexplained by motives or justification:

McCarthy simply describes Glanton less romantically as one of 'a pack of vicious-looking humans mounted on unshod Indian ponies riding half drunk through the streets, bearded, barbarous...like a visitation from some heathen land where they and others like them fed on human flesh' (233).

One is simply overwhelmed by the bloodbath itself, with the American West described as a killing-field. Motivation, circumstance, or consequences are somehow beside the point:

It is a prose at once terrifying and so overwrought as to recall *The Road Warrior*, and even the most appalling moments in McCarthy's books appear to proceed from a world beyond any conventional judgment of good or evil. He achieves that effect by systematically withholding any information about his characters' interior lives. The technique suggests that it isn't what one thinks that matters, but what one does (Gorra 2005: 21).

The diminishment of thought and the erasure of judgment give his killing fields an eerily familiar, modern feeling; they are incidents of mass killings, not individual murders. It is mass destruction, or genocidal murder, and what links it to Sebald's analysis of the Holocaust is the sense that knowledge of what has happened can never be erased, either by perpetrators, witnesses or survivors. One's culture

becomes death-haunted. Jane Tompkins sees the pain of the men tied to their occupations as cowboys and as hired guns. 'Both depend,' she argues,

on an instrumentalization of the body, turning living flesh into pieces of meat. The hero, who must take pain silently, learns to deaden his natural reactions to pain in order to survive his ordeal. And the habitual numbing of himself makes it easier for him to inflict pain on others... (119).

This is one difference between *Blood Meridian* and *The Road*. In the latter, McCarthy emphasises the myth of the individual. There are no epic battles, no seas of blood. At the end of the narrative he has the protagonist fall in battle, the victim of a lone survivalist whose weapon is a bow and arrow. He and his son have been forced on and off the road dodging human predators carrying an array of modern weaponry, but the father is in the end fatally injured by an unidentified hostile who has fashioned an ancient fighting tool. It is as though a message were sent across time:

In an upper window of the house he could see a man drawing a bow on them and he pushed the boy's head down and tried to cover him with his body. He heard the dull twang of the bowstring and felt a sharp hot pain in his leg. Oh you bastard, he said. You bastard (263).

He knows instantly that he will not survive and is forced, like Huck Finn, Brian Edwards tells us, 'to make difficult decisions' (2). He commences to prepare his son for surviving on his own.

Coetzee with far greater alertness to ironies than McCarthy, especially in *Waiting for the Barbarians*, envisions a civilisation made vulnerable by an enemy carrying ancient tools and weapons:

No one truly believes, despite the hysteria in the streets, that the world of tranquil certainties we were born into is about to be extinguished. No one can accept that an imperial army has been annihilated by men with bows and arrows and rusty old guns who live in tents and never wash and cannot read or write (143).

Unlike McCarthy, whose preoccupations revolve around paternal sentimentality and an oddly conceited faith in what has been lost, Coetzee (1982) argues that an essential enlightenment is required, that if one is doomed, it is deserved:

Some will be caught in dugouts beneath their cellars clutching their valuables to their breasts, pinching their eyes shut. Some will die on the road overwhelmed by the first snows of winter. Some few may even die fighting with pitchforks. After which the barbarians will wipe their backsides on the town archives. To the last we will have learned nothing. In all of us, deep down, there seems to be something granite and unteachable (143).

Unlike Coetzee's protagonist, and McCarthy's, whose adventurers in *Blood Meridian* are never victims but active participants in the slaughter on the plains, the father and son in *The Road* wish nothing more than to live in peace. The arrow hits the mark:

The arrow had cut a gash just above the knee about three inches long. It was still bleeding and his whole upper leg was discolored and he could see the cut was deep. Some homemade broadhead beaten out of scrapiron, an old spoon, God knows what (*The Road* 265).

Not unlike the fears and obsessions of Coetzee's father-figure in *Disgrace* and the Swede in Roth's *American Pastoral*, the father in McCarthy's novel fears above all what will become of his off-spring, although here it is not a daughter but a son, who the father fears will be murdered and eaten by marauding gangs of 'savages' using bows and arrows, assembled out of urban waste. The writer's vision is suggestive of an unknown past that resembles an equally scary depiction of America's not-so-distant past. His intentions in *The Road* are less clear than those in *Blood Meridian*: '*Blood Meridian* is a record of forgotten atrocities committed in the name of nationhood' (Easton 2008: 159). The merging of a chronicled past and an imagined future may reveal a crucial insight regarding the consequences of an on-going political structure or an agenda that has yet to be fulfilled. According to Easton, McCarthy's novels set in the past are part of an historical recovery whose purpose, at least to Eaton, is not revealed by the author. *Blood Meridian*, Eaton argues, 'demonstrates how the territorial designs of the US entailed not only dismembering bodies but erasing any record of that dismemberment' (164).

The nature of this phenomenon has been addressed in 2005 by Harold Pinter (2005). Its implication for literature lies at the heart of the postcolonial project which seeks to address it directly (Mbembe 2003). Pinter spoke to this issue in his Nobel acceptance speech on the subject of America's denial of responsibility for its actions:

It never happened. Nothing ever happened. Even while it was happening it wasn't happening. It didn't matter. It was of no interest. The crimes of the United States have been systematic, constant, vicious, remorseless, but very

few people have actually talked about them. You have to hand it to America. It has exercised a quite clinical manipulation of power worldwide while masquerading as a force of universal good. It's a brilliant, even witty, highly successful act of hypnosis (815).

American novelists of the last few decades have addressed the wit and success of this act of hypnosis, but few have found a way to break the spell. Like Cormac McCarthy, the postmodernists of his generation have found their way into the dilemma of how to restore the balance between what is real and unreal, but they cannot imagine and have not committed themselves as have their postcolonial counterparts to an alternative to their monocultural heritage (Shoemaker 1996: 248).

Confinement and disillusion can be found in contemporary literature, but there can also be seen a sustained if frustrated impulse toward emancipation. For the most part, however, especially among prominent American novelists, the search for liberation often devolves into an escape for a chosen few. Key works envision modes of survival in the context of worldly destruction. The literary response to our age has in turn lacked coherence, reinforcing the turmoil rather than giving it form. George Steiner (1971) nicely summarises this cultural impasse:

A common formlessness or search for new forms has all but undermined classic age-lines, sexual divisions, class structures, and hierarchic gradients of mind and power. We are caught in a Brownian movement of every vital, molecular level of individuation and society. And I may carry the analogy one step further, the membranes through which social energies are current are now permeable and nonselective (83).

These works have in common their unusual dedication to the accurate and sympathetic depiction of community-building in the context of war and impending destruction. In each narrative can be found the suggestion that not mere survival is possible, but hope for the creation of an alternative life. There is an impulse toward utopianism, but in each case possibility is thwarted.

John Edgar Wideman and Don DeLillo make an effort to understand the motivations of their protagonists' vision. They have in common the recognition that a healthy, sane, human life can no longer be guaranteed to the race, that pockets of civilisation contain defensive, beleaguered remnants which maintain themselves precariously, if at all, and that it is vital for the survival of human kind that alternative visions of human life be realised so as to preserve the best within us as destruction and corruption feed on themselves.

If we compare DeLillo's college campus to the spiritually focused compound of Wideman, what emerges is a vision of a small world seeking to act out dreams of survival in a hostile environment. This too can be said of the Jewish ghetto which drew on centuries of tradition to find its organising principle. As long as the ghetto existed or was allowed to exist, the possibility of a future survived with it, as its members nurtured continuity through their celebration of the past and their stubborn faith in its power to inform present action.

John Edgar Wideman takes pains to defend the decency and the ultimate humility of his saviour, an African-American named King, whose vision is informed by a realisation that salvation would never come from the promises made to consumers. Wideman attributes to King an insight into the workings of

contemporary society that Sheldon Wolin (2004) has articulated, namely, that consumerism and the spread of capitalism have replaced the territorial ambitions of the Nazi regime depicted by Hannah Arendt (1964).

The American regime of oppression may resemble superficially the high-handedness of the Nazis, especially if you are like King and his followers residents of an inner-city ghetto, but the organising principles of the societies are different. King's insight informs his radical rejection of the trappings of material comfort and his call for an intense struggle to remain true to and disciplined for an alternative way of life. One witness obviously cherished King's purity of vision and his ability to remain undistracted by easy gains:

My life wasn't much different from my mama's or hers from her mama's on back far as you want to carry it back... runny water inside my house and in the supermarket I can buy thirty kinds of soda pop, twelve different colors of toilet paper. But that ain't what I call progress. Do you? King knew it wasn't. King just told the truth (14).

Wideman's characters are very alert to entertainment and consumerism as part of the regime's hold on power. As in DeLillo's work the process of turning citizens into shoppers instead of corpses is seen finally as what differentiates the American government from the Nazis.

Part of the radicalisation of the society, part of the corruption, and a large part of the increasing coarsening of the society are due to the militarised ethos on the domestic front. Doris Lessing's apt characterisation of the atmosphere in Europe following the end of WWI captures well Wideman's sense of direction of American

society in the aftermath of the Vietnam conflict: the degeneration of the already degenerate was accelerated (1992: 87).

The violence can be understood, according to Elleke Boehmer (2005), in a political context that suggests historical development rather than stasis, that is, not a universal constant but in context:

The theorist Achille Mbembe has illuminatingly described how the ‘necropolis’ of the neo-colonial state instrumentalises destruction; that is to say, it operates using the constant threat of human death, and of displays of state-inflicted death and near-death. The neo-colonial state or post-colonial, in other words, repeats in sophisticated, knowing forms the *commandment*, or regime of violence, of the colony (*Colonial & Postcolonial Literature* 254).

Wideman’s contention is that the moment of the firebombing of a Philadelphia city block by the city police can be seen as a declaration of war made by the local government against its own people. More generally, it is in fact Wideman’s understanding that American imperialism abroad is making life more unbearable at home. Much of the anger has arisen from a sense among the people that their sacrifices have been ignored. It is, according to Wideman, an increasingly embattled environment, with the veterans of foreign wars bearing the brunt of injustice and neglect:

They say this Republic’s built to last, blood of twenty million slaves mixed into the cement of its foundations, make it strong brother, plenty, plenty strong. They say there are veterans’ benefits available. J.B.’s not a vet, his name not scratched on some goddamn cold-ass black-marble slab in DC, but half his crew who went to war killed over there in the jungle and half the

survivors came home juiced, junkied, armless, legless, crazy as bedbugs. Fucked over good in Asian jungles whiles this Philly jungle fucking over J.B. and the brothers left here to run it. *Casualties just as heavy here in the streets as cross the pond in Nam* (173, my emphasis).

Wideman's insight is not limited to the notion that those who participated in foreign wars were brutalised by their experiences. The traumatising experiences left them maimed and wounded emotionally and physically, to be sure, but his argument is that that the children of the veterans have been brutalised, that they have taken on the identities of their fathers. Like the daughter of Philip Roth's the Swede in *American Pastoral*, the black youths of Philadelphia see themselves engaged in a battle of their own making. In the words of Jerry Varsava, 'The untamed violence of *A Clockwork Orange* has taken over the city' (8). An urban army has emerged that is at war with its surroundings and spares no one:

My army stuffs them chumps. Right up the gut. Down to the bone. Jam city. They squeal and scatter like they the rack, we the cue. Bomb them motherfuckers. Set a fire under they asses. We the fist. Rammed up their giggies. The hard black fist. Hit them hard, real hard. Knock some on the ground. Take everything they got. Wave your piece in the faces of the ones on the ground. Stand shoulder to shoulder. Hard black brothers. Swoop in like Apaches, like Vietcong, hit for the middle. Grab a few. Knock a few down (165).

The attempt to build an alternative community within and surrounded by an indifferent or hostile society required on the part of King and his followers a commitment beyond the trappings and promises of a materialist society. It was not enough just to reject society's definition of progress and the means of acquiring the

rewards of subordinating the self to the 'good life.' King required a total and absolute break from one's own past, as if to suggest that the reward for casting off success was the promise of a new life, a second chance:

...when you went to live with King...he said, give it up, give up that other life and come unto me naked as the day you were born. He meant it too...Oh so happy. Happy it finally came down to this. Nothing to hide no more. Come unto me and leave the world behind. Like a new-born child (18).

The condemnation of society is total as is King's demand that his followers break with their past. The irony is that one of the central grievances of the community is its sense of having been forgotten. His rage at the conflagration set by the security police literally to smoke out the commune expresses only a part of his sustained anger, chiefly directed at those he feels have forgotten their pasts. Amnesia is part of the American hold on power, as argued by Pinter, from the massacre of native-Americans to the Philadelphia's grand jury's willed forgetfulness shown by their refusal to bring charges against those who bombed the city block where members of MOVE resided:

This Black Camelot and its cracked Liberty Bell burn, lit by the same match ignited two blocks of Osage Avenue. Street named for an Indian tribe. Haunted by Indian ghosts – Schuylkill, Manayunk, Wissahickon, Susquehanna, Moyamensing, Wingohocking, Tioga – the rivers bronzed in memory of their copper, flame-colored bodies, the tinsel of their names gilding the ruined city (159).

The massacre of Native Americans, slavery, police brutality: memories of past genocides play on the mind and animate contemporary urban unrest; the sense of

continuity is vital to urban unrest. Names of places and incidents of unrest and injustice preoccupy:

Mile after square mile of broken glass littering the countryside. Lebanon
Soweto West Bank Belfast San Salvador Kabul Kampuchea. Spin the globe
and touch it wherever it stops. You'll get blood on your finger (160).

History and current events merge into a single incident; past and present are barely distinguished.

The purification urge derives from the leader-theoretician's belief that his community exists as a kind of divine remnant whose very existence is in peril. The life urge is activated by a vision of total annihilation awaiting those who stray. Wideman presents the link between the massacres of the American West and the genocidal ambitions of the Third Reich. From his point of view the moment has arisen when the imperial ambitions of the American empire have turned against its own people, while employing the mechanism of destruction employed in the recent past by the Germans.

Wideman's protagonist Cudjoe, the writer who returns to his old neighbourhood to make sense of what had happened, has paranoid delusions about the forces aligned against his community. His fantasies, however, draw from historical precedent:

Cops herd them with cattle prods into the holds of unmarked vans. Black Marias with fake shower heads in their airtight rear compartments, a secret button under the dash. Zyklon B drifts down quietly, casually as the net. Don't know what hit you till you're coughing and gagging and puking and everybody in a funky black stew rolling round on the floor (177).

The reference to Zyklon B, the gas used in the German extermination camps, maintains a hold on Cudjoe's imagination, as does the image of Nazi storm troopers, despite the fact that a different form of tyranny has taken control of his old neighbourhood on the west side of Philadelphia:

I wouldn't know anything about that, but I'd skin Billy or Karen alive if I caught them hanging around here. Pimpmobiles and dopemobiles. Sell you anything you big enough to ask for. And if I know what they're doing, the cops got to know. You think the police do anything about it? Hell no. Not till one these little white chicks slinking around here ODs and turns up dead, they'll come down on that corner like gangbusters (32).

But the imagery of Nazis is interspersed with images of a more distant past, of a genocide beyond the memory of any of Wideman's city dwellers. Still, they identify with historical victims of genocide. Television, although frequently an intoxicating distraction, frequently offers suggestive images that inform or inspire or frighten:

All she could think of was a frozen river and snow and tepees neat row after neat row. Up on a ridge blue-coated soldiers watch quiet smoke curl from the tent town. Horses snorting and spurs jingle-jangling the blue men gallop down a hill. Toward the snowy riverbank where Indians sleeping peacefully cause they don't know what's dropping out of the sky on their heads. Cannon fire. Snow churned blood red. She thinks of that. The time she'd seen the late movie on TV and babies running naked in the cold, yelling for their mommas, their mommas chased by men with swords on horses, hollering, cutting the women down in the snow (135-136).

The identification with past victims of American expansionism formed part of the inner-city ethos, the sensibility of the ghetto, but another part, and an even greater

part, was the increasing awareness among many that their existence consisted mainly of watching others. They were victims but they were also spectators of their own demise. They were not being attacked, just forgotten.

This new form of power, a tyranny of indifference, although every bit as threatening and perhaps as destructive as the more familiar forms, was to a large degree what King and his followers in the Move organisation were fighting against (Wolin 2004; Neal 2007). Wideman's theory of imperial power rejects the claim that the American empire is to be distinguished from its predecessors, chiefly the British. He seeks to explode the myth of American exceptionalism, whereby American power expanded without conquest and dispossession. Instead, he argues that those dispossessed by its power are the American people themselves.

Neglect has the power to brutalise. The author's descriptions of local and federal power structures and their indifference confirm Hannah Arendt's chilling descriptions of the Nazi state which, she argues, was not to be characterised as one of traditional despotism but of bureaucratic inhumanity: 'And one can debate long and profitably on the rule of Nobody, which is what the political form known as bureaucracy truly is' (*Eichmann* 117).

Their defiance, however, brought upon them a display of old-fashioned force. The utopian impulse, then, must be countered by rationalism, cynicism and, of course, by hostility. The leap of faith asked by King of his followers was countered by a commitment made by the surrounding society to destroy them, obliterate their traces, and finally to kill in its survivors and in its own members the belief that life

can be changed. Wideman describes the police action which ended the social experiment his novel *Philadelphia Fire* sets out to memorialise:

On May 13, 1985, in West Philadelphia, after bullets, water cannon and high explosives had failed to dislodge the occupants of 6221 Osage Avenue, a bomb was dropped from a state police helicopter and exploded atop the besieged row house. In the ensuing fire fifty-three houses were destroyed, 262 people were left homeless. [...] Eleven of them, six adults and five children, were killed in the assault that commenced when they refused to obey a police order to leave their home (97).

The remnant King sought to invite into his dream made itself vulnerable to the society it sought to escape. Wideman sees them historically as part of a long line of victims of conformity and powerlessness. His claim is that social misfits incite an urge to punish through exclusion. Deportation, imprisonment and punishment await those whose ‘disease’ of nonconformity can be externalised or marginalised or just identified, but when that threat becomes too close to be so easily eliminated, then, he suggests, it must be destroyed completely – erased (Mbembe 2006). According to Wideman, the unusual degree of antipathy is saved for those whose memory itself poses a threat.

The mutually exclusive duality of life and death lies at the heart of the utopian vision. It is also profoundly conservative, in the sense that King and his followers were cutting themselves off from society rather than attempting to change it. For the followers of King it was an inspiring vision; for outsiders it was a threatening denial rather than the inspiration it was intended to be:

Life is good, so we're good. We said that every day. We must protect Life and pass it on so the Tree never dies. Society's system killing everything. Babies. Air. Water. Earth. People's bodies and minds... He taught us to praise Life and be Life (11).

Cynicism works most successfully, the author shows, by destroying the belief that new things can be desired and that one's motivations themselves can be transformed. The abiding ideology of the materialist society is that all ideologies ultimately spring from the same human urge, namely, greed. A negation lies at the heart of the utopian vision:

How you gon convince somebody democracy's good or socialism or communism or King or his nouveau Rousseau or whatever the fuckism, how you gon preach the morality of one system over another system when all anybody concerned about is the goodies the system delivers to their door?
(84)

That MOVE's people were obliterated provided proof to Wideman of the political bankruptcy of the perpetrators as well as the spiritual poverty of the community. He focuses on the corruption of the community, for their idleness and their capacity to be satisfied with their own passivity:

She screamed without uttering a sound: don't touch that dial. And in a way I don't. We're in bed. The Sony's ten feet away. I can round first base and scoot into second and slide though a cloud of dust into third without getting my uniform dirty. A city burns on the screen. Any large city. Anywhere in America. CNN. Cable news network. Row houses in flames. Roof lines silhouetted against a dark sky. Something's burning. We watch. Wonder whose turn it is now. Whole city blocks engulfed. It must be happening in another country (100).

But it is not happening in another country. The relationship between the people of Philadelphia and its government is such that it cannot be assumed that the government would give a second thought to destroying a neighborhood if it believed itself threatened. Indeed, what Wideman's protagonist rightly concludes is that the entire city lies vulnerable and helpless before the power of the state. According to Elleke Boehmer (2009), once stripped of any meaningful duties as citizens, that is, once public life has been reduced to shopping, the people are no more than subjects of control, as the colonised, and as such vulnerable to the state's various sanctioned organs of control:

I would like to suggest that in the globalised world terror is a force that has been *incorporated everywhere*. As Walter Benjamin presciently observed: 'The tradition of the oppressed teaches us that the 'state of emergency' in which we live is not the exception but the rule' (145).

What Wideman intuits, Boehmer explicates, confirming Hannah Arendt's crucial insight into the modern totalitarian regime, which from her point of view was not to be understood merely as an historical moment, albeit one uniquely gruesome, but as a potential threat:

There is a well-known fact that Hitler began his mass murders by granting 'mercy deaths' to the 'incurably ill', and that he intended to wind up his extermination programme by doing away with 'genetically damaged' Germans (heart and lung patients). But quite aside from that, it is apparent that this sort of killing can be directed against any given group, that is, that the principle of selection is dependent only upon circumstantial factors. It is quite conceivable that in the automated economy of a not-too-distant future

men may be tempted to exterminate all those whose intelligence quotient is below a certain level (*Eichman* 116).

The unlikelihood of this specific possibility can be seen, but the point is that such regimes will find their intended victims, their own justifications, and their own means of extermination. This finally is the insight that emerges from the works of Wideman, McCarthy, and DeLillo.

DeLillo is less committed to the explication of the visionary's impulse than he is to the anti-utopian nightmare which surrounds and engulfs an increasingly isolated community. The author shows that the consequence of such destruction has wider implications for our culture than those attributed to mere brutality:

Devastation does not just mean a slow sinking into the sands. Devastation is the high velocity expulsion of Mnemosyne... [D]evastation is the expulsion of memory, the historically weighted spiritual and useful objects which made up the traditions and material culture of western man (177).

This is why remembrance, revision, and regeneration become crucial to preventing the annihilation of culture. The acknowledgement and recording of past events function as a crucial part of a restorative process. The restoration of what has been forgotten is itself a political act.

DeLillo envisions a spiritual desolation set in motion by the destruction of memory itself. *White Noise*, while not functioning as an act of historical recovery, as *Philadelphia Fire* aspires to do, nonetheless is concerned with the annihilating forces of contemporary culture. The white noise of which DeLillo speaks consists of the lulling distractions, enhancements, and obsessions that erase memory. DeLillo

fashions a disaster narrative that sets into motion the kind of societal dislocation that mirrors the fragmentation of community that left the Jews of Eastern Europe so vulnerable. The image of fleeing crowds, parents desperately seeking lost children, terrified, once prominent individuals suddenly thrown in with the anonymous mass: this dislocation of the commonplace occasioned by the chemical spill of Nyodene D left people without any sense of being part of any kind of organised society, set adrift not unlike the toxic plume:

It seemed only minutes later that I was surrounded by noise and commotion. I opened my eyes to find Denise pounding on my arms and shoulders. When I say I was awake, she began battering her mother. All around us, people were dressing and packing. The major noise issued from sirens in the ambulances outside. A voice was instructing us through a bullhorn. In the distance heard a clanging bell and then a series of automobile horns, the first of what would become a universal bleat, a herd-panic of terrible wailing proportions as vehicles of all sizes and types tried to reach the parkway in the quickest possible time (156).

Suddenly, as was seen in the slums of Philadelphia where King's followers were fire-bombed, Jack Gladney and his family find themselves on the run. Their plight is described by DeLillo in the following evacuation scene:

It was still dark. A heavy rain fell. Before us lay a scene of panoramic disorder. Cars trapped in mud, cars stalled, cars crawling along the one-lane escape route, cars taking shortcuts through the woods, cars hemmed in by trees, boulders, other cars. Sirens called and faded, horns blared in desperation and protest. There were running men, tents wind-blown into trees, whole families abandoning their vehicles to head on foot for the parkway. From deep in the woods we heard motorcycles revving, voices

raising incoherent cries. It was like the fall of a colonial capital to dedicated rebels (157).

Gladney, a professor of Hitler studies at College-On-The-Hill, finds himself a nobody and, as such, experiences the vulnerability made so terrifyingly part of modern life. He believed that he was invulnerable, protected from the chaos by his social status:

‘These things happen to poor people who live in exposed areas. Society is set up in such a way that it’s the poor and the uneducated who suffer the main impact of natural and man-made disasters. People in low-lying areas get the floods, people in shanties get the hurricanes and tornadoes. I’m a college professor. Did you ever see a college professor rowing a boat down his own street in one of those TV floods? We live in a neat and pleasant town near a college with a quaint name. These things don’t happen in places like Blacksmith’ (114).

An expression of DeLillo’s satiric gifts is how he makes class consciousness the centre of his intellectual’s very being. It is not that Professor Gladney has other things on his mind – he is an absent-minded professor; the geography of privilege is all that he has on his mind:

I’m not just a college professor. I’m the head of a department. I don’t see myself fleeing an airborne toxic event. That’s for people who live in mobile homes out in the scrubby parts of the country, where the fish hatcheries are (117).

Gladney intuits the connection between the loss of privilege and the threat of annihilation. The erasure of social distinction and the emergence of the mass leads to

the potential for abuse, perhaps trivial at first, but gradually small inconveniences and indignities can develop into humiliations and violence. There is little standing between the mass and the power of the state.

Gladney's family and all the others left stranded and uninformed also experience one of the vital characteristics of being part of the mass: they are utterly helpless. Rather than fearing the brutality of a disciplined, occupying army, DeLillo's characters face chaos. Nobody answers when they call 911. But what DeLillo imagines comes quickly to resemble Cormac McCarthy's prophecy. None of us will escape the total collapse that is coming. The chaos that engulfs the isolated, impotent people resembles totalitarianism as understood by both Wolin and Arendt by its being a crucial part of what gives power to the regime. The tyranny is not familiar; it is a new form of control: 'Its danger,' according to Hannah Arendt, 'is that it threatened to ravage the world as we know it – a world which everywhere seems to have come to an end – before a new beginning rising from this end has had time to assert itself' (476).

The tyranny of neglect extends to all walks of life; it is total (Neal 2007). The postmodern police state is manned by automated telephone services where one is invited to leave a message. This, according to Wolin (2004), is crucial to an understanding of the difference between modern forms of tyranny and that of the Nazis:

The crucial element that sets off inverted totalitarianism from Nazism is that while the latter imposed a regime of mobilization upon its citizenry, inverted totalitarianism works to depoliticise its citizenry, thus paying a left-handed compliment to the prior experience of democratization. Where the Nazis

strove to give the masses a sense of collective power and confidence, *Kraft durch Freude* (or ‘strength through joy’), the inverted regime promotes a sense of weakness, collective futility that culminates in the erosion of the democratic faith, in political apathy and privatization of the self (592).

And, indeed, the ineffective, nonresponsive nature of the modern bureaucratic state, as described here and in the work of DeLillo and Wideman, is by no means unique to the United States. There are surely exceptions, but Mike Davis (2007) sees it as characteristic of governments throughout the developing world. He claims that

the idea of an interventionist state strongly committed to social housing and job development seems either a hallucination or a bad job, because governments long ago abdicated any serious effort to combat slums and redress urban marginality (62).

Wideman is especially alert to the consequences of such neglect. Davis cites the testimony of a Nairobi slum-dweller given to a *Guardian* reporter whose observations echo Wideman’s: “‘The state does nothing here. It provides no water, no schools, no sanitation, no roads, no hospitals’”(62). While Wideman’s Philadelphia has to be said to be better off than Nairobi in regard to many basics, on the subject of inner-city crime and corruption, the two cities, according to Davis, are remarkably similar:

Indeed, the journalist found that residents bought water from private dealers and relied on vigilante groups for security – the police visited only to collect bribes (62).

In this connection, *Philadelphia Fire* and *White Noise*, the two novels set in the United States, share a common vision of our collective political passivity and

isolation. Both authors see the community under threat, both articulate a general spiritual malaise, and both find literal and metaphorical embodiments for one's sense of physical intrusion, dispossession and isolation. They do not see physical annihilation through political action as the threat; instead they imagine a spiritual death. What King's group and the panicky evacuees have in common is the fear of obliteration, of their lives coming to nothing. The link between these novels is their concern for the possibility of human survival in an increasingly dangerous world. In *White Noise* the dual-world theme is drawn less concretely in that there is no utopian remnant experimenting with an alternative life style as in *Philadelphia Fire*, but the choice of a college campus shows how one world survives when set apart from what surrounds it. There is a palpable sense of menace surrounding and encroaching on the parenthetical lives of the students and faculty. Theirs is a world organised for self-sufficiency and designed for self-satisfaction:

The students tend to stick close to campus. There is nothing for them to do in Blacksmith proper, no natural haunt or attraction. They have their own food, movies, music, theatre, sports, conversation, sex (59).

DeLillo fashions a world, however, that takes the shape of a centre encircled by concentric rings of turmoil and menace, all the way to the outer boundary beyond which death awaits.

In such conditions, as Wolin has pointed out, the political inactivity of the consumer society is more easily manipulated. The regime is able to adopt extra-legal measures about what becomes a state permanently in a state of emergency (Neal 2007). Whether it is dealing with an urban police action, or to the ensuing chaos set

in motion by a threatening toxic plume, the government convinces itself that it must be on a permanent footing. In other words, government responds to the world described by Wideman and DeLillo by reshaping itself. Simoes da Silva (2010), in his review of the work of Giorgio Agamben, concisely summarises the main argument of Agamben's analysis of the 'State of Exception' or emergency powers of today's global powers:

'State of Exception,' with its seemingly limitless elasticity, seems almost perversely designed for the very exercise of power as it obtains at present in most parts of the globe. There is considerable irony in this return of the repressed, as it were, insofar as the political processes Agamben identifies here are the very sort once exported by Europe to Algeria, to Cape Verde or Madagascar (Simoes da Silva 8).

It is a view of life that the author of *Politics and Vision* argues is manufactured by a form of government that believes itself in the post-911 era strengthened by a fearful populace:

A government controlled, color-coded climate of fear existing side by side with officially sanctioned consumer hedonism appears paradoxical, but the reality is that a nervous subject has displaced the citizen (593).

Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri (2006) take up Agamben's notion of the 'state of exception', seeing it as essential to the modern state's sense of itself, as part of its legitimacy. They tie their concept of the new imperialism, as do other writers such as Harold Pinter (2005) and Noam Chomsky (2008), to the United States:

Today it is increasingly difficult for the ideologues of the United States to name a single, unified enemy; rather there seem to be minor and elusive

enemies everywhere. The end of the crisis of modernity has given rise to a proliferation of minor and indefinite crises, or, as we prefer to an omni-crisis (2006: 482).

At the centre lies the family – if we can believe Murray – whose relation to the world parallels that of the college campus, a metaphorical family, and what it stands apart from:

[W]e are fragile creatures surrounded by a world of hostile facts. Facts threaten our happiness and security... The family process works toward sealing off the where objective reality is most likely to be misrepresented (82).

Wolin and Agamben find in the contemporary political state what Edward Said locates in key modernists at the beginning of the century. There is in the postmodern political order a powerlessness and paralysis that can be traced back to the early twentieth century. In Said's essay on modernists, such as Conrad, Proust and James Joyce, he (2000) argues that in the works of these authors:

Alterity and difference are systematically associated with strangers, who, whether women, natives, or sexual eccentrics, erupt into vision, there to challenge and resist settled metropolitan histories, forms, modes of thought. To this challenge modernism responded with the formal irony of a culture unable to say yes, we should give up control, or no, we shall hold on regardless: a self-conscious contemplative passivity forms itself, as George Lukács noted perspicaciously, into paralyzed gestures of aestheticised powerlessness (313).

Passive acknowledgement may not develop into recognition, identification or engagement. Said is right when he argues that there is a link between a culture

‘unable to say yes’ and a crippling form of passivity that leads to political indifference and neglect. There is a political consequence of such a culture’s inability to move beyond ironic distance.

The factual and the fantastic become a blur where the inner world is separated from what is seen as outside. There is the self and the family which taken as a single unit closes in on itself to watch the world rather than negotiating a truce, as it were, or engaging in its improvement. The world exists merely as a spectacle:

For most people there are only two places in the world. Where they live and their TV set. If a thing happens on television, we have every night to find it fascinating, whatever it is (66).

The vision which haunts this narrative arises out of the author’s effort to find a connection between the way we live and the fact of death. The concentric circles function as a kind of distraction from the essential dialogue between man and his inevitable fate. But the inability to assimilate mortality affects what little life we have, with the result that we live stunted lives, neurotic, frightened, partial lives that come to resemble the death-world. It is this central reality of the modernist vision that intersects with that of the postcolonial (Boehmer 2005).

This is in substance Wideman’s conclusion, too, from his contact with the survivors of MOVE and those who remember King’s vision. DeLillo gives this prophetic power of seeing to Murray Suskind, professor of popular culture, whose occasionally authoritative voice often speaks for the author. Boehmer (2009) shows how Mbembe’s conception of a ‘necropolis’ comes close to describing the world

Wideman's and DeLillo's characters inhabit. The American people have become colonised by their own government:

Terror according to this logic can be defined, in terms taken from Achille Mbembe's exposition of the necropolitical, as a politics exercised through the imposition of death and near-death. For Mbembe, whose work in this respect is interestingly informed by Franz Fanon's concept of colonial violence, imperial and post-imperial sovereignty depends on the right to kill or, more precisely, to hold the subject in a state of continual confrontation with death: 'the colony represents the site where sovereignty consists fundamentally in the exercise of a power outside the law...and where 'peace' is more likely to take on the face of a 'war without end'' (145).

In such a world, we become Comanches or Jews. Extinction discourse is turned upon itself.

DeLillo wants to draw a kind of parallel between the television watching public in the United States and the Nuremberg crowds of the Third Reich by locating within the centre of his quiet campus town a Hitler studies program and by linking it with the broader fascination of Hitler to our society at large. By positing the notion that advanced societies possess weakened family units, Murray implicitly characterises our modern society as one of atomised individuals whose knowledge of the world is undermined by loneliness. Alone, we attend to the rituals of community by viewing television, 'where the outer torment lurks, causing fears and secret desires....' These rituals can be reduced, metaphysically, to a depiction of the death-world, which was the *raison d'être* of the Nazi assemblies:

Many of those crowds were assembled in the name of death. They were there to attend tributes to the dead... Crowds came to form a shield against their

own dying. To become a crowd is to keep out death. To break off from the crowd is to risk death as an individual, to face dying alone (73).

In this connection, it is understandable that DeLillo would see the modern American shopping mall as a mausoleum. People find it as difficult to resist commodification as they do consumerism. The mall is the one place people feel safe, virtually guaranteed to enjoy their loneliness among strangers. It is, according to him, the closest thing to attending one's own funeral.

The symbolic connection, ironically made, between television and Hitler parallels the earlier link between shopping and death. Consumption is made to serve as a confirmation of life in a one-dimensional society, de-politicised and apathetic, except when it comes to shopping. DeLillo through Murray subverts this ideology through parody and irony, but the critique emerges, namely, that our denial of death imperils our lives. DeLillo's vision springs precisely from that sense of life as a construct of perception, hence the double meaning of the world 'seeing' itself, whereby a life depicted by television impedes vital contact. When 'THE MOST PHOTOGRAPHED BARN IN AMERICA' becomes an icon or an image more than a reality, its existence as an artifact irrevocably denies its viewer the experience of seeing it for the first time. As Murray says, 'We've agreed to be part of a collective perception.' But the implication is made that life itself is lost when we see, as it were, the signs on television before we 'see' our own lives. Television, then, exists as a kind of obituary or a cemetery for our having lived our lives watching how other people would live if they were us.

Wideman and DeLillo chose America as the setting for their narratives and in doing so found the greatest threat to their disparate quests to be a life drained of meaning. DeLillo follows Wideman in depicting an urban nightmare that slowly infiltrates and corrupts. One lives besieged, cut off, isolated in fear or in rage. As in Cormac McCarthy's vision of survival in a post-apocalyptic world, there is little made of the possibility of revival, rehabilitation, or regeneration. As has been seen, these versions of the apocalypse revive extinction theory's premise that a given culture has seen its best days and has entered the final stage of dissolution. Revival contradicts the premise of extinction. It is antithetical to the postcolonial impulse to reinstate or regenerate.

In this chapter, I have proposed that patterns of oppression identified earlier as belonging to imperialist powers can be found in contemporary America. The three writers analysed here place their narratives in the broader context of the dissolution of civic order in contemporary American society. These authors consider issues of gender, class, and race, which is of central concern to Wideman, but in fact the broader issue of the powerlessness and the citizen's loss of control is taken up with vigour. I have tried to bolster and particularise that political interpretation by embedding it in a context of the modern state as it has transformed itself. I also hope to have clarified the odd dynamic of political overreach, oppression and political neglect. As this synopsis indicates, the chapter also participates in my effort to consider issues of responsibility and accountability in the context of the emerging social mass.

Theorists such as Sheldon Wolin, Hannah Arendt, Elleke Boehmer and Mbembe have been used to make my case for understanding American imperialism and its domestic ramifications in the context of 20th century totalitarianism. The rise of state lawlessness is of central concern to Agamben. The three key novels under analysis participate in and contribute to an unmasking of American claims of innocence. The issue of accountability relates to American myths of equality and denials of imperial intent. An unmasking of purported innocence plays a part in the narrative intent of these works by Wideman, DeLillo, and McCarthy. These authors themselves make connections between the past and present in an attempt to understand better America's emerging and until recently unchallenged hegemony.

What I do hope to have formulated freshly, however, is the unique relationship each writer develops between the politics of race and class and that of imperialism. The three key writers studied in this chapter – Wideman, DeLillo and McCarthy – represent a spectrum of ideological strategies rather than a unified outlook. Stark as these writers' differences on imperialism may have been, their efforts to revise understanding of domestic conflicts in the context of American expansion of power deserve attention. All three writers address the ways personal and cultural dissolution can be traced to America's political liabilities, its expansionism, and its corruption. Their writings contribute to our understanding of the relationship between cultural hegemony and cultural debasement.

Chapter 5: Postcolonial Regeneration

It was urgently necessary to strengthen the link, the bond, by restoring selected individuals to suitable ways of life, thus regenerating and vitalizing areas, cultures, or cities (109)

Doris Lessing, *Canopus in Argos: Archives*

It is through the effort to recapture the self and to scrutinise the self, it is through the lasting tension of their freedom that men will be able to create the ideal conditions of existence for a human world (231).

--- Franz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*

The postmodern authors in the previous chapter present the global structure as both a threat and something threatened. Their depictions negate reconstruction; their premise is that the human project's disrepair presents a challenge beyond reckoning. They may, of course, be right. Another reading, however, presents itself in the project known as the postcolonial. Principal authors dedicated to this project recognise the destructive forces at work but put forward as their perspective a radical hope. It is the contention of this author that postcoloniality has as its central identifying characteristic a belief in hope.

The radical fears of the postmodernists are overcome through trials of communication. The postcolonial impulse believes in healing through dialogue, although its premise is that misunderstandings have been wounding. The scope of disillusionment is formidable and acknowledged. This is the starting point. Unlike the apocalyptic authors who prophesy doom, postcolonial authors, such as Gordimer and Coetzee, take as their starting point the idea that the apocalypse has already occurred. The destruction is not coming but has passed. We are in a period of repair.

In *The Location of Culture* Homi Bhabha reiterates this point:

In this salutary sense, a range of contemporary critical theories suggest that it is from those who have suffered the sentence of history – subjugation, domination, diaspora, displacement – that we learn our most enduring lessons for living and thinking (1994: 246).

Bhabha argues that postcolonialism need not begin in despair. This may seem a controversial contention. In his 'Reflections on Exile', Said speaks of exile mostly in terms of loss. 'The achievements of exile are permanently undermined by the loss of something left behind forever' (2000: 173). For him, there is so much left behind, so rich a heritage of advantage, that it is inconceivable to see exile as liberation. Said's memories are of having lived a vital, cultured existence, in an unforgettably rich environment:

Exile is strangely compelling to think about but terrible to experience. It is the unhealable rift forced between a human being and a native place, between the self and its true home: its essential sadness can never be surmounted (173).

The rich body of literature from exiles reveals a far more complex relationship between the exile and his or her former home than what is implied by sadness. That home, wherever it might have been, is frequently experienced as a place from which the exile is happy to escape should be considered.

Said is no doubt correct when speaking of himself, but his generalisation is hard to support. One can go further and question the desirability of return, quite apart from the question of how a lost world can ever be found. Ella Shohat (2010) affirms the point that Homi Bhabha is making, namely that the refashioning of a home is part of the postcolonial project:

For communities which have undergone brutal ruptures, now in the process of forging a collective identity, no matter how hybrid that identity has been before, during, and after colonialism, the retrieval and reinscription of a fragmented past becomes a crucial contemporary site for forging a resistant collective identity (109).

Shohat directly takes issue with those who believe that a dismembered past can in some sense be re-membered anew:

A notion of the past might thus be negotiated differently; not as a static fetishised phase to be literally reproduced, but as fragmented set of narrated memories and experiences on the basis of which to mobilise contemporary communities. A celebration of syncretism and hybridity per se, if not articulated in conjunction with questions of hegemony and neo-colonial power relations, runs the risk of appearing to sanctify the *fait accompli* of colonial violence (1992: 109).

On the other hand, one can err on the side of optimism. Arendt's analysis of the mass and its vulnerability to manipulation should be considered before valourising diaspora as liberation. Perhaps some caution is in order when considering the enthusiasm Paul Gilroy (1993) expresses for the promise of social displacement:

What was initially felt to be a curse – the curse of homelessness or the curse of enforced exile – gets repossessed as a privileged standpoint from which certain useful and critical perceptions about the modern world become more likely (*The Black Atlantic* 111).

One might point out that the 'curse' is as likely to be a death sentence as an invitation to self-expression. It is just as common to find examples of writers who have little to leave behind or for whom life at home has grown stale.

J.M. Coetzee narrates instances of postcolonial recovery in his recent novel *Slow Man* (2006). When Rayment takes into his home a recently arrived immigrant Marijana Jokić, he is forced to confront many of the issues he once faced when he first arrived in Australia from Europe. Rayment is an archivist with a valuable collection of photographs. Rayment tries to build rapport with Marijana who reluctantly says she can appreciate his efforts:

‘Is good, is good. Is good you save history. So people don’t think Australia is country without history, just bush and then mob of immigrants. Like me. Like us’ (48).

Rayment is not sure of whom she is speaking, who it is who belittles Australian history. It is the European point of view, Marijana says. But this disturbs Rayment, who asks her the following question, a question that captures in a phrase the question that is central to the postcolonial mind: “Do you cease to have a history when you move from one point on the globe to another?”(49). Bruce King, in his article ‘New Centres of Consciousness’(1996), turns the question into a statement that captures Coetzee’s concerns and the preoccupations of his protagonist: ‘The common characteristic is a multiple consciousness, a feeling of participating in several cultural groups or traditions without being fully at home’(16).

A preoccupation with the past could be said to be part of what cripples Coetzee’s protagonist in *Slow Man* (2005), but his subject remains the possibilities of renewal, an examination of the past through the perspective of an indifferent present. ‘Everything in the world was, once upon a time, new. Even I was new,’

Paul Rayment says. 'Then time got to work on me' (179). The examination goes beyond the personal, beyond Paul's dialogue with the youthful Drago. Suffering acutely from the traumatic effects of the loss of his leg in a traffic accident, Rayment essays the possibility of cultural renewal in the context of the past, a past for Rayment that is often more vivid than the present. His photographic albums have a hold on him because he believes himself to be their guardian:

The story he told Marijana was that he saved old pictures out of fidelity to their subjects, the men and women and children who offered their bodies up to the stranger's lens. But that is not the whole truth. He saves them too out of fidelity to the photographs themselves, the photographic prints, most of them last survivors, unique (65).

It is through the photos that Rayment connects to the present but, perhaps even more importantly, it is through them that he hopes to find a way to extend his life and a way of life:

He gives them a good home and sees to it, as far as he is able, as far as anyone is able, that they will have a good home after he is gone. Perhaps, in turn, some as yet unborn stranger will reach back and save a picture of him, of the extinct Rayment of the Rayment Bequest (65).

It is Europe examined from a distance, through the prism of a new life in Australia, but its hold on his father is as strong as its hold on Rayment. Loyalty is an issue, nostalgia must be considered, a sense of loss, and an inability to embrace what is foreign and new:

The Dutchman who married his mother and brought her and her children from Lourdes to Ballarat kept a framed photograph of Queen Wilhelmina

side by monarch's birthday he lit a candle before her image as if she were a saint. *Infidèle Europe*, he used to say of Europe; the queen's picture bore the motto Trouw, faith, fidelity (66).

Living, however, as Rayment does, in a 'zone of humiliation,' with one leg, unable to care for himself, and vulnerable to the opinion of others, especially the young, he contemplates what it means to leave one's land, to leave everything behind. He finds these considerations alternatively thrilling and frightening. But he is able to conceive of this as part of a war generation that witnessed total devastation. He knows well that everything can be lost:

He had never thought he would have a good word to say for war, but here in his hospital bed, consuming time and being consumed, he seems to be revising his opinions. In the razing of cities, the pillage of treasure, the slaughter of innocents, in all that reckless destruction, he begins to detect a certain wisdom, as though at its deepest level history knows that it is doing. Down with the old, make for the new! (20).

This passage is important because it raises one of the questions that preoccupies Rayment. In his self-pity, Rayment reminds this reader of Saul Bellow's crippled war veteran, Henderson. With thoughts for the first time in his life of killing himself, the now-crippled Rayment moves easily from contemplating suicide to advancing the cause of war and through it the chance for renewal. Will Rayment seize the opportunity? It is through his encounter with Marijana and her family that he engages the challenge of renewal.

Said would readily acknowledge that people experience exile personally and individually. There are, after all, those like himself who left the sun-drenched

Mediterranean, and those who departed from, shall one say, cloudier environments. Still, he recognises ours as an age of exiles, a time in which people are either living in actual exile or are made to feel exiled from their traditions and native cultures by trauma. Said sees this age as to a large extent haunted by death, literally a death-rattled time:

But the difference between earlier exiles and those of our own time is, it bears stressing, scale: our age – with its modern warfare, imperialism, and the quasi-theological ambitions of totalitarian rulers – is indeed the age of the refugee, the displaced person, the mass immigration (174).

Said is right about this. There is an eventual, inevitable break down of traditional national identity, a diminishing of the ability to make distinctions between peoples by established means.

Some might differ with Said's sense of loss, his commitment to the ideals of the past. Despair of reconciliation with the past is one such impulse, as can be seen in Nadine Gordimer's writing. When one revisits the ending to *July's People*, for example, one cannot but acknowledge Maureen's yearning for escape. Gordimer writes:

She runs: trusting herself with all the suppressed trust of a lifetime, alert, like a solitary animal at the season when animals neither seek a mate nor take care of young, existing only for their lone survival, the enemy of all that would make claims of responsibility. She can still hear the beat, beyond those trees and those, and she runs towards it. She runs (160).

She and Bam have been in a kind of exile forced by the circumstances of civic collapse that Said speaks of, but Maureen learns that that order, once cherished, was

built on lies. There was nothing there, nothing to go back to. Gordimer's interrogation of the principles of that order makes Said's reflections seem sentimental.

Instead, postcolonial writing can be read as a project of recovery and recuperative vitality. Elleke Boehmer (2009) sees it this way. Her point is that the anguish need not produce regret, with full knowledge that humanity is always vulnerable to inhumanity. But she goes further, arguing, as does Homi Bhabha, that what is lost is generative, that the exile's exposure is ultimately productive:

With its commitment to cross-border interaction and ethically inspired adjustments to the other, postcolonial writing can be said to expand and complicate, as well as to question, the shared languages and common frames of reference, legacies of a colonial history, which made globalization possible. By the same token, such writing seeks to define, or redefine, home as against world, the particular and the local as distinct from, even though intricately bound up in, the global. Postcolonial writers, in other words, whether magic realist or national, find, through the medium of different modes of dialogue, ways of continuing and prolonging the lineages of life. And they see such conversation and prolongation as practices that must be continually renewed and repeated (2009: 146).

That striving for continuity is not driven by nostalgia. The project as described by Boehmer entails recognition in full awareness that that what has been lost cannot be fully recovered.

In Maureen's confrontation with July, things are said finally that forbid the kind of nostalgia to which one may be prone. She learns that their relationship bore little resemblance to what she had imagined. She and July had never been friends, he

tells her. The codes of rapport, gestures of kindness, the rituals of decency hid the vital inequality July experienced and understood. He finally enlightens Maureen on this point (70). Gordimer and others put in the forefront of their explorations the recognition of a chasm of experience, a communication gap that they reckon is worthy of being filled. At first, Maureen figures that things can be managed, that she and Bam can work things out and find a way to survive their exile from suburban certainties until it becomes clear that the source of misunderstanding is herself. One can speak of there being a gulf between the developing and developed world; part of the postcolonial engagement with the idea of identity is its urge to bridge this gulf...there is an urge to explain, to make oneself understood. It is an instance of enlightenment, an instance of revelation, as well as an opportunity for liberation.

This is to Maureen to July:

What's the good of going on about that? It's six hundred kilometers over there – her arm flung cross before his face the useless rope of a gesture that would fall short of what had disappeared into the bush. – If I offended you, if I hurt your dignity, if what I thought was my friendliness, the feeling I had for you – if that hurt your feelings... I know I don't know, I didn't know, and I should have known – The same arm dangled; she didn't know either, if he understood the words; she dropped fifteen years of the habit of translation into very simple, concrete vocabulary. If she had never before used the word 'dignity' to him it was not because she didn't think he understood the concept, didn't have any – it was only the term itself that might be beyond his grasp of the language (71-72).

Maureen contemplates her man-servant's inability to grasp the word 'dignity' and in the process has to face the fact that it is she and her husband who have none. This

mounting sense of anxiety leaves Maureen feeling less and less able to communicate, first with July, her servant turned guardian, and then with her husband. This moment of recognition leaves her feeling panicky and she runs as if for her life, but she is free, not bound. She is free of nothing, of course, but dread. For Maureen this is enough.

Dialogue is called for. This may be easily supplied, but for too long the words, the messages, the speeches and the lessons came from one side. Chenjerai Hove sees the inequality of relations in terms of an entirely one-sided conversation, between an insistent parent and a child, expected to listen and obey:

‘The white man thinks we are children, that is why his tongue is loose. The day he learns that we are also grown-ups, he will learn to tighten his tongue. He was brought up like that. You do not expect him to think differently from what his mother told him. Do you think all of us here went to school where the white man is called *baas*: we were brought up like that. So it is not our fault. One day we will also learn that the white man is like us, if we prick him with a thorn in his buttocks, he will cry for his mother like anybody else’ (1990: 63).

Hove is optimistic, believing that an eventual, perhaps inevitable dialogue between equals will come. Others are less confident. Certainly, July felt dishonoured by Maureen’s distrust; he felt he had been treated as a child. She is stunned by this fact.

This sort of resignation and frustration is not the dominant sensibility found. It is my contention that postcolonialists often respond to the challenges described by Edward Said with the exhilaration of Gordimer’s fleeing heroine, not trapped in despair, not exiled *from* but exiled *to* what is very often a more worthwhile place.

Said articulates well what has been lost and, in his words, the unbearable toll such loss has taken on culture:

Exiles are cut off from their roots, their land, their past. They generally do not have armies or states, although they are often in search of them. Exiles feel, therefore, an urgent need to reconstitute their broken lives, usually by choosing to see themselves as part of a triumphant ideology or a restored people. The crucial thing is that a state of exile free from this triumphant ideology – designed to reassemble an exile's broken history into a new whole – is virtually unbearable, and virtually impossible in today's world (177).

Many postcolonial writers may, as Said says, engage in a restorative project; they are engaged in a reconstruction of sorts, but his sense of their being part of an ideology of triumph is less obvious, although not altogether mistaken. Certainly Said has made the case himself for one's capacity for self-invention.

What is sought and accomplished is far more equivocal. One gets a sense of how fragile and tentative the gains are, but also the ambitions. As in Gordimer's *July's People*, the survivor wants little more than to be understood. Yet this can be seen as an instructive moment. Homi Bhabha's contention is that postcoloniality is dedicated to finding instruction in disaster (1994: 90). This is what animates Lucy in J.M. Coetzee's *Disgrace*. This is what motivates her to stay after her brutal victimisation at the hands of a group of male thugs. She sees things rightly and knows what has happened to her and why:

'What if ... what if *that* is the price one has to pay for staying on? Perhaps that is how they look at it; perhaps that is how I should look at it too. They see me as owing something. They see themselves as debt collectors, tax

collectors. Why should I be allowed to live here without paying? Perhaps that is what they tell themselves?’(158).

Unlike her father David, Lucy seeks to see things from the other side, from the point of view of her neighbours, from the point of view of the South African blacks who had always been in the majority but who were never represented. She wants to reach across the divide that separates, not escape, not seek to save herself by the means obvious to her father, but through reaching an accommodation with her tormentors. Lucie recognizes, Boehmer (2006) tells us, her dilemma as one that demands ‘the acceptance of disgrace as a ‘state of being’ (140). She says to her father:

‘I am determined to be a good mother, David. A good mother and a good person. You should try to be a good person, too.’ ‘I suspect it is too late for me. I’m just an old lag serving out my sentence. But you go ahead. You are well on the way.’ A good person. Not a bad resolution to make, in dark times. (216).

Lucy intuits the terms of her struggle. She is neither naïve nor sentimental. She grasps fully what her submission means and understands what the men are demanding. Catharine A. MacKinnon (2007) in her studies on genocide and rape enforces Lucy’s crucial insight:

Sexuality socially means possession; forced sex means that the raped belongs to the rapist, instead of to herself or to the people with whom she identifies herself and to whom she gives herself intimately (227).

David, of course, is horrified by the implication of his daughter’s resolve and can’t quite fathom it. The debate is critical to one’s understanding of the project of

recovery. One's impulse is to get out, but again Lucy's intuition guides her to a larger truth, namely there is nowhere to go. She recognises that there would be no empowerment through escape for her. She wants too much. She writes to her father telling him that he, the teacher, the university professor can no longer be a teacher for her.

Achille Mbembe (1995) expounds on such conflicts, linking the political with the intimate, with an analysis of the tensions that arise from powerlessness. Lucy is both able to face her assailants and face them down because she recognises their essential weakness. This insight is illumination at a political level by Mbembe:

It is here, within the confines of this intimacy, that the forces of tyranny in Africa must be studied. Such research must go beyond institutions, beyond formal positions of power, and beyond the written rules, and examine how the implicit and explicit are interwoven, and how the practices of those who command and those who are assumed to obey are so entangled as to render both powerless. For it is precisely the situations of powerlessness that are the situations of violence par excellence (2006: 69).

What could be seen as merely a moment of compassion, or a misguided form of sentimental complicity, according to Lucy's father, is instead guided by the intellectual understanding of one's position, of one's standing. Mbembe widens the scope of this insight that the violence arises from powerlessness.

In 'Postcolonial Writing and Terror' (2009), Elleke Boehmer places a regenerative impulse at the heart of postcolonial writing, seeing Lucy's torment and her hopefulness as vital to the project of what is called postcoloniality, This is not an

affirmation of victim status. She argues that cultural reconstruction is animated by an ethical imperative which is forward looking:

By narrating historical pain, but also recovery and endurance, postcolonial writing posits futurity (whether the consummation of individual pleasures or the fulfillment of the nation) in relation to the futureless (that is: terror, necropolis). True, 'national writing' may arguably be more concerned with restitution in the future, the restoration of roots; and 'migrant writing' with the hoped-for retracing and recovery of roots. Yet both tendencies within postcolonial literature direct attention to the future because of their awareness of the on-going pressure of colonial 'pasts,' of the 'regeneration of colonialism through other means,' and of the need to remain vigilant about and survive such regeneration (146).

Boehmer's idea that postcolonial writing emerges in the face of a possible extinction coincides with the thrust of Jonathan Lear's exploration of a survivors' ethic, a kind of manifesto emerging from his studies of Native Americans who have not only faced extinction but of those who in fact became extinct, that is, those whose way of life ended, finally and completely.

In *Radical Hope*, Lear (2006) takes up an inquiry into what it could have meant for a people such as the American Crow to see their way of life vanish. From this, he extrapolates an ethics of survival on the premise that such an end could come to any culture or to all cultures:

We live at a time of a heightened sense that civilizations are themselves vulnerable. This is basically an *ethical* inquiry: into how one should live in relation to a peculiar human possibility. But it also has what philosophers call an *ontological* dimension: if we are going to think about how to live with this possibility, we need to figure out what it is. What is this possibility of

things' ceasing to happen? The inquiry is rather into what it *would* be if it *were* true that after a certain point nothing happened (7-8).

Lear is fascinated by the moment in his narrated autobiography when Plenty Coups, 'the last great chief of the Crown nation,' told his story in 1885 to a white man but could not continue his narrative beyond the point when the buffalo disappeared. It was after that point, the Crow chief said, that their way of life and their purpose in life came to an end. 'After this nothing happened' is the extraordinary phrase used in the text (2). Lear explains his focus:

So: it is one thing to give an account of the circumstances in which a way of life actually collapses; it is another to give an account of *what it would be* for it to collapse (2006: 9).

Collapse often animates postcolonial writing, as a prospect, a threat and, all too often, as a fact. Lear's discover of hope in the response of Plenty Coups' recognition of an impending cultural extinction offers a viable and significant language of recovery:

In the interpretation I am exploring, Plenty Coups had his dream in the context of a communal sense of anxiety. A way of life was anxious about its ability to go forward into an unfathomable future. The dream was a manifestation of radical hope – and it gave the tribe the resources to adopt a stance of radical hope – in that it enabled them to go forward hopefully into a future that they would be able to grasp only retrospectively, when they could reemerge with concepts with which to understand themselves and their experiences. If we can make the case that this stance was a manifestation of courage, we could presumably come to see how radical hope can be not just

psychologically advantageous but a legitimate response even to world catastrophe (115).

What is proposed is nothing less than a grand repudiation of extinction. It is conceived as a frame of mind, as a way of seeing things. It could also take place in a single gesture, an act.

Futurity is the critical starting point. This is what excites the reader at the end of Gordimer's *July's People*. The protagonists go forth to live. The reader believes that there is little worthwhile behind them. Yet in this novel there is little evidence of what Boehmer refers to as restorative. The emancipatory impulse lacks this component. The dynamic of escape as revealed in the act does not alone create a vision for a new world. For this one may turn to narratives of ritual reenactment, celebrations of the past, acknowledgements of things lost or regained under conditions of severe pressure. It is the equivalent of praying before execution.

What some postcolonial writers use as their starting point is their shared sense that their cultural identity is threatened by extinction. This is not specific to a given peoples, although that has been true in the past. The central insight is that the end of culture threatens the human race. This is how postcolonialism is tied to the rise of genocide in recent decades, but also tied to those trends that converged in the 20th century in Europe with totalitarianism, namely, the appearance of mass man whose central characteristic is his lack of cultural identity. Hannah Arendt (2005) speaks to this point:

To me, modern masses are distinguished by the fact that they are 'masses' in a strict sense of the word. They are distinguished from the multitudes of

former centuries in that they do not have common interests to bind them together or any kind of common 'consent' which, according to Cicero, constitutes *inter-est*, that which is between men, ranging all the way from material to spiritual and other matters (406).

Arendt's contention is that the creation of the mass is a prerequisite to genocide. Once stripped of identity, mass man becomes more vulnerable to extermination. Cultural awareness through processes of memory and regeneration are vital to living, not merely to recovering something past. Holocaust awareness is vital as a form of resistance. This is the crucial importance of Plenty Coups' insight with regards to his own people. For European Jews and for Native Americans cultural extinction and the reality of genocide moved from theory to practice. It is in this connection that cultural recovery not only expresses a feature of historiography but demonstrates a way of life.

Deracination is what threatens world cultures and is what modern peoples around the world are threatened by. 'The lack of common interest so characteristic of modern masses is therefore only another sign of their homelessness and rootlessness' (Arendt 406). Arendt defines the threat and the conditions of our time. Her project entails forming a response to this critical dilemma, namely, how culture can be reconstituted, *politically*. Agamben paints a stark picture: 'Contemporary politics is precisely this devastating *experimentum linguae* that disarticulates and empties, all over the planet, traditions and beliefs, ideologies and religions, identities and communities' (quoted by Simoes da Silva 2005:7) Arendt sees the threat of total annihilation as more radically disturbing than that attributed to diasporans who may

harbour notions of return to an imagined homeland (Ramraj 1996: 215). Her vision of genocidal threat admits of no retrieval; what was once shared is lost.

It has been shown how escape can function as a form of self-imposed exile, or as a means of getting away from a hopeless situation; it has also been shown as the promise of a new beginning. Ceremony is another. Ritualised behaviour can function as a way of reestablishing a threatened identity. Adam Shoemaker (1996) identifies the use of ritual most closely with native authors, but I think the impulse can be found in writers whose sense of identity is threatened, whose sense of self or community is in danger of being obliterated. Shoemaker says:

As all of these extracts reveal, native authors believe that an exploration of traditional religious beliefs is an essential underpinning for their verbal art. However, this phenomenon should not be considered solely on the level of content: it is not just the writings which reflect this preoccupation by the writers themselves (256).

Shoemaker may be right to speak of this in terms of writers' 'attitude towards writing,' but I think this may fall short of its true significance. The word attitude suggests a frame of mind while what is happening is closer to an action. Tayo, the protagonist in Leslie Silko's *Ceremony*, overcomes the traumatic, maiming experience of having served in the war in the Pacific by 'refiguring' his identity, through a form of therapy that involves 'a spiritual reappropriation of the homeland' (Ganser 2004: 149). Tayo, who has been marked for self-destruction by falling victim to helplessness in the face the soul annihilating experiences of battle, recovers and gains human composure by rediscovering his heritage, by recovering and reconstituting himself as a human being in the context of the traditions of the

Laguna Pueblo people. It is precisely through such essential acts that Ella Shohat insists the assertion of culture is justified (1992: 110).

Perpetrators of war atrocities can find themselves crippled by guilt and shame according to Sebald (2003: 185-6). Native American novelist Leslie Marmon Silko (1977) subjects her protagonist in *Ceremony* to debilitating bouts of paralysing guilt that sends him, like Saul Bellow's protagonist, on a quest, if not for redemption, then for relief. The return of Tayo to the Laguna reservation of his youth offers little immediate relief to the traumas he has been subjected to and to those he has witnessed, but part of his agony originates in his inability to make his actions understandable to others. In this connection, Silko's Tayo and Bellow's Henderson experience similar torments. Certainly, the intensity of their sense of estrangement is comparable. What differentiates their inner struggles is that Tayo is searching for communal understanding whereas Henderson's contents himself with redemption of a personal nature. Tayo has trouble carrying back to his village the incomprehensible agonies of 20th century warfare. He has been initiated by America's war in the Pacific to horrors unimagined and unimaginable to the elders of his community:

He didn't know how to explain what had happened. He did not know how to tell him that he had not killed any enemy or that he did not think that he had. But that he had done things for worse, and the effects were everywhere in the cloudless sky, on the dry brown hills, shrinking skin and hide taut over sharp bone (36).

When one compares Tayo's impulse to be reintegrated into the community of the Laguna Pueblo reservation with Henderson's, it becomes clear that while the

intensity of their self-doubt is comparable, the terms of their dilemma are experienced by them differently. Tayo zeroes in on the ways wars can make returning to peaceful reconstruction impossible. He experiences post-war depression not as personal disappointment but as community corruption. The world is coarsened by war-memory, war-weariness. It has the feel of a permanent loss. Silko sees post-WWII America as a country filled with communities crippled by war-loss, death-haunted and guilt-ridden environments, but chiefly she concentrates on those of Native Americans. This is Helen Jean who surveys the local scene with mounting disgust:

These Laguna Guys were about the worst she'd run into, especially that guy they picked up walking along the highway; he acted funny. Too quiet, and not very friendly. She wanted to get away from them. They weren't mean like the two Oklahoma guys who beat her up one afternoon in a parked car behind the El Fidel. Pawnees, they said. Normandy. Omaha Beach. They heat her up – took turns holding and hitting her. They yelled at her because they both wanted her; they had been buddies all through the war together, and she was trying to split them up (161).

The silence, the abusive behaviour, the inability to settle down: this is typical among war veterans. According to Ganser (2004), 'When the conscious processing of one's individual memories has become impossible, these painful memories take on a demonic nature, i.e., they haunt the person by uncontrollable recurrence...' (147).

War had a way of insinuating itself into peacetime, informing and shaping post-war lives. Silko shows how Native-American identity was remade after the War, and shows how the War dominated criteria of assimilation. She even goes so

far to suggest that men who had once been Pawnees now belonged to a larger tribe known as 'vets'; their pasts were nearly erased by their war-time identities. The Utes, the Laguna, even the Apache now shared a common war vocabulary, they'd been to the same places, seen the same things:

These Indians who fought in the war were full of stories about all the places they'd seen. San Diego, Oakland, Germany, the Philippines... They had ribbons and medals they carried in their wallets; and if the US Government decorated them, they must be okay (166).

Of course, it does not take too long for Helen Jean to get wise to the fact that these guys were not in fact okay. Many of them were alcoholics, some of them violent.

The

men and their women were going nowhere:

She looked at the Laguna guys. They had been treated first class once, with their uniforms. As long as there had been a war and the white people were afraid of the Japs and Hitler. But these Indians got fooled when they thought it would last. She is tired of pretending with them, tired of making believe it had lasted. It was almost a year since she had left Towac. There was something about Gallup that made her think about it. She didn't like the looks of the Indian women she saw in Gallup, dancing at Eddie's club with the drunks that stumbled around the floor with them. Their hair was dirty and straight. They'd shaved off their eyebrows, but the hairs were growing back and they didn't bother to pencil them anymore. Their blouses had buttons missing and were fastened with safety pins. Their western pants were splitting out at the seams; there were stains around the crotch (166).

She intuitively recognises that her survival demands on resisting these self-destructive behaviours; she feels the need to distance herself from 'the passivity of

the victimised Indian,' self-abuse through alcoholism, and those behaviours associated with low self-regard (Ganser: 150).

Unlike Bellow's Henderson, whose therapeutic moment is personal, and who ultimately comes to terms with his own demons, Tayo, who sees much of what Helen Jean sees and reaches the same conclusion, strives to have his trauma understood as a communal estrangement, to be reunited with his people, as though what he has witnessed and participated in has made him a stranger to his own kind:

In the old way of warfare, you couldn't kill another human being in battle without knowing it, without seeing the result, because even a wounded deer that got up and ran again left great clots of lung blood or spilled guts on the ground. That way the hunter knew it would die. Human beings were different. But the old man would not have believed white warfare – killing across great distances without knowing who or how many had died. It was all too alien to comprehend, the mortars and big guns; and even if he could have taken the old man to see the target areas, even if he could have led him through the fallen jungle trees and muddy craters of torn earth to show him the dead, the old man would not have believed anything so monstrous. Ku'oosh would have looked at the dismembered corpses and the atomic heat-flash outlines, where human bodies had evaporated, and the old man would have said something close and terrible had killed these people. Not even oldtime witches killed like that (36-37).

Ganser characterizes Tayo's journey as one 'of refiguring identity within a highly conformist community of Native Americans' (148). Tayo grapples with issues of ethnic identity that had been undermined by his war experiences (Sarairah 2003; Ganser 2004). Tayo's instincts confirm Sebald's argument that individuals need not remain in isolation. He claims that

even private suffering increasingly merges with a realization that the grotesque deformities of our inner lives have their background and origin in collective social history (184).

Tayo's ceremony fulfills his quest to rediscover his ancestral self, and to shed the identity he was forced to adopt as a soldier and as a veteran. His quest, like Henderson's, confirms W. H. New's argument that one can find 'recurrent structural patterns in each literature', which 'offer an approach to the underlying cultural sensibilities.' These, Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin quote New as saying, stress commonality of experience over essentialist identities: '[T]he degree to which they overlap provides...a guard against easy assertions about national distinctiveness in literature' (1989: 29). The war had in some ways erased differences that their respective communal rites reassert.

Tayo's life was shattered when he was sent to fight the Japanese and ended up suffering as a prisoner of war. Again, Tayo has trouble coping with survival and with the trauma of having witnessed the brutal deaths of friends. Tayo, as the product of the Laguna Pueblo community, by reflex relies on ritualised behaviour to cope with challenges but is disoriented by having to adjust, first to the rituals of war and then to those of peacetime. It is as though personality played less of a role in his sense of character than group behaviour. Everything was about belonging:

Belonging was drinking and laughing with the platoon, dancing with blond women, buying drinks for buddies born in Cleveland, Ohio. Tayo knew what they had been trying to do. They repeated the stories about good times in Oakland and San Diego; they repeated them like long medicine chants, the beer bottles pounding on the counter tops like drums (43).

Dafer Yousif Sarairah (2003) identifies in Tayo's struggle the element that saves his quest from such criticisms. Sarairah argues, I think persuasively, that through his regenerative ceremonies of remembering, Tayo finds his composure in the present, that he assembles an identity that is no longer fractured and fragmentary. Tayo rises out of anonymity, from the mass of nobodies, not by discovering a nonexistent past, but by recognising meaningful connections in the present. 'Tayo's heightened sensitivity allows him to see that each seemingly incongruent and disparate aspect of his life is in fact closely related to each other seemingly incongruent and disparate part' (Sarairah 2003:158).

'The crucial element of spirituality' is enacted by word or deed in a struggle for survival. Ceremonies of community survival take place and are witnessed; narratives of survival call upon incidents of ritual as a way of reidentifying lost peoples. According to Keneally, some Jews literally sang in the face of death:

The man yelling the order in there was the SS man Edmund Sdrojewski. Ukrainian NCOs marched among the women hitting them with whip handles. I presumed they were Jewish, probably women caught with Aryan papers, brought here from Montelupich prison. Some cried out at the blows, but others were silent, as if to refuse the Ukrainians that much satisfaction. One of them began to intone the *Shema Yisroel*, and the others took it up. The verses rose rigorously above the mound, as if it had just occurred to the girls – who till yesterday had played straight Aryans – that now the pressure was off they were freer than anyone to celebrate their tribal difference in the faces of Sdrojewski and the Ukrainians (2007: 210).

Perhaps nothing can be compared to the suffering of the Jews in Nazi camps, but a case can be made that others have also faced a sense of cultural decimation if not physical extermination.

Spirituality can be more than something made important by the writer. It can also be enacted as ritual, either personal or political or both. As a personal expression of something indefinable, it may provide a means of reckoning or function as a form of solace. Silko sets before the maimed and traumatised the challenge of rebuilding a meaningful life without resorting to violence. She seeks to make clear through Tayo's acts and reenactments that a new life can be constructed through recognition. Her point, according to Ganser, is that 'both mental and physical war wounds' can be healed through an acknowledgement of one's true heritage (157-58).

Ritualised, communal behaviour can also be seen as a form of protest, even as a kind of demonstration (Griffiths 2006: 167). That is, one can see that the enactment of such rituals possesses a political component. Because it takes an act of courage to perform such rituals in the face of death, rituals of this kind are in essence acts that defy death. Ella Shohat (1992) warns against some interpretations of ritual which may fail to recognise the political necessity of cultural enactments:

Post-colonial theory's celebration of hybridity risks an anti-essentialist condescension toward those communities obliged by circumstances to assert, for their very survival, a lost and even irretrievable past. In such cases, the assertion of culture prior to conquest forms part of the fight against a continuing form of annihilation (110).

Ashraf Rushdy's use of the term 'palimpsest' to describe identity formation goes a long way toward capturing the way memories overtake the present (2000). The acknowledgement of the past as an influence on the present, as an informing presence, reinforces historical insights into events of the past, their causation and consequences, and explain why they should not be allowed to be forgotten. Elleke Boehmer (2009) sees unpeeling the palimpsest of past terrors as part of the postcolonial project of regeneration. The act of recovery functions as a means of memorialising. Victor J. Ramraj (1996) identifies in the work of Derek Walcott a concern with his 'in-between state', which at once expresses his own ancestral background (220). This heightening of awareness is suggestively expressed in Derek Walcott's poetry, his ability to weave images of swastikas and pineapples make for an odd medley, but Boehmer claims that such juxtapositions are crucial to creating the informed images of our time:

Intricate and deathly forms of terror and counter-terror, as I have suggested, interpenetrate the global order. Although it cannot deny its fascination with the necropolitical act (even if this is critically reflective), postcolonial writing has the power to draw attention to places outside the terror-stricken state, to supply a fuller understanding of the painful losses as well as strategic gains of such acts. So it might, for example, explore the human inwardness that inheres to situations of extreme decimation, carnage and grief (2009: 146).

Here is Derek Walcott's 'North and South' from *The Fortunate Traveller*:

Now, at the rising of Venus – the steady star
that survives translation, if one can call this lamp
the planet that pierces us over indigo islands –
despite the critical sand flies, I accept my function

as a colonial upstart at the end of empire,
a single, circling, homeless satellite.
I can listen to its guttural death rattle in the shoal
of the legions' withdrawing roar, from the raj,
from the Reich, and see the full moon again
like a white flag rising over Fort Charlotte,
and sunset slowly collapsing like the flag.

The poet casually refers to British imperialism and the Nazis in a couple of lines, as though such a connection was the most obvious thing in the world. It is indeed a connection worth making, but not an obvious one. What Walcott intuitively grasps is historically verified. It is not postcolonial discourse that finds the connection; rather the historical wreckage of the 20th century is linked by an ideology that legitimised that wreckage, which informed and guided it, giving it a rationale:

In all these ways, extinction discourse forms a powerful nexus of ideas that has been hegemonic for countless European explorers, colonists, writers, artists, officials, missionaries, humanitarians, and anthropologists. Albeit in less overtly racist terms, the general nexus of ideas is still at work in the insistence by the West that the rest of the planet must travel the road of capitalist economic development (Brantlinger 2003: 189-190).

Extinction discourse's contribution to the various destructive events that punctuate intercourse between cultures may not be causative, as Brantlinger points out (189), but what can be said is that racist forms of othering give the perpetrators a clear conscience, at least temporarily. What becomes paramount, at least for Walcott, is the association of political trauma across time, shown in the rich juxtapositions of

imagery in his poem. His images tie colonial exploitation to genocide, imperial invasions to the Nazis' 'final solution' for Gypsies and Jews. Walcott puts into poetry the consequence of extinction discourse:

I think of Europe as a gutter of autumn leaves
Choked like the thoughts in an old woman's throat.

Under the blue sky of winter in Virginia
the brick chimneys flute white smoke through skeletal lindens,
as a spaniel churns up a pyre of blood-rusted leaves;
there is no memorial here to their Treblinka –
as a van delivers from the ovens loaves
as warm as flesh, its brakes jaggedly screech
like the square wheel of a swastika. The mania
of history veils even the clearest air,
the sickly-sweet taste of ash, of something burning.

Walcott's poem continues:

The ghosts of white-robed horsemen float through the trees,
the galloping hysterical abhorrence of my race –
like any child of the Diaspora, I remember this
even as the flakes whiten Sheridan's shoulders,
and I remember once looking at my aunt's face,
the wintry blues eyes, the rusty hair, and thinking

In his analysis of genocide, Achille Mbembe (2003) traces such observations to Hannah Arendt (1964) and her breakthrough text *The Origins of Totalitarianism* on the development of 20th century totalitarianism from what she argues were its antecedents in 19th century imperialism. In *Necropolis*, Mbembe (2003) says:

Arendt develops the thesis that there is a link between national-socialism and traditional imperialism. According to her, the colonial conquest revealed a potential for violence previously unknown. What one witnesses in World War II is the extension to the ‘civilised’ peoples of Europe of the methods previously reserved for the ‘savages’ (18).

Walcott sees this connection and beyond to its implications for those living like himself on the fringe of great self-destructive empires, such as the British in Africa, the Jews of Eastern Europe pressed between the Russians and the Germans, and peoples of the Caribbean like himself, who live in the shadow of the behemoth to the north:

maybe we are part jewish, and felt a vein
run through this earth and clench itself like a fist
around an ancient root, and wanted the privilege
to be yet another of the races they fear and hate
instead of one of the haters and the afraid.
Above the spiny woods, dun grass, skeletal trees,
the chimney serenely fluting something from Schubert –
like the wraith of smoke that comes from someone burning –
veins with air with an outcry that I cannot help (15).

As Walcott’s war-torn poem continues, it is clear that the past remains, haunts even, but that the past is also changed through a process of recognition and awareness:

The winter branches are mined with buds,
the fields of March will detonate the crocus,
the olive battalions of the summer woods
will shout orders back to the wind. To the soldiers’ mind

the season's passage round the pole is martial,
the massacres of autumn sheeted in snow, as
winter turns white as a veterans hospital.
Something quivers in the blood beyond control –
something deeper than our transient fevers (15).

The term 'palimpsest' captures well the sense of multi-layered self-consciousness that permeates Walcott's poem. Walcott's poem fits perfectly Rushdy's use of the concept, as he speaks of the presence of the past, its persistence and its exertion of influence (2000). Here, however, memories are not secrets but explicit historical references, reverberations of memory that are not easily shaken. Rushdy's insights into the persistence of a slave past is useful to understanding how the world wars of the 20th century maintain their hold. Phyllis Sakinofsky (2009) explains how Rushdy's idea works:

Palimpsest narrative aligns with the psychological concept of the transgenerational transmission of trauma that emerged from work with Holocaust survivors, but Rushdy has related to the idea of literature, particularly pertaining to the descendants of American slaves. He explains how fiction can be used to expose and resolve the memories of traumas that have been submerged but nonetheless passed down through generations. He defines palimpsest narratives as the transmission of the memories of dark family secrets and unspoken taboos through the generations of those who have been the victims of history (2009: 8).

As in Wideman's *Philadelphia Fire*, Walcott's poem uses historical events as common references, as shared memory, not revealed secrets. The repercussions

of slavery may continue, but slavery itself is over, at least in the parts of the world of concern to Rushdy. Tyranny, however, is not. Certain events are of such significance that they have been incorporated into any rhetoric of awareness. The Nazi ‘vocabulary’ of terror no longer speaks exclusively to a single moment in time but speaks, as seen in DeLillo’s work, to a present, impending abuse of power.

In Gordimer’s short story ‘My Father Leaves Home’, there is a sense that one begins a new life in a new place. On the one hand, the father is overcome by thoughts of leaving everything familiar behind. On the other hand, however, he is overcome by thoughts of life in Lithuania: as he contemplates the thrashers unsettling frightened flocks, he remembers villagers fleeing from attacking Cossacks. The immigrant carries memories that inform, embolden, and even cripple.

The layering of sensibilities and memories that animate Gordimer’s characters illustrates Bhabha’s notion of culture ‘as a strategy of survival’ (1994). In Gordimer’s story the old watchmaker’s sense of displacement sharpens his eye for social injustices and makes him aware of how the black workers were made to feel in their own land; that is, his sense of estrangement gave him an acute ability to empathise with the workers:

He waylaid white miners and replaced balance wheels and broken watch-faces while-you-wait, he went to the compounds where black miners had proudly acquired watches as the manacles of their new slavery: to shift work. In this, their own country, they were migrants from their homes, like him. They had only a few words of the language, like him (1992: 61-62).

The past informs and sharpens the powers of observation in ‘My Father Leaves Home’:

In the quarrels between husband and wife, she saw them as ignorant and dirty; she must have read something somewhere that served as a taunt: you slept like animals round a stove, stinking of garlic, you bathed once a week. The children knew how low it was to be unwashed. And whipped into anger, he knew the lowest category of all in her country, this country. *You speak to me as if I was a kaffir* (64).

It was precisely this ability to draw on one's own sense of estrangement that informed the settlers. 'Because horror comes slowly' (1992: 13). This is Nadine Gordimer's apt expression for capturing the sensibility of the war haunted. There is a sense of not being able to grasp what one has witnessed, but ignorance leaves one more vulnerable, less well equipped to cope and less compassionate. The incidents crowd one's mind, as one seeks to explain what is clearly senseless:

How could you associate yourself with the murderous horde that burns down hospitals, cuts off the ears of villagers, blows up trains full of innocent workers going home to their huts, rapes children and forces women at gunpoint to kill their husbands and eat their flesh? (1992: 13).

Memory makes one more able to grasp what is happening around one and therefore more able to cope. Empathy, like the father's in Gordimer's 'My Father Leaves Home', comes from a shared past that continues to haunt. As Gordimer's story makes clear, newly arrived immigrants carried with them memories that made a clean break from the past, even if desired, nearly impossible. The old man, for instance, cannot help thinking of his past encounters with the Russian Cossacks as he observes local beaters as they thrash sticks to drive the pheasants:

They have wings but dare not fly and reveal themselves, there was nowhere to run to from the village to the fields as they came on and on, the kick of a cossack's mount ready to strike creeping heads, the thrust of a bayonet lifting a man by the heart like a piece of meat on a fork. Death advancing and nowhere to go. Blindness coming by fire or shot and no way out to see, shelling peas by feel. Cracks of detonation and wild agony of flutter all around me. I crouch away from the sound and sight, only a spectator, only a spectator, please, but the cossacks' hooves rode those pleading wretches down. A bird thuds dead, striking my shoulder before it hits the soft bed of leaves beside me (1992: 66).

This instance of historical resonance illustrates in an instant the ways the past reverberates in one's subconscious. It requires little in terms of exegesis to comprehend how a memory can invade and overtake the present. Gordimer's use here of so potent an historical imagery as this Babel-like moment of Cossacks at full gallop through the mind of an old South African émigré shows well how the 'residual' has staying power; it is, in fact, unshakeable.

The past blinds and the past guides. The forward movement, the sense of futurity is enfolded by the past. In Gordimer's stories, exile never means escape, even when it is sought. A young Hungarian couple, in her story 'The First Sense,' finds that language, memories, and loyalties make the transition of emigration more than a challenge. There is a sense that one can change one's place but never one's mind. Ferenc, Gordimer tells us, becomes Fred, but he was never able to leave completely what had become the past:

For the first years Ferenc had friends, still back there, send him newspapers. But reading, here, what was happening in Hungary, what crowds were

demanding of whatever new government, what was being discussed in the endless forum of Budapest cafés became detached from the venue, abstract, without accompanying vision, awareness of familiar place. (2007: 143).

It is a perfect instance of the inner life of the immigrant whose present is enfolded by the past, forming, as described by Sakinofsky, an instance of a palimpsest narrative (2009: 8). In 'The First Sense', the moment does not capture any form of trauma, save that of profound cultural dislocation, but the sense of the past engulfing and disorienting is well described:

This was the reverse of looking at old photographs, recognizing the place in which they were taken and having no memory of who the people were. It was Fred, driving in his Korean car across the vast suspension bridge – named for this country's great hero, Mandela – who was suddenly crossing from Buda to Pest over the gleaming breast of the Danube, and not over the confusion of railroad tracks the hero's bridge actually spans (2007: 143).

Gordimer sets the challenge of postcolonial identity. Her sense of the past strikes me as being closer to Bhabha's than to what Said expresses in 'Reflections'. Said sees exile as entailing an irretrievable loss, not just of something in the past, but of something affecting the present and the future. He considers exile as a betrayal and a punishment, a weighing down that wearies and disarms: 'Against this large, impersonal setting, exile cannot be made to serve notions of humanism' (174). On this subject, that is so personal to the author, there remains much ambiguity. When Said writes of exile, he invokes the language of those scattered abroad, of a people who has lost its homeland. In fact, he conflates those in exile and those of the

diaspora. Victor J. Ramraj captures their sense of lost identity: 'Diasporic writings are invariably concerned with the individual's or community's attachment to the centrifugal homeland' (1996: 216). Perhaps this is why Said reveals an insensitivity to those for whom the homeland has come to mean so little. Bhabha, on the other hand, sees such loss as a challenge. Exile is necessary for his definition of postcoloniality; it is the central factor in rebuilding: 'Culture as a strategy of survival is both transnational and translational' (1994: 247).

'Which world? Whose world?' This is the way Gordimer expressed her starting point in 1997 (2005: 535). According to her, the world may be turned upside down, but much has been gained. She postulates a concept of worldliness that is restorative and dignifying. Maureen and Bam are exiled to July's village where *he* not they are in control. As a result of this, Maureen and Bam's 'world picture,' in Coetzee's memorable words, 'undergoes a chastening revision' (2007: 250).

If one sees postcolonialism as a literary project aimed at reviving a dying culture, or even at rediscovering a lost one, if one understands the project of postcolonial literature as a response to extinction theory, which, unlike the postmodernists who anticipate an impending apocalypse, assumes that one has already taken place, there is little time to spare on considerations of nostalgia. The destruction may be taken for granted, but the project of rebuilding is also assumed to be both possible and worthwhile. There is an undercurrent of optimism. Incredibly, it would be a mistake to see this optimism as naïve.

W. G. Sebald, in his study of Germany's recovery in the years following WWII, found to his and the reader's astonishment that survival and revival come even in the face of total devastation and predictions of cultural collapse:

Instead, and with remarkable speed, social life, that other natural phenomenon, revived. People's ability to forget what they do not want to know, to overlook what is before their eyes, was seldom put to the test better than in Germany at that time (41).

Sebald suggests that Germans rebuilt in a state of willful forgetting; Homi Bhabha, on the other hand, makes this point in *The Location Culture* that the postcolonial project entails seeks to address dislocations of culture, 'social pathologies' which may arise from war: 'There is even a growing conviction that the affective experience of social marginality – as it emerges in non-canonical cultural forms – transforms our critical strategies' (246). The context of war is but one of the considerations that deserves attention. Bhabha emphasizes that 'contemporary postcolonial discourses are rooted in specific histories of cultural displacement' but what is found in the writings of Coetzee, Silko, and Gordimer is a narrative of recovery through remembrance.

Some postcolonial writers often find conflict at the point of contact, the moment of cultural clash when the simple act of meeting has dramatic and unpredictable consequences. Nadine Gordimer has made this her concern as well. In contrast to the nearly apocalyptic vision of political chaos and revolution found in *July's People*, Gordimer's *None to Accompany Me* captures the breathtaking

excitement and nearly universal goodwill that surrounded events as they unfolded in South Africa following the election of Mandela:

Children seen for the first time were tossed from hands to shoulders, welcome banners were trampled, flowers waved, bull-horns sounded, the hugging, capering procession of transit to repossession, life regained, there outside the airport terminal was a carnival beyond belief it would ever be possible to celebrate (44).

In *None to Accompany Me*, Gordimer (1994) responds to the extraordinary events unfolding at the time in South Africa. There is a sense about the book that events are unfolding beyond the control or understanding of the characters. Things are getting away from people; people are having trouble keeping up. Exile can be more comforting than either remaining or returning home. This was the case for Gordimer's returning radicals who had grown accustomed to bourgeois comforts while living abroad.

When Vera's old friends, Sibongile and Didymus Maqoma, return to South Africa with their daughter, Mpho, after 20 years of European exile, Vera welcomes them as family. The Maqomas, formerly of Soweto, schooled in Moscow, educated in England, exiled into the comforts of Western decadence, had grown soft and fussy over the years. Mpho, for example, never learned the language of her parents, and was embarrassed to try to learn. Her parents see this less as her lack than as part of what happens to people torn from their homeland, robbed of their heritage: 'My girl,' says Mpho's mother,

that is exactly what has been done to our people, you, your father, me. We've been alienated from what is ours, and it's not only in exile. Your father's

descended from great chiefs who resisted the British more than a hundred years ago – you have a name to live up to! You were robbed of your birth – that should have been right here. Take back your language (50).

Their return causes Vera to engage in a prolonged meditation on the possibilities of the rebirth of the self in a new born land. She observes the possibilities of change, and is exhilarated by the aesthetics as well as the politics of the newly-emerging hybrid culture:

Boundaries are changed, ideologies merge, sects, religious and philosophical, create new idols out of combinations of belief, scientific discoveries link cause and effect between the disparate, ethnically jumbled territorial names make a nationality out of many-tongued peoples of different religions, a style of beauty comes out of the clash between domination and resistance (49).

The world Gordimer describes exemplifies Bhabha's depiction of a contemporary culture struggling against what he calls 'the sentence of history – subjugation, domination, diaspora, displacement' and, it is his contention that it is from this kind of world that one learns 'our most enduring lessons for living and thinking' (246). This point of view comes closest to articulating for Gordimer what she wishes to convey in this novel.

In the course of the narrative, Vera sells her home, leaves her husband, and agrees finally to consider a post in the newly formed free government. She moves to free herself from unwanted baggage: let others fight to keep what they have. As in *July's People*, Gordimer implies, continuing a thread found throughout her works, that a devotion to the public, to the future, requires that one first free oneself of debilitating preoccupations. As Caryl Phillips (2002) has pointed out, *None to*

Accompany Me 'works best when it deals with the kind of life that politically active black South Africans, who were exiled during the later stages of white rule, have to face when returning to their country' (105).

The past is an impediment; yet, without it, all would be lost. Perhaps this is Gordimer's final message. The South Africans are finally freed from exile, from their cells, from doom, only to find themselves, as we all are, imprisoned between past and future. Yet, despite the urgency and reality of change that accompanied the returning exiles, there was, as Gordimer often finds, persistence, continuity, and a sense of living in the shadow of the past. There is an unfolding, but not a clean break in Gordimer's world; an enlarging, but not a complete breakthrough:

Yet beneath it, under the disguise of flesh, behind the sunken eyes, within the clothes of a foreign cut, the black leather caps of East Germany, the dashikis of Tanzania, the Arab keffiyeh worn as a scarf, the old events and circumstances exist; standing there in the street, the old dependencies, the old friendships, the old rivalries, the old betrayals and loyalties, political scandals and sexual jealousies were not gone forever but persisted in evidence of traceable, ineffaceable features, visible cell structure, still living. The past was there (36).

Vera Stark, a professional political advocate, might remind one of the author's previous heroines; like Maureen Smales in *July's People*, for example, Vera is an embodiment of caution and enthusiasm in the face of electrifying political change, a woman torn personally between memories of past intimacies and the desire to get on with life.

Woven into Gordimer's narrative of returning political refugees is the author's narrative of Vera's personal life which involves persons with ties to Europe, persons with 'histories,' survivors of conflicts more gruesome than South Africa's. Otto, a Viennese filmmaker, with whom Vera was living, was an orphan, the product of Nazi race policies. Before his disclosure, she imagined the rumours of his Jewish background to be true and seemed to embrace them. Vera recognised the limits of her ability to identify with him, to understand, but was drawn to him, perhaps even finding his victimisation comforting:

Vera was a gentile atheist gratified by the idea that her lover was a Jew, orphaned by racism, without a name that was his own – this linked him with the open, daily purpose of her life, the files of displaced communities on her desk and, before he on the other side of it, day after day, the faces of those who had been made wanderers because they were decreed the wrong race (67).

She did not have to struggle to imagine what he might have experienced. Images played easily in her mind:

She would ask no more: the Gestapo round-up, the closed cattle-train, the concentration camp, the gas chamber; a provenance she could be familiar with only from books and films, documentation (67).

But it was not so. He confessed to her that his father had been a soldier chosen to impregnate his mother as part of an Aryan purification program. He was in fact a 'Hitler Baby,' he told her:

‘My mother was mated like a cow to produce a good German child for Hitler. I don’t know who the Aryan stud was. She didn’t know. Was never told his name when he was put on her’ (69).

Vera identified with his vulnerability. The political and the personal merged:

She was making up to him for the deprivation of childhood, deprivation like that of so many she knew in the veld settlements she investigated. She was giving him toys and sweets. Naked in bed with her, he was also an infant deported, naked in the world (67).

She also connects the world of apartheid with that of the Nazi Empire, identifying white South African racists with Nazis: ‘The Nazis didn’t end in the war where your parents died. They were reborn here’ (68). He was shaken by what he was witnessing daily, the parallels between his memories and the occurrences he witnessed and filmed were easy to draw:

...he was becoming filled with horror at what he recorded on film, the savagery of those who called their victims savages, the shooting of children, beatings, torture, and the savagery that this was beginning to bring forth in retaliation, the knifings and burnings in the revenge of the night (68).

This contextualisation of the contemporary within the more infamous conflagration of the Second World War suggests, as is the case of DeLillo’s use of Nazi references, that Gordimer reads the present as not being free of its past, that the ‘residual’ resides in the present inexorably, perhaps functioning as a warning. Hers is an example of the ways the past can be shown to be seamlessly woven into the present. According to Judith Butler (2005), such narrative attention to the past shows ‘the way we are implicated, beholden, derived, sustained by a social world

that is beyond us and before us' (64). Gordimer's use of the past is easily referenced, as she explicitly embeds South Africa's apartheid regime in the recent past, specifically in her numerous references to the Nazi regime and its racial policies.

The violence described by Gordimer and by Coetzee is a different sort from that described the postmodern apocalyptic violence of Cormac McCarthy. His is a meaningless, chaotic violence, a *sense-less* violence. He describes an apolitical, ahistorical violence which is terrifying because its fearsomeness lies in its irrationality; it belongs both to the distant past and to the future, scenes of ritualistic torture bereft of symbolic importance, emptied of meaning, belonging only to the author's strange world of the pre- and the post-modern:

Shapes of dried blood in the stubble grass and gray coils of viscera where the slain had been field-dressed and hauled away. The wall beyond held a frieze of human heads, all faced alike, dried and caved with their taut grins and shrunken eyes. They wore gold rings in their leather ears and in the wind their sparse and ratty hair twisted about on their skulls... [...] The heads not truncheoned shapeless had been flayed of their skins and the raw skulls painted and signed across the forehead in a scrawl and one white bone skull had the plate sutures etched carefully in ink like a blueprint for assembly (90).

Gordimer, on the other hand, describes crimes that do make sense, although they may be no less shocking. They are acts of revenge, perhaps, a kind of resistance, or a form of protest (2010: 566-67). She does not describe them as a sign of descent, marks of decline, or proof of some kind of spiralling out of control:

Some mornings, attacks on farms; a white farmer shot, the wife raped or killed, money and car missing. Taken. 'Taken' to mean the motive is

robbery; as if robbery has a single meaning in every country at every period. Take car, take money, take life. These mornings robbery means taking everything you haven't got from those who appear to have everything: money, a car to sell for money, a way of life with house and land and cattle (Gordimer 110).

Still, it is clear that she is mystified by the random acts of violence that have become part of daily life and in *None to Accompany Me* has not yet worked out how to think about them.

This is the case when Vera and Oupa are attacked and shot in a highway robbery, where they are stripped of their possessions and left on the side of the road, penniless and without the means to call for help. She is in pain but recovers; Oupa's small wound festers and he eventually dies in hospital. Vera has trouble taking it in, making sense of the attack, finding meaning in the event:

The sacred human body is only another object that can be patched together, like a tyre. This is a meaning of what had happened on the road. Something to be traced with a forefinger. There are many. Violence has many: now, in this country, as the working out of vengeance, as the return of the repressed, for some; the rationalization for their fear, of their flight, for others (200).

Vera is not sure how to think about this event, nor able to consider the act from the point of view of the perpetrators. She is hesitant to blame, she is not angry, and she does not herself seek revenge. Perhaps she and Oupa had it coming and deserved it:

While you were fighting, while I was screaming, weren't we conscious of getting what we deserved, according to the rules? If I had stayed home as a white woman should in these times (what other times have there been in the

efficacy of a country run by fear) it wouldn't have happened, serve you right (201).

Vera connects the events of the present to those of the very near past, trying to calibrate her response to her awareness of causation. Her moral stand is formed in the shadow of history. She cannot condemn those who shot her, those who have taken the peace of the night away. She is saying that one must be mindful of the violence, but not forgetful of at what cost the 'peace' and 'safety' were once maintained.

In this chapter, I have looked at the ways contemporary novelists cope with cultural recovery and restoration in the face of the centrifugal forces of social unrest, political upheaval and war. The impact of the kinds of event that send people away from home can be seen in the narratives considered by authors such as J. M. Coetzee, Leslie Marmon Silko, and Nadine Gordimer. They write of conscripts sent across oceans to distant wars, political activists forced to live on foreign shores, those who have left permanently and then of those who finally choose to return. Expressions of recuperation, retrieval, and revitalisation are crucial to the means by which their protagonists cope with what has been lost. Instances of personal rehabilitation and recovery create patterns, but chiefly one sees fragmented efforts to make sense of what looks to be a reordering of society along lines that are hard to recognise.

Coetzee, Silko, and Gordimer narrate projects of recovery in disordered societies, fraught with violence. Their protagonists, already shaken by experiences of exile and war or both, face uncertainties as they seek refuge in new lands or in

lands they once knew. The uncertainty of regaining one's footing is very much what these narratives consider. The narratives express a yearning to make sense of the ways things past are lost, to heal breaks, and to embrace what is new. The writers explore the subject of personal trauma in the context of social upheaval, creating worlds in which what has been experienced as trauma is part of the fabric of life, shared. Renewal in the wake of dislocation preoccupies their protagonists.

What these writers consider is the way those once thought safe and immune now find themselves suddenly vulnerable. What was once thought commonplace to some, suddenly becomes dramatic because it happens to those for whom such occurrences were once considered unthinkable. There are reversals of fortune. New mechanisms of hierarchy and subordination are not easily understood, not quite established. The exilic may find themselves finally at home, only to have trouble getting their bearings. Certainties are replaced by ambivalence.

The writers place their narratives in the broader context of the dissolution, but Silko's Tayo, Coetzee's Rayment, and Gordimer's Vera finds themselves burdened with the responsibility of finding their equilibrium. It is entirely up to them to get reestablished. Each is committed to carrying on despite an inability to move beyond their ambivalent feelings toward their adopted or transformed cultures, their heritage and their place in it. There is very much a sense of moving on with a lessening of anguish, but with little clarity. Tayo, Rayment, and Vera can neither live in or with their pasts, nor live without them. They cannot face the future while believing that they must face it alone; there is a striving for the communal, for a sense of belonging to a collective, for being part of something.

America's Pacific War haunts Tayo. Rayment cannot shake off Europe's dark times. Vera's memories move between apartheid and the Holocaust. They are not stricken by memories, but they cannot see past what has happened, cannot see forward without a reckoning. Their visions of renewal demand an acknowledgement and full consideration of how their respective societies have arrived where they are. Their chief question is not who is responsible, but once responsibility has been accepted, how does one reconcile oneself with what one has always believed to be true. Not reconciliation with others, but with oneself. How does one bear knowing what one has learned, if only about oneself?

Conclusion: The Other Is Oneself

Oh that's how it is people go all over, you never hear what's with them, these days, it's let's try this place let's try that and you never know they's alive or dead, my brothers gone off to Cape Town they don't know who they are anymore ... so where you from? (15)

---- Gordimer, 'Beethoven Was One Sixteenth Black'

This thesis has traced the struggle to survive the reach of empire: living on the frontier, surviving internment, fleeing urban violence. Modes of resistance, expressions of transgression, however tentative and frustrated, and occasional acts of rebellion and escape reveal across geographic boundaries moments of willful rejection of imperial hegemony. Diasporic dislocations and temporary habitations have been shown to occasion public and domestic transgressions. Instances of personal growth as seen in Gordimer's fiction can be compared to displays of collapse as in Philip Roth's melancholy narrative. I have argued that the apolitical resignation found in works by Cormac McCarthy, DeLillo, and Roth can be

suggestively juxtaposed with the writings of Gordimer, Coetzee, and Silko, in whose writings one finds moments of ritualised assertion and ceremonies of resistance.

What Bhabha, Mbembe, and Elleke Boehmer make clear is that the Holocaust does not belong to the past. Hannah Arendt's analysis of totalitarianism and its origins forbids the sort of reduction that wants to make the Holocaust part of some sort of culture of memory. The resonances of traumatic memory are not to be dismissed; the significance of the events of the past lies in the ways they continue to inform the present. The precondition of totalitarianism described by Hannah Arendt (1964) as 'world alienation' remains operative; nothing illustrates this sense of mass helplessness better than the spectre of nuclear war. What has emerged in recent decades, however, is the threat of total domination. Annihilation has replaced marginalisation and oppression as the potential consequence of global conflict. The recent American 'war against terror' has, according to Susan Sontag, called forth 'the dangerous, lobotomizing notion of endless war' (2007: 123). Adorno describes a glimpse of what his generation witnessed and, what he warns, threatens ours:

Cinema newsreel: the invasion of the Marianas, including Guam. The impression is not of battles, but of civil engineering and blasting operations undertaken with immeasurably intensified vehemence, also of 'fumigation', insect-extermination on a terrestrial scale (56).

This thesis has proposed that those who 'bear witness' help define the space that 'constitutes,' according to Bhabha, 'the memory and the moral of the event as a narrative, a disposition to cultural communality, a form of social and psychic identification' (1994: 349). The Holocaust may very well be 'a powerful prism,' as

Andreas Huyssen points out, ‘through which we may look at other instances of genocide (2003: 14). But such ways of speaking suggest that the Holocaust is an event of the past now made use of, rather than a political reality that has permanently shaped our lives. Affording those who ‘bear witness’ full hearing ‘reinscribes the ‘lessons of the past’ into the very textuality of the present that determines both the identification with, and the interrogation of, modernity...’ (Bhabha 1994: 354).

I hope to have shown that events have left one estranged from modernity in so far as its justification of hierarchy and racial supremacy informs human degradation and domination. Adorno, Wolin and Arendt show how new ways of organising human relations were introduced throughout the 20th century that continue to be put into practice today. If, as Arendt (1964) makes clear, war is an equaliser, the anonymous mass grows increasingly less able to perpetuate ‘the imaginaries of sovereignty’ that make Othering reflexive (Mbembe 2003: 18). The prospect of global conflagration, therefore, presents a challenge to traditional notions of the Other. It is recognised that global war would leave few survivors and, as the saying goes, the living would envy the dead...in the aftermath of nuclear holocaust. The point is that a vital break has occurred in our traditional conception of the Other as one who inevitably poses a threat (Mbembe 2003: 18). This thesis points to the emergence of a transnational culture in which the Other can no longer be distinguished from oneself.

Such questions recall Rayment’s preoccupation in Coetzee’s *Slow Man* (2006): In an increasingly transnational culture, how does one locate one’s culture?

Disparate events – the Amritsar massacre (1919), Katyn Forest (1940) or My Lai (1968) – can, of course, be studied both in isolation and in their broader contexts. Although Arendt, Steiner, and Mbembe have focused on those pertaining to Nazism and the Holocaust, their significance for postcolonial studies has been rarely emphasised. These events were in fact of such signal moment that their long-term consequences can be seen as multi-generational and continue to shape the postcolonial world in ways often only narrowly conceived (Johnson & Poddar 2005).

It is not only a matter for cultural critics such as W. G. Sebald and George Steiner who see the centrality of war atrocity; writers such as Lessing, Gordimer and Coetzee create characters whose memories and experiences were shaped by war. I have explored writers of widely diverse backgrounds whose narratives display converging, trans-generational memories. It is in recognition of Sebald's moral claims that I have broadened my outline. His argument, which I find persuasive, is that 'our inner lives have their background and origin in collective social history' invites a redefinition of the postcolonial (2004: 184). I have demonstrated that new alignments of comparison are dictated by pervasive thematic similarities that should be accorded significance. Where national contexts might invite narrowing, similarities of experience and response have called for expansion.

It is not only through the discrete examination of individuals that the weight of 20th century embattlement can be measured; it is rather the accrual of war experience, through war-fatigue and cultural exhaustion, that informs postcolonial frameworks. Commonalities and similarities can be traced among disparate loci of

upheaval. Steiner (1971) and Mbembe (2003) concur in their insistence on making war-remembrance central to understanding culture formation. ‘Yet the barbarism which we have undergone reflects, at numerous and precise points, the culture which it sprang from and set out to desecrate’ (Steiner 1971: 30). If one could realistically claim that the threat to human existence belonged to the past, these matters would be best left to the expertise of historians; that the potential for the extermination of entire peoples exists makes understanding its causes and purposes vital to the postcolonial project.

It is in this connection that one is reminded of the prescriptive impulse in the postcolonial project of some authors, especially those who conceive of a radical regenerative project that sees in totalitarianism a living threat. Elizabeth Costello in Coetzee’s novel of the same name suggestively argues that the machinery of industrial meat production is to be compared to the butchery of the Third Reich (2003: 63). Understood in this way, and taking seriously Hannah Arendt’s warning against modes of domination as an ever-possible way for society to organise itself, Kirsten Holst Peterson and Anna Rutherford skillfully articulate why the postcolonial resists narrowing:

What one must remember is that fulfilment is a *ceaseless* task of the psyche; that *identity is part of an infinite movement* [my emphasis], that one can only come into a dialogue with the past and future, a dialogue which is necessary, if one ceases to invest in a single (and therefore latent totalitarian) identity. If one invests in identity one locks oneself in an immobile horizon; totalitarian identity was the extreme function of the Nazis. One must be prepared to participate in the immense and specific challenges of a wider community, to participate in what Wilson Harris calls the ‘complex creativity

involved in the ‘digestion’ and ‘liberation’ of contrasting spaces’ (2006: 142).

Such a challenge is central as I see it to the postcolonial project. Devadas and Prentice embrace this challenge: ‘Postcolonial critique remains productive to the extent that it brings its commitment to the analysis of all violent sovereignties that have followed colonialism’s modern movement’ (2007: 3).

In the first chapter, I wanted to provide an understanding of how settlers were alienated by their surroundings, but also, and more importantly, that they carried with them emotional and physical scars from their experiences as soldiers of the British Empire. Lessing in particular has been clear that her father’s suffering was transmitted and shared by the women in his house, thus creating an atmosphere of torment and disquiet that she came to express in her writings from Africa and beyond.

Said speaks of the ‘consolidated vision’ of imperial intent revealed in artistic endeavours and creations as varied as opera, poetry and novels. In the first chapter of this thesis I have concentrated on those writers whose works contributed to undermining this ‘vision’. Said himself admits that the ‘vision’, however consolidated it may be, is not total, that there is an opening, as it were, in which competing or contending visions might be exposed. In *Culture and Imperialism*, Said writes:

I suggested that studying the relationship between the ‘West’ and its dominated cultural ‘others’ is not just a way of understanding an unequal relationship between unequal interlocutors, but also a point of entry into

studying the formation and meaning of Western cultural practices themselves (1994: 190).

Said places emphasis on those 19th century sources that reinforce hegemony. It must be said, however, that he makes room for the ambiguities others insist on recognising, as in the following passage:

Far from being unitary or monolithic or autonomous things, cultures actually assume for “foreign” elements, alterities, differences, than they consciously exclude (15).

Said is also very aware of the ways imperial powers maintain their hegemony through propaganda – its power to ‘mobilize passions atavistically’ – in the service of the state and in preparation for war, but his study does not address those explicitly opposed to war or address the topic of how the hegemony is undermined.

The case for this is reinforced by the reality of the Great War. The war veteran is not easily assimilated. Veterans of all stripes often carry the burden of repudiating the forces that seek to uphold a vision of empire. The fears and anxieties experienced by veterans, not to say physical traumas suffered, undermine confidence in authority. Soldiers are among the first to turn their backs on imperial ideology, as are women. As shown to be true of Doris Lessing’s memories of living with her war-crippled father, the domestic scenes are war-haunted, frequently with women left to carry the burden of nursing wounded men back to life. Frequently, the soldiers’ family members are left wounded in the process by the strain and stress of living with embittered, less than articulate companions. Doris Lessing (2008) came to see after many years that the Great War had been the defining event of both her parents’

lives. Lessing's female protagonists are scarred by neglect and socially constricting values, constraints against female self-definition, but she never allows it to be forgotten that the source of their despair was the Great War (170). Hers is a vision shaped by her father's despair.

What one finds within the range of writings I have considered is a concern for personal and social identity. It is the contention of this study that writers frequently do reinforce hegemonic ideologies but they do not always do so. Margery Fee (2006) points out this limitation in Said's conception of an imperialist intellectual dynamic. There is more room for ambiguity and complexity on all sides of the dominant ideology than Said's 'consolidated vision' seems to embrace. Fee rightly sees Homi Bhabha as seeking to articulate a more fluid interpretive language:

It is not possible simply to assume that a work written by an 'Other' (however defined), even a politicised Other, will have freed itself from the dominant ideology. Homi Bhabha says 'there is always, in Said, the suggestion that colonial power and discourse is possessed entirely by the coloniser, which is an historical and theoretical simplification' (2006: 171).

In his essay 'Reflections on Exile' Said writes: 'Modern Western culture is in large part the work of exiles, émigrés, refugees' (173). On the face of it, this seems like one of those statements that cuts to the heart of the matter. Certainly, the writers and artists are there to back up such a claim. Said, however, says this with more than mere numbers in mind. He is seeking to identify a kind of modern sensibility, and it would seem easy enough to locate. Trans-nationality is certainly a key to defining and recognising contemporary sensibilities, whether they are found among Europeans ruined by the brutality of modern wars or among first and second

generation immigrants, refugees, and exiles who move ambivalently between two or more worlds. Said would be right had he said that writers in the 20th century are forced to become 'travel' writers, while insisting, clearly, on the profound differences between forced exile and leisure travel. Exile may be described as a psychological uprooting, but perhaps what is lost is less disturbing when one has belonged through class to a transnational order. As Andrew Smith (2004) points out:

Without the right circumstances of birth or bank account the majority of the world's population remain intractably in place and very distant from the celebration of a newly mobile, hybrid order. Because our world is marked by such disparities – because travel is price-tagged like any other commodity – migration can involve forms of domination as well as liberation and can give rise to blinkered vision as well as epiphanies (246).

It is arguable that Bhabha's sense of the negotiated voice communicating from this 'third' space is the inevitable voice of the writer who has lost his or her home and experienced the cultural conditions of diaspora. Such voices as Lessing's and Gordimer's may articulate colonial interests, but such expressions need not be part of the 'consolidated' vision found by Said; they may be said instead to express Bhabha's notion of a 'hybrid' voice born of the circumstance of exile, colonial settlement or expatriation. Homi Bhabha in *The Location of Culture* expresses his understanding of this fluid by-play whereby writing is to be understood as much as a negotiation as a description:

The pact of interpretation is never simply an act of communication between the I and You designated in the statement. The production of meaning requires that these two places be mobilised in the passage through a Third space, which represents both the general conditions of language and the

specific implication of the utterance in a performative and institutional strategy of which it cannot 'in itself' be conscious (1994: 36).

As has been shown, however, the location of that 'true home' remains in doubt. The postcolonial identity instead remains trapped in conditions identified in Chapter 2 and best described as Kafkaesque.

Zadie Smith (2008) says, 'These days we all find our anterior legs flailing before us. We're all insects, all *Ungeziefer*, now' (17). Smith identifies that most disturbing of modern realisations, namely, the recognition that the drama of the individual has ended. The individual is nothing. This threat, discussed in Chapter 4, is addressed by Bhabha who warns that 'in the renaming of modernity' one must guard against 'the fact that the hegemonic structures of power are maintained in a position of authority' (1994: 347). While Adorno's attention was drawn to the ordeal of soldiers dying in battle without glory, as insects, the potential for sinking into oblivion without recognition preoccupies Milan Kundera: 'Hell (hell on earth) is not tragic; what's hell is horror that has not a trace of the tragic' (2008: 115).

It is a time, Adorno (2005) argues, that makes the idea of the home increasingly obsolete because, although it may offer solace, it cannot provide protection: 'There is no remedy but steadfast diagnosis of oneself and others, the attempt, through awareness, if not to escape doom, at least to rob it of its dreadful violence, that of blindness' (2005: 33). Unlike Said, who seems in some ways preoccupied with the experience of loss and with what has been lost, Bhabha and others, echoing Adorno, are determined to see what has been and can be gained even

with the recognition that what remains can be described as ‘a kingdom of bones’ (Kadare, 2000: 61).

What distinguishes Said’s and Bhabha’s points of view is their understanding of the past. Said describes well the emotional laceration afflicted on intellectuals torn from their cultural heritage, left adrift in foreign lands, forced to learn new languages and to adjust, as he had to do in the United States. Rightly, he places the exile at the centre of the age, without, perhaps, taking proper care to make the important distinctions offered by Chelva Kanaganayakam (1996) between the exile, expatriate, refugee, and immigrant (202). Be that as it may, like Hannah Arendt, Said locates the terrible events of the 20th century at the centre of what it means to talk about culture in our time. This is crucial and a central concern of his. What he cannot seem to bring himself to admit is that the cultures that were lost created the conflicts that bore them away. Said’s definition of the exile seems not to be mitigated by an appreciation for the sense of loss that may be imbedded in the culture left behind ‘in this era of world wars, deportations, and mass exterminations’ (Said 2000: 183).

On the other hand, Said’s high praise for the writings of Theodor Adorno suggests an ambivalence that is worth considering. He quotes from what he calls Adorno’s ‘masterwork’, *Minima Moralia: Reflections From a Mutilated Life*:

[T]he house is past. The bombings of European cities, as well as the labour and concentration camps, merely precede as executors, with what the immanent development of technology had long decided was to be the fate of houses. These are now good only to be thrown away like old food cans (184).

This is not far from what Bhabha sees and properly places this recognition at the centre of his definition of postcolonialism:

The time for ‘assimilating’ minorities to holistic and organic notions of cultural value has dramatically passed. The very language of cultural community needs to be rethought from a postcolonial perspective, in a move similar to the profound shift in the language of sexuality, the self and cultural community, effected by feminists in the 1970s and the gay community in the 1980s (251).

From this sense of homelessness, Bhabha finds it possible to speak beyond despair. The loss does not function as an obstacle to renewal. Bhabha argues that it is not that culture is lost, but that it is found on the grounds of historical trauma:

The study of world literature might be the study of the way in which cultures recognise themselves through their projections of ‘otherness’. Where, once, the transmission of national traditions was the major theme of world literature, perhaps we can now suggest that transnational histories of migrants, the colonised, or political refugees – these borders and frontier conditions – may be the terrains of world literature (1994:17).

Part of this project entails identity formation (Bhabha 1994: 63). There is tension between the desire to break with one’s past and the urge to restore. There may be the sense that nothing is left, or that one has left everything behind, for better or for worse.

In Chapter 2, I make the argument that a century of war, totalitarianism and genocide served to unsettle personal relations, to that extent personal relations even when not directly disturbed by civic disorder were warped and distorted. Lessing, Gordimer and Coetzee write of relationships coloured by settings that resemble the

discord and oppression of the Nazi state. The machinery of European imperialism insinuated itself into social relations, of course, but beyond that, into the private, even intimate negotiations between spouses and lovers.

The predicament of otherness and colonial presumption is seen dramatically in the pieces explored in depth in Chapter 2, which focuses on imperialism as a part of the Third Reich's territorial ambitions and its racial policies. In numerous passages taken from the works of Lessing, Gordimer and Coetzee, one sees the clash between rival expectations, resulting in responses ranging from disappointment to madness, as in the case of Mary Turner. In these exchanges, what emerges is a glimpse into the inner turmoil wrought by relationships created by imperial associations based on social barriers, those created by class, race or hierarchy. These texts give evidence of the sort of malaise described by Aimé Césaire (1972) as an ineluctable part of colonialism:

What am I driving at? At this idea: that no one colonizes innocently, that no one colonizes with impunity either; that a nation which colonizes, that a civilization which justifies colonization – and therefore force – is already a sick civilization. A civilization that is morally diseased, that irresistibly, progressing from one consequence to another, one repudiation to another, calls for its Hitler, I mean its punishment (4).

Césaire connects the barbarities of colonialism to the brutalities of Europe's twentieth century wars and beyond to America's continuous use of military force to maintain its global power. His insight is that the imperial enterprise leads eventually to barbarism at home: 'Colonization: bridgehead in a campaign to civilize barbarism, from which there may emerge at any moment the negation of civilization,

pure and simple'(3). This, I have suggested, is the meaning of the Swede's confrontation with his daughter; Roth skillfully essays the consequence of a war brought home and the burdens heaped on a society that thought it could get away with murder. This is, finally, the reverberation of the quest for imperial expansion, guided by extinction theory and the premise of cultural superiority. The ultimate repercussion is to be found in what Wideman, McCarthy and DeLillo set forth, namely, the end of the world.

Bellow and Roth are fascinating examples of writers in the postwar years whose experiences reflect mentalities formed within the orbit of the American empire and the juggernaut of the Cold War. Bellow's Henderson searches for a way to find himself in a postwar environment, where the entitlement and triumph of battle no longer have a place. He rebels against the expectations and oppressions of suburban domesticity, but has nowhere to turn, save for the author's imagined Africa. His adventure is not an escape but a journey of discovery, through which he acknowledges responsibility. He learns to face and admit complicity; he traces the source of his guilt to himself. Roth's hero also has nowhere else to turn, as the world around him falls apart. The war he and his generation conspired to forget or to remember in silence did not prepare him for the war his daughter and her generation chose to bring home.

The key writers studied in Chapter 4 take Roth's tragic narrative beyond personal disappointment. Wideman, McCarthy and DeLillo consider the wider implications of American imperialism to the society at large. They participate in a larger project, which takes as its subject the prospect of an American triumphant

imperialism at war with its own people. These writers show an America home-front undermined and threatened by dissolution. In the case of Wideman, that instability is mirrored by his narrative techniques, which undermine traditional modes of narrativity as the societal monolith is undermined. DeLillo's text also presents a society in flux, by presenting events which undermine stability and uniformity. Neither of these writers searches for the means of imposing singularity on the extremes they depict, but seek to embrace the heterogeneity they face.

Roth and McCarthy, however, describe worlds from which they both emotionally and intellectually recoil. Theirs is not a search for flux, but an effort to retreat from the happenings that undermine stability and sanity. Roth and McCarthy create protagonists who are faced with silent menaces. Roth's daughter, a stutterer, rebels by refusing to speak to her father, the Swede. Eventually, her injuries rob her of the ability to speak coherently. McCarthy's protagonists in *The Road* seek to survive in a silent world, threatened by faceless marauders, cannibals in some instances, who eventually succeed in killing the father. Roth's daughter becomes a kind of lone Other, sporting the urban demeanor and looks of the MOVE members described by Wideman. The Swede finally finds her, a virtual mute, the victim of a terrible sexual assault that left her barely alive and covered in excrement. She is described as living alone under a highway crossing, made vulnerable to the sort of victimisation that the MOVE members experienced at the hands of the Philadelphia police.

The political order that devised the machinery of death that annihilated an entire generation in the trenches of World War I had had years of practice in the

colonies. It was those experiences that had hardened and equipped that society for the brutalities to come, only this time to be turned against its own people. These principles and capacities were to be extended by the Germans against the peoples of Eastern Europe, with special attention given to the annihilation of the Jews. By addressing the Nazi atrocities and insisting on seeing them as the culmination of colonial logic, Césaire gives coherence to what otherwise might be forgotten as disparate incoherent events, or memorialized for their uniqueness.

What these well-known incidents and events make clear is that the distinction between coloniser and colonized had become irrelevant. The brutalisation and dehumanisation had become systematic, as has been shown in the works considered at length in Chapter 4. These writers participate in a project committed to giving voice to those for whom identity is related to the act of historical recovery. Writers such as Wideman are engaged in a kind of struggle against amnesia. This is true of Gordimer and Coetzee as well. As supplement, I have cited Derek Walcott at length to show how his poetry exemplifies the ways memories can provide interpretive perspective on the present. The pounding hoofs of the Cossacks reverberate through the writings of Gordimer, at once a reminder of her Lithuanian heritage, and of the connection between South African apartheid and European genocide.

Wideman and DeLillo demonstrate the ways contemporary modes of communication serve to drown out individual voices. Theirs is an exercise in retrieval and recuperation, as a response to cultural fragmentation. Wideman is alert

to cultural genocide, if not as physical extermination, then as dilution. His work narrates Césaire's despairing thought:

The Indians massacred, the Muslim world defiled and perverted for a good century, the Negro world disqualified, mighty voices stilled forever, homes scattered to the wind, all this wreckage, all this waste, humanity reduced to a monologue(19).

Chapter 5 seeks an answer to the question of how it is that one can be expected to live with the knowledge of what has been allowed to occur, while facing the prospect of being a witness to or being victimized by further acts of barbarism. There may be divergent explanations, but Bhabha and Said are concerned with what it means for a so-called civilisation to have destroyed what it means for a people to have a home. Gordimer, Silko and Coetzee are novelists whose works describe transformations of the kind now taking place around the world in response to the destruction of war. They participate in a project devoted to making life humanly possible in the context of radical upheaval. These writers look to ways of picking up the pieces, but also of making something valuable out of what might seem to be meaningless fragments. Isidore Diala (2000) finds opportunities for recovery and reconciliation in recent post-apartheid writings, particularly those of Gordimer and Coetzee (68). What I have argued is that what has been forged in South Africa can be applied beyond its borders. Trauma can be healed and, if Adorno is right, can be transformative. Reconciliation is one path but, as Sebald makes clear, so is accusation and 'the unremitting denunciation of injustice' (2004: 157).

This inquiry has examined literature of writers at the periphery of empire who have experienced war in the 20th century and suffered its consequences. These writers show collective preoccupations with cross-cultural and transnational experiences expressed in the fictional writings of European, American, and African writers. Displacement and estrangement are central themes in the literary works analysed here, along with social class and class awareness. As James Clifford puts it, ‘Not everyone is equally on the move’ (2006: 182). What emerges is a realisation that the experiences of disparate peoples cannot be categorised easily, because in an increasingly contingent world the provisional has replaced the permanent (Said 2000: 185). The challenge, then, is to search for a balance between yearning and memory; this is what remains crucial to Homi Bhabha’s notion of ‘inbetweenness’ (Clifford 2006: 157).

What remains crucial to the postcolonial project is the recognition that none has escaped unscathed from the century’s upheavals. R. Radhakrishnan (2010) argues that one is not merely speaking of adjustments but of alignments, of commitments:

The challenge theorists face, particularly when they are committed to addressing the collective human condition, is that of critical alignment: how to line up the coordinates of their theoretical model with the contradictory, heterogeneous, and contingent whereabouts of life, existence, reality (794).

Furthermore, it is Kwame Anthony Appiah’s contention that the reader participates in the construction, that neither the act of writing nor the act of reading is apolitical. Appiah (2001) argues that

what is necessary to read novels across gaps of space, time, and experience is the capacity to follow a narrative and conjure a world; and that, it turns out, there are people everywhere more than willing to do (224-25).

This is what binds the colonised and the coloniser and, therefore, points to what Sue Kossew (2000) calls ‘the possibility of recovery.’ The postcolonial project is not immune to the promise of belonging and, by implication, of excluding. This is why critics like Sara Suleri (2006) find it necessary to argue for a way of seeing things that eschews binaries that not only violate complexities but also offer complacencies. Strategies of thought that promise exemption from the consequences of what the 20th century has wrought are to be avoided. ‘Consummate inhumanity,’ to use Adorno’s apt phrase, describes what has taken place (2005: 56). A perhaps even ‘bloodier age’ may come (Gordimer 1988: 284). Plenty Coups and the Crow leaders were forced by circumstances to forge a new way of looking at things in the face of total cultural extinction. Their challenge, Jonathan Lear (2006) argues, was to acknowledge what had befallen them by sorting out the relationship between self and Other. ‘One needs to recognise the destruction that has occurred if one is to move beyond it’ (152). This thesis seeks to contribute to a comparable challenge. Given fiction’s capacity to deal with what we call ‘actuality’ and to fictionalise its implications, one strives to see patterns of continuity based on the past. The future must remain unknown, but through acknowledgment of shared experience the tension between Self and Other may be diminished.

REFERENCES

Introduction: POSTCOLONIAL IDENTITY IN A CENTURY OF WAR

- Arendt, Hannah. *Origins of Totalitarianism*. New York: Meridian Books, 1964.
- Ashcroft, Bill, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin. *The Empire Writes Back*. London: Routledge, 1989.
- Baldwin, James. *The Fire Next Time*. New York: Vintage International, 1993.
- Bhabha, Homi. 'Cultural Diversity and Cultural Differences.' in *The Post-Colonial Studies Reader, 2nd ed.* ed. Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin. London: Routledge, 2006.
- . 'Signs Taken for Wonders.' in *The Post-Colonial Studies Reader, 2nd ed.* ed. Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin. London: Routledge, 2006.
- . *The Location of Culture*. London: Routledge, 1994.
- Bluemel, Kristin. Rev. of *Colonial Strangers: Women Writing the end of the British Empire*, by Phyllis Lassner. *Modernism/modernity* 12.1 (2005) 186-188.
<http://muse.uq.edu.au/journals/modernism-modernity/v012/12.1b>
- Boehmer, Elleke. *Colonial & Postcolonial Literature: Migrant Metaphors*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1995.
- Brantlinger, Patrick. *Dark Vanishings: Discourse on the Extinction of Primitive Races, 1800-1930*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2003.
- Caruth, Cathy, ed. *Trauma: Explorations in Memory*. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins UP, 1995.
- Casanova, Pascale. *The World Republic of Letters*. trans. M.B. Debevoise. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2004.
- Chernetsky, Vitaly, Nancy Condee, Harsha Ram and Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak. 'Are We Postcolonial? Post-Soviet Space.' *PMLA*. Volume 121.3 (2006): 828-836. Print.
- Damrosch, David. *What is World Literature?* Princeton: Princeton UP, 2003.
- Gewertz, Ken. 'Telling tales out of, and in, class: Bhabha studies culture and genre

- with a moral squint.' Harvard University Gazette Profiles. January 31, 2002.
<http://www.hno.harvard.edu/gazette/2002/01.31/03-bhabha.html>. 2007/01/30
- Gordimer, Nadine. *The Essential Gesture: Writing, Politics, and Places*. London: Jonathan Cape, 1988.
- Humphreys, Stephen. 'Legalizing Lawlessness: On Giorgio Agamben's *State of Exception*.' *The European Journal of International Law* 17.3: 2006, 677-687.
- Innes, C. L. 'Forging the Conscience of Their Race': Nationalist Writers.' In *New National Post-Colonial Literatures*. Ed. Bruce King. Oxford: Clarendon, 1996.
- Kelertas, Violeta, ed. *Baltic Postcolonialism: On the Boundary of Two Worlds: Identity, Freedom, and Moral Imagination in the Baltics*. Amsterdam: Editions Rodopi BV, 2006.
- Kertész, Imre. trans. Christopher C. Wilson and Katharina M. Wilson. *Fateless*. Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern University Press, 1992.
- Lisiak, Agata Anna. 'The Making of (Post)colonial Cities in Central Europe.' *CSLWeb: Comparative Literature and Culture* 12.1 (March 2010).
 <<http://docs.lib.purdue.edu/clcweb/vol12/iss1/3>>.
- Mbembe, Achille. Trans. Libby Maintjes. 'Necropolis.' *Public Culture* 15 (1) 2003: 11-40. Web. 6 Apr 2010.
- Mishra, Vijay. 'The Diasporic Imaginary: Theorizing the Indian diaspora' in *The Post-Colonial Studies Reader 2nd ed.* ed. Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin. London: Routledge, 2006.
- Moore, David Chioni. 'Is the Post- in Postcolonial the Post- in Post-Soviet? Towards a Global Postcolonial Critique.' in *Baltic Postcolonialism: On the Boundary of Two Worlds: Identify, Freedom, and Moral Imagination in the Baltics*. Ed. Violeta. Kelertas. Amsterdam: Editions Rodopi BV, 2006.
- Neal, Andrew W. *Exceptionalism and the Politics of Counter-Terrorism; Liberty, Security and the War on Terror*. London: Routledge, 2009.
- . 'Georgio Agamben and the politics of the exception.' Sixth Pan-European International Relations Conference of the SGIR. Standing Group on International Relations. Turin. 12-15 Sep 2007. Paper.
- Parry, Benita. 'Problems in Current Theories of Colonial Discourse.' in *The Post-Colonial Studies Reader, 2nd ed.* ed. Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin. London: Routledge, 2006.
- . 'The institutionalization of postcolonial studies.' in *The Cambridge Companion to Postcolonial Literary Studies*. Ed. Neil Lazarus. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004.
- Roth, Joseph. Trans. Michael Hofmann. *The Radetsky March*. London: Granta, 2002.
- Said, Edward W. *Culture and Imperialism*. New York: Vintage, 1994.
- . 'Reflections on Exile.' in *Reflections on Exile*. Cambridge: Harvard UP, 2000.
- Sakinofsky, Phyllis. 'Shaping the Jewish South African Story: Imprints of Memories, Shadows and Silences.' *Transnational Literature* Volume 2 No 1 November 2009. Web. 19 Apr 2010.

- Shohat, Ella. 'Notes on the 'Post-Colonial.''' *Social Text: Third World and Post-Colonial Issues* 31/32 1992: 99-113. Web. 18 Feb 2010.
- Simoes da Silva, Tony. 'Narrating a White Africa: autobiography, race and history.' *Third World Quarterly*, Vol.26, No. 3, (2005): 471-478.
- 'Strip It Bare – Agamben's Message For a More Hopeful World.' *International Journal of Baudrillard Studies* 2.2 (July 2005).
- Slemon, Stephen. 'Unsettling the Empire: Resistance Theory for the Second World.' in *The Post-Colonial Studies Reader*. Ed. Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin. London: Routledge, 1995.
- Smith, Andrew. 'Migrancy, hybridity, and postcolonial literary studies'. in *The Cambridge Companion to Postcolonial Literary Studies*. Ed. Neil Lazarus. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004.
- Steiner, George. *In Bluebeard's Castle: Some Notes Towards the Redefinition of Culture*. New Haven: Yale UP, 1974.
- Van Herk, Aritha. 'Pioneers and Settlers.' in *New National and Post-Colonial Literatures: An Introduction*. Ed. Bruce King. Oxford: Clarendon, 1996.
- Williams, Raymond. *Culture and Society: 1780-1950*. New York: Penguin, 1971.
- Whitlock, Gillian. *The Intimate Empire*. London: Cassell, 2000.

Chapter One: WAR AND PROTEST: WOMEN SETTLERS SPEAK OUT

- Achebe, Chinua. *Hopes and Impediments*. Doubleday, New York, 1988.
- . *Things Fall Apart*. New York: Anchor, 1994.
- Ashcroft, Bill, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin. *The Empire Writes Back*. London: Routledge, 1989.
- Bahri, Deepika. 'Feminism in/and postcolonialism'. in *The Cambridge Companion to Postcolonial Literature Studies*. Ed. Neil Lazarus. Cambridge: C UP, 2004.
- Bhabha, Homi. *The Location of Culture*. London: Routledge, 1994.
- Boehmer, Elleke. *Colonial & Postcolonial Literature: Migrant Metaphors*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1995.
- Brink, André. 'Interrogating Silence: New Possibilities Faced by South African Literature.' *Writing South Africa: Literature, apartheid and democracy, 1970-1995*. Ed. Derek Attridge and Rosemary Jolly. Cambridge: CambridgeUP, 1998: 14-28.
- . *Writing in a State of Siege*. New York: Summit, 1983.
- Coetzee, J. M. *Stranger Shores: Literary Essays*. New York: Penguin, 2002.
- . *White Writing: On the Culture of Letters in South Africa*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988.
- Dao, Anna. 'A Perfect Wife.' *Opening Spaces: Contemporary African Women's Writing*. Ed. Yvonne Vera. London: Heinemann, 1999.
- Dinesen, Isak. *Out of Africa and Shadows on the Grass*. New York: Vintage, 1989.
- Drabble, Margaret. 'Ahead of Her Time.' *The Guardian*. 6 December 2008. [online] URL: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/books/2008/dec/06/margaret-drabble-doris-lessing/print>. Viewed 16 May 2009.
- Fussell, Paul. *Abroad: British Literary Traveling Between the Wars*. Oxford: Oxford

- University Press, 1980.
- . *The Great War and Modern Memory*. London: Oxford U Press, 1975.
- Gordimer, Nadine. *The Essential Gesture: Writers and Responsibility*. The Tanner Lectures on Human Values. Delivered at the University of Michigan. October 12, 1984.
<http://www.tannerlectures.utah.edu/lectures/documents/gordimer85.pdf>
- . *The Essential Gesture: Writing, Politics and Places*. London: Jonathan Cape, 1988.
- Griffiths, Gareth. 'The Myth of Authenticity.' *The Post-Colonial Studies Reader, 2nd ed.* ed. Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin. London: Routledge, 2006.
- Hemingway, Ernest. *The Short Stories*. New York: Scribner, 2003.
- Hughes, David McDermott. 'The Art of Belonging: Whites Writing Landscape in Savannah Africa.' Presented to the Program in Agrarian Studies, Yale University, New Haven, Connecticut, 6 October 2006. Print.
- Innes, C. L. "'Forging the Conscience of Their Race': Nationalist Writers.' in *New National Post-Colonial Literatures*. Ed. Bruce King. Oxford: Clarendon, 1996.
- Katrak, Ketu H. 'Post-Colonial Women Writers.' in *New National and Post-Colonial Literatures*. Ed. Bruce King. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996.
- Kennedy, Dane. *Islands of White: Society and Culture in Kenya and Southern Rhodesia, 1890-1939*. Durham: Duke University Press, 1987.
- Kosew, Sue. 'Giving Voice: Narrating Silence, History and Memory in André Brink's *The Other Side of Silence* and *Before I Forget*.' *Tydskrif Vir Letterkunde*. 42.1 (2005): 134-146. Web. 6 October 2010.
- . *Pen and Power: A Postcolonial Reading of J.M. Coetzee and André Brink*. Amsterdam-Atlanta: Rodopi, 1996.
- . *Writing Women, Writing Place: Contemporary Australian and South African Fiction*. London: Routledge, 2004.
- Kucich, John. *Imperial Masochism: British Fiction, Fantasy, and Social Class*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007.
- Lessing, Doris. *African Laughter: Four Visits to Zimbabwe*. New York: HarperPerennial, 1992.
- . *African Stories*. New York: Popular Library, 1951.
- . *Alfred & Emily*. London: Harper Perennial, 2008.
- . *Canopus in Argos: Archives*. New York: Vintage, 1992.
- . 'Desert Child.' *New Statesman*, 56, November 15, 1958.
- . *The Grass Is Singing*. New York: Schribner's, 1948.
- . *Under My Skin: Volume One of My Autobiography to 1949*. New York: HarperCollins, 1994.
- Lewis, Simon. 'Culture, Cultivation, and Colonialism in *Out of Africa* and Beyond.' *Research in African Literatures* 31.1 (2000): 63-79. Web. 6 July 2009
http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/research_in_african_literatures/v031/311lewis.html
- Mbembe, Achille. 'The Intimacy of Tyranny.' in *The Post-Colonial Studies Reader*,

- 2nd ed. Ed. Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin. London: Routledge, 1995. Print. 66-70.
- Mlambo, Alois S. 'Building a White Man's Country: Aspects of White Migration Into Rhodesia Up To World War II.' *Zambezia* (1998), XXV, (ii): 123-146.
- Naipaul, Shiva. *North of South: An African Journey*. New York: Penguin, 1980.
- Naudé, Stephen. "'A Very Bitter Love-Making'. Women as Points of Cross-cultural Encounter in William Plomer's *Turbott Wolfe*'. Internet –Zeitschrift für Kulturwissenschaften 15.Nr. April 2005. Viewed 03 March 2009. http://www.inst.at/trans/15Nr/04_07/naude15.htm
- New, W.H. 'Colonial Literatures.' in *New National and Post-Colonial Literatures*. Ed. Bruce King. Oxford: New Clarendon Press, 1996.
- Said, Edward W. *Culture and Imperialism*. New York: Vintage, 1994.
- . *The Edward Said Reader*, ed. Moustafa Bayoumi and Andrew Rubin. New York: Vintage, 2000.
- Sakinofsky, Phyllis. 'Shaping the Jewish South African Story: Imprints of Memories, Shadows and Silences.' *Transnational Literature* Volume 2 No 1 November 2009. Web. 19 Apr 2010.
- Simoes da Silva, Tony. 'Geographies of sorrow and renewal: Basali! Stories by and about Women in Lesotho.' *Mots Pluriels*, no 09 February 1999, viewed 23 Mar 2009, <http://www.arts.uwa.edu.au/MotsPluriels/MP2202tss.html>
- . 'African childhoods: identity, race and autobiography.' *Mots Pluriels*, no 22 September 2002, viewed 13 Dec 2008, <http://www.arts.uwa.edu.au/MotsPluriels/MP2202tss.html>
- . 'Narrating a White Africa: autobiography, race and history.' *Third World Quarterly*, Vol.26, No. 3, (2005): 471 – 478.
- Simpson, Alyse. *The Land That Never Was*. Lincoln: U of Nebraska Press, 1985.
- Spivak, Gayatri Chakravorty. 'Three Women's Texts and a Critique of Imperialism.' *Race Writing and Difference*. Ed. Henry Louis Gates Jr. Chicago: U of Chicago, 1986: 262-280.
- Stach, Reiner. Trans. Shelley Frisch. *Kafka: The Decisive Years*. NY: Harcourt, 2005.
- Thurman, Judith. *Isak Dinesen: The Life of a Storyteller*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1982.
- Trzebinski, Errol, *The Kenya Pioneers*. New York: Norton, 1986.
- Van Herk, Aritha. 'Pioneers and Setters.' *New National and Post-Colonial Literatures: An Introduction*. Ed. Bruce King. Oxford: Clarendon, 1996.
- Whitlock, Gillian. *The Intimate Empire*. London: Cassell, 2000.

Chapter Two: POSTCOLONIALISM AND THE LEGACY OF TOTAL WAR

- Achebe, Chinua. *Things Fall Apart*. New York: Anchor, 1994.
- Adams, David. *Colonial Odyssey: Empire and Epic in the Modernist Novel*. Ithaca: Cornell U. Press, 2003.
- Anderson, Benedict. *Imagined Communities*. London: Verso, 2006.

- Arendt, Hannah. *Origins of Totalitarianism*. New York: Meridian Books, 1964.
- Bachmann, Ingeborg. 'Early Noon.' trans. Mark Anderson, *Evidence of Fire: An Anthology of Twentieth Century German Poetry*. ed. Rich Ives. North Carolina: Owl Creek Press, 1988.
- Bahri, Deepika. 'Feminism in/and postcolonialism'. in *The Cambridge Companion to Postcolonial Literary Studies*. Ed. Neil Lazarus. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2004.
- Bhabha, Homi K. *The Location of Culture*. London: Routledge, 1994.
- Bluemel, Kristin. Rev. of *Colonial Strangers: Women Writing the end of the British Empire*, by Phyllis Lassner. *Modernism/modernity* 12.1 (2005) 186-188. <http://muse.uq.edu.au/journals/modernism-modernity/v012/12.1b...>
- Caruth, Cathy, ed. *Trauma: Explorations in Memory*. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins UP, 1995.
- Celan, Paul. 'Death Fugue.' trans. Michael Hamburger. *Evidence of Fire: An Anthology of Twentieth Century German Poetry*. ed. Rich Ives. North Carolina: Owl Creek Press, 1988.
- Chomsky, Noam. *The Essential Chomsky*. Ed. Anthony Arnone. New York: The New Press, 2008.
- Coetzee, J.M. *Disgrace*. New York: Viking, 1999.
- . *Elizabeth Costello*. London: Secker & Warburg, 2003.
- . *Inner Workings, Literary Essays 2000-2005*. New York: Viking, 2007.
- . *Slow Man*. London: Vintage Books, 2006.
- Deleuze, Gilles and Guattari, Félix, trans. Dana Polan. *Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature*. Minneapolis: U of Minn Press, 1986.
- Elkins, Caroline. *Imperial Reckoning: The Untold Story of Britain's Gulag in Kenya*. New York: Henry Holt, 2005.
- Evans, Richard J. 'Immoral Rearmament.' Rev. of *The Wages of Destruction: The Making and Breaking of the Nazi Economy*, by Adam Tooze. *The New York Review*. 20 Dec. 2007: 76-78.
- . *The Coming of the Third Reich*. New York: Penguin, 2003.
- Fanon, Franz. *Wretched of the Earth*. New York: Penguin, 1990.
- Gertjeanssen, Wendy Jo. *Victims, Heroes, Survivors: Sexual Violence on the Eastern Front During World War II*. PhD, University of Minnesota, 2004. Web.
- Gilbert, Sandra M., and Susan Gubar. *The Madwoman in the Attic: The Woman Writer and the Nineteenth-Century Literary Imagination*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1984.
- Gordimer, Nadine. *July's People*. New York: Viking Penguin, 1981.
- Hastings, Max. 'A Farewell to Arms.' Review of *The White War: Life and Death on the Italian Front, 1915-1919* by Mark Thompson. *The New York Review* 11 June 2009: 48-51.
- . 'Germans Confront the Nazi Past.' Rev. of *Germany and the Second World War, Volume IX/I: German Wartime Society, 1939-1945: Politicization, Disintegration, and the Struggle for Survival*, edited by Jörg Echternkamp. *The New York Review* 26 February 2009: 16-18.

- . 'The Most Evil Emperor.' Rev. of *Hitler's Empire: How the Nazis Rules Europe*, by Mark Marzower, *The New York Review* 23 October 2008: 46-49.
- Heather, Gerald and Stolz, Matt, 'Hannah Arendt and the Problem of Critical Theory.' *The Journal of Politics* Vol. 41, 1979, quote from Arendt, *Between Past and Present*, (Beacon Press, New York, 1961), p. 26.
- Hove, Chenjerai. *Bones*. London: Heinemann, 1990.
- Innes, C. L. "'Forging the Conscience of Their Race': Nationalist Writers.' in *New National Post-Colonial Literatures*. Ed. Bruce King. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996.
- Jay, Martin. *The Dialectical Imagination: A History of the Frankfurt School and The Institute of Social Research, 1923-1950*. Boston: Little, Brown, 1973.
- Kafka, Franz. trans. Mark Harman. *The Castle*. New York: Schocken Books, 1998.
- . *The Complete Stories*. New York: Schocken Books, 1971.
- Katrak, Ketu H. 'Post-colonial Women Writers and Feminisms'. in *New National and Post-Colonial Literatures*. Ed. Bruce King. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996.
- Kertész, Imre. trans. Christopher C. Wilson and Katharina M. Wilson. *Fateless*. Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern University Press, 1992.
- . *Heureka!* Trans. Ivan Sanders. nobelprize.org. 7 December 2002. 26 August 2009 http://nobelprize.org/nobel_prises/literature/laureates/2002/Kertesz-lecture-e.html
- . *The Freedom of Bedlam*. [Signandsight.com](http://www.signandsight.com). 22/08/2006. 3 September 2009 <http://www.signandsight.com/features/908.html>
- Kucich, John. *Imperial Masochism: British Fiction, Fantasy, and Social Class*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007.
- Laub, Dori. 'Truth and Testimony: The Process and the Struggle.' In *Trauma: Explorations in Memory*. Ed. Cathy Caruth. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins UP, 1995.
- Lessing, Doris. *Canopus in Argos: Archives*. New York: Vintage, 1992.
- . *The Grass Is Singing*. New York: Schribner's, 1948.
- Lodge, David. 'Disturbing the Peace.' Rev. of *Disgrace* by J.M.Coetzee, in *The New York Review*, 20 November 2003: <http://www.nybooks.com/articles/16791>: 5
- Lustig, Arnošt. Trans. Ewald Osers. *Lovely Green Eyes*. New York: Arcade Publishing, 2000.
- MacKinnon, Catharine A. *Are Women Human? And Other International Dialogues*. Cambridge: The Belkap Press, 2007.
- Mak, Geert. *In Europe: Travels Through the Twentieth Century*. NY: Vintage, 2008.
- Marrouchi, Mustapha B., 'Horrors.' www.countercurrents.org, 2111 January, 2008.
- Memmi, Albert. *The Coloniser and the Colonised*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1967.
- Motzkin, Gabriel. An Interview. *Shoah Resource Center, the International School for Holocaust Studies*, 8/14. 7 January 1998. 8 July 2009. www.yadvashem.org
- New, W.H. 'Colonial Literatures.' in *New National and Post-Colonial Literatures*. Ed. Bruce King. Oxford: New Clarendon Press, 1996.
- Pinter, Harold. 'Nobel Lecture 2005: Art, Truth & Politics.' *PMLA*. 121.3 (2006): 811-818. Print.

- Ryback, Timothy W. *Hitler's Private Library*. New York: Vintage, 2010.
- Said, Edward W. *Culture and Imperialism*. New York: Vintage, 1994.
- . 'Reflections on Exile.' in *Reflections on Exile*. Cambridge: Harvard UP, 2000.
- Schlant, Ernestine. *The Language of Silence: West German Literature and the Holocaust*. London: Routledge, 1999.
- Sebald, W.G. *On the Natural History of Destruction*. New York: The Modern Library, 2003.
- Simoes Da Silva, Tony. 'African childhoods: identity, race and autobiography.' *Mots Pluriels*, no 22 September 2002,
- Snead, James. 'European pedigrees/African contagions: nationality, narrative, and communality in Tutuola, Achebe, and Reed.' from *Nation and Narration*. Homi K. Bhabha, Ed., London: Routledge, 1990.
- Steiner, George. *Extraterritorial: Papers on Literature & The Language Revolution*. New York: MacMillan, 1971.
- . *Language and Silence: Essays on Language, Literature, and the Inhuman*. New Haven: Yale UP, 1998.
- Szymborska, Wislawa. *View With a Grain of Sand, Selected Poems*. New York: Harcourt, 1995.
- Van Herk, Aritha. 'Pioneers and Settlers.' *New National and Post-Colonial Literatures: An Introduction*. Ed. Bruce King. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996.
- Verhaeghen, Paul. *Omega Minor*. Champaign, Ill.: Dalkey Archive Press, 2007.
- Waugh, Alexander. *The House of Wittgenstein, A Family at War*. London: Bloomsbury, 2009.
- Ziemann, Benjamin. 'Book of the Week: Hitler's Empire: Nazi Rule in Occupied Europe.' *Times Higher Education*. 5 June 2008. 18 August 2009
<http://www.timeshighereducation.co.uk/story.asp?storyCode=4022...>

Chapter Three: POSTWAR: THE TRAUMA OF PEACE

- Achebe, Chinua. 'An Image of Africa: Racism in Conrad's 'Heart of Darkness.''' *Massachusetts Review*. 18. 1977. Rpt. in *Heart of Darkness, an Authoritative Text, Background and Sources Criticism*. 1961. 3rd ed. Ed. Robert Kimbrough. London: W.W. Norton and co., 1988, pp. 251-261.
- . *Things Fall Apart*. New York: Anchor, 1994.
- Bellow, Saul. *Henderson the Rain King*. New York: Penguin, 1976.
- Bhabha, Homi K. *The Location of Culture*. London: Routledge, 1994.
- Boehmer, Elleke. *Colonial & Postcolonial Literature: Migrant Metaphors*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1995.
- Bradbury, Malcolm. *Saul Bellow*. London: Methuen, 1982.
- Cai, Rong. *The Subject in Crisis in Contemporary Chinese Literature*. Honolulu University of Hawaii Press, 2004.
- Caruth, Cathy, ed. *Trauma: Exploration in Memory*. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins UP, 1995.
- Cooper, James Fenimore. *The Deerslayer*. New York: NAL, 1980.
- Coetzee, J.M. *Disgrace*. New York: Viking, 1999.

- . *Elizabeth Costello*. London: Secker & Warburg, 2003.
- . *Inner Workings: Literary Essays 2000-2005*. NYC: Viking, 2007.
- Dutton, Robert R. *Saul Bellow*. Boston: Twayne, 1982.
- Fiedler, Leslie. 'A New Fiedler Reader.' Amherst, New York: Prometheus Books, 1999.
- Fussell, Paul. 'The Great War and Modern Memory.' New York: Oxford U Press, 1977.
- Gruesser, John Cullen. 'First-Generation Postwar Writers: Ignoring Political Realities.' *White on Black: Contemporary Literature about Africa*. Ed. John Cullen Gruesser. Urbana: U of Illinois P, 1992. 36-41.
- Hays, Peter L. *The Limping Hero: Grotesques in Literature*. New York: New York University Press, 1971.
- Johnson, Lemuel A. 'Safaris in the Bush of Ghosts: Gamara Laye, Saul Bellow, and Ayi Kwei Armah.' *Issue: A Journal of Opinion* Vol. 13, (1984): 45-54.
- Lamont, Daniel. 'A Dark and Empty Continent': The Representation of Africa in Saul Bellow's *Henderson the Rain King*.' *Saul Bellow Journal* 16.2/17.1-2 (2001) 129-49.
- Larson, Charles. 'Heroic Ethnocentrism: The idea of universality in literature.' in *The Post-Colonial Studies Reader, 2nd ed.* Ed. Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin. London: Routledge, 2006.
- Lawrence, D. H. *Studies of Classic American Literature*. NYC: Penguin, 1977.
- Lessing, Doris. *Canopus in Argos: Archives*. New York: Vintage, 1992.
- Lukács, Georg. *Theory of the Novel: A Historico-philosophical Essay on the Forms of Great Epic Literature*. Trans. Anna Bostock. Cambridge: MIT Press. 1996.
- Miniotaite, Daina. 'Human Quest in Saul Bellow's Novels *Henderson the Rain King* and *The Adventures of Augie March*.' *Eger Journal of English Studies V* (2005): 112-119.
- Morrison, Toni. 'Playing in the Dark: Whiteness and the Literary Imagination.' New York: Vintage, 1993.
- New, W.H. 'Colonial Literatures.' in *New National and Post-colonial Literatures*. Ed. Bruce King. Oxford: New Clarendon Press, 1996.
- Roth, Philip. *American Pastoral*. New York: Vintage International, 1998.
- . 'Defender of the Faith.' *The Norton Anthology of American Literature, v.2, 3rd edition*. Ed. Nina Baym, etc. New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1989.
- Scheer-Schazler, Brigitte. *Saul Bellow*. New York: Ungar, 1972.
- Sebald, W.G. Trans. Anthea Bell. *On the Natural History of Destruction*. New York: The Modern Library, 2004.
- Self, Will. 'Sebald, the Good German?' *The Times Literary Supplement*. 26 January 2010. Web. 25 March 2010.
- Shaw, Tony. 'The Politics of Cold War Culture.' *Journal of Cold War Studies*, 3:3, Fall 2001, 59-76.
- Shukla, Anu. 'Bellow's Quest for the True Self.' In *Aspects of Contemporary Post/Colonial Literature*. Ed. Sheobhushan Shukla & Anu Shukla. New Delhi: Sarup & Sons, 2005.

- . 'The Protagonist's Engagement with Society.' In *Postcolonialism and Fiction in English*. Ed. Sheobhushan Shukla & Anu Shukla. New Delhi: Sarup & Sons, 2004.
- Slotkin, Richard. *Regeneration through Violence*. Norman, OK: U of Oklahoma Press, 2000.
- Tompkins, Jane. *West of Everything: The Inner Life of Westerns*. Oxford UP, New York, 1992.
- Twain, Mark. *Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court*. New York: Signet, 1963.
- Williams, Tennessee. 'Cat on a Hot Tin Roof.' New York: Signet, 1958.

Chapter Four: POSTMODERNISM: SURVIVING THE APOCALYPSE

- Adorno, Theodor. Trans. E.F.N. Jephcott. *Minima Moralia; Reflections on a Damaged Life*. London: Verso, 2006.
- Arendt, Hannah. *Eichmann and the Holocaust*. London: Penguin, 2005.
- . *Origins of Totalitarianism*. New York: Meridian Books, 1964.
- Ashcroft, Bill, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin. *The Empire Writes Back; Theory and Practice in Post-Colonial Literatures*. London: Routledge, 1989.
- Boehmer, Elleke. *Colonial & Postcolonial Literature: Migrant Metaphors*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005.
- . 'Networks of Resistance.' in *The Post-Colonial Studies Reader, 2nd ed.* Ed. Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin. London: Routledge, 2006.
- . 'Postcolonial Writing and Terror.' in *Terror and the Postcolonial: A Concise Companion*. Ed. Elleke Boehmer and Stephen Morton. Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009. 141-159. Print.
- Brantlinger, Patrick. *Dark Vanishings: Discourse on the Extinction of Primitive Races, 1800-1930*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2003.
- Coetzee, J.M. *Age of Iron*. New York: Random House, 1990.
- . *Disgrace*. London: Vintage, 2000.
- . *Elizabeth Costello*. London: Secker & Warburg, 2003.
- . *Waiting for the Barbarians*. New York: Penguin, 1982.
- Davis, Mike. *Ecology of Fear*. New York: Vintage, 1999.
- . *Planet of Slums*. London: Verso, 2007.
- DeLillo, Don. *White Noise*. New York: Viking, 1985.
- Ellison, Harlan. 'A Boy And His Dog.' in *Beyond Armageddon*. ed. Walter M. Miller, Jr. and Martin H. Greenberg. Lincoln: U of Nebraska Press, 1985.
- Eaton, Mark A. 'Dis(Re)membered Bodies: Cormac McCarthy's Border Fiction.' *MFS Modern Fiction Studies* 49.1 2003: 156-180. Web. 23 Mar 2008.
- Edwards, Brian. 'Refiguring The West(ern): Cormac McCarthy's Border Trilogy and Old Markers in American Cultural History.' *Australian Journal of American Studies*. Vol.22, No. 2, December 2003, 1-9.
- Evans, Richard J. *The Coming of the Third Reich*. New York: Penguin, 2004.
- Gordimer, Nadine. *July's People*. New York: Viking Penguin, 1981.
- Gorra, Michael. 'Journey into a Land beyond law.' TLS, October 28, 2005: 21.

- Hardt, Michael, and Antonio Negri. 'Imperial Sovereignty.' In *The Post-Colonial Studies Reader*, 2nd ed. Ed. Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin. London: Routledge, 2006.
- Judt, Tony. 'What have We Learned, If Anything?' *The New York Review of Books*, 1 May 2008: 16-20.
- Lessing, Doris. *African Laughter: Four Visits to Zimbabwe*. New York: HarperPerennial, 1992.
- . *Canopus In Argos: Archives*. New York: Vintage, 1992.
- Lukács, Georg. *The Historical Novel*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1983.
- MacKinnon, Catharine A. *Are Women Human? And Other International Dialogues*. Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2006.
- McCarthy, Cormac. *Blood Meridian Or the Evening Redness in the West*. New York: Vintage, 1992.
- . *The Road*. New York: Vintage International, 2006.
- Mbembe, Achille. Trans. Libby Maintjes. 'Necropolis.' *Public Culture* 15 (1) 2003: 11-40. Web. 6 Apr 2010.
- . 'The Intimacy of Tyranny.' in *The Post-Colonial Studies Reader*, 2nd ed. Ed. Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin. London: Routledge, 2006. Print. 66-70.
- McMurry, Andrew. 'The Slow Apocalypse; A Gradualistic Theory of the World's Demise.' *Postmodern Culture* 6.3 (May, 1996).
- Nádas, Péter. Trans. Imre Goldstein. *Fire and Knowledge*. New York: FSG, 2007.
- Neal, Andrew. 'Georgio Agamben and the politics of the exception.' Paper Presented at the Sixth Pan-European International Relations Conference of the SGIR. Turin, September, 2007.
- Peebles, Stacey. 'Yuman Belief Systems and Cormac McCarthy's *Blood Meridian*.' *Texas Studies in Literature and Language* 45.2 2003: 231-244. Web. 12 Nov 2009.
- Pinter, Harold. 'Nobel Lecture 2005: Art, Truth & Politics.' *PMLA*. 121.3 (2006): 811-818. Print.
- Said, Edward. *Reflections on Exile*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2000.
- Shaw, Tony. 'The Politics of Cold War Culture.' *Journal of Cold War Studies*, 3:3, Fall 2001, 59-76.
- Simoes da Silva, Tony. 'Strip It Bare – Agamben's Message For A More Hopeful World.' *International Journal of Baudrillard Studies* 2.2 2005: 1-11. Web. 21 Mar 2010.
- Steiner, George. *In Bluebeard's Castle: Some Notes Towards the Redefinition of Culture*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1971.
- . *The Portage of San Critobál of A.H.: A Novel*. Chicago: U Chicago Press, 1999.
- Tompkins, Jane. *West of Everything: The Inner Life of Westerns*. Oxford UP, New York, 1992.
- Varsava, Jerry. "'Woven of Many Strands": Multiple Subjectivity in John Edgar Wideman's *Philadelphia Fire*.' *CRITIQUE: Studies in Contemporary Fiction* 41.4 June 22 2000: 425.

- Waugh, Alexander. *The House of Wittgenstein*, London: Bloomsbury, 2009.
- Wideman, John Edgar. *Philadelphia Fire: A Novel*. New York: Mariner, 2005.
- Wolin, Sheldon S. *Politics and Vision*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004.
- Wood, James. 'Red Planet: The Sanguinary Sublime of Cormac McCarthy.' *The New Yorker* 25 July 2005. Web. 23 Sep 2009.
http://www.newyorker.com/critics/books/articles/050725crbo_books

Chapter Five: POSTCOLONIAL REGENERATION

- Arendt, Hannah. *Essays on Understanding, 1930-1954: Formation, Exile, and Totalitarianism*. New York: Schocken, 2005.
- Ashcroft, Bill, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin. *The Empire Writes Back: Theory and Practice in Post-Colonial Literatures*. London: Routledge, 1989.
- Bhabha, Homi K. *The Location of Culture*. London: Routledge, 1994.
- Boehmer, Elleke. *Colonial & Postcolonial Literature: Migrant Metaphors*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005.
- . 'Networks of Resistance.' in *The Post-Colonial Studies Reader, 2nd ed.* Ed. Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths, & Helen Tiffin. London: Routledge, 2006.
- . 'Postcolonial Writing and Terror.' in *Terror and the Postcolonial: A Concise Companion*. Ed. Elleke Boehmer and Stephen Morton. Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009. 141-159. Print.
- . 'Sorry, Sorrier, Sorriest: The Gendering of Contrition in J. M. Coetzee's *Disgrace*.' In *J. M. Coetzee and the Idea of the Public Intellectual*. Ed. Jane Poyner. Athens, Ohio: Ohio UP, 2006: 135-147. Web.
- Butler, Judith. *Giving an Account of Oneself*. New York: Fordham UP, 2005.
- Coetzee, J.M. *Disgrace*. New York: Viking, 1999.
- . *Inner Workings: Essays 2000-2005*. London: Vintage, 2007.
- . *Slow Man*. London: Vintage Books, 2006.
- Fanon, Franz. *Black Skin, White Masks*, Intro. H. K. Bhabha. London: Pluto, 1986.
- Ganser, Alexandra. 'Violence, Trauma, and Cultural Memory in Leslie Silko's *Ceremony*.' *Atenea*. XXIV: 1. June 2004: 145-159.
- Gilroy, Paul. *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993.
- Gordimer, Nadine. *Beethoven Was One-Sixteenth Black and other stories*. New York: Penguin, 2007.
- . *July's People*. New York: Penguin, 1981.
- . *Jump and Other Stories*. New York: Penguin, 1992.
- . *None to Accompany Me*. New York: Penguin, 1995.
- . *Telling Times: Writing and Living, 1954-2008*. New York: W.W. Norton, 2010.
- Griffiths, Gareth. 'The Myth of Authenticity.' in *The Post-Colonial Studies Reader, 2nd ed.* ed. Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths, Helen Tiffin. London: Routledge, 2006.
- Hove, Chenjerie. *Bones*. London: Heinemann international, 1990.
- Kanaganayakam, Chelva. 'Exiles and Expatriates.' in *New National and Post-Colonial Literatures*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996.

- Keneally, Thomas. *Schindler's Ark*. London: Hodder & Stoughton, 2007.
- King, Bruce. 'New Centres of Consciousness.' *New National and Post-Colonial Literatures: An Introduction*. Oxford: Clarendon, 1996. 3-26. Print.
- Lear, Jonathan. *Radical Hope: Ethics in the Face of Radical Devastation*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2006.
- Mbembe, Achille. trans. Libby Maintjes. 'Necropolis.' *Public Culture* 15 (1) 2003: 11-40. Web. 6 Apr 2010.
- . 'The Intimacy of Tyranny.' in *The Post-Colonial Studies Reader, 2nd ed.* Ed. Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin. London: Routledge, 2006. Print. 66-70.
- Phillips, Caryl. *A New World Order: Essays*. New York: Vintage, 2002.
- Ramraj, Victor J. 'Disasporas and Multiculturalism.' *New National and Post-Colonial Literature*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996.
- Rushdy, Ashaf H. A. *Remembering Generations*. Asheville: UNC Press, 2000.
- Said, Edward W. *Reflections on Exile*. Cambridge: Harvard UP, 2000.
- . *The Edward Said Reader*. Ed. Moustafe Bayoumi and Andrew Rubin. New York: Vintage, 2000.
- Sakinofsky, Phyllis. 'Shaping the Jewish South African Story: Imprints of Memories, Shadows and Silences.' *Transnational Literature* 2.1 November 2009. Web. 19 Apr 2010.
- Sarairah, Dafer Yousif. 'Leslie Marmon Silko's Ceremony as a Viable Path of Resistance and Agency.' *Scientific Journal of King Faisal University* 4.2 (2003). 155-167. Web. 27 Aug. 2010.
- Sebald, W.G. *On the Natural History of Destruction*. New York: The Modern Library, 2003.
- Shoemaker, Adam. 'Paper Tracks: Indigenous Literatures in Canada, Australia, and New Zealand.' In *New National and Post-Colonial Literatures: An Introduction*, ed. Bruce King. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996. 245-262. Print.
- Shohat, Ella. 'Notes on the 'Post-Colonial'.' *Social Text: Third World and Post-Colonial Issues* 31/32 1992: 99-113. Web. 18 Feb 2010.
- Silko, Leslie Marmon. *Ceremony*. New York: Penguin, 1986.
- Walcott, Derek. *The Fortunate Traveller*. NYC: Farrar, Strauss & Giroux, 1981.
- Williams, Raymond. *Culture and Society: 1780-1950*. New York: Penguin, 1971.

Conclusion: THE OTHER IS ONESELF

- Adorno, Theodor. Trans. E.F.N. Jephcott. *Minima Moralia; Reflections on a Damaged Life*. London: Verso, 2006.
- Appiah, Kwame Anthony. 'Cosmopolitan Reading.' *Cosmopolitan Geographies*. Ed. Vinay Dharwadker. London and New York: Routledge, 2001. 197-227.
- Arendt, Hannah. *Origins of Totalitarianism*. New York: Meridian Books, 1964.
- Bhabha, Homi. *The Location of Culture*. London: Routledge, 1994.

- Boehmer, Elleke. 'Postcolonial Writing and Terror.' in *Terror and the Postcolonial: A Concise Companion*. Ed. Elleke Boehmer and Stephen Morton. Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009. 141-159. Print.
- Brennan, Timothy. 'The National Longing For Form.' in *The Post-Colonial Studies Reader 2nd ed.* ed. Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin. London: Routledge, 2006.
- Césaire, Aimé. 'Discourse on Colonialism.' Trans. Joan Pinkham. New York and London: Monthly Review Press, 1972. Originally published as *Discourse sur le colonialism* by Editions Presence Africaine, 1955.
- Clifford, James. 'Indigenous Articulations.' *The Post-Colonial Studies Reader, 2nd ed.* ed. Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin. London: Routledge, 2006.
- Coetzee, J.M. *Elizabeth Costello*. London: Secker & Warburg, 2003.
- . *Slow Man*. London, Vintage, 2006.
- Devadas Vijay, and Chris Prentice. 'Postcolonial Politics.' *Borderlands e-journal* 6.2: 2007. Web. 12 July 2010.
- Diala, Isadore. 'Guilt, Expiation and the Reconciliation Process in Post-Apartheid South Africa.' *Journal of Modern Literature*. 25.2. (Winter, 2001-02): 50-68. Print.
- Fee, Margery. 'Who Can Write As Other?' *The Post-Colonial Studies Reader, 2nd ed.* ed. Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin. London: Routledge, 2006.
- Gordimer, Nadine. *Beethoven Was One-Sixteenth Black and other stories*. New York: Penguin, 2007.
- . *None to Accompany Me*. New York: FSG, 1994.
- . *Telling Times: Writing and Living, 1954-2008*. New York: Norton, 2010.
- . *The Essential Gesture: Writing, Politics and Places*. London: Jonathan Cape, 1988.
- Huyssen, Andreas. *Present Pasts: Urban Palimpsests and the Politics of Memory*. Stanford: Stanford UP, 2003.
- Johnson, David and Prem Poddar, ed. *A Historical Companion To Postcolonial Thought in English*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2005.
- Kosew, Sue. "'Something terrible happened': Nadine Gordimer's The house gun and the politics of violence and recover in post-apartheid South Africa.' *Mots Pluriel* no 13; April 2000. Web. 19 October 2010.
- Lear, Jonathan. *Radical Hope: Ethics in the Face of Radical Devastation*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2006.
- Mbembe, Achille. Trans. Libby Maintjes. 'Necropolis.' *Public Culture* 15 (1) 2003: 11-40. Web. 6 Apr 2010.
- Petersen, Kirsten Holst and Anna Rutherford. 'Fossil and Psyche.' in *The Post-Colonial Studies Reader, 2nd ed.* ed. Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin. London: Routledge, 2006.
- Radhakrishnan, R. 'Theory, Democracy, and the Public Intellectual.' in *PMLA* May 2010 Volume 125.3: 785-794.
- Said, Edward W. *Culture and Imperialism*. New York: Vintage, 1994.
- . 'Reflections on Exile.' *Reflections on Exile*. Cambridge: Harvard UP, 2000.

- Sebald, W.G. *On the Natural History of Destruction*. New York: The Modern Library, 2003.
- Smith, Andrew. 'Migrancy, hybridity, and postcolonial literary studies.' in *The Cambridge Companion to Postcolonial Literary Studies*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2004.
- Smith, Zadie. 'F. Kafka, Everyman.' Rev. of *The Tremendous World I Have Inside My Head: Franz Kafka: A Biographical Essay*, by Louis Begley. *The New York Review* 17 July 2008 14-17.
- Sontag, Susan. *At the Same Time: Essays & Speeches*, New York: FSG, 2007.
- Steiner, Goerge. *In Bluebeard's Castle: Some Notes Towards the Redefinition of Culture*. New Haven: Yale, 1971.
- Suleri, Sara. 'The Rhetoric of English India.' in *The Post-Colonial Studies Reader*, 2nd ed. Ed. Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin. London: Routledge, 2006.