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Yolande M. S. Tomlinson July 29, 2010

To Fanon, With Love: Women Writers of the African Diaspora Interrupting Violence, Masculinity, and Nation-Formation

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By

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B.A., University of Pennsylvania, 2002

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An Abstract of
A Dissertation submitted to the Faculty of the
James T. Laney School of Graduate Studies of Emory University
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Abstract

To Fanon, With Love: Women Writers of the African Diaspora Interrupting Violence, Masculinity, and Nation-Formation
By Yolande M. S. Tomlinson

As the epistolary inscription of its title suggests, this project undertakes a critical task of "writing to" and "writing back to" Frantz Fanon on the issues of violence, masculinity, and nation-formation. To this end, I deploy Brian Keith Axel's formulations of "national interruption" to position African diasporic women's novels—specifically Gayl Jones's Corregidora, Tsitsi Dangarembga's Nervous Conditions, and Edwidge Danticat's Breath, Eyes, Memory— as critical interruptions to Fanon's formulations. This task unfolds in three parts. In Part I, I begin by undertaking a close reading of Fanon's two seminal texts, Black Skin, White Masks and The Wretched of the Earth, to argue that Fanon's 'masculinist' politics and drive toward mastery and nation-formation are embedded in his articulation of homelessness and the black male body as a closed-system and an agent of violence. Conceptualized through a corporeal lens, this approach contests some feminist scholars' claims that Fanon's revolutionary project offers liberatory possibilities for women and other vulnerable populations. In Part II, I place the above novels in dialogue with three key issues I find central to Fanon's project of liberation: the master/slave relationship; his revolutionary subjectivity; and, the relationship between violence and nationhood. Throughout this analysis, when the body and healing are analytically privileged above the nation, what emerges is a movement from the language of fragmented bodies (masculinist/nationalist violence) to fragmented geographical borders (diaspora) and a reconstitution of traditional masculinity, community, and belonging. In the final part, the afterword, I explicate the title as an act of "writing back to" Fanon and his feminist interpreters and outline –via Toni Morrison's Love–a new model on which to recuperate Fanon and masculinity for a contemporary feminist anti-violence politics of liberation. Ultimately, this project argues that we must be willing to 'interrupt' problematic formulations of gender—men as agents of violence, women as victims—and begin to articulate new paradigms of love, gender, and community.

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To

Rose, my first love

My family

And

Donald

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Introduction
Interrupting Fanon and His Feminist Interpreters

Today I believe in the possibility of love; that is why I endeavor to trace its imperfections, it's perversions.

Frantz Fanon, Black Skin

The incontestable assertion by various feminist scholars that "all nations are gendered" warrants a sustained engagement with nationalisms, especially those in which violence is a modus operandi.[1] As "imagined communities,"[2] nations often rely on women's bodies as literal and discursive spaces on and through which the nation's existence is articulated.[3] Such analysis necessitates merging conceptual studies of gender and the body with the actual deployment of violence as a means of asserting national agency and identity, especially masculinized identities. Identifying the constitutive grounds of the nation and the ways black/subaltern women continue to suffer and to be oppressed require a twofold approach: conceptualizing the ways gender and the body are bases for the ideological articulations of the nation; and unpacking how women suffer as a consequence of racialized nationalist struggles where gender is not overtly a concern.

Seeking to address a lacuna within contemporary feminist discussions of prominent anti-colonial theorist Frantz Fanon,[4] I situate this dissertation project, *To Fanon, With Love: Women Writers of the African Diaspora Interrupting Violence, Masculinity, and Nation-Formation*, within the above approach. Fanon's work comes out of the often-violent anti-colonial and anti-racist struggles for independence and sovereignty of the 1950s and 1960s. His work is grounded in corporeal and, hence, gender politics, particularly the resuscitation of black/subaltern masculinity through

violent national actualization. Feminist scholarship on Fanon neither addresses the relationship between his discussion of violence and the nation with his discussion of women nor has it made connections between contemporary black women writers' discussion of the body and violence and Fanon's discussion of the same issues.[5] By juxtaposing four novels from across the diaspora, Gayl Jones's Corregidora (1975), Tsitsi Dangarembga's Nervous Conditions (1988), Edwidge Danticat's Breath, Eyes, Memory (1994), and Toni Morrison's Love (2003) with Fanon's most known works, Black Skin, White Masks and The Wretched of the Earth, I argue that these novels constitute a form of "interruption" to the discourses of violence, gender, nation-formation, and healing presented in Fanon's work. Further, I argue that we must begin to move beyond discourses such as Fanon's to consider more viable sites for the articulation of racial and sexual agency. I position diasporic women's literary projects, these novels specifically, as discursive sites where these articulations are occurring. These novels offer differing concepts of consciousness, subjectivity, and community in the face of racist and colonial practices that radically challenge Fanon's appeal to violence as a necessary condition for self- and national-awakening.

Fanon and his Feminist Critics

Early feminist engagements with the work of Frantz Fanon range from examinations of Fanon's "fear" and hatred" of women (Brownmiller 1975; Young 1996) to his "elision of gender" (Bergner 1995) to his "sexist" and "patriarchal" leanings (hooks 1984; 1996). Still other scholars find Fanon's treatment of women "odd," "puzzling," or contradictory (McClintock 1995; Fuss 1995; hooks 1996), but are unwilling to dismiss

his work completely and struggle to reconcile aspects of his philosophies with their feminist positions.[6] In the introduction to their edited volume, Fanon: A Critical Reader, Fanon interpreters Lewis R. Gordon, T. Denean Sharpley-Whiting, and Renée T. White argue that such postcolonial and postmodern academic criticisms fall under "fashionable political designations such as misogynist, homophobic, anti-black, anti-Caribbean, anti-Arab, and petit bourgeois" (6).[7] In laying out what they see as the five stages of Fanonian scholarship, Gordon, Sharpley-Whiting, and White suggest that at the fifth stage, rather than "glorify" or "denigrate" Fanon, emergent scholarship should "explore ways in which he is a useful thinker," thus avoiding the 'theoretical decadence' of cultural studies work (6-7, 8).[8]

Sharpley-Whiting (1996, 1998, 1999) has emerged within Fanonian scholarship as perhaps his most ardent feminist supporter. Sharpley-Whiting falls into a second wave of feminist scholars (Elia 1996; Dubey 1998; Seshadri-Crooks 2001), whose works take up a central dilemma within critiques of Fanon's work, namely its relevance to a feminist politics of liberation. In her seminal text on Fanon, Frantz Fanon: Conflicts and Feminisms, Sharpley-Whiting addresses Euro-American and Arab feminists by (re)claiming Fanon for feminism through an emphasis on his radical humanist politics. She positions Fanon not as pro-feminist, but rather as possessing a "radically humanist profeminist *consciousness*" (24, my emphasis),[9] arguing that "Simply put, Fanon's works speak often of a 'New Humanism' profoundly grounded in the belief in '[a] social democracy in which man and woman have an equal right to culture, to material well-being, and to dignity'" (3). Rather than attempting to "rescue Fanon from the critics," Sharpley-Whiting asserts her intention as "debunking the binary erected by some

feminists between Fanon's philosophy of revolution and women's liberation" (3-4). For Sharpley-Whiting, language becomes the way to engage and limit the uses of Fanon, as it was his primary mode of engagement with patients and the world around him.[10] In order to understand the relevance of Fanon's politics to academic feminism, she asserts activism as the grounds on which to do so. Activism, she asserts, is what is lacking along with feminist rhetoric.

In an attempt to reclaim Fanon, specifically from criticism levied against Black Skin, Sharpley-Whiting posits that Fanon's work is more masculinist than anti-feminist or misogynist. Employing Joy James' definition of the term, she quotes,

> masculinism does not explicitly advocate male superiority or rigid social roles, it is not identical to patriarchal ideology. Masculinism can share patriarchy's presupposition of the male as normative without its antifemale politics and rhetoric. Men who support feminist politics, as profeminists, may advocate the equality or even occasionally for the superiority of women…. However, even without the patriarchal intent some works may replicate conventional gender roles (11).

She offers several possible explanations for the "damning evidence" cited against Fanon's anti-feminist politics such as: authors who cite as evidence his critique of Martinican writer Mayotte Capécia have not themselves read her texts, as the author herself uses the masculine pronoun to represent the feminine; critics who note Fanon's usage of cultural stereotypes to characterize white women's sexual desire towards black men fail to note that the white women whom Fanon writes about are patients and therefore psychologically disturbed; critics also fail to note that Fanon has had limited

interaction with Antillean/black women, which accounts for their absence in his text.[11] As a response to Arab feminists who see Fanon as engaged in "myth-making," Sharpley-Whiting argues that if sexual silence plagues Arab women, Fanon could not be expected to have access to or even write extensively about their sexual lives.

Kalpana Seshadri-Crooks is another second wave critic. In her essay, 'I am a Master: Terrorism, Masculinity and Political Violence in Frantz Fanon," Seshadri-Crooks advocates for a similar theory of masculinism in feminist and postcolonial readings of WOE. She argues that for Fanon, "political resistance, both in its spontaneous and organized forms, is often founded upon a reconstruction of masculinism and a restructuring of gender relations within native society" (84).[12] Unlike Sharpley-Whiting, however, Seshadri-Crooks does not offer masculinism as a defense of or an apology for Fanon's shortcomings. Instead, she uses it to highlight the precarious relationship in his work, and elsewhere, between black male sexuality and (black) female agency. Locating Fanon's sexual and gender politics in the body and the way that the colonial relationship shatters the black male image of himself, Seshadri-Crooks argues that masculinism is "an integral part of Fanon's resistance to colonialism which for him is ideologically marked by the manipulation of sexual difference and gender politics." Coming out of the anti-colonial upheavals of the 1950s and 1960s, according to Seshadri-Crooks, for Fanon, "political struggle and national sovereignty were unimaginable without the rehabilitation of masculinity" (96). Fanon's masculinity, she contends, is not just male-focused, but imagined as a new humanism for all—blacks and whites, males and females.

While both Sharpley-Whiting and Seshadri-Crooks locate their gendered readings of Fanon in the notion of masculinism, they do not adequately address the emergence of

deeply troubling formulations of women in Fanon's work from a feminist perspective. Noting that her essay does not address Black Skin, the text that is often the site of feminist contentions with Fanon, Seshadri-Crooks points out that her discussion does not include the "neutral use of the male pronoun, [Fanon's] idealization of women and his homophobia, or his dismissal of the 'woman of colour'" (94). Although she rightly locates Fanon's advocacy of violence and national revolution in the muscularity of the body, Seshadri-Crooks, nevertheless, inadequately considers the usefulness and/or dangers of this politics for feminism because her analysis of masculinity centers on the male body exclusively. On the other hand, Sharpley-Whiting rigorously defends nearly every troubling formulation of women in Black Skin; though, ironically, she reclaims Fanon for feminism through WOE. Despite their efforts to reclaim Fanon, the mediated agency Anne McClintock notes, Fanon's disavowal of homosexuality in himself and Martinique, and the dismissal of the 'woman of colour' cannot be ignored or explained away through lack of access to specific populations. Rather, these issues manifest as symptoms of a masculinism that does not acknowledge feminist concerns as integral to its project of liberation and one that is predicated on a hetero-masculine conceptualization of subjectivity.

Published in the same year as Sharpley-Whiting's and prior to Seshadri-Crooks' works on Fanon, feminist and literary scholar Madhu Dubey offers a measured defense of Fanon, albeit from a different angle. In "The 'True Lie' of the Nation: Fanon and Feminism," Dubey argues that "Fanon's discussion of nationalism in WOE and A Dying Colonialism does not necessarily preclude a feminist politics" (2). In fact, Fanon's failure to make connections, for example, between the compartmentalization of colonial

space and the gendered division of space for Algerian women is "clearly an error of omission," asserts Dubey (2). After an extensive and nuanced examination of the multiple and contradictory appearances of women in the aforementioned texts, Dubey concludes that "Fanon […] often expresses himself in a frenzy of irrational passion because he knows that the nation must constitute itself in the image of the Enlightenment, even as the very mention of Western values produces 'a sort of stiffening or muscular lockjaw' in the native" (23). Ultimately, one of the points of Dubey's argument is that postcolonial feminist politics can be reconciled with Fanonian politics through the "true lie" or contradictory process of decolonizing nationalism.

Dubey presents a well articulated and convincing argument for reconciling postcolonial feminist politics with Fanonian politics. However, the "true lie" of the nation in which she resolves Fanon's contradictions around women requires further unpacking. First, Dubey observes that when it comes to discussions of gender in Fanon he is most vulnerable to feminist critique in his "feminization of the peasantry" (13). Later she argues that Fanon's discourse on tradition and modernity stumbles when it comes in contact with the peasantry and women: "women and the peasantry constitute the stress-points of Fanon's nationalist discourse" (20). Dubey reconciles these two areas of vulnerability through an appeal to a fundamental contradiction inhered in decolonizing nationalism, or what she identifies as the "true lie" of the nation. Accordingly, the "true lie" of the nation is Fanon's "marvelous" term for "the contradictory space, both within and outside the province of secular rationality" (21). What Dubey overlooks is that this space of contradiction, or "epistemological paradox" (21), and the emergence of women happen at politically expedient moments, as Clare Counihan's examination of women in

Fanon's work has shown. As well, at the sites of contradiction and complexity Dubey notes, women and the peasantry are being tasked with the burden of carrying the "true lie" of the nation into being. Dubey does not explore how Fanon's text produces women as a site of fragmentation in ways that he secures a whole, coherent subjectivity for men. Because of these oversights, she does not consider or gesture towards the consequences for those women who refuse to bear this contradiction or who outright challenge it. Essentially, she does not address the nexus of women and violence as central to this paradox of the nation.

Re-Reading Fanon, Rethinking a Feminist Analysis

Situated within a still-unfolding third wave of feminist scholarship on Fanon's work (Wright 2004; Counihan 2007), this dissertation addresses some key concerns in the works of Dubey, Sharply-Whiting, and Seshadri-Crooks. To accomplish this, I undertake a comprehensive examination of the multiple imbrications of gender, violence, and nation-formation in Fanon's most discussed works. Dubey and Seshadri-Crooks, for example, take the nation as a given and do not question whether the quest to secure it is the best or most productive approach for women, or men for that matter. Both scholars neither interrogate the nation as a legitimate discourse of difference nor ask whether his system is wholly supportive of feminist epistemologies in quite the same way as it is of masculinist and patriarchal discourses.[13] In not addressing these concerns, both works inadequately attend to feminist concerns of violence, subject-formation, and community and belonging. While I support Sharpley-Whiting's desire not to place feminism in opposition to nationalism or women in opposition to men, she, nevertheless, completely overlooks the issue of violence in Fanon's work and how to reconcile that with feminist

anti-violence discourses and projects. The oversights in the above interpretations arise primarily from the analytical model employed by these scholars. In what follows, I outline five conditions I find necessary for fully conceptualizing the issues of violence, masculinity, and nation-formation in Fanon's work.

The first issue that frustrates a full understanding of how these discourses materialize in Fanon's work arises from the process of textual analysis scholars undertake. Often Black Skin emerges as the text that seals Fanon's fate as misogynist or anti-feminist and WOE becomes the text that restores his revolutionary proclivities. Seshadri-Crooks, for example, privileges revolutionary violence in WOE and by implication, works backwards to Black Skin, while Sharpley-Whiting defends Black Skin from attacks, but locates his "pro-feminist consciousness" in WOE. A Dying Colonialism, specifically the opening essay, "Algeria Unveiled," also emerges as a text to secure or at least complicate discussions of Fanon's anti-feminism.[14] Dubey, for example, uses WOE to defend the contradictions she finds in A Dying Colonialism. While the move to place Fanon's two primary texts, Black Skin and WOE, in conversation is useful and generative, *To Fanon, With Love* argues that we must begin with an understanding of the trajectory of violence in Black Skin in order to understand its development in WOE in all its complexities—not just in its revolutionary impulses.

Second, reading Black Skin and WOE together requires careful attention to possible conflations of formerly enslaved and formerly colonized peoples, the foci of the first and the last text, respectively. While these groups share concerns regarding disruption of home spaces, struggles for ownership of the body, and forced labor, among other concerns, they can be markedly different, a difference that is key in any assessment

of Fanon's oeuvre and its influence. One of the primary reasons this conflation happens is because Fanon himself conflates the two, most notably in his insistence on the collective and, therefore, universal nature of racism, as when he asks, "Is there in truth any difference between one racism and another?" (Black Skin 86). While such a conflation has allowed, and continues to allow, marginalized peoples and groups to make political and social justice claims that built productive alliances across national borders and cultural differences, it also truncated claims of gender and sexuality as divisive and secondary and elided differences among various groups' experiences of colonialism. To unconsciously read Fanon in this way is to ignore the specific ways in which he has been able to write about women differently located within colonial systems of power, as well. Fanon did, most likely unintentionally, write differently about black/Caribbean women and Algerian women. On one hand, Algerian women whose activism he saw as "an authentic birth in a pure state" became legitimate reproducers of the nation, while on the other hand,[15] black/Caribbean women's desire for recognition is figured as a desire to "lactify" or whiten the race and thus corrupt the nation.

Third, past works have focused on Fanon's sexism or his deployment of masculinism instead of the system of gender and sexuality that underpins his formulations. Conceptualizing this system of gender necessitates a simultaneous assessment of femininity and masculinity in Fanon's work. While scholars are willing to place nationalism and feminism in conversation, it is counterproductive to a discussion of liberation to talk about Fanon's treatment of women without also attending to his construction of masculinity. Relatedly, a focus on men and masculinity at the expense of women and homosexuals risks replicating Fanon's erasures of both groups. Explicating

his system of gender also requires attending to the ways in which violence becomes constitutive of subjectivity and Fanonian masculinity.

Fourth, the often specious binary erected between literary and political works need to be breached to understand how the two fields can inform each other. I place Fanon's work in conversation with diasporic women writers' works, which address multiple identities and discourses simultaneously and which speak to the need to promote feminist projects that advance the causes of both black/subaltern men and women. When placed in communication with Fanon's work, these novels expose Fanon's own discourse as woefully one-dimensional and inadequate when it comes to speaking to women's lived-realities and imagined communities. Putting Fanon as a political theorist in conversation with diasporic women writers means acknowledging that Fanon's only sustained treatment of women in Black Skin is through the literary and semi-autobiographical works of Mayotte Capécia. As well, Fanon himself deploys the creative works of African American novelists Chester Himes and Richard Wright and of Caribbean writers Amie Césaire and René Maran. Placing these two approaches to subjectivity and belonging in dialogue acknowledges, as well, that Fanon's work was not solely about material access but about discursive access, which the novel dramatizes.

Lastly, in addition to his positioning within postcolonial and black Atlantic discourses, I want to suggest that we begin to read the works of Frantz Fanon along lines of black nationalist discourse based on his historical location, the late 1940's to the early 1960's, on his physical location in the Caribbean and later North Africa, as well as on the dominant issues of his work: violence, nation-formation, and gender and sexuality. As a precursor to black nationalist movements such as those in the U.S., Fanon helped to usher

in a modern black radical tradition; one that juxtaposes action, i.e. violence, with rhetorical strategies for resisting white western practices and ideologies.[16] In particular, Fanon fits within the trajectory of radical, revolutionary responses to western conceptual models of blackness, which would include historical precursors such as Maroon societies in Jamaica and Brazil, the Haitian Revolution, and numerous and varied slave and colonial revolts. The fact that Fanon's WOE is said to have been a veritable bible of the U.S. Black Nationalist movements is not coincidental; rather, it indicates a political strategy and ideological link between Fanon and those movements in the Americas, Africa, Asia, and elsewhere across the globe. In essence, Fanon gave voice and expression to revolutionary impulses that were evident across the world, and that were yet to come. Significantly, then, this radical voice of revolutionary action can be traced across Fanon's writings. Conversely, the influence of the U.S. black radical tradition, most notably the works of Richard Wright and Chester Himes, is present in Black Skin and the legacy of which is discernable in WOE and his other writings on violence and nationalism.

Reading Fanon within a discourse of racialized nationalism allows us to examine his writings in a wider context. Most notably, the recent works of Robin Kelley and Nikhil Pal Singh allow us to place Fanon within the scope of a global black nationalist struggle, and correspondingly place African-American struggles for civil rights within a transnational framework. In his effort to revise the historiography of the black power struggles within the United States, Kelley, for example, argues that a significant, but salient, part of the movement was its voicing of "revolution, socialism, self-determination, and armed struggle […] that looked to the Third World for models of

black liberation" (68-9). Among those models they found the works of Frantz Fanon, most notably WOE. Fanon, along with other third-world theorists and revolutionaries, are the precursors to the more discussed U.S.-based Black Nationalist and Black Power movements. Locating Fanon within a global black nationalist struggle, and not only in an anti-colonial struggle, links him with other racialized struggles for self-determination not only those resulting in national independence. Such a positioning further encapsulates Fanon in a trajectory of calls for basic human and citizenship rights, which, depending on the historical epoch, take different forms. Additionally, the extensive work by U.S.-based black feminist scholars on U.S. black nationalist discourse helps to shed light on the particular manifestations of the feminine within Fanon's work, particularly as black revolutionaries have deployed aspects of Fanon's work.

Black Women Writers "Interrupting" Fanon

In positioning Fanon under a global black nationalist discourse, we can then come to see black women's literary projects, in part, as challenges to those conceptions of women, violence, sexuality, and a number of other concerns represented in racialized nationalist discourses. This particular mode of writing or "talking back," to borrow bell hooks' expression, to male nationalists is well documented between African American women writers and U.S. black male nationalists.[17] However, the case is yet to be made for a similar exchange within the context of the larger African diaspora. Drawing on Brain Keith Axel's formulation of the relationship between the nation-state and the diaspora, I position black women's writings in relation to nationalist discourses as "national interruptions."[18] Axel situates diaspora as that which challenges the limits of

the nation-state as opposed to constituting an 'other' or threat within it. Black women's writing, then, can be seen as a challenge to or "interruption" of nationalist discourse, which continues to produce feminist concerns as its own 'other'.

Axel explains interruptions thus:

> Interruption draws attention to the pulsation of discontinuity and displacement […] Through its repetitive motion, or insistent repetition, the interruption constitutes not only a threatening visage of discontinuity and incommensurability, but also the desire of adequation, assimilation, or totality (248).

Axel's formulations of interruption refuses the incorporation of difference into an undifferentiated whole. Interruption functions both as other ("threatening visage of discontinuity") and in its desire for "adequation" or "assimilation" reflects the potential for incorporation. Placing women's writings within the framework of diaspora serves to highlight the challenges this discourse poses to conceptions of the nation, while simultaneously acknowledging their desire for incorporation in the nation-state, i.e. as fully actualized citizens. Feminist 'national interruptions' challenge the limits of the formation of the modern nation-state and its attendant discourses of hetero-normativity, patriarchal masculinity, and violence. Examined in a diasporic framework, black women's writing becomes a kind of 'national interruption' willing to contest black males' views of black women as threats to the formation of the black nation. Such a reading also situates these writers and their texts simultaneously within and outside the discourse of the nation-state.

To Fanon, With Love examines black women's writings in what Hazel Carby calls a "comparative framework of world literature constituted in and by anti-colonial and anti-

imperialist politics" (134).[19] These writers are not solely engaged in challenging masculinity and patriarchy, but also colonialist and imperialist discourses. To this end, I call upon Mae Henderson's formulation of the dialogic nature of black women's discourses. Henderson explicates the multiple ways in which black women, and I would add subaltern women, are forced to speak. According to her, as black and female, black women writers are informed by both "hegemonic and (non)hegemonic discourses, but they must also be cognizant of the dominant perceptions of themselves as the 'other'" (21).[20]

Extrapolating Henderson's formulations from the African American context to the larger African diaspora, we can better understand and appreciate the multiple ways women writers of the diaspora speak to or challenge violent, masculinist, and nationalist discourses. A primary vehicle for facilitating this process is through an exploration of the body—its exposure and vulnerability to violence, its ability to heal after trauma, its constitution in discourse, its embattled position as a site of struggle. A turn to the body is not a turning away from voice or language, nor is it a turn to wholeness or completeness. This corporeal turn is a turn to health and wellness. It recognizes that subjectivity is an iterative process assailed at all angles and under which the body must function. To this end, I employ a twofold strategy of analysis in which I account for not just the body under attack, but the body in search of reconciliation and wellness. Moving away from a Fanonian model of violence as therapeutic, generative, and libratory, this framework of analysis privileges the body (as opposed to the nation) as a viable site of investigation. It asks: in what ways are individuals disciplined under nationalist ideologies to seek out

race-specific and sex-specific bodies as well as hetero-specific routes, thus prolonging or foreclosing the space(s) of healing or reconciliation?

In what follows, I begin the work of placing Fanon and women writers of the African diaspora in conversation. The dissertation is organized in two parts. In Part I, which consists of chapter one, "Masculine Violence as National (Be)longing," I take Kalpana Seshadri-Crooks' essay, "'I am a Master': Terrorism, Masculinity, and Political Violence in Frantz Fanon," as an opportunity to engage the issues of violence, masculinity, and nation-formation in Fanon's two seminal texts, Black Skin and WOE. Unlike Sharpley-Whiting and Madhu Dubey's works attempt to place women within the purview of nationalist politics, Seshadri-Crooks challenges, instead, the subject and, thus, the methodology of feminism. By employing a close reading strategy, I critically engage Fanon's uses of and allusions to the Hegelian master-slave dialectic, tracing one trajectory of the way we might begin to recognize the connections between Black Skin and WOE. In the process, the goal is to uncover the rhetorical strategies that buttress Fanon's system of gender and sexuality in Black Skin and how they reemerge and manifest in his articulation of the revolutionary subject and his argument on the necessity and value of violence and nation-formation in WOE. I contend that Fanon's appeal to violence and the nation is grounded in his personal experiences of subjective and linguistic homelessness and his desire to restore the black male body as a closed system and an agent of violence. These formulations then cannot be separated from his masculinist rhetoric in WOE. The chapter dislodges the notion by Seshadri-Crooks and Sharpley-Whiting that Fanon's conceptualization of liberation actually provides for women's liberation. Instead, I elucidate how such masculinist frameworks unwittingly

participate in leaving women submerged within the social proper and exposed to further violence.

In Part II, which consists of chapters two, three, and four, I shift the approach to place women's literary projects in conversation with three key concepts within Fanon's work: his conception of the colonized subject, the revolutionary subject, and the nation. If Part I begins the task of direct engagement with Fanon's work by deploying the five conditions I outlined for a contemporary feminist analysis of Fanon, then Part II completes that task by placing Fanon in conversation with women's literary projects, demonstrating the ways we might begin to move aspects of Fanon's project forward. These novels bring together women's lives in whole and coherent ways that stand in stark contrast to their marginal representations in political or theoretical works. Such works generally take men and their worlds as the subject and women become ancillary to their agenda.

The goal throughout Part II is to explicate how these novels address the same concerns as Fanon, but by centering women's experiences of violence at the hands of men and slavery, colonialism, and nationalism, they arrive at radically different positions that do not reinforce their experiences of and vulnerability to violence. Each chapter examines the multiple ways the nation is re-imagined and transformed as it passes through, or is experienced in the feminine body. Together, these chapters make the argument that when women's lives are placed center stage we avoid the work of having to account for their fragmented and violated lives through masculinist frameworks. Correspondingly, when the body and healing are analytically privileged above the nation, what emerges is a movement from the language of fragmented bodies

(revolutionary/nationalist violence) to fragmented geographical borders (diaspora). Additionally, an exploration of the health and wellness of the female body and mind, or the process to achieving such, highlights a deep seated desire for a reconstitution of traditional masculinity, community, and belonging.

In chapter two specifically, "Rethinking Fanonian Subjectivity through the Portrayal of Black Sexual Politics in Gayl Jones's Corregidora," I draw upon Gayl Jones's Corregidora to engage Fanon's historical and cultural subject in Black Skin. Fanon states explicitly that he does not know anything about "the psychosexuality of the woman of color" and that in the master-slave relationship, the master does not want recognition from the black slave; he wants work. I begin the chapter by arguing that Fanon's initial conceptualization of the black subject—historically and culturally—does not fully account for black women, who were subjected to sexual labor (not just manual labor as Fanon contends). I go on to position Jones's engagement of Fanon not only through her re-articulation of the master-slave relationship, but also through the discourse of the black power movement, which drew heavily on Fanon's WOE. Using sexual labor as my heuristic device, I map out the ways in which Jones juxtaposes the master/slave relationship with the male/female relationship. In this pairing, Jones displaces the Hegelian dialectic through an appeal to the blues dialectic. As such, she ruptures the circularity of violence contained in Hegel's dialectic and gestures towards the possibility of mutual reconciliation between her characters, Ursa Corregidora and her lover Mutt Thomas. In this way, the novel begins to move beyond the violence that Fanon comes to embed in the structure of the nation-state.

Chapter three, "Dangarembga's Corrective to Fanon's Revolutionary Project," undertakes the task of examining Fanon's revolutionary project of nation-formation through the prism of his violent revolutionary subject. Through an emphasis on the concepts of twining and doubling, I assert that Tsitsi Dangarembga recasts Fanon's revolutionary project in the mold of two young Rhodesian girls, Nyasha and Tambu, and their quest of liberation and education. I assert that Dangarembga recasts the uncompromising Nyasha and her drive towards self-destruction as Fanon's revolutionary subject. In the novel's portrayal of Nyasha's madness and its insistence that her rebellion may not have been successful, Dangarembga displaces Fanon's revolutionary subject and project as another destructive colonial condition. Instead, I argue that she installs the less volatile but equally critical and adaptive character, Tambu, as an African feminist model of postcolonial futurity, thus displacing the drive towards violence that is characteristic of Fanon's project and subject.

As with chapters two and three, in chapter four, "Diaspora, Sexual Violence, and Healing in Edwidge Danticat's Breath, Eyes, Memory," I carry on the work of charting the various routes women seek out in their quest for subjectivity and health. Focusing on the mother-daughter dyads of Grandma Ifé and Atie and Martine and Sophie, I argue that Danitcat's Breath, Eyes, Memory positions transnational migration as a source of healing. In this way, it displaces the emphasis that Fanon's places on the nation as the space of identity and belonging for the black/subaltern subject. In the process, I highlight the troubling and abusive elements of the nation that often coerce women's participation and cooperation. By charting each daughter's journey to find self and her individual relationship to her mother('s)land, both of which are deeply rooted in her ability to cross

borders, maneuver within space, and form transnational communities, we can better understand the function of migration in women's quest for freedom and sexual health as a mode of diaspora making, and hence an interruption of (Haitian) nationalist discourse. As well, the novels underscoring of the various discourses of violence that impact the women's lives and, relatedly, their quests to find avenues of wellness belie Fanon's contention that national violence is therapeutic and creative.

In the afterword, "To Fanon, With Love," I begin the task of shifting old paradigms of masculinity and feminist engagement with male nationalists. I deploy love as an epistemological and ethical ground of engagement, reflecting both Fanon's commitment to the subject as well as a feminist approach to engaging men and masculinity through non-antagonism. Such an approach asks: how do we utilize love as an ethic of incorporation, absent of violence, as the main engine of a liberation politics? Here I explicate the title of this dissertation, "To Fanon, With Love," as a critical act of "writing back" to masculinist and nationalist formulations of women, violence, and love. The titular use of love couples Fanon's engagement of the subject with Morrison's novel, Love, which I utilize as an opportunity to consider some of the larger questions of the dissertation and to offer a contemporary example of how we might shift the conceptual and narrative terrain of healing and liberation to consider a wider constituency beyond the violent, aggressive masculine—though conscious not to leave the masculine behind.

Throughout the dissertation, I attempt to show how the models upon which Fanon has built his theory of revolutionary, cathartic violence is deeply and problematically embedded with a European, hetero-masculine model of self, fraternity, and, by extension, community, or nationhood. In accepting Fanon's conclusion, namely that violence can

be therapeutic or cathartic to the racial/colonized subject, we unwittingly, and at times uncritically, peddle in leaving women, gays, and other vulnerable populations submerged within his system of self-awakening and community-formation. *To Fanon, With Love* begins the task of critical feminist engagement with the work Frantz Fanon by highlighting those problematic elements in Fanon's work that signal dangerous possibilities for women and other groups, while articulating a paradigm of love through which to engage Fanon for a contemporary feminist liberation agenda—an agenda that is not hostile towards men and masculinity, but one that looks to displace old models.

Notes

[1]For a discussion of the relationship between nationalism and gender, see Anne McClintock's "No Longer in a Future Heaven: Nationalism, Gender, and Race" in Imperial Leather: Race, Gender, and Sexuality in the Colonial Contest*;* Kumari Jayawardena's Feminism and Nationalism in the Third World; Niral Yudal-Davis' Gender and Nation; Ann Laura Stoler, "Making Empire Respectable: The Politics of Race and Sexual Morality in Twentieth Century Colonial Cultures;" Deniz Kandiyoti, "Identity and Its Discontents: Women and the Nation;" and Vanaja Dhruvarajan and Jill Vickers, Gender, Race, and Nation: A Global Perspective.

[2] See Benedict Anderson's Imagine Communities: Reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism (1983).

[3] See Yudal-Davis, McClintock, Neluka Silva

[4] There are a slew of feminist writings on gender in the work of Frantz Fanon: Anne McClintock's "No Longer in a in a Future Heaven: Gender, Race, and Nationalism," Diana Fuss's "Interior Colonies: Frantz Fanon and the Politics of Identification," bell hooks' "Feminism as a Persistent Critique of History: What's Love Got to Do With It?", T. Denean Sharpley-Whiting's Frantz Fanon: Conflicts and Feminisms, Kalpana Seshadri-Crooks' "'I am a Master': Masculinity and Political Violence in Fanon," Gwen Bergner's "Who is that Masked Woman? Or, The Role of Gender in Fanon's Black Skin, White Masks," Madhu Dubey's "The 'True Lie' of the Nation: Fanon and Feminism," Michelle Wright's Becoming Black, Clare Counihan's "Reading the Figure of Woman in African Literature: Psychoanalysis, Difference, and Desire." This list does not include Arab feminists who have engaged Fanon specifically on his writings on the Algerian war nor does it include male scholars who have similarly engaged Fanon.

[5] Nadia Elia's "Violent Women: Surging into Forbidden Quarters" stand as an exception to this. But, as I go on to demonstrate in chapter one specifically and the entire dissertation generally, Elia does not address the subordination of women necessary for Fanon's articulation of violence in The Wretched of the Earth and her essay does not address, from a feminist perspective, the "adoption of physical or psychological violence by women," which she notes is necessary in order to render her position as liberatory (163). See Fanon: A Critical Reader, eds. Gordon, Sharpley-Whiting and White.

[6] Much of this criticism, including Arab/Muslim feminists' grievances against fanon, is captured in T. Denean Sharpley-Whiting's rejoinder to these scholars, Frantz Fanon: Conflicts and Feminisms.

[7] Introduction. Lewis R. Gordon, T. Denean Sharpley-Whiting, and Renee T. White, eds. Fanon: A Critical Reader. Cambridge: Blackwell, 1996.

[8] See Gordon, Sharpley-Whiting, and White, Fanon: A Critical Reader.

[9] Sharpley, T. Denean. Frantz Fanon: Conflicts and Feminisms. New York: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, 1996.

[10] Sharpley-Whiting grounds her support of Fanon in three prevailing concerns: language, activism, and masculinism. Of the first, for example, she writes, "Language was the primary instrument through which Fanon observed racism and alienation. Through words of patients, the words of novelists, the words of children, women, and men, and the unwritten but spoken Antillean rules that governed the most intimate of social relations were the prisms that enabled Fanon to shed light on racist cultures and the colonized psyche" (9-10). Importantly, or ironically, my method of engaging Fanon will be through his words, of which I will undertake a close reading in the chapter one.

[11] For the moment, I note these as rhetorical and analytical strategies that Sharpley-Whiting deploys in her defense of Fanon; however, in the first chapter of this project, I draw on Fanon's biography to point out how these strategies fail to be compelling.

[12] Seshadri-Crooks, Kalpana. "'I am a Master': Terrorism, Masculinity, and Political Violence in Frantz Fanon." Parallax 8.2 (2002): 84-98.

[13] Clare Counihan identifies this focus on a single-issue approach to nation-formation as in part due to "the pressures of political urgency." She goes on, however, to assert that, "it is also a consequence of the epistemological groundings of postcolonial theory, in which the fear of desire dispersed away from the nation drives the discourse to exclude all other alternatives. In order to account fully for the multiple realities of a postcolonial identity we must begin to both acknowledge and allow for the differences of identities and desires that inform the postcolonial subject" (163). While this is true of postcolonial studies, the field is not exceptional in this respect as African-American studies, for example, also suffers in this

way. See Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham's essay, "African-American Women's History and the Metalanguage of Race," for a discussion of how race can monopolize the discussion of difference.

[14] In one graduate seminar, for example, I announced that I would be undertaking an examination of masculinity and violence in Black Skin and Wretched and the instructor prompted me to include "Algeria Unveiled" because this is the essay in which Fanon "redeems himself" as far as women are concerned.

[15] See A Dying Colonialism, p. 50.

[16] Here W. E. B. Du Bois and Negritudists such as Amié Césaire stand out as contemporaries of Fanon who offer counter discursive strategies. For a discussion of how these two figures in particular compare to Fanon on this issue, see Michelle Wright's Becoming Black. Fanon also balked at the idea of a black modern identity that centered on recovering a history and identity prior to European domination.

[17] See various works by black feminist scholars and activists such as bell hooks, Madhu Dubey's Black Women Novelists and the Black Nationalist Aesthetic, Tracey Matthews and Barbara Ransby, E. Frances White, Patricia Hills-Collins, Toni Cade Bambara's anthology, The Black Woman, The Combahee River Collective's Statement, among many others.

[18] Axel, Brian Keith. "National Interruption: Diaspora Theory and Multiculturalism in the UK." Cultural Dynamics 14.3: 235-256.

[19] Carby, Hazel. "Reinventing Histories/Imagining the Future." In Cultures in Babylon: Black Britain and African America. New York: Verso, 1999.

[20]Henderson, Mae G. "Speaking in Tongues: Dialogics, Dialectics, and the Black Woman Writer's Literary Tradition." Changing Our Own Words. Ed. Cheryl A. Wall. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1989. 16-37.

Part I

Chapter One

Rebirth of a Nation: Masculine Violence as National (Be)longing

Discussions that focus on women or sexism exclusively necessarily miss the economy of gender in Frantz Fanon's work, particularly the work around the black male body and sexuality.[1] Conversely, works that single-mindedly focus on Fanon's "revolutionary politics" often elide troubling formulations of violence and masculinity and risk replicating disquieting models of masculinity and heterocentrism. Perhaps more importantly, such analyses continue to replicate a troubling dilemma within feminist and anti-racist discourses that is yet to be addressed: how do we begin to talk about female agency with respect to the male body and sexuality, and conversely, how do we begin to talk about male agency with respect to the female body and sexuality?[2] This chapter seeks not only to account for Fanon's trajectory of violence, but goes beyond his treatment of women to include his articulation of black masculinity and how that construction is intimately tied into his theory of violence and postcolonial nation-formation.

Masculinism emerges as a primary tool for feminist scholars attempting to unequivocally explain or excuse Fanon's troubling gender politics. In an effort to separate her defense of Fanon from fellow Fanonian interpreter T. Denean Sharpley-Whiting, Kalpana Seshadri-Crooks asserts that scholars should "stop denying Fanon's masculinism or even apologizing for it," rather, they should, as she does, "acknowledge Fanon's masculinism and contextualize it historically as a strategy that arises from *his* analysis of the nature of colonialism and resistance to it" (93, my emphasis). In her essay,

"'I am a Master': Terrorism, Masculinity, and Political Violence in Frantz Fanon," Seshadri-Crooks argues that Fanon's work may not be "free of sexist implications" (96). However, she notes that her analysis of Fanon's deployment of masculinism omits a slew of grievances against him that can be labeled sexism or misogyny. As well, she separates Fanon's discourse of revolution from his biography, and she locates her argument in "the libidinal urgency, the messianic tone, the collected yet rousing rhetoric, the testosterone driven politics" of Fanon's work (93). For Seshadri-Crooks, Fanon's masculinism rests at the level of the metaphorical, and the recuperation of black/subaltern women rest in Fanon's particular interpretation of the colonial politics of gender and sexuality.

Seshadri-Crooks' approach to the study of gender and nation agency becomes a critically important site of intervention in feminist discussions of Fanon because she is one of a few scholars to tackle gender, specifically masculinity, and violence in Fanon's work. However, responding to the central claim of her work that "'our' salvation as women rests" in Fanon's appeal to a 'new man' requires excavating the multiple and complicated ways gender, violence, and nationalism meander throughout Black Skin, White Mask and remerges in the The Wretched of the Earth. Addressing Black Skin, White Masks, however, means attending to those very issues—feminist grievances against Fanon and his biography—that Seshadri-Crooks omits. As this chapter goes on to demonstrate, Fanon's approach to rehabilitating black masculinity and subaltern/black humanity in The Wretched of the Earth rests on a prior claim of gender mastery that is grounded in a specific construction of the black male body as a closed system and an agent of violence, already to be found in Black Skin, White Masks. As such, the birth of the postcolonial nation becomes coextensive with protection of the black/subaltern

heterosexual male body. Ultimately, I contend that Fanon's position vis-à-vis black male agency and national liberation does not offer a path to healing, or salvation, for black/subaltern women and other marginalized groups despite the claims bolstered by such critics as T. Denean Sharpley-Whiting and Kalpana Seshadri-Crooks.[3] In fact, scholars such as Seshadri-Crooks end up reaffirming disquieting models of liberation that unwittingly blame women for the competing discourses of violence and nationalism that seek to co-opt and commodify their bodies and voice.

Linguistic Homelessness, Subjective Homelessness[4]

Black Skin, White Masks (hereafter Black Skin), Fanon's first book, is structured as a series of responses to then-prevailing constructions of blackness. Throughout, Fanon takes on a number of interlocutors including Jean-Paul Sartre, Dominique O. Mannoni, Mayotte Capécia, Sigmund Freud, and G. W. F. Hegel; these are figures whose discourses on race and subjectivity dominated his historical moment. Each chapter essentially revises key constructions of black subjectivity and black desiring. Even though Fanon writes that only a psychoanalytic model can explain the condition of "the black", dismantling G. W. F. Hegel's dialectical model of subject-formation is his aim, and it informs the structure of the text. While not explicitly trumpeting his intentions, Fanon begins Black Skin by addressing the Hegelian dialectic. Expressing his view of the dialectic as a "concern with the elimination of a *vicious cycle*," he states that "man is not merely a possibility of recapture or of *negation*" (10, 8, my emphases). In this way, Fanon invokes the dialectic that posits whiteness (or mastery) as thesis and blackness (or slavery) as its antithesis. It is here that Fanon departs from his contemporaries—Senghor, Césaire, Du Bois, et al—who tried to resolve this dialectic through a reclamation of its

negation.[5] For Fanon, "man is a *yes* that vibrates to cosmic harmonies" (8, emphasis in original). Thus, to claim its negation is a phenomenological perversion; in Sartrean terms, it is to inhabit a false consciousness or to exist as an inauthentic being. As such, reclaiming an affirmative position is his aim. As I will demonstrate later, this affirmation comes to fruition in the reclamation of the nation-state.

While the text critically revises the above thinkers and constructions, Fanon's positions are based on personal experiences, cultural anecdotes, media representations, and, to a lesser extent, clinical encounters. As David Macey reveals in his biography of Fanon, Frantz Fanon: A Life, by 1952, the publication date of Black Skin, Fanon had not yet sat for his psychiatric exams (152); this indicates he could not yet have been practicing.[6] Fanon himself writes in Black Skin that the manuscript was written seven years prior (1945). It was originally submitted as his medical school dissertation, but was rejected on the grounds of its "experimental" nature (Macey 138). Moreover, Fanon published Black Skin upon his final return from Martinique, a place that he had mixed emotions about, not least because Fanon believed Martinique never rose up against its former colonial master, France.[7] Although Fanon insists that his formulations are representative of the Antilles and blacks generally, such as when he rhetorically inquires, "Is there in truth any difference between one racism and another" (86), the subject of Black Skin is both personal and decidedly Martinican or (French) West Indian, and so must be assessed within these parameters.[8]

In the same biography, Macey positions Black Skin as a "bricolage," or as a text in which Fanon uses "elements of a then modernist philosophy and psychoanalysis to explore and analyze his own situation and experience" (163). As Macey clarifies that his

use of the term is not meant to disparage either Fanon of his text, I would also point out that my positioning of the text along the same lines is not meant to disparage neither one, but to highlight the personal nature of the text. Feminists, for example, have always held that the personal is political, and the same is true here of Fanon's use of the personal. Read in this way, I situate the text more as a semi-autobiographical text than as an ethnographical work of Caribbean masculinity, elucidating how Fanon's personal conflicts come to inform his political articulations. For example, Macey points out that Fanon's relationship to Martinique was "complex and tormented" (31),[9] and it is often at the center of his writing. It is his relationship to Martinique and its impact on his theorizing that I find most fruitful to this study. Specifically, Fanon's articulation of homelessness comes to inform his construction of the threatened black male body and his subsequent turn to violence, represented in this text as a drive towards risk.

Homelessness surfaces in Black Skin as a consequence of the psycho-physical dislocation that results from the conditions of racism and colonialism. One of the ways that this manifestation of homelessness gets overlooked is through a focus on alienation, or that which Fanon explains as a state of being "duped" or deceived (29). However, focusing solely on psychological deception does not permit us to acknowledge the physical alienation that racism and colonialism produce for people such as Fanon who know of this trickery and so cannot comfortably claim Martinique or France as home.[10] In her exploration of blacks' responses to western constructions of race, Michelle Wright argues that Fanon reads the drive in the Hegelian dialectic as one towards upheaval as opposed to longing (116).[11] I, too, acknowledge the drive towards upheaval, but I contend that it cannot be separated from (be)longing. Wright's reading is applicable to Black

Skin, but if we trace the dialectic to The Wretched of the Earth (hereafter WOE), we begin to recognize the drive towards longing/recognition as a drive towards the formation of the nation (belonging). Given the territorial nature of the colonial project, struggles for decolonization are not simply struggles for whites' recognition of subaltern humanity, but are implicitly and explicitly struggles to reclaim land, i.e. home or that which gets refigured as the space of the nation.[12] As will become evident, Fanon posits the nation as that which can secure subjectivity for subaltern or colonized peoples; importantly, this national longing is implicitly structured in expressions of homelessness.

While Fanon resolves the issue of homelessness in his appeal to the postcolonial nation, here he begins with his rejection and negation in the French language and culture, or what I term linguistic homelessness. Fanon begins the chapter, and the book, with the claim that "A man who has a language consequently possesses the world expressed and implied by that language" (18). Language, as a primary mode of expression, determines one's values and value within said cultural system. To the latter point, he later insists that "The colonized is elevated above his jungle status in proportion to his adoption of the mother country's cultural standards." Within the French value system, "[The black] becomes whiter as he renounces his blackness, his jungle" (18). Among blacks this resulted in a racial/geographic hierarchy of belonging in which each group strove to be closer to whiteness/Frenchness. For example, Antilleans placed themselves above continental Africans, Martinicans placed themselves above Guadelopians, and Martinicans who have traveled to France placed themselves above Creole-speaking locals (26). At the time of Fanon's writing, the French language and culture remained the ground for the definition of humanity and subjectivity in Martinique, and it is that erasure

and negation of blackness that Fanon rejects. Because he did not himself explore the possibility of what it might mean for Martinicans to claim Creole as an alternative space of subjectivity, in Fanon's formulations, blacks are effectively linguistically homeless or are made foreigners relative to their natal culture as well as within the French culture.[13]

If France rejects the Negro, as Fanon experienced after his military service to the country during WWII, and blacks reject their place of origin (i.e. Martinique, Guadeloupe, etc), then where does he, and by extension black people, belong? Where is home? This is the underlying question in the first chapter of Black Skin. Where is home for the black man? Creole is perceived to be an uncivilized linguistic practice, and French, no matter how well he speaks it, rejects him linguistically, socially, and politically.[14] To be an oppressed people, then, is to be linguistically and subjectively homeless. For Fanon the man, this produces a psycho-physical dislocation as he in turn rejected not only French cultural systems, but both Martinique and France as legitimate models for home. Fanon never returned to Martinique after his last visit in 1952 and, within the same year, he left France and moved to Algeria. I know no evidence that suggests that Fanon saw Martinique as his homeland, and, perhaps as a consequence, he did not seek to reclaim it through institutional reformation, which is never proposes in Black Skin. And he outright rejected embracing French colonial culture and counter discursive strategies as remedies for subjective homelessness.

While not explicitly outlining the solution, the organization of Black Skin adumbrates what becomes more discernible in his later works, violent restructuring of the colonial order. Rhetorically, the text moves from a discussion of philosophy to psychoanalysis, and later action and destruction: "If there can be no discussion on the

philosophical level […] I am willing to work on the psychoanalytical level," writes Fanon (23). Throughout, Fanon equates language with philosophy, which he notes is inadequate for reclaiming black subjectivity. As he states, "Philosophy never saved anyone" (29). He goes on to suggest that it is also the case "that intelligence has never saved anyone; and that is true, for, if philosophy and intelligence are invoked to proclaim the equality of men, they have also been employed to justify the extermination of men" (29).[15] He closes the chapter by "insist[ing]" that "the poison must be eliminated once and for all" (62). He thus ends each chapter with an appeal to a social or structural solution, or a call to action, albeit one that he does not give form to in this text.

The tension between an analytical and systemic destruction of the colonial condition is made more explicit in the fourth chapter of Black Skin entitled "The So-Called Dependency Complex of Colonized Peoples." It also serves as a crucial moment in Fanon's move towards dismissing the colonial order. In the chapter, Fanon examines statements that psychologist Dominique O. Mannoni puts forward in his assessment colonial conditions in Madagascar. In *Prospero and Caliban*, Mannoni undertakes the task of trying to account for these conditions of inequality through an analysis of personality types. Deploying the archetypal Shakesparean figures of Propsero and Caliban, he reasons that the Malagasies, his objects of study, exhibit a Caliban like personality, which he terms *dependency*. He goes on to argue that when this type comes in contact with a Propsero type personality, which he labels *inferiority*, it produces the current inequality one observes in colonial Madagascar. Fanon rejects Mannoni's assessment the *dependency* complex by saying that essentially the colonial problem is structural and not psychological.[16] For Fanon, the arrival of the Europeans not only

shattered the "horizon" of the Malagasies, but "[their] psychological mechanisms," as well (97).

> The landing of the white man on Madagascar inflicted injury without measure. The consequences of that irruption of Europeans onto Madagascar were not psychological alone, since, as every authority has observed, there are inner relationships between consciousness and the social context (96).

This line of reasoning will become crucial to Fanon's later appeal to violence, as it is rooted in a reverse logic: if the Europeans' violent intrusion ruptured the natives' psychological mechanism, then the Europeans' violent expulsion from the social will restore this mechanism. Therefore, when Mannoni interprets the dreams of the Malagasies according to psychoanalytic principles that seem, within Fanon's estimation, to reinforce the status quo, Fanon reassesses them to show the direct correlation between the events of the dream and the realities of people's lives. The dark menacing figures in the dreams of the Malagasies that Mannoni interprets as an inherent dependency complex, Fanon reassesses as part of the lived realities of the Malagasies in which Senegalese soldiers, at the time agents of the French regime, are responsible for tens of thousands of deaths and torture on the Island (104). Scholars such as Jock McCulloch critique Fanon's dismissal of and contradictory analysis of Mannoni's assessment of colonial psychology in Madagascar, but Fanon's dismissal of Mannoni can be understood in relation to his expression of homelessness. McCulloch asserts, "While critical of Mannoni's political quiescence, Fanon gives no indication either of having resolved his own ideological confusion or of having comprehended the political conclusions that his psychological analysis implied" (220). Certainly Fanon is unwilling to grant Mannoni a

more graduated approach to the onset of colonialism and its possible solutions because as he notes, Mannoni's assessment is akin to "the racial distribution of guilt" in which "the white man," "unable to stand up to all the demands […] sloughs off his responsibilities [to the man of color]" (103). But his rejection of Mannoni lays the foundation for his theory of violent self-awakening. It also begins his articulation of the 'new man,' both as a new postcolonial subject, but also as a new masculine type, especially as he aligns black women with colonial education and flawed racial desiring.

At this juncture, it is crucial to understand Fanon's logic with respect to Mannoni specifically, and language and psychoanalysis more generally, because he applies a similar judgment to the woman of color. As I have pointed out above, Fanon dismisses Mannoni because he understands Mannoni's assessment of colonial disorder to be complicit with French racist policies and attitudes. As McCulloch puts it, Fanon wrongly believed Mannoni's work to be an apologia for French colonialism (214, 219). With respect to women, Fanon took a similar attitude in that he explicitly associated them in their social roles as mothers and teachers as complicit with colonialism. In the cycle of inculcation that Fanon charts in Black Skin, mothers and teachers are responsible for imparting corrupt values to the group. Fanon points out that "some families completely forbid the use of Creole" and mothers specifically discourage its usage among children (20). In their rejection of Creole lies the endorsement of French as that which moves one closer to being civilized and human. While I withhold judgment on the subject, this rejection of the French language and Fanon's positioning of mothers within it clearly motivates some critics to question Fanon's relationship to his mother, whom he notes in a later chapter used to sing French love songs to him, and who, when he cried, would chide

him for “acting like a nigger” (191). While Fanon does not claim Creole as an alternative cultural and psychological space within which blacks can claim subjectivity, the implied suggestion is that such a space is foreclosed from childhood by one’s mother.

Teachers are also positioned as agents who broker the relationship between subjectivity and colonial acculturation. Just shortly after accusing Mayotte Capécia, the Martinican novelist whom he takes to task for her rejection of black men and her desire for white men, of attempting to “whiten” or “lactify” the race, Fanon notes that her attitude is not unlike many women’s in Martinique. He writes, “I know a great number of girls from Martinique, students in France, who admitted to me with complete candor—completely white candor—that they would find it impossible to marry a black man” (47-8). Reflecting on a conversation with one such woman, Fanon notes that after passing her examinations she will return to Martinique to become a teacher. Referring to the developed racial complexes that he finds in the woman on color, Fanon says, “It is not hard to guess what will come of that” (48). While it would be disingenuous to imply that only Martinican women become teachers in Fanon’s formulations, it is significant to note that, at least in Black Skin, only women are accorded this alignment with the colonial system. Furthermore, this potential corruption is not isolated to children, but in their signification as the future, or more specifically the future citizenry, Fanon implies that the woman of color has the potential to corrupt the nation. Combined with his assessment of mothers, Fanon effectively constructs black women teachers specifically and black women generally, as flawed racial subjects who threaten the rehabilitation of the black race, and so, as he does with Mannoni, he dismisses them.

Perhaps his most scathing critique is reserved for Mayotte Capécia whose desire for white male love and white approval Fanon finds reprehensible. The bulk of feminist assessments of Fanon's gender politics in Black Skin rests on his critique of Capécia because this chapter, "The Woman of Color and The White Man," is the only place where he discusses black women specifically and in great detail.[17] While Fanon positions his critique of Capécia through an assessment of her two novels, Je Suis Martiniquaise and La Négresse Blanche, he extrapolates from her work of fiction views he accords to the woman of color generally. His discussion of black women teachers, for example, comes through his discussion of Capécia. My interest here, however, is not to unearth a well parsed discussion and counter discussion about Fanon's treatment of Capécia. Rather, my aim is to demonstrate that Fanon's dismissal of Capécia goes beyond his treatment of gender exclusively; it also harbors the grounds forhis rejection of Creole and Martinique.[18] Capécia's texts reflect a particularly Martinican mentality in her desire for a "shade" of whiteness, or what Fanon describes as a desire for "whiteness at any price" (49). Martinican color politics reflected a bias towards colorism or what Macey calls "shadism" whereby one is categorized by his/her level of skin pigmentation, often the closer one is to whiteness the more access he or she has to power. At some level, Capécia expressed a particular Martinican identity, however "unhealthy," that Fanon found "nauseating" (47), a similar nausea he recounts in his later discussion of homosexuality. In her candor, Capécia reflects a struggle with the messiness of race and racialization that Fanon eschews in his reduction of these complex experiences and constructions into Manichean binaries, the very binaries that he critiques Capécia for constraining her desires within (44-5). According to Macey, "shadism creates analytic difficulties for

Fanon" (*Martinican* 218); Fanon does not wrestle with these difficulties in his writing. That he neither returned to Martinique after the publication of Black Skin, and that he never wrestled with racial identity beyond the black/white binary, mean that Fanon's disgust with Capécia is not only with the particulars of her politics, but connote a larger dismissal of the hybridization or creolization that she represents. To Fanon, this would yet pose another threat to the nation.

Fanon's treatment of Capécia represents only a portion of his gender politics. We lack sufficient evidence to make any conclusive statements about his gender politics when based solely on his engagement with Capécia's texts and his dubious statements on mothers and female teachers. To fully explicate Fanon's system of gender as it manifests in Black Skin and later texts, it is instructive to consider the position and uses of masculinity within hiss movement from homelessness to nationhood, or as he alluded to in his reference to Hegel's dialectic struggle, from negation to affirmation. It is in his invocation of and challenges to Hegel's dialectic that we can fully unpack Fanon's treatment and construction of masculinity. In doing so, we can fully mount a challenge to Seshadri-Crooks's articulation of masculinism in WOE by unpacking the risks to women and other marginalized groups that are embedded in his formulations.

Mastery, Masculinity, and the Sexual Contract

Stuart Hall notes in "The Afterlife of Frantz Fanon: Why Fanon? Why Now?" that Fanon begins Black Skin with the question, "What does man want? What does the Black man want?"[19] Moments later Fanon states explicitly that "the black is a black man," whom he proposes to liberate from himself (8). As many have noted, Black Skin is riddled with masculine pronouns and references that cannot and should not always be

conflated with the universal. Doing so continues to mask the multiple and complex appearances of the masculine and feminine throughout the text. As we will come to see, the moments in which either one appears or disappears speak heavily to the system of gender operating in Fanon's work.[20] Of equal note, Fanon states three caveats: he is addressing a problem with love and understanding, which plagues his historical moment by blocking the way to transcendence/consciousness (8); he is specifically addressing the black/white conflict (8, 9); and, he is addressing a specific type of Negro (12).[21] The above stipulations are important because they presumably limit the scope of what we can and should expect to find in the text. The answer to the question, 'what does the black man want', is that he wants harmony with his white brother; this appears to be the aim of Black Skin, and it plays out in the master-slave dialectic (or the desire for mutual recognition).[22] Fanon's model of harmony, however, is predicated on the rehabilitation of a rigid, dominant masculinity[23] in which women and homosexuals constitute a substratum within the social.

In order to address this black/white conflict, Fanon must first displace those that stand in the way, namely women and homosexuals. The first step in effecting this displacement occurs with Fanon's question, "what does man want?" which bears the imprint of Freud's original question, "what does woman want?" Making the brilliantly effective argument that women amount to a ghosting in Fanon's work, Clare Counihan asserts that Fanon not only maps race onto gender, as Gwen Bergner argues, but that he displaces it all together so that race constitutes the only marker of difference:

> This shift is more than just a *transliteration* of terms and language, swapping one word for another so that the difference of race is *like* the difference of sex;

> Fanon's translation fundamentally replaces sexual difference with racial difference so that sexual difference disappears into and from racial difference, and racial difference becomes the primary (sole) mode of difference (165).[24]

For Counihan, women reemerge at politically convenient moments for Fanon, for example, as biological vehicles for the production of the nation (167). While I wholeheartedly agree with her assessment of race and gender, psychoanalysis as a discourse of sexual difference is also fraught with its own ghosts, which she does not address in her otherwise fine critique.

As David Eng suggests, the interplay of race and gender is foundational to psychoanalytic discourse. In his 2001 work on the usefulness of psychoanalysis to Asian Studies, Racial Castration: Managing Masculinity in Asian America, Eng asserts that race for psychoanalysis is undergirded by a discourse in which "we witness a convergence of homosexuality with racial difference, a coming together of the homosexual and the primitive as pathologized, banished figures within the psychic landscape of the social proper" (13). He argues that this cross of the primitive and the homosexual, to be found specifically in Totem and Taboo and "On Narcissism," is embedded in the "organizing structure of Freud's metapsychological theories" (10), and so cannot be isolated as an aberration. "It is through this management and erasure of racial difference that sexuality—specifically, a system of *compulsory heterosexuality*—gains its hold within psychoanalytic theory as a universal and ahistorical principle," he goes on to write (13 original emphasis). A parallel argument can be made about Fanon's construction of heterosexual black/subaltern masculinity, which, no doubt, was formed in opposition to a colonialist discourse that linked racial primitivism and homosexuality. Nevertheless, in

his transmutation of race and gender, he banishes women *and* homosexuals from the category of blackness, creating, instead, a rigid, hegemonic masculinity based in the exercise of violence.

As others have pointed out, Fanon draws on Jean-Paul Sartre's deployment of Hegel's master/slave dialectic in *Orphée Noir* to engage racial domination.[25] Chapter five, properly translated as "The Lived Experience of Blackness,"[26] is the chapter in which Fanon begins his contention with the dialectic, specifically by presenting a rebuttal to Jean-Paul Sartre's thesis in *Orphée Noir* that Negritude does not, as its theorists contend, offer blacks/subalterns a way out of the Hegelian dialectic. "Negritude appears as the minor term of a dialectical progression," argues Sartre. In fact, it constitutes the negativity of the dialectic: "The position of negritude as an antithetical value is the moment of negativity" (133).[27] Blackness, in itself, does not constitute a particularity different from class; "It is no coincidence," he avers, "that the most ardent poets of negritude are at the same time militant Marxists" (132-3). To overcome Sartre's re-inscription within the dialectic, Fanon rejects the idea that joining the class/proletariat struggle can provide that transcendent consciousness that he seeks, for as he asserts, "Sartre neglected the fact that the black man suffers quite differently in his body than the white man" (138). From the vulnerability of this body, then, Fanon, or the black man, acts to overcome this race dilemma. He begins by refusing violence against the black body, paradoxically, by asserting his own mastery.

At the end of chapter five, Fanon, reflecting on a scene from the movie, *Home of the Brave*, writes, "The crippled veteran of the Pacific war says to my brother [a black character], 'Resign yourself to your color the way I got used to my stump; we're both

victims.' […] Nevertheless with all my strength I refuse to accept that *amputation.* […] *I am a master* and I am advised to adopt the humility of the cripple" (140, my emphasis). , It is odd that Fanon should make such a claim to mastery at this juncture in his argumentation when he has neither discursively nor politically resolved his quarrel with Sartre/Hegel. Further, the connections between blackness (skin color), disability (amputation/dismemberment), and mastery that he eschews beg for further analysis. Given the construction of mastery in the text as white man or white-man-to-be (white boy), Fanon's claim of mastery is puzzling. How is he able to recognize his own mastery without the mutual recognition from another master, or at the very least from a slave? This declaration of mastery raises another question: in this battle for recognition, if we are to assume that the master (white man) is not also a slave, who occupies this other slave position? And who therefore grants him 'mastery'?

The above invocation of the master-slave dialectic should not be confused with Fanon's own refiguring of it in the penultimate chapter of Black Skin. In a subsection of "The Negro and Recognition" entitled "The Negro and Hegel," Fanon begins with the following line: "Man is human only to the extent to which he tries to impose his existence on another man in order to be recognized by him" (216). Importantly, it is worth noting that Fanon does not dismiss Hegel as a sexist, racist imperialist, and therefore not worth engaging, but mines his philosophy by using race to complicate the model; he also moves the model from a struggle between individuals to that between groups. In Alexandre Kojève's interpretation of Hegel's dialectic model of subject formation, which was widely disseminated across Paris at the time Fanon was a student, the drive behind human existence is the drive toward mutual recognition, which, in the historical process

is displaced by a desire for individual, supreme recognition by another individual (243). Kojève asserts,

> To be *human*, man must act not for the sake of subjugating a *thing* [nature], but for the sake of subjugating another *Desire* [man]. The man who desires a thing humanly acts not so much to possess the *thing* as to make another recognize him as the *owner* of the thing. […] Action that is born of these can—at least in the beginning—be nothing but a life and death *Fight* (40).[28]

In the above formulations, he who tries to subjugate another is the master; he achieves mastery, figured as self-consciousness or prestige, in his willingness to risk death (45). He who is "possessed" is the slave because he capitulates in order to live (47). Essentially, mastery is an inherently violent and potentially self-destructive desire. Kojève goes on to point out that the slave and the master's relationship is not brought to a halt, but continues because each depend on the other for recognition—reciprocal recognition. For the master, though, recognition by the slave is unsatisfying because after all he is only a slave, and thus he seeks recognition from another master (46). While the slave can achieve self-consciousness by turning to the creativity of this work, through this position, he can also potentially get the master to reach this level of non-violent liberation through his "active abolition of slavery" (50). However, the moment the slave attempts to enslave the master, the two have switched positions and the dialectic continues on (50). Thus, the master/slave dialectic begins, paradoxically, with the idea of genuine reciprocity, yet it is the failure to attain reciprocity, its circularity, that drives it on.

Read within Kojéve's articulation of the Hegelian dialectic, Fanon's use of 'master' at the end of chapter five does not constitute a moment of dialectic mastery.

Fanon's construction of mastery, which comes through the complete overthrow of the white/colonial system, is not yet realized because he has not yet acted or disrupted the colonial process; he is still mired within a colonialist state.[29] Since Fanon's use of 'master' here is not conversant with the terms of the death-struggle that is the Hegelian dialectic, what else could be at work? The most plausible interpretation based on the chapter's location in the text, the textual references, and his use of imagery is that it functions within the patriarchal model of men's mastery over women. In her brilliant and trailblazing book, The Sexual Contract, Carole Pateman argues that civil societies' claim to universal rights and equality is belied by women's subjugated roles within such societies. She argues that the social contract which totes individual rights and universal equality is contradicted by the sexual contract, or the narrative of patriarchal rule over women. Pateman asserts, "To tell the story of the sexual contract is to show how sexual difference, what it is to be a 'man' or a 'woman', and the construction of sexual difference as political difference, is central to civil society" (16). She argues that fraternity, or brotherhood, is the modern locus of patriarchal power, not the paternal model. Feminists and other scholars have heretofore missed this transmutation of power because they rely on the definition of fraternity "as universal bond of community" (81), and miss its literal definition as "*men* bound by a recognized common bond" (80, my emphasis). Power, she continues, shifted to men collectively upon parricide or the death of the father (Oedipus stands as the reigning archetype).[30] Fraternity is now the locus of patriarchal power, and it is this model of power and community that Fanon calls upon in his appeal to his white brothers to allow him the opportunity to "be a man among men."

The ideas expressed occur at a critical juncture in Fanon's pivot away from intellectualizing the problem of race. First, this is the chapter in which his biography takes center stage and where he directly injects his own experiences as a black man confronting racism in France. Second, this is also the point in the text where he turns exclusively to black men. Recall that the previous chapters dismissed language, black women, and Mannoni as complicit with the colonial system, thus clearing discursive space for black men's emergence. As I will show, the proceeding chapter, "The Negro and Psychopathology," begins the process of recuperation by relying on black men's experiences to articulate racism, while the final chapter directly engages Hegel as noted above. Third, the final passage forecasts the conception of blackness that Fanon goes on to construct. In particular, the references to a decidedly aggressive and irascible masculine type a la Richard Wright's Bigger Thomas and Chester Himes' Bob Jones—both of whom Fanon directly references before declaring himself a 'master'—exemplify the type of black man he invokes for the remainder of the text and the body of his work. It also locates his construction of black masculinity outside the context of the Caribbean, which contradicts his earlier claim that his "observations and conclusions are valid only for the Antilles" (14). Correspondingly, it highlights the influence of African American masculinity on Fanon's articulation of black Caribbean masculinity.

Throughout the chapter (and the text) Fanon narrates with lyricism, passion, and discernable frustration, the fracturing of black male consciousness and humanity in a world dominated by whites' representations of blacks:

> I came into the world imbued with the will to find meaning in things, my spirit filled with the desire to attain to the source of the world, *and then I found that I*

> *was an object in the midst of other objects*. Sealed into the *crushing objecthood*, I turned beseechingly to others. Their attention was a liberation running over, my body suddenly abraded into *nonbeing*…. the moments, the attitudes, the glances of the other fixed me [on the other side], in the sense in which a chemical solution is fixed by a dye. I was indignant; I demanded an explanation. Nothing happened. *I burst apart*. Now the fragments have been put together again by another self (109, my emphasis).

A dark-skinned Antillean living in France, Frantz Fanon recounts the harrowing experience of being identified as a racial caricature—"the nigger." For Fanon, the black man is rendered no true self-consciousness; he is made a body and object among other objects—an object precisely because of the color of his skin. As the above passage suggests, the conflation of color with inhumanity is not an organic pairing, but is created as "a chemical solution is fixed by a dye". In his choice of metaphor, Fanon reveals, perhaps unwittingly, the naturalization of race within scientific discourse, and, rightfully, its constructed, inessential quality. Race and consequently the black body exist as culturally intelligible in what Stuart Hall calls "a specular matrix" (26).[31] It is through the white gaze that the black body is made intelligible. This constructed identity, writes Fanon, is a "historico-racial schema", one the white man had "woven [for him] out of a thousand details, anecdotes, stories" (111). This experience of objectification, then, is maintained through specious historical and socio-cultural narratives that threaten not only him as a black man, but his right to be a man.

The harrowing experience narrated in this passage is not entirely one inflicted by race, but is nevertheless a blow to Fanon's manhood. The rhetoric of the passage moves

from tropes of masculinity to that of femininity. With the last term in each pair connoting stereotypes of femininity, the passage moves from an active known self, to a passive constructed one, from wholeness to fragmentation, and from voice to a lack of voice. In both rhetoric and imagery, this section of Fanon's work demonstrates a movement from masculinized coherence to feminized uncertainty, or in the very least un-manliness. A few pages later Fanon asks, "What else could it be [being racially identified] but an *amputation, an excision, a hemorrhage* that splattered my whole body with black blood" (112, my emphasis). In refusing that "amputation", Fanon as subject refuses an emasculation figured here and throughout the text as the threat of castration. Being labeled black is to be un-manned, or to be feminized. Unequivocally, the pronouncement to accept his blackness as one would an amputation is figured as a negation of his masculinity. The text is as much about Fanon's attempt to assert his humanity as much as an attempt to reclaim the masculinity he enumerated at the outset of the text.

By interweaving race and gender at this juncture, Fanon is able to discursively and psychologically secure mastery through masculinity as the position from which to launch his opposition to Hegel's dialectic, as well as from which to challenge the white male other's usurpation of power. His claim to mastery, however, is predicated on the dismissal of the feminine, both black and white. Early on in the second chapter, Fanon notes that his main reason for engaging the works of Capécia is to challenge her conception of love, which he notes competes with his position on the subject. However, if Fanon aligns Capécia with flawed racial ethics and politics and with women of color generally, the woman of color is not in a position within the Hegelian dialectic to grant him mastery; in fact she falls out of the equation entirely. In the following chapter, "The

Negro and Psychopathology," Fanon goes one step further to dismiss black/Caribbean women entirely: "Those who grant our conclusions on the psychosexuality of the white woman may ask what we have to say about the woman of color [;] I know nothing of her" (180). Additionally, white women are figured as the embodied reinforcement of the stereotype of the black male rapist; drawing on the historical incidence of lynching, again an African American phenomenon, white women, too, serve for Fanon as a castration threat. In a similar discussion of love between the man of color and the white woman, Fanon dismisses the possibility that relationships between black men and white women can grant black men entry into dialectical mastery, or place them as equals with white men (see chapter six). Women's dismissal is critical because Fanon cannot enter the dialectic in a feminized or feminine position since Hegel's dialectic is a struggle between men. Patricia Mills, in the introduction to Feminist Interpretations of G. W. F. Hegel, notes that scholars have made the argument that "women do not, and cannot occupy the position of the slave in Hegel's model, because 'women' and 'slaves' are conceptualized as having radically different relationships to life, death, and work" (4).[32] So, while Fanon is able to argue that blacks, specifically black men, occupy the position of the slave in Hegel's model, women occupy a substratum beneath the black other, i.e. the position that Pateman's sexual contract reveals. Women's ability to bear new life is not figured as the origin of civil society; rather, men, in their shared love of each other, give birth to civil society.

Diana Fuss argues in "Interior Colonies" that the "crushing objecthood" that Fanon expresses when he is racially identified may be a deeper level of Orientalism in which blacks are excluded from the self-other dynamic necessary for subject formation

(22). This "alternative theory of non-alterity" Fuss finds in Fanon is not necessarily a theory of racial alterity. The "insidiousness" that she identifies is primarily a function of its gendered and sexualized dimensionality, more specifically the feminization of the black/colonized male. It is this 'banished,' 'pathologized,' feminized position outside of society that Fanon rejects so doggedly for black men. As Fanon asserts, white men usurp subjectivity for themselves and leave the black man subjectively homeless. Accessing his rights as a fierce, heterosexual man allows Fanon to effectively enter the dialectic, not as a slave, but as another master. He secures these rights by constructing the black male body as explicitly heterosexual and as a closed, impenetrable system free from castration and effeminacy.

Black Masculinity and the Fanonian Body

Fanon's recuperation of black masculinity is very much grounded in a notion of the black body as impermeable and heterosexual, a body that inflicts violence as opposed to suffers violence. Although the black man is constructed out of a "historico-racial schema," Fanon does not deny the realness of racism, maintained in many ways within the racialized gaze as both violent and sexualized. The black body as culturally intelligible exists within an "orientalized" space onto which white fears of appetitive excess, hyper-masculinity, and intellectual deficiencies are projected. Within this "specular matrix," the black body is a grotesque abject, or that which is casted off or expelled from the white body. Within Fanon's recuperation, however, this body becomes a properly heterosexual, male body that not only can be recuperated into the white social whole, but can form its own sociality.

In his attempts to articulate a black body free of colonial pathology, Fanon exposes the constructedness of the body as well as its materiality and hence vulnerability to violence. As Judith Butler argues, we cannot maintain any notion of the body as prior to discourse, a point that Fanon echoes in his assertion that the white man has woven him out of a thousand details, anecdotes, and stories. Yet he goes further in his presentation of the black body under racial domination; the black body is permeable, fragmented, schizophrenic, and threatened. Here, the mind's separation from the body is not simply an open philosophical conundrum, but a condition brought on by racial oppression—something akin to Du Bois's concept of double-consciousness: "the black is rendered no true self-consciousness" (112). Fanon asserts, "In the white world the man of color encounters difficulties in the development of his bodily schema. Consciousness of the body is solely a negating activity. It is a third person consciousness. The body is surrounded by an atmosphere of certain uncertainty" (110-111). Rather than a mind/body problem, Fanon argues that the black man's issue is a body/world problem in which self-consciousness is excised from the equation (111), and the black man is exposed in his corporeality.

In dismissing black women from his discussion of colonialism and racism, Fanon excludes them as well from what Cedric Robinson terms the "psychological violence of colonialism" (85), as well as its physical violence.[33] In chapter six in particular, "The Negro and Psychopathology," the image of the black that Fanon challenges is grounded in a male physiology. While he states in the preceding chapter that "all [he] wanted was to be a man among other men," in chapter six the body is even more explicitly masculinized. The threat that the black body faces is here again revealed to be a threat of

castration, or of being un-manned. Immediately after dismissing women of color, Fanon writes, “In relation to the Negro, everything takes place on the genital level” (157). Comparing the condition of Jews to blacks, Fanon writes,

> If one wants to understand the racial situation psychoanalytically, not from a universal viewpoint but as it is experienced by individual consciousness, considerable importance must be given to sexual phenomena. In the case of the Jew, one thinks of money and its cognates. In that of the Negro, one thinks of sex (160).

Given that Fanon already established that he does not speak of the woman of color, the Fanonian body is first and foremost an imperiled male body. It is an error to assume that Fanon’s alignment of “sex” and “the Negro” encompasses black women’s experience of sexual abuse; it does not. The examples offered by Fanon of the fear of blacks are limited to sexual violence endured by black men; black women’s experiences of sexual and physical violence are omitted, which highlights the particularity of his project. As he states, “No anti-Semite, for example, would ever conceive of the idea of castrating a Jew. […] But the Negro is castrated. The penis, the symbol of manhood, is annihilated, which is to say that it is denied” (162). While we can agree with Fanon that “the Negro is attacked in his corporeality” (163), his omission of black women’s experiences and history of rape and sexual abuse leads him to make a faulty connection between black corporeality and black masculinity. Moreover, their re-incorporation into the post-colonial, national landscape sans critical examination—via what Kalpana Sheshadri-Crooks argues is possible through Fanon’s model of the “new man”—transports these problematic formulations intact.

Secondly, the Fanonian body is aggressively heterosexual. His compulsive pairing of heterosexuality and masculinity is very much reinforced by the colonialist pairing of non-whites and homosexuality, which is borne out by David Eng's work and a number of other studies on South Asian and Jewish masculinities.[34] Fanon falls into this trap when he argues that homosexuality as he has observed it happens in the metropole, not in the colonies (180, footnote 44). He writes, "I have known several Martinicans who became homosexuals, always passive. But this was by no means a neurotic homosexuality: For them it was a means to a livelihood, as pimping is for others" (180). Here Fanon reveals that he knows more about homosexuality than he initially lets on, but he also positions homosexuality as a condition of the economic inequality brought on by colonialism and so does not predate it. In his singular focus on race and his casual reference to pimping, Fanon overlooks the ways in which men access agency through the commoditization of women's bodies and sexual labor, i.e. pimping. Noting the anxiety and contradiction for Fanon that this passage reveals, Kobena Mercer argues that these affects can be taken "as a symptom of [the] homophobic fixation and disavowal in the political economy of masculinity in black liberationist discourse" (124),[35] a claim that is borne out in Fanon's (re)construction of the black male body and the black male/white male relationship.

In the foreclosure of the black body as a homosexual body, Fanon forecloses points of entry/access to that body. As Judith Butler points out in Gender Trouble, to identify a particular body as homosexual/queer/gay is to mark that body along its points of entry as culturally and socially unintelligible or unacceptable. Butler writes, "The construction of stable bodily contours relies upon fixed sites of corporeal permeability

and impermeability. Those sexual practices in both homosexual and heterosexual contexts that open surfaces and orifices to erotic signification or close down others effectively re-inscribe the boundaries of the body along new cultural lines" (169).[36] As Fanon himself notes, "I have never been able, without revulsion, to hear a *man* say to another man: 'He is so sensual!'" (201). Symbolically, Fanon's act of revulsion represents an attempt to expel homosexual desire or its possibility from the black male body and effectively its expulsion from the collective black body. Fanon's statement denotes his attempt to secure the black male body as impenetrable and heterosexual. In its impenetrability, it is a body that inflicts rather than suffers violence. In remapping the margins of the black body, Fanon charts it along lines of hetero-masculinity, and therefore along new bio-physical lines. As the metaphorics of WOE reflects, he also plots the body along new socio-political lines. Consequently, we when Fanon deploys the male body in WOE as a metaphor for the contours of the nation it implicitly excludes women and homosexuals.

Much like femininity, homosexuality and blackness are made to occupy untenable positions in Black Skin. Arguing as he does that a neurotic homosexuality plagues the white male/black male relationship, Fanon shifts the grounds of recognition between both groups from homophilia, or what bell hooks calls a love of the same, to the homosocial, to be among "a select group of enlightened intellectual men, linked by a shared vision" (83).[37] Ironically enough, hooks makes this argument about WOE, not Black Skin, demonstrating the interconnectedness of the two texts. She goes on to argue that "the presence of the female disrupts the possibility of this unmediated bonding" (83).[38] While scholars such as hooks note that Fanon's appeal to masculinity is based in fraternity, it is

not linked to his larger political claims for nationhood in ways that radically challenge Fanon's compulsive nexus of blackness, heterosexuality, nationhood, and violence. Furthermore, such analyses are made to "queer" Fanon in more ironic ways than his formulations allow.

Fanon likens the attack on the black male to a homosexual rape when he argues that the white male projects his own fears onto the black male and "whoever says *rape* says *Negro"* (166, original emphasis). In the conflation of negrophobia and rape, homosexuality is marked as a condition of whiteness, and thus not only as a condition of colonization , which the previous passage insinuates. Projected at the level of the body, the black male and the white male can never have meaningful interactions because the black male is vulnerable to rape, i.e. negrophobia, at the hands of the white male. Fanon usurps much of black women's historical and lived experiences for the black man, especially in his insistence on the ubiquity of rape and castration for the black man. One might uncritically argue that Fanon's inclusion of rape encompasses black women, even if it is attached to the wrong historical subject. However, black women's experience of rape is constitutively different from black men's experience because not only does rape shatter one subjectively and psychically, in the case of black women, it can and did result in the production of children. As I have pointed out earlier, Fanon's focus on a black/white dichotomy excludes the experiences of racially mixed subjects. The ambiguously raced subject is attached to the black feminine and would pose a constitutive problem to Fanon's conception of the black family and consequently the nation.

If negrophobia is a form of bodily violation against the genital Negro, then the black male/white male relationship is impeded by the threat of interracial homosexual rape. Consequently, in the black male/white male relationship, reciprocal mastery can only be achieved outside the parameters of colonialism. The parameters Fanon has erected for racial liberation seems achievable only through a physical separation of the races, denoted, of course, through his conflation of the physical act of rape and the neurosis produced by that fear. Fanon's prayer at the end of the Black Skin, "Oh my body, make of me always a man who questions!" locates the source of resistance not in the black skin, as Ewa Plonowski Ziarzek asserts, but in the black male body generally and the black penis specifically. Crucially, white men cannot simply grant black men their freedom or equality, they, black men, must take it.

Violence, Nationhood, and Feminism

Undeniably, the use or exercise of violence is the lynchpin of Fanon's restoration of masculinity, nationhood, and humanity. As Seshadri-Crooks points out, his call to action is centered on a specific formulation of violence peculiar to the colonial relationship. However, this construction of anti-colonial violence is not new or exclusive to WOE, as its roots are discernible in Black Skin. What is different about WOE is that Fanon's appeal to violence is grounded in the historical reality of the Algerian revolution and so his interpreters grant it more legitimacy because of this. Recall, for example, that Sharpley-Whiting, in the introduction to her seminal work on Fanon, Frantz Fanon: Conflicts and Feminism, asserts that her aim is to use Fanon to challenge "academic feminists," who "haven't moved from indispensable feminist theorizing to liberatory

action" (4). The suggestion here is that Fanon has been able to do this successfully. As well, the focus on the national body, i.e. his revolutionary politics, instead of the physical body, i.e. his gender politics, allows some critics to misread or neglect the ways in which the constructions of masculinity and consciousness-raising articulated in Black Skin come to embed itself in the rhetoric and politics of WOE.

While violence is a central concern in both texts, it is important to note where the two texts differ as well as where they converge on the issue. David Macey, for instance, cautions against projecting the violence of WOE backwards to Black Skin. Citing the opening lines of Black Skin, "The explosion will not take place today. It is too early. . . or too late," Macey argues that we should not conflate Fanon's imagery of violence at the outset and throughout the text with his turn in WOE (*Martinican* 219). For a number of reasons, Macey's point holds credibility: the time separation between the writing of Black Skin and Fanon's participation in the Algerian Revolution; the correlation between the imagery of Black Skin and past events in Martinique; and, the similarities between Fanon's poetics and Cesairé's (220). Macey seems to want to erect a clear divide between the two texts; yet, despite these compelling reasons, there exists ample evidence to support my claim that there is significant overlap between the violence in Black Skin and that in WOE.

In many ways, the work of unpacking the relationship between Fanon's rhetoric of violence and masculinity in WOE has already been done by Seshadri-Crooks. Where we differ, and this is crucial, is in the significance and implications of Fanon's rhetoric to his politics of gender, and a larger political agenda relative to feminism and women's liberation. Writing about WOE, Seshadri-Crooks points out that

> The psychical effect of the political taking up of arms by the native man is perhaps best interpreted as a force towards mastery. For the colonized man, resistance arises not from reasoned analyses about national sovereignty, distributive justice and the lack thereof, citizenship and human rights but from the male body – 'the tonicity of the muscles' (91).

This reading is plausible if we limit our understanding of masculinity and violence to WOE, as Seshadri-Crooks does. The force towards resistance, represented as a drive towards mastery, is grounded in the male body, but the roots of that force go beyond the innocuous 'tonicity of the muscles' to the black male body as an impenetrable and closed system divorced from the feminine and homosexual, as I have demonstrated above. As such, the will to power that Fanon draws on throughout the text is necessarily anti-woman and anti-homosexual because of Fanon's earlier representations of the two as castration threats and therefore complicit with the colonial system's efforts to emasculate or effeminize the black male. Seshadri-Crooks' position that resistance does not arise from a "reasoned analysis about national sovereignty" is similarly restricted. If we understand Fanon's critique of language and culture as a critique of French culture and domination in Martinique/the Caribbean, Senegal, Madagascar, and now Algeria, then his rejection of language (which results in a linguistic and subjective homelessness,) tied as it is to his drive towards mastery, provides a well reasoned foundation for what gets articulated in WOE as a drive towards the formation of the nation. Similarly, his critique of Dominique Mannoni's dependency complex and his discussion of conditions in Algeria are both human rights critiques of colonialism and domination. Mastery, as I

have laid it out above, is only achievable within the space of the nation, and violent revolution is the means for achieving this end.

In Black Skin, Fanon attacks prevailing constructions of the black male as wholly or primarily genital and as reductive to the color of his skin; however, in WOE, the black body is mapped along lines of muscularity and its libidinal drive. Seshadri-Crooks rightly points out that Fanon analyses violence among the colonized and the subsequent revolutionary taking up of arms in terms of the 'dynamism of the libido.' The shattered bodily schema of the colonized functions as the chaotic moment when the death drive marks its trajectory, when aggressivity is directed at the neighbour and libidinal violence is transformed into nationalist struggle (91).

She reasons, "The core of political violence then is fundamentally death driven, libidinal and in that sense beyond good and evil" (91). Reread within the purview of Black Skin, the libidinal in WOE is a re-articulation of the genital. If, as Fanon claims, racial oppression is a form of castration against the black male and a threat to the black future, then the resurgence of the libido is also a resurgence of black male (sexual) potency, articulated in WOE as political agency. Consequently, Seshadri-Crooks' contention that Fanon's infamous passage, "violence is a cleansing force. It frees the native from his inferiority complex and from his despair and inaction; it makes him fearless and restores his self-respect," should be understood within her articulation of the libidinal requires a more studied analysis of Black Skin.

The libidinal, much like the genital, cannot be separated from Fanon's earlier complicated and complicating model of impenetrable black male boundaries, the erasure of black women and homosexuals, negrophobia as homosexual rape, and the path to

black male political and sexual agency; because out of these formulations arises Fanon's turn to violence. Violence is a tinted thread running throughout Black Skin that becomes more visible as a tactic for overcoming racism and colonialism toward the end of the text. As I have pointed out in the first section of this chapter, although Fanon insists on a psychoanalytical approach to the analysis and destruction of the colonial problem, the need for a "structural" solution surfaces within and across each chapter. In many ways, his writing vacillates between covert suggestions of violence and the more overt suggestion of risk or struggle, or that which "goes beyond life to a supreme good that is the transformation of subjective certainty of [ones] own worth into a universally valid objective truth" (218); this truth for Fanon is freedom and reciprocal recognition—i.e. Hegelian recognition, which is only achievable through physical violence.

In chapter six of Black Skin, "The Negro and Psychopathology," Fanon writes that the Negro needs a "collective catharsis…In every society, in every collectivity, exists—must exists—a channel, an outlet through which the *forces* accumulated *in the form of aggression* can be released" (145, my emphases). In the next chapter, "The Negro and Recognition," he asserts that "human reality in-itself-for-itself can be achieved only through conflict and through the risk that conflict implies" (218). And, he goes on to aver, "the former slave needs a challenge to his humanity, he wants a conflict, a riot" (221) through which to reclaim his subjugated humanity. The above passages run counter to Macey's reading of violence in Black Skin and it widens Seshadri-Crooks sequestering of the infamous passage beyond the parameters of Fanon's metaphorics.

National violence, as it is discussed in the first section of WOE, is not solely about national liberation, but about restoring black, subaltern masculinity free from the

threat of castration; this threat is precisely what Fanon narrates in his refusal of "that amputation" advocated by the crippled veteran. The process of decolonization, which is also a process of 'disalienation', or finding/reclaiming home, carried over from Black Skin, is one based in chaos, violence, and bloodshed. He asserts, "[D]ecolonization is always a violent phenomenon. At whatever level we study it, decolonization is quite simply the replacing of a certain "species" of men by another "species" of men" (35). The use of "species" here is unclear and can mean multiple things: differing cultural practices among various groups of people; the reversal of power relations between "white" settlers and Algerian "natives"; or/and, the instituting of a new form of masculinity, that which Fanon calls the "new man" (36). What is clear is that the reversal of this structure can only be accomplished through force, or violence, because the system came about through the use of violence: "Their first encounter was marked by violence and their existence together—that is to say the exploitation of the native by the settler—was carried on by the din of a great array of bayonets and cannons…The settler owes the fact of his very existence, that is to say his property, to colonial system" (36). Because the settler has so much invested in the oppression of the native, peaceably asking him to leave will not be a viable or realistic alternative to violence, nor will it resolve the problem of the original dialectic, for as Fanon says, freedom (physical and psychological) must be fought for; it must be won. It cannot be given. More importantly, it is in this other context that we must understand his infamous claim that violence is a cleansing force. Fanon arrives at his use of violence not from a desire to restore black or subaltern humanity, but by restoring black masculinity. It is not a misreading of violence that we should be worried about

projecting backwards onto Fanon, as Macey cautions; it is a perverse reading of women's liberation from and culpability within racist/colonial systems.

From a feminist perspective, one of the underlying problems in Fanon's work, in my view, is a reliance on a singularly-gendered black subject to deal with what he acknowledges is a collective and, therefore, multi-pronged problem. This mono-centric subject is not solely a function of gender bias as Seshadri-Crooks argues, but stems from his attempt to rescue the black masculine from white dehumanization. In her sophisticated analysis of violence and masculinity in Fanon's work, she pleads with feminists to move toward a more rounded understanding of Fanon's gender politics:

> A sympathetic understanding of Fanon's masculinist politics forces us to confront the contradictions in a simple feminist position that privileges women's issues and well being first (even if it is because women otherwise always come last) and in isolation from other overlapping and extenuating concerns (94).

It is surprising that Seshadri-Crooks does not also take Fanon to task for the problem she notes with feminism, but lays the work squarely at the feet of feminism. Nevertheless, her argument concerning the deployment of masculinism in WOE rests on a theory of "ungendering" put forward by Hortense Spillers. Drawing from Spillers, Seshadri-Crooks asserts,

> As a system of power/knowledge, slavery reproduces itself in its systematicity by using black women to strip black men of their status as men and as humans. If Spillers is right that in slavery *gender* differences between black people are lost, we can go even further to say that black *sexual* difference is the instrument by which men and women are stripped of their humaneness. It is this painful and

> tragic legacy that haunts black feminism and gender politics in the US and black communities everywhere today (94).

While Seshadri-Crooks raises provocative points regarding the gender politics of Fanon's project, the subject of feminism, and the relationship between contemporary black men and women, her perspectives do not exempt Fanon's work from criticism and they do not make his position liberatory for women and, therefore, for the entirety of the black collective.

In her defense of Fanon, Seshadri-Crooks raises several issues that warrant a closer examination. To begin, Seshadri-Crooks' statements reveal a bias towards western feminist, specifically Anglo-feminist, traditions as when she argues that such theories and movements are divorced from "overlapping and extenuating concerns." U.S. black feminism is inherently about the intersections of gender and other "overlapping and extenuating" concerns.[39] The recent insistence among many African feminist thinkers on the need to include men and masculinity within feminist thought and practices further highlights the particularity of her generalizing statement.[40] Second, as this project goes on to demonstrate, if we expand beyond traditional sites of feminist articulation to include the literary realm, such texts' continued efforts to grapple with black gender politics—via the black family, the black heterosexual couple, and the black woman—further undercut Seshadri-Crooks' claim. Third, the most glaring irony of Seshadri-Crooks' statement is that while she makes the claim that "black *sexual* difference is the instrument by which men and women are stripped of their humaneness," she neglects the ways in which Fanon's own work erect just such a divide in his turn to a dominant form of masculinity to reclaim black humanity.[41] And, lastly, Spillers' theory of 'ungendering' deals

specifically with the experience of the middle passage, which Seshadri-Crooks does not address in her examination of a transplanted Martinican theorizing about the Algerian Revolution.

Essentially, Seshadri-Crooks' use of Spillers relies on a partial reading, or partial misreading, of her concept of 'ungendering." In her now famous essay, "Mama's Baby, Papa's Maybe: An American Grammar Book," Spillers makes her case for what she identifies as a process of "ungendering" in the forced exportation of African peoples to the Americas and elsewhere. According to Spillers, the ungendering of blacks occurred in at least two particular ways: 1) in the manner of transport and 2) in the treatment of enslaved Africans once they were ashore. In the first instance she argues that although enslaved peoples were allotted space on the slave vessels based on their sex and age, such categorizations were not instances of gendering. In the second instance, Spillers explains that 'ungendering' occurs in the exposure to certain types of "violence to the unprotected [black] flesh", which she explains as "specifically externalized acts of torture and prostration" (62).[42] Spillers notes that this process of dehumanization impacts both black males *and* females. However, black women's presence gets elided in Seshadri-Crooks' exclusive focus on black male emasculation and her questioning of the subject of feminism. As Spillers concludes, African American women are the inheritors of a historical misnaming of power within the enslaved community (84). For her, "the problematizing of gender places [black women]…out of the *traditional* symbolic of female gender, and it is our task to make a place for this different social subject" (85, my emphasis). For the black man, Spillers argues that he is uniquely positioned to understand the feminine. Furthermore, she did not argue that black men and women's experiences of

torture were the same or that one should take precedence above the other, as Seshadri-Crooks' work implies.

If Spillers's formulations were to accurately speak to Seshadri-Crooks' project, then the argument would not be that black men's quest for access to traditional patriarchal privilege, re-imagined as a fraternal bond among black and white men, at the subordination and exclusion of black women, is potentially liberatory, but that black sexuality provides the ground upon which to investigate and reconstitute a new, androgynous black liberationist politics, and perhaps a new masculinity. Stated differently, Crooks' use of Spillers to advance her argument concerning Fanon's eschewing of the woman of color, rather than speaking to the promotion of the black man above the black woman, helps to clarify the need for an integrated analysis that highlights the nature and centrality of black sexuality across lines of gender and "other overlapping and extenuating" concerns. Sexuality and gender performativity mark the common ground for the exploration of racial liberation in ways that do not marginalize the experiences and positions of black women in particular and the black collective in general. Moreover, defenses of Fanon's single-axis approach, such as the one offered by Sesahdri-Crooks, threaten to throw black women back within the traditional confines of gender, which Spillers argues she has transformed through the historical legacy of "ungendering."

As I have stated at the outset, some scholars' attempts to find recuperative feminist possibilities in Fanon's work yield disquieting assessments of women's role in maintaining colonialist practices. Take for example the oft-repeated, but poorly substantiated claim about colonial sexual politics offered by Seshadri-Crooks: "In settler

colonialism too, as in the case of Algeria, colonial masculinity once more deploys women to depersonalize the native (emasculation of the man, objectification of women), but *it is the native woman whose passivity secures the process*" (94, my emphasis). Although she references "native women" here, her statement is made to correlate with a forgoing claim regarding the "expulsion of the black man from the symbolic system of kinship" because the black woman has been "reduced to a reproducing machine" and thus the one who "guarantees identity to her offspring" (94). The claim that women remained 'passive' in their objectification is simply not supported by the historical record. We know that women's work is often left out of the historical records and therefore made to seem invisible. Yet, some examples speak for themselves, such as Harriet Tubman's courageous work extricating people from slavery and Nannie of the Maroons in Jamaica. As well, there is documented evidence to show that women rebelled in gender-specific ways such as refusing to cooperate with forced breeding practices, delaying time between the births of children, refusing to work, and overtly fighting back, even at the cost of death.[43] One could only surmise that context-specific examples arose in settler colonies. In the case of Algeria, for instance, there is historical evidence to show that women participated in the decolonization struggle.

Another question regarding the emasculation of men through women's objectification and supposed passivity remains: given that Seshadri-Crooks draws from periods of enslavement, did this phenomenon remain true for the post emancipation period, especially in Francophone regions about which Fanon wrote? Sue Peabody's examination of the historical and legal records of the Francophone Caribbean offers a resounding no to this question. According to Peabody, "While the patriarchal model of

France's Old Regime favored upward mobility for a few female slaves, the republican model tended to create increased avenues of upward mobility for black and brown men" (69); one major route being military participation. She continues, "Republican interventions abolished slavery and extended the notion of citizenship to men of all classes but excluded women from formal and direct political participation" (70).[44] This is not to deny that colonial practices served to dehumanize both men and women, but it is to correct the idea that women are somehow to be blamed for black/subaltern men's emasculation. Doing so would only amount to blaming the victim and to further dehumanizing black/subaltern women who suffer doubly under domination.

Concluding Thoughts: Finding Home

Home is a vexed place, especially for the once-enslaved and formerly colonized. Within Black Skin homelessness, linguistic and subjective, demarcate the initial terrain upon which Fanon constructed his critique of French colonial domination; and it is this longing for home that structures his claim to the nation in WOE. Nevertheless, scholars, such as Kalpana Seshadri-Crooks, T. Denean Sharpley Whiting, and Madhu Dubey, who continue to mine Fanon's work for potential feminist gems, overlook the ways in which a comprehensive understanding of gender in Fanon's work necessitates an understanding of the interconnections of masculinity, the heterosexual body, violence, and the nation. Fanon built his call to revolutionary action on a foundation of masculinity as divorced from the feminine and the homosexual and as such does not offer a liberatory path for either—at least not compared to that of privileged heterosexual men. Furthermore, and as I have articulated through an examination of his

use of Hegel and my use of Carole Pateman's formulations, he relegates women to a substratum within the social proper.

As I have shown in this chapter, Fanon's exploration of the intersections of racism/colonialism and sexuality does not include black and native women's sexual experiences under racism or colonialism. In fact, his dismissal of Mayotte Capécia specifically and Martinique generally points to a wholesale dismissal of Caribbean women and their conditions and a one-dimensional approach to the recuperation of the postcolonial nation. Additionally, the history he reconstructs and his analyses are irreducibly masculinist and heteronormative, and debatably sexist and homophobic. Such labels, while they satisfy our need for neat categorizations and easy dismissals, do little to assist our recovery of the histories and narratives of gender-based violence and resistance he omits. Yet, his work is worth engaging because it draws from actually deployed revolutionary strategies, because it has been adopted as a strategy of resistance among black and native revolutionaries, and because a wholesale adoption of his revolutionary politics risks replicating troubling and dangerous models of resistance for black/native women and, subsequently, black/native peoples.

Within Fanon's model of the nation, the black male body becomes metonymic of the national body while the feminine is relegated to the metaphoric; no actual historical account of women's bodies is taken into consideration in his formulation of the nation.[45] In fact, his primary engagement of black women is through the fictive, namely Capécia's two novels. It is on these grounds that the next several chapters turn in order to re-instate black women's voices and to unpack their specific challenges to identifiably crucial elements within Fanon's theory of masculinity and nation-formation: his assessment of

the Hegelian dialectic and the black subject; his construction of the black/subaltern revolutionary subject; and his image of the decolonized nation. Drawing on both the historical reality of sexual violence against black/subaltern women and an imaginative reconstruction of the possibilities for health and reconciliation, these novels implicitly and explicitly challenge Fanon's drive towards violence and his protection of the heterosexual black male body, and hence the nation as wholly constitutive of black/postcolonial subjectivities and identities.

Notes

[1] See the introduction for a categorization of feminist criticisms on Fanon. This is list not exhaustive, but representative of the various ways feminists have discussed Fanon.

[2] Kalpana Seshadri-Crooks approximates this question in her examination of masculinity and violence in Fanon, but her response falls short for precisely the reasons outlined in this chapter. I discuss this issue as it pertains to Fanon in the final section of the chapter, and more generally in the final chapter of this dissertation.

[3] For a detailed discussion of how these scholars approach issues of gender, sexism, and revolution see the introduction to this project.

[4] Mikhail Bakhtin uses the term linguistic homelessness in his discussion of Dostoevsky's Poetic, but at the time that I was searching for a term to capture what I observe in Fanon's writing, I was unaware of Bakhtin's usage. So, I would like to distinguish this usage from Bakhtin's.

[5] See Michelle Wright for a discussion of how each of these figures respond to Hegel and other western thinkers; See also Ewa Plonowska Ziarek's "Kristeva and Fanon: Revolutionary Violence and Ironic Articulation" for a discussion of Fanon's engagement with Jean-Paul Sartre; see Lou Turner's "On the Difference Between the Hegelian and Fanonian Dialectic of Lordship and Bondage" for a comparative analysis of Fanonian and Hegelian dialectics.

[6] This particular point flies in the face of a defense of Fanon offered by T. Denean Sharpley-Whiting, which argues that we cannot hold Fanon accountable for his position on the woman of color because his clinical experiences were limited only to white women. As I noted at the outset, Fanon's work is not based exclusively on clinical experiences, so it is unclear why he could not have drawn from personal context to engage black women.

[7] See David Macey's biography of Fanon, Frantz Fanon: A Life , and a related essay, "Frantz Fanon, or the Difficulty of Being Martinican," for a discussion of Fanon's difficult relationship with his homeland.

[8] See Macey's essay "Frantz Fanon, or the Difficulty of Being Martinican." Macey does not restrict his assessment of Fanon as West Indian to the French West Indies as I do here. I have chosen to qualify this discussion of the West Indies to a decidedly French context because as Fanon himself asserts, "A man who

has a language consequently possesses the world expressed and implied by that language." Certainly, French language, culture, and policies created a milieu separate from the Dutch, Spanish or English Caribbean.

[9] Macey, Frantz Fanon: A Life.

[10] One might argue that this idea of homelessness in Fanon is analogous to 'double consciousness' in Dubois in which the American Negro constantly confronts two selves—his Americanness and his blackness. Macey, however, argues that Fanon's writing is very idiosyncratic because of its reliance on very technical medical jargons, which, he continues, reflects a "difficulty with self-expression rather than diagnostic sophistication" (A Life 162). On a more generous note, it might also reflect an attempt to move away from the dominance of 'proper' French which Fanon critiques for its abjection of blackness.

[11] Wright, Becoming Black.

[12] This point bears more weight when we realize that Fanon does not reclaim Martinique, which elected to become an Overseas Department of France, as that home space, but Algeria, which was engaged in a war of decolonization.

[13] See Macey on Fanon's later embracing of Creole.

[14] Fanon gives the example of Amié Cesairé having to been qualified as the "negro poet" as opposed to simply the poet.

[15] A comment such as this marks Fanon's distance from his contemporaries such as Du Bois who was the proponent of the Talented Tenth—or the educated 10% of the black population who would work to uplift the race.

[16] See Jock McCulloch's Black Soul White Artifact: Fanon's Clinical Psychology and Social Theory, particularly "Appendix I: Fanon and Mannoni: Conflicting Psychologies on Colonialism," for a rebuttal of Fanon's reading of Mannoni.

[17] For feminist analyses of Fanon's critique of Capécia, see Gwen Bergner's "Who is That Masked Woman, or The Role of Gender in Fanon's Black Skin, White Masks" Mary Ann Doane's Femme Fatales: Feminism, Film Theory, Psychoanalysis, Susan Andrade's "The Nigger if the Narcissist: History, Sexuality, and Intertextuality in Maryse Condé's Heremakhonon," Clare Counihan's "Reading the Figure of Woman in African Literature: Psychoanalysis, Difference, and Desire," Sharpley-Whiting's Conflicts

and Feminisms, "Anti-black Femininity and Mixed-race Identity: Engaging Fanon to Reread Capécia," (in Fanon: A Critical Reader, Gordon, et.al.) and "Fanon and Capécia" (in Frantz Fanon:Critical Perspectives, ed. Anthony C. Alessandrini).

[18] See Macy's writings on Fanon (sited in this chapter) in which he argues that Fanon initially rejected Creole until later in his life. Fanon, he suggests, later came to believe that Creole may served as a source around which the Islands of the Caribbean could come together.

[19] Hall, "The Afterlife of Frantz Fanon." Hall insists upon the importance of the Hegelian dialectic as central to Fanon's project in Black Skin as well as the then current French school of thought (31).

[20] See Clare Counihan and Michelle Wright's works cited in this chapter.

[21] Along with the above list, Fanon insists that he is a man of his time and desires no future except in the form of tomorrow (11).

[22] This idea of love or harmony is taken up by bell hooks in "Feminism as a Persistent Critique of History: What's Love Got to do with it?" in The Fact of Blackness, ed. Alan Read. Hooks, however, offers this analysis by way of reading The Wretched of the Earth; nevertheless, as I argue, much of Fanon's conceptualizations and formulations in Black Skin come to bear in WOE.

[23] This concept of dominant masculinity is taken from Tony Coles' "Negotiating the Field of Masculinity: The Production and Reproduction of Multiple Dominant Masculinity," in which he expands R. W. Connell's formulations of hegemonic masculinity to argue that men in subdominant groups can and do in fact exercise different types of masculinities that dominate others even when they are dominated by other categories such as race, class, or sexuality.

[24] Counihan, "Reading the Figure of Woman in African Literature."

[25] See Irene Gendzier's Frantz Fanon: A Critical Study, Jock McCulloch's Black Soul White Artifact, and et al.

[26] In Charles Lam Markmann's translation of Black Skin, White Masks, the most widely used and reportedly the most problematic translation, this chapter is translated as the "The Fact of Blackness".

[27] Fanon, Black Skin, White Masks.

[28] Bloom, Introduction to the Reading of Hegel.

[29] In Against War: Views from the Underside of Modernity, Nelson Maldonado-Torres, citing Lewis Gordon, notes this very paradox in chapter five, namely that Fanon writes from within his own consciousness, which he claims is denied him (134).

[30] Although said in reference to homosexuality, Fanon himself notes that the Oedipus model is not alive in the Caribbean. For Fanon, this moment of awakening has shifted to the moment of interracial encounter, e.g. his encounter on the train with the young boy.

[31] Hall, "Why Fanon? Why Now?"

[32] Mills, Patricia Jagentowicz, ed. Introduction to Feminist Interpretations of G. W. F. Hegel. University Park, Pa: The Pennsylvania State UP, 1996.

[33] Robinson, Cedric. "The Appropriation of Frantz Fanon." Race and Class 35.1 (1993): 79-91.

[34] For discussions of the effeminate Bengali and effete Jew, see Mrinalini Sinha's Colonial Masculinity: The 'Manly Englishman' and the 'effeminate Bengali' in late Nineteenth Century. Manchester: Manchester UP, 1994; see also, Daniel Boyarin's Unheroic Conduct: The Rise of Heterosexuality and the Invention of the Jewish Man.Berkeley: U of California P, 1997.

[35] Mercer, Kobena. "Decolonisation and Disappointment: Reading Fanon's Sexual Politics." In The Fact of Blackness: Frantz Fanon and Visual Representation, ed. Alan Read.

[36] Butler, Judith. Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity. New York: Routledge, 1999.

[37] The shift from the homosexual to the homosocial is a point made by bell hooks in her discussion of Fanon in "Feminism as a Persistent Critique of History" in The Fact of Blackness Ed. Alan Read.

[38] hooks, "Feminism as a Persistent Critique of History."

[39] See works by Kimberle Crenshaw "Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence Against Women of Color," Frances M. Beale's "Double Jeopardy: To be Black and Female," Deborah K. King, "Multiple Jeopardy, Multiple Consciousness: The Context of Black Feminist Ideology," Valerie Smith's Not Just Race, Not Just Gender: Black Feminist Readings, Combahee River Collective's A Black Feminist Statement, among others.

[40] Many African Feminist scholars insist on that addressing African men's oppression under colonialism is central to their feminist theorizing. See for example the works of Molara Ogundipe-Leslie, Obioma Nnaemeka, Niara Sudarkasa, Tsitsi Dangarembga, Carole Boyce Davies, among others.

[41] For a discussion of dominant masculinity, see Coles, "Negotiating the Field of Masculinity," cited in this chapter.

[42] Spillers, "Mama's Baby, Papa's Baby."

[43] See Dorothy Roberts' Killing the Black Body: Race Reproduction, and the Meaning of Liberty, especially chapter two for a discussion of reproduction and resistance in bondage in the US; Jennifer Morgan's Laboring Women: Reproduction and Gender in New World Slavery offers a longitudinal view from the 17th and 18th century and across the Anglophone Atlantic; Angela Davis's "Reflections on the Black *Woman's Role* in the Community of Slaves;" among others.

[44] Peabody, Sue. "*Négresse, Mulâtresse, Citoyenne*: Gender and Emancipation in the French Caribbean, 1650-1848." Gender and Slave Emancipation in the Atlantic Wolrd. Eds Pamela Scully and Diana Paton. Durham: Duke University Press, 2005.

[45] While Fanon talks extensively in "Algeria Unveiled" of Algerian women's participation in the war, his construction of their entry into the war and his framing of their efforts—how he and his comrades laughed at these fighters or his description of their use of technologies of war—do not redeem him. Had he omitted their participation, he would most certainly deserve the labels misogynist and sexist.

Part II

Chapter Two

'Afraid Only of What I'll Become': Rethinking Fanonian Subjectivity Through the Portrayal of Black Sexual Politics in Gayl Jones's Corregidora

Those who grant our conclusions on the psychosexuality of the white woman may ask what we have to say about the woman of colour. I know nothing about her.

Frantz Fanon, Black Skin

I hope I have shown that here the master differs basically from the master described by Hegel. For Hegel there is reciprocity; here the master laughs at the consciousness of the slave. What he wants from the slave is not recognition but work.

Frantz Fanon, Black Skin

In the preceding chapter, I argued that in his exclusive focus on the black/native male's lived-experiences, Fanon renders black women and homosexuals fragmented and pathological, and in those cases in which he attempts to recover the black/native man as a whole and coherent subject, the black woman becomes hyper-visible and obstructionist to his revolutionary project. Both of the passages in this chapter's epigraph were taken from Black Skin. They represent, to varying degrees, Frantz Fanon's omission of black women's sexuality as a primary category of analysis—his examination of Mayotte Capécia's works is no exception.[1] In fact, his examination of Capécia bears out this formulation specifically because of how he moves between Capécia's works and casual observations of Caribbean women. Fanon then uses these observations to generalize about Caribbean women and their potential to corrupt the youth and by extension the nation.[2] His admission that he knows nothing about the "psychosexuality" of the woman of color, while it may be honest, is a problem endemic not only to Black Skin, but to his entire oeuvre. Noting a similar phenomenon in his study of the Algerian Revolution, A

Dying Colonialism, some Arab feminists, for example, point out that Fanon does not treat Algerian women's sexual lives in his analysis of these women. Responding to these claims, T. Denean Sharpley-Whiting asks, how can we expect Fanon, given the "codes of sexual silence in the 1950s and 1960s," to "write extensively on the sexual lives and sexual neuroses of Algerian women?" (17).[3] A similar question could be asked of Fanon's work concerning his limited analysis of Caribbean women's sexuality—although the same codes did not exist in the Caribbean. Ironically, while Sharpley-Whiting's question is meant to rebuff charges of sexism against Fanon, it implicitly admits the omission of any satisfactory analysis of women's sexuality from his work and further locates women's oppression within the national and cultural landscape he seeks to reclaim.

While the first passage of the epigraph consciously disavows any knowledge of black women's "psychosexuality," the second inconspicuously reveals their absence from Fanon's history and analysis of racial exploitation, the terms on which he engages Hegel's master-slave dialectic, and, more subtly, his turn to violence to articulate racial consciousness and national liberation. In WOE, for example, Fanon insists that the colonial system "was carried on by the din of a great array of bayonets and cannons" and so must be terminated through similarly violent means (36). But such an exclusive focus on overt demonstrations of violence masks the complexity of colonial violence, not to mention the ways in which the exercise of violence is always already gendered.[4] In Black Skin, Fanon demonstrates an acute awareness of the cultural and psychological deployment of colonial violence; however, his analyses fail to incorporate women in ways that move them from emasculating threats to potentially equitable subjects within

the new national landscape. Rather, by insisting on a separation of work and recognition, he overlooks sexual labor— the institutionalized rape, forced breeding and sexual threats and torture of black women— as a mode of colonial work. These are some gender-specific ways in which women suffered under colonial systems.[5] More importantly, Fanon's account of colonialism does not provide an understanding of the ways in which colonialism as a system of control and domination developed around women's bodies and sexuality. As such, it would necessarily fail to account for women's present conditions in the contemporary national-political landscape. Stated differently, he fails to understand the how an account of black/subaltern men's sexual subjectivity does not suffice to cover that of black women's. Turning back to Sharpley-Whiting's rejoinder to Arab feminists for a moment, perhaps the concern should not be Fanon's inability to speak for or about black or Algerian women's sexual lives, but why we continue to turn to Fanon for a radical humanist, "non-sexist," or even "profeminist" perspective when he and his interpreters implicitly and explicitly admit such limitations in his body of work?[6]

For the remaining chapters of this study, I will focus on those issues that I find central to Fanon's project: the master/slave relationship, the function of violence, black subjectivity, and the relationship between self and community/nation as they bear out in the novels. The four novels under consideration ask similar questions to Fanon, yet they arrive at different, sometimes radically different, conclusions than does Fanon. I begin with Gayl Jones's Corregidora for a number of reasons. For one, the novel's storyline historically overlaps with Fanon's entry into and critique of colonial, racist systems. Jones also reformulates the historical master-slave relationship. And finally Jones engages with black male-female relationship in 19th century Brazil and mid-20th century

U.S.—a noticeable absence in Fanon's work. While Jones does not explicitly address Fanon or his work, her troping of male-female relationship, or what she calls a "blues relationship," radically disrupts Fanon's formulations that colonial masters wanted work, not recognition from their slaves. Moreover, Jones's attempt to articulate a radical black female subjectivity through a heterosexual framework adumbrates, through the troping of violence, the limitations of constructing a (black) female subjectivity within the strictures of a hetero-patriarchal world. In so doing, Jones not only challenges Fanonian discourse, but also exposes the imperative towards violence that structures heterosexuality.

Intertextuality in the Masculine Decade: Gayl Jones and Frantz Fanon

Except for Nervous Conditions, which I discuss in the subsequent chapter, none of the novels under consideration in this project overtly addresses Fanon's work. Yet, like in Fanon's work, each text is "engaged in a complex dialogic negotiation with the various spheres that together form the cultural moment of [their] production" (Rushdy 17).[7] Madhu Dubey has shown in her excellent study, Black Women Novelists and the Nationalist Aesthetic, that in the case of Corregidora, Jones was engaged with the various political and cultural debates in the U.S. mainstream and the black community. Jones's work specifically addresses those debates that concerned the black woman, her body and sexuality, and her place within the community (and by extension the black nation). While the subject of Fanon's work is the black male, he was engaging similar debates about black liberation, racial oppression, and the politics of "racialized sexuality," or the point at which the deployment of sexuality intersects with the deployment of race.[8] Without rehearsing Dubey's formulations, two things are worth pointing out with respect to how

Corregidora engages its cultural moment and hence Fanonian discourse. The first is the political and cultural context in which the novel emerges; the second is the set of themes and issues that the novel engages. As Dubey points out, Jones's works were clearly responding to black nationalist discourse, specifically black a aesthetic ideology whose recreation of a black reading public shaped the publication, reception, and production of black literature at the time (14, 32). Such a milieu, however, was a quagmire for while it allowed for the emergence of black writers such as Jones, it marginalized texts such as Corregidora that challenged the political and cultural ideology of its public.[9]

Published in 1975, Corregidora emerged amidst the strident debates about black identity, community-formation, black aesthetic theory, and liberation more commonly identified as black nationalist discourse. Drawing on the work of Alphonso Pinkney, Dubey asserts that black nationalist discourse constitutes a number of often conflicting, ideologies historians have tended to divide into two broad camps: revolutionary nationalism and cultural nationalism. The main difference between the two is that cultural nationalists believed that black people constituted a cultural nation and so emphasized race over class, while revolutionary nationalists, who blend black nationalism with Marxism-Leninism, emphasized class over race (14). It is worth pointing out that this distinction is representative of the U.S. context, though within the same logic of categorization Fanon's work would be more closely aligned with a revolutionary nationalist framework—if only because he was deeply mired in the anti-colonial movements of 1950s and early-1960s and believed that participation in violent revolution could lead to racial self-consciousness. More than anything, though, U.S. black nationalist discourse largely demanded political and economic justice, while it articulated

the desire for a right to self-determination irrespective of the American mainstream's apparata of political and economic mobility. Corregidora comes out of this atmosphere of radical self and community articulation, for which WOE provided strategic and ideological underpinning.

In engaging black nationalist discourse, Jones also engages Fanon, whose work was highly influential with movement leaders and followers. In contrast to the Civil Rights movement, which sought change through a strategy of nonviolence, black nationalist discourse, under the banner of "Black Power," expressed and sometimes enacted a platform of violent reform and remedy. While the slogan gained its political roots through such groups such as the Black Panther Party and the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), specifically through SNCC chairman Stockley Carmichael,[10] it was Richard Wright who first breathed life into the expression in his 1954 exploration of the developing nations of Africa, Black Power. The presence of Wright within this genealogy of violent political demands should not be easily overlooked as Wright's work has had a significant influence on Fanon's writing and development as a radical force within decolonization.[11] As I have pointed out in chapter one, in Black Skin, Fanon makes reference to Wright's Native Son via references to Bigger Thomas, the novel's anti-hero. And further, Fanon's shift from a rhetorical deployment of the Hegelian dialectic to a gendered claim for recognition as a man emerges at the same point as his reference to Wright and Chester Himes, two U.S. writers whose works helped usher in a modern black radical (literary) tradition.[12] Ideologically, then, the two—Fanon and Wright—are linked. This linkage attests to the chiasmic relationship between Fanon's writing about Caribbean masculinity and decolonization

and U.S. black male radicals' ideological and political patronage of Fanon's work. The depth of Fanon's influence during this period is captured by the oft-referenced line from Black Panther leader Eldridge Cleaver who asserted, "Every brother on a rooftop can quote Fanon." Recognized as a hyperbole, the weight of Cleaver's sentiments is nevertheless conveyed by Nikhil Pal Singh's assertion that The Wretched of the Earth was "perhaps the most important theoretical influence on such late 1960s radicals as the Black Panthers" (189).[13] Importantly, we can come to see those challenges posed to patriarchal formulations of nation/community, masculinity and femininity, and violence by black women writers, activists, and artists such as Gayl Jones as intertextual engagements with Fanon, who was likewise responding to "interrelated impulses" on the black subject, black sexuality, and black community-formation (Rushdy 17).[14]

In addition to the metatextual concerns that inform the novel, Jones textually engages Fanonian discourse through the issues of black masculinity, specifically black male emasculation, and the black female body and sexuality. In Black Skin, Fanon constructs an image of black male emasculation through his anxiety over castration. Everything for Fanon amounts to a castration threat: black women's desire for white men, white women's desire for black men, and what he calls "negrophobia"—white men's hate of black men.[15] Within black nationalist discourse, black women as emasculators is rooted in a discourse of slavery; according to this logic that black women were supposedly deployed against black men. Nathan Hare, for example, argued that "historically, the white oppressor has pitted the male against the female and …forced and seduced the female to take on his values and through her emasculated and controlled the man."[16] Eldridge Cleaver made a similar argument that black women have been used as

props against the economic advancement of black men. Through a fictional "Black Eunuch's" voice he claims, "[t]hat's why all down through history, he [the white man] has propped her up economically above you and me, to strengthen her hand against us."[17]

Recalling Pinkney's description of black nationalist discourse, it is clear that while class consciousness was an important aspect of claims for racial justice for both revolutionary and cultural nationalists, gender consciousness, specifically discrimination against black women, was not. Although leaders of various movement organizations made gendered assessments of their racial predicament, the move was, in the main, to portray black women, through their roles as mothers and income-earners, as the inheritors of a legacy of black male emasculation and white hegemony. If the discourse at the time constructed the black male body as threatened and imperiled, it constructed the black female body as the literal and figurative ground through which its recuperation was possible. If black female success was inversely related to black male's, for black men to reclaim their masculinity, black women needed to step back and serve black men as helpmates and mothers for the revolution. Black leaders and thinkers such as Carmichael, Cleaver, Maulana Ron Karenga, and others chided black women to be more feminine and submissive and to take care of the home (Marable 141). [18] According to Manning Marable, by the 1960s, the definition of what constituted a real black woman depended on her ability to have children. And further, "black unmarried teenage girls could become women by bearing children 'for the race'" (133). Quoting black sociologist Robert Staples, Marable writes, "The role of the black woman in the black liberation is an important one and cannot be forgotten. […] From her womb have come the revolutionary warriors of our time" (135). Black women's most important asset, then, was her womb.

This patriarchal logic was not exclusively articulated by black men, as black women such as Brenda Heyson, a Black Panther leader in New York, attacked a New York statute that made abortion available to poor and black women as "deceptive genocide" (137).

This patriarchal discourse was not exclusive to leaders of the black community. This is indicated by then-Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan's 1965 report, "The Negro Family: The Case for National Action," that argued black women's so-called matriarchal role in the family is responsible for the dysfunction of the black family and the plight of the black male. Moynihan asserted that black families are caught in a "tangle of pathology," in which their matriarchal family structure contributes to their improvised social standing. Although Moynihan admits that this structure is only deviant in comparison to the dominant patriarchal white structure, he nonetheless argued that the heart of black disadvantage lies in the putatively domineering role of the black woman, who functionally emasculates her men. As a result, these men fail to be competitive with their black female and white counterparts. Moynihan's arguments, as other scholars have shown, were not only racist, but sexist. In one passage, he points out that the problems of the "negro" are "inter-related," yet he pointed to the black family and the black woman in particular as the center of this "dysfunction." Moynihan's report relied on the works of a number of scholars, including black sociologist E. Franklin Frazier, to make his case. It also provided black males ammunition against black women—as the above quotes from Cleaver, Hare and others demonstrate—while exposing the ideological alignment between white patriarchal and black patriarchal discourses.

Moynihan's report and the discourse that it spurred are emblematic of the ways in which circulating racist and patriarchal discourses conceptualized the black feminine. In

responding to the political and cultural discourses of her time, Jones indirectly engages Fanonian discourse, which drew on U.S. political and cultural discourse around the black male, violence, liberation, and, by erasure and exclusion, the black female. Black leaders and thinkers in turn drew from Fanon's work that called for, or in the least found value in, violent reformation and community-formation. In what follows, I will examine Jones's Corregidora to show how she negotiates the various cultural and political debates of her time to rethink a core pillar within Fanonian discourse and black nationalist discourse, the master-slave relationship and the uses of violence. In addition, I aim to show that in reconceptualizing this relationship, Jones not only shows the overlap between racist and black patriarchal discourses, but also how the imperative towards violence already reinscribes women's abuse.

Rethinking the Master-Slave Dialectic through a Trans-America Model

Critical examination of Jones's Corregidora run the gamut, from explorations of the blues as a mode of healing and subject formation for the protagonist, Ursa Corregidora, to explorations of the mother-daughter relationship and of the slave past as a traumatic return to explorations of the conflicts and possibilities surrounding black male-female love relations.[19] In addition, some critics have also explored how the novel challenges or disrupts the Hegelian master-slave dialectic.[20] Sally Robinson, for example, argues that the novel explores Hegel's dialectic as it "describes a pattern of mutual dependency between masters and slave, but goes beyond Hegel in foregrounding the ways in which his formulations naturalizes a dynamic that, in the black woman's experience, can better be explained by socioeconomic relations" (161). She concludes

that in recasting the master slave dynamic between Ursa and her reconciled ex-husband, Mutt Thomas, Jones temporarily reverses the roles of master and slave, but does not disrupt the pattern of heterosexual relationship within which the novel and the relationship operates. Thus, Ursa and Mutt are locked into the "circular pattern of a master/slave dialectic with no hope of escape" (164). While Robinson offers some intriguing reformulations of the master/slave dialectic, which will prove useful for my project, this chapter departs from her reading of the master/slave dialectic by considering the dialectic vis-à-vis Fanon's deployment of it as well as Jones's deployment of a blues dialectic alongside the master/slave dialectic. Ultimately, my reading challenges Robinson's contention that the final scene of the novel offers "no hope of escape" for Ursa and Mutt.

A neo-slave narrative,[21] Corregidora utilizes the "ancestral memory" of Brazilian slavery to signify on mid-20th century U.S. black male-female relationship.[22] In what Jones calls a "blues relationship," or black male-female relationship that "emerges out of the tradition of love and trouble" (Jones & Harper 360),[23] Corregidora is the story of a young blues singer, Ursa Corregidora, whose domestic altercation with her possessive husband, Mutt Thomas, caused her to "fall" down a flight of stairs, resulting in a miscarriage and a hysterectomy. The loss of her womb, a site of struggle and resistance for the black women in her family, forces Ursa to reconsider her place in a lineage of women who have recorded their family history of incest, forced prostitution, enslavement, and survival through "making generations," or having daughters; because after slavery ended in Brazil, the former masters burnt all the documents "to play like it didn't never happen" (9). Not only must Ursa cope with finding her place in the family

history, she must also cope with finding herself outside the bounds of a heterosexual relationship—as she has divorced her husband Mutt—all the while struggling to find an appropriate medium to "bear witness" to her and her foremothers' past. Jones's challenge to black patriarchal discourse and heterosexual coupling lies in her reconstruction of the colonial master-slave relationship, which she highlights through a focus on the black female body and sexuality.

From the outset of the narrative, Jones establishes Ursa's body as a contested site, a site of confusion and confrontation. After returning from her stay in the hospital, her caregiver and soon-to-be husband, Tadpole McCormick, tells her that the medical staff kept wondering if she were "a gypsy" because she was "cussing them out" and "saying words they ain't never heard before" (8). Asking what his response to them was, Tadpole quipped: "Naw. I said, 'If she's a gypsy I'm a Russian'" (8). As an introduction to her family's story of racial amalgamation and sexual exploitation, Ursa challenges Tadpole's certainty about his ancestry: "How do you know you ain't? One of them might a got your great-grandmama down in a Volga boat or something" (8). Ursa's reaction is revealing on two accounts. It sets the narrative stage for an account of her family's history of sexual violation while subtly revealing the uncertain ancestry of black and multi-raced peoples in the "new world"; this in effect calls into question the whole project of racial categorization. Moreover, in referring to Tadpole's "great-grandmama" and not his great granddaddy, for example, Ursa underscores the reality that black women's bodies and sexuality are often at the center of this contestation of ancestry, identity and sexual exploitation.

Through Ursa's physical body, Jones brings together competing discourses on ownership of the female body, Brazilian slavery, and African American masculinity. As the product of a Brazilian mother and an African American father, Ursa points out that her "veins are centuries meeting" and that she is "stained with another's past as well as our [hers and Mutt's] own. Their past in my blood. I'm a blood" (45). Perhaps invoking the U.S. one drop rule on racial identification, Ursa uses her blood to instantiate her being and ancestral history. The reference to blood also calls to mind her foremothers' corporeal project of historical documentation, namely using the female body to "leave evidence" or "make generations" to tell the family and national history. Her Brazilian history is more directly marked on and in the body when she says, "I have a birthmark between my legs" (45), here referring not only to her vagina, but her uterus and, more specifically, her family's imperative to "make generations." Moreover, her remark exposes the history of prostitution her foremothers endured, as well as the exigencies placed on her as a woman with "a hole".

Jones does not cast this struggle over Ursa's body and future as a problem endemic to the Corregidora family or Ursa herself. Further encroaching on Ursa's right or space to carve out an identity for herself is Mutt's demands to know "*Are you mine, Ursa, or theirs?*" or to "Let me feel *my* pussy" (45, 46 original italics). In setting the narrative stage as a struggle between Ursa and her family and husbands, Jones points to heterosexual codes of conduct that Ursa must perform and negotiate in order to claim herself. In the series of recalled and imagined conversations that Jones uses to structure the novel, as well as the direct exchanges between Ursa and Tadpole, each male character—old man Corregidora, Tadpole McCormick, Harold (a childhood neighbor), an

old man during her childhood, and patrons at the cafés where she works—make demands on her body. In one instance during her marriage to Tadpole, he says to her, "Let me up in your pussy, baby" (82). During her youth, Harold, her girl friend May Alice's boyfriend, and his friends surrounded her house banging on the doors to "Let us in so we can give you a baby" (138). And, as a young girl going to the store with her mother, an old man reaches out his hand to her asking her to "give me what you got" (95). It is only after her mother pulls her away and tells her that he was reaching his hand "down between your legs" that she knew what was going on (95). In the ubiquity and diversity of encounters with male characters who repeatedly demand access to her body, Jones casts Ursa's struggle for identity and ownership of her body as a larger battle women face in a patriarchal culture that objectifies their personhood and their right to self assertion.

She further problematizes this struggle by linking colonial demands of the black female body and sexuality, narrated through Ursa's foremothers' slave experiences in Brazil, and black men's contemporary demand of the same.[24] Jones's use of Brazil is a direct engagement with Moynihan's thesis; the report distinguishes the peculiarities of American slavery from the putatively kinder, more humanitarian version in Brazil. Quoting from American sociologist Nathan Glazer, Moynihan wrote:

> The feudal, Catholic society of Brazil had a legal and religious tradition which accorded the slave a place as a human being in the hierarchy of society; […] in contrast, there was nothing in the tradition of English law or Protestant theology which could accommodate to the fact of human bondage—the slaves were therefore reduced to the status of chattels.[25] [26]

The passage continues, "In short: the Brazilian slave knew he was a man, and that he differed in degree, not in kind, from his master."[27] Moynihan uses Glazer's argument to substantiate his thesis that enslaved blacks in the U.S. were denied their manhood because in servitude they were not allowed to marry, purchase their or their family's freedom, or openly practice the national religion. Moynihan, in essence, contends that enslaved blacks in the U.S., unlike in Brazil, were not given the economic, religious, and psychological foundation with which to assimilate into the Anglo-dominated, Protestant culture after emancipation. In centering the Corregidora women's story of sexual abuse and exploitation under Brazilian slavery, Jones directly challenges Moynihan's contention that slaves were treated more humanely, and, in the process, exposes the patriarchal foundation on which his argument rests. More importantly, she exposes the ideological alignment of racist discourse and black patriarchal discourse, and the ways in which both structure their project upon the black female body.

By employing a transnational model of race and gender in which she deploys elements of Brazilian slave history, namely the master-slave relationship, to tell the story of the Corregidora women, Jones signifies on mid-20th century discourse about black women. The first step in her reconstruction is that she tells the story of Brazilian enslavement from a black female perspective, thus shifting the patriarchal focus of Moynihan's, and by extension, Glazer's work. Accordingly, the family's narrative, which has been passed down from generation to generation, begins with Ursa's great grandmother, Great Gram, a former slave who at the age of eight years old was taken out of the field to work as a mistress and prostitute for her Portuguese master, Simon Corregidora. Second, Jones goes beyond the individual narrative of Great Gram to point

to the fact that prostitution was an institutionalized, sanctioned practice among Brazilian slave owners: “He [Corregidora] wasn’t the first that did it. There was plenty that did it. Make the women fuck and then take their money” (23). Here Jones disrupts the idea that a slave was “accorded […] a place as a human being in the hierarchy of society.” Moreover, she demonstrates that economic priorities outweighed legal and religious conventions in Brazil. Under Brazilian slave practices, female slaves were doubly objectified as chattel and as sexual object, and, what is more, they endured a compounded level of institutionalized torture through the various forms of sex labor they were called upon to perform.

In rounding out her critique of the colonial master-slave relationship, Jones further points to the various ways the sexual conventions of slavery both gendered and ungendered black Brazilian women. On the one hand enslaved women were valued for their function as women, as enslaved men were punished and prevented from having sex with the women both as romantic partners and clients: “He didn’t want no black bastard fucking me, he didn’t wont no black bastard fucking all in his piece” (125). On the other hand, enslaved women were not held to the same standards as their white female counterparts, who Great Gram points out participated in and benefited from their sexual exploitation: “And the mistresses was doing it too so they could have little pocket money that their husbands didn’t know about” (23). Relatedly, heterosexual conventions were not upheld, as Great Gram was forced to sleep with both Ole man Corregidora and his wife: “He wouldn’t sleep with her, so she made me sleep with her, so for five years I was sleeping with her and him” (13). This particular revelation about lesbian sex between Great Gram and Corregidora’s wife, as I will demonstrate later, plays a pivotal role in

Ursa's decision to return to Mutt. And finally, since Corregidora made no distinction between these women and property, he did not recognize family connections; he would sell-off all the boys and ship out any husband whose wife he wanted. Further, he would sleep with and impregnate his own daughter Gram, thus fathering his grandchild, Ursa's mother, Mama. Under these conventions, Brazilian slavery operated within sanctioned and unsanctioned channels. White men's commoditization of black women's sex labor was legitimized as part of the economic structure, while white women's usage was not. Paradoxically, while the sexual indiscretions of white men were marked on the bodies of the enslaved population, their unwillingness to acknowledge parentage rendered these practices at once visible and unspoken; this helps to explain why decades later Brazilian sociologist Gilberto Freyre could, yet again, misappropriate the sexual exploitation of black women as a positive element in Brazilian history and national identity.

Through an examination of the double, sometimes triple, labor that black women were made to endure, one can more effectively understand the challenge that Corregidora poses to Fanon's distinction between work and recognition. Sexual labor, i.e., the institutionalized rape, forced breeding, and sexual threats and torture of black women,[28] ensnared masters and slaves in a system that operated within and outside the conventions of normativity. Although talking about U.S. antebellum practices, Abdul JanMohamed makes the observation, which is applicable in the Brazilian case, that 'racialized sexuality'—"the point where the deployment of sexuality intersects with the deployment of race"—is governed by a peculiar silence in which the 'open secret' of the master's rape of the female slave was never subjected to the same dense juridical discourse as bourgeois sexuality (94, 104). He goes on to argue that the master's "[sexual] desire for

the female implicitly admits the slave's humanity [and thus] undermines the foundation of the racial border [or the superior/inferior split between white and black]" (104).[29] While I hesitate to fully endorse JanMohamed's premise that this relationship implicitly admits the slave's humanity, the notion that the master's desire was never wholly admitted to the same scientific and pseudo-scientific analytics as bourgeois sexuality offers an especially useful point of entry into Fanon's contention that masters only wanted work from their slaves, not recognition, and, further, that the work does not carry the possibility of recognition for the slave. For my purposes, JanMohamed does not outline how specifically this relationship works to admit the slave's humanity. What his formulations accomplish, from my perspective, is that it leaves open the idea that bourgeois sexuality, figured as normative sexuality, produced a fragmented white subject who relied on the black female slave to fulfill those desires that fell outside the realm of normativity. The result is what Ursa calls "genital fantasies" and "sex circuses" (59, 125), or those private and public acting-outs of white male sexual desires onto the black body.

Fanon's conceptualization of work only functioned in the capacity of relationships between black and white males, primarily when the master coerces recognition or when recognition is secured through institutional power, e.g., through the accumulation of financial and political capital for the white master. In this respect, work is constituted as manual labor, which unlike sexual labor, produces a good external to the slave's body. Moreover, the system through which manual labor operates drew sharp distinctions along racial lines about who worked and who can access the resources of that labor, namely, black bodies worked and white bodies consumed that labor. In the case of Corregidora, for example, Great Gram mentions that "Corregidora himself was looking like a Indian—

if I said that to him I have my ass off—so that this light black man looked more like a white man than he did, so he just got rid of him" (124). Gram also says, "He liked his women black but he didn't won't us with no light black mens" (124). Here we see the ways in which whiteness instituted and managed itself in juxtaposition to enslavement and access to the black female body, not just skin color. In his efforts to maintain the fiction of whiteness Corregidora restricted both verbal and physical comparisons of himself to "light black" people. Perhaps to highlight that dichotomy between enslaved and free, black and white, master and slave, he himself preferred only black-skinned slave women and so "wasn't buying up them fancy mulatta womens ...They had to be the color of coffee bean," says Gram (173). Enslaved black females, in their capacity as sexual slaves, were afforded access to the white male body, certainly under compromised and compromising conditions, that those relegated exclusively to manual labor did not have.

Fanon's narrow interpretation of colonial work,[30] then, never allows for the possibility of what it would mean to Hegel's project of recognition or his project of disruption "when the slave is the object desired by the master?"[31] Unlike manual labor that produces a good external to the slave's body, sexual labor produces the slave as the object of consumption. Moreover, in the case of sexual labor, Fanon misses the ways that those on-going sexual encounters between masters and slaves,[32] because they often required some degree of intimacy between the master and the slave, conflates the public and the private and thus holds the possibility of self-recognition for the slave. Another way of conceptualizing these relationships is through a master/mistress relationship in which the mistress occupied the status of "favored" servant. In this capacity, these

enslaved persons gained access to the intimate domains of the master's world; they acquired knowledge of and awareness of the master-slave relationship different from those outside these relationships, for example.[33] Great Gram's relationship with Corregidora, which lasted well after slavery ended, points to the ambivalent nature of this relationship. Great Gram reveals to her descendants that she had to flee Corregidora's plantation because she had done something to him that made him want to kill her. While she never revealed to anyone what she had done, Ursa later comes to speculate, through her own relationship and reenactment with Mutt, that Great Gram's actions "had to be sexual." In "Love and the Trauma of Resistance in Gayl Jones's Corregidora," Stephanie Li asserts that in the sexual encounter between Great Gram and old man Corregidora, in which she may or may not have bitten his penis, "Great Gram exposes the vulnerability of Corregidora's desire and transforms her servile position into one of violent agency; if only for a moment, she becomes master of his body" (133). Sally Robinson makes a similar point when she argues that Great Gram's actions temporarily reversed the roles of master and slave, hence Great Gram becomes master. While I would not employ the same language of mastery in relation to Corregidora's body, Li and Robinson's point is well taken. Throughout the novel, the question of "how much was love for Corregidora and how much was hate," helps to encapsulate the ambivalent and paradoxical nature of this relationship. Not wanting to obscure her vulnerability and the violence inherent in that relationship, Great Gram and Gram, for their part, restricted their memory of Corregidora to one of pure victimhood. Similarly, not wanting that moment of awareness of vulnerability on Corregidora's part or of tenuous agency on Great Gram's part to obscure the violence and exploitation inherent in the master/mistress relationship, critics have

tended to take a similar approach to Great Gram when talking about this relationship, namely to neglect that moment of self-awakening. In delineating this type of relationship my purposes are to complicate the pure victim model of master/mistress relationships, and to consider the possibility of self-awakening that such relationships hold for the slave without denying the violence that it inheres. In no way do I argue that slave mistresses gain the upper-hand against colonial masters, or that they controlled such relationships. As I go on in this chapter to demonstrate, the moment of agency is fleeting and it can, at least in the case of Great Gram and old man Corregidora, engender further violence; yet that violence, or the threat of it, does not foreclose the psychological space opened up for the slave.

A crucial fact is worth acknowledging about the nature of sex labor in master/mistress relationships, namely that such encounters offer up the master's body to the slave in ways that manual labor only offers up the slave's body and labor. Removed from some of the more violent and restrictive elements of enslavement, this point comes out more explicitly in the final scene of the novel in which Mutt and Ursa reenact that relationship and a crucial moment of self-awakening between Great Gram and Corregidora (which I explore more thoroughly towards the end of this chapter). But for now though, colonial work, both manual and sexual, means that whether or not the master's desire admits the slave's humanity, the master depended on that relationship to fully grant his humanity—on both the sexual and racial fronts. It also means, as JanMohamed points out, that "racialized-sexuality," which operates through "*allegorical codes*" and "*mytho-logics*," i.e., through stereotypes, mischaracterizations, and contradictory discourses, constitutes an "even more dense transfer point for the relations

of power." [34] Understanding how Jones constitutes the possibility of recognition for the slave requires understanding the ways in which black masculinist drives can be coextensive with white male hegemony, particularly as they operate through hetero-patriarchal identification.

"A man always says I want to fuck, and a woman always has to say I want to get fucked": Heterosexual Masculinity and Lesbian Self-Denial

Moynihan and black nationalists who support his matriarchal emasculation thesis rest their argument on a simple proposition, which is that men should be women's rightful, if not natural, masters. And further that black men's rightful place is alongside white men. Both do little, if anything, to challenge white hegemonic masculinity. By aligning black male desire for control of and access to the black female body with white male exploitation of black females' sex labor, Jones challenges this assumption of mastery and possession on which contemporary masculinity rests. She does this by aligning black males' desires in the text with that of old man Corregidora, or colonial mastery in general.[35] For example, when Mutt tells Ursa that if she does not stop singing, he will come to the café to auction her off, or when he calls her his "pussy" and his "little gold piece," he evokes old man Corregidora's ownership and uses of Great Gram and Gram as prostitutes. According to Great Gram, old man Corregidora used to refer to her as his "dorita" or his "little gold piece," thus aligning her body with its economic value (124). In one imagined conversation, Ursa acknowledges this link between old man and Mutt when she tells him, "Didn't I tell you you taught me what Corregidora taught Great Gram. He taught her to use the kind of words she did. Don't you remember" (76)?

Similar to the patterns of control exhibited by old man Corregidora, black men's demand for recognition emerge through sexual coercion and emotional and physical violence.

Although Ursa and Mutt's relationship form the dominant signifying narrative, several other relationships provide riffs on this overlap between colonial mastery and black masculinity. Both Martin, Ursa's father, and Tadpole, Ursa's second husband, are initially presented as sympathetic models of masculinity. Tadpole is Ursa's caregiver while she convalesces after her hospitalization. He initially presents himself as different from other men. When Ursa wonders aloud which man will want her now that she cannot have children, Tadpole reassures her, "If I were the man it wouldn't matter. I don't know about any other man" (6). As well, Tadpole is one of two people that Ursa tells her family's history of incest and abuse, and she does not tell him as much as Mutt (60). Tadpole not only shows sympathy, but is willing to share his own family story of abuse. The story he shares, though, complicates and reinforces the overall pattern into which black masculinity falls. His grandfather raised and then married his white grandmother, who, as a nine-or-so year old orphan, was "working out in the fields along with the blacks and [was] treated like she was one" (14). It is unclear how Tadpole interprets this story, but the particulars of it, the grandfather's access to money and therefore to his adopted daughter, the age difference between the two, as well as her race point to the ways that class and masculinity can intersect to displace white female privilege.

In another attempt to connect with Ursa's story that the Brazilian authority burned all the evidence of their cruelty, Tadpole shares how his mother suffered because when she went to claim their family's land, the local authorities had ripped from the deed book documentation of his family's ownership of the land. He ends by punctuating his story

with “They probably burned the pages” (78). While Tadpole shares a familiar story of black people’s rights being denied through destruction of documents, he reveals that the trauma was not suffered equally by all members of the family. When Ursa asks, “Didn’t your daddy do anything [about the burned papers]?” Tadpole replies, “Naw. He went off to France during the war, and stayed in France” (80). Jones does not exactly align Tadpole’s father with the acts of the white administrators; however, the fact that Tadpole’s granddaddy did not have to deal with the travails of the family highlights the fact that black men were allowed avenues of escape, however inadequate, that their black female counterparts did not have, such as access to military service and the attenuated freedoms that accompany it. That his family suffered is not in doubt, but that his mother’s burdens were exacerbated by the father’s leaving is certain. Here Jones further challenges the thesis that black women who head their family contribute to the emasculation of black men. Instead, Tadpole’s family story illustrates that black men’s diminished roles within the family are in part due to their treatment by a racist system that would steal the family’s property and to black men’s difficult, yet personal, decision to walk away from their families when that pressure becomes unbearable.

Although Tadpole did not necessarily want children from Ursa, he demanded that she recognize him as a particular type of man, and he used sex to make that demand: “What am I doing to you, Ursa? What am I doing to you?” […]. Am I fucking you” (75)? Demonstrating the similarity between Tadpole’s and Mutt’s demands of Ursa’s body, Jones juxtaposes, through the very next flashback, Mutt’s usage of the same question to Ursa: “What am I doing to you, Ursa?” To which she replies, “You fucking me” (76). Both Mutt’s and Tadpole’s questions point to the central configuration of and power

dynamic in heterosexual coupling. This is revealed when in an imagined conversation with Cat Lawson, Ursa says, “A man always says I want to fuck, a woman always has to say I want to get fucked” (89). Here heterosexual masculinity is predicated on women’s recognition of black men’s ownership of and access to their bodies, specifically their vagina. Heterosexual sex thus becomes one of the sites for the making of the male subject and the subjection of the female.

While more sympathetic than Tadpole’s or Mutt’s, Martin’s story follows suit in his subjection of Ursa’s mother to the process of gender making. The novel clearly depicts him as someone different from the men that Mama had encountered. In their first meeting, when he approaches her but she would not speak, he does not verbally deride her as other men had. According to Mama, “I kept expecting him to be like the other mens was, and say real evil, ‘You got a mouth, ain’t you bitch? I know you can talk,’ but instead he was still soft” (114). This “softness” presents Martin as a particularly sensitive and patient man. Yet, when he was finally chased away from his wife by Great Gram and Gram, he was able to assuage his feelings of rejection by reducing her to a common feminine type of licentious sexuality—the whore—invoking yet again the colonial conflation of black women and their economic value. Although he lived with the Corregidora women for two years, Martin was not sympathetic to Mama’s struggles within her own family—how her mother and grandmother demanded she make her body a receptacle for their memory or how she was unable, because of the family’s demands, to actualize her desires. Instead, when she went to talk to him, he physically attacked her and turned her onto the street to look like a whore: “Get out […] Go on down the street, lookin like a whore. I wont you to go on down the street, looking like a whore” (121).

Martin's decision to turn Mama unto the street "looking like a whore" ultimately links him with Corregidora who actually used Great Gram and Gram as prostitutes. In fact, his construction of Mama as a whore is not borne out by her actual behavior or his experiences with her. Unlike a whore who is presumably open and available sexually, Mama has been reserved and closed sexually towards Martin. If anything, Mama's unwillingness to have intercourse with Martin after she gives birth to Ursa, placed him in the position of a whore, or someone used for a specific sexual purpose without regard for the person's actual sexual desires. Robinson makes a similar point about Mutt's jealousy and mistreatment of Ursa. She argues that in his perception of Ursa as a kind of Jezebel figure, or the stereotype of the sexually loose and alluring black woman, Mutt misinterprets Ursa's blues songs as invitations to her male audience as opposed to what they are actually about, "closing" up as opposed to "opening" up her body (155). That Martin and Mutt are linked in their fundamental misreading of their female partners points to an underlying feature of heterosexual masculinity, as opposed to white masculinity exclusively. What Martin projects onto Mama is his perceived commoditization by her and her family and thus his vulnerability. Consequently, he lashes out beating her, ripping her clothes, and sending her down the street to look like a whore. Like Tadpole, Martin is initially portrayed as a potential witness to and sympathizer of Mama's history of abuse and exploitation. He rejects the role and Mama when he could not gain full access to and ownership over her body.

While the male characters are positioned, to varying degrees, as reluctant and abusive witnesses, Jones renders Ursa's good friend Cat Lawson as the ideal witness to Ursa's story. As a black lesbian who falls outside the heterosexual framework, Cat

presents Ursa with an alternative to heterosexual coupling and offers her the possibility of recognition. Unlike Jeffy, the young woman Cat babysits and the other lesbian character in the text, Cat's lesbianism is structured as a response to a racist, masculinist system that refused her the option of an unencumbered sexual existence. As a number of critics have pointed out, Cat functions as Ursa's alter-ego. In this capacity, she not only reflects Ursa's sexual alternative, but also the possible consequences to women who reject a heterosexual system of identification.

Cat's relationship with Ursa ranges from a mother figure/caregiver to potential sexual partner to ideal witness. In the role of a mother figure and witness, Cat is supportive of Ursa's blues singing in ways that none of her foremothers are or have been. In her refusal to allow Ursa to make her own decisions while she convalesces, she mirrors the restraints of the Corregidora matriarchy, but she also provides that motherly care that Ursa did not get from her foremothers after her fall and surgery. As Caroline Streeter points out, neither Gram nor Mama visited Ursa after her fall (78).[36] As well, Cat is the perfect audience to Ursa's blues testimonial.[37] The first time Ursa sings after her hysterectomy, Cat reveals to her that her singing now sounds more beautiful because "it sounds like you been through something. […] Like Ma, for instance, after all the alcohol and men, the strain made it better, because you could tell what she'd been through" (44). Despite her desire for Ursa—several characters hint at this fact—Cat does not reduce Ursa's pain to a desire for her body as the men she encounters do. Instead, she provides psychological succor for moving Ursa from wound to health. Cat is also the person who challenges Ursa on the rushed relationship she begins with Tadpole, the owner of Happy's Café where she works, so soon after her fall:

> Listen, honey, I'ma tell you something […]. Right now's not the time for you to be grabbing at anything. Any woman to be grabbing at anything. Out of fear. I don't know what. Ask yourself how did you feel about Tadpole before all of this happened. I know he's been good to you, but this is a rush. Just thinking about the two of y'all getting together is a rush job. You know what I mean? He's looked at you and seem like you scared somebody else won't. You a beautiful woman. They be many mens that… (26).

Cat challenges Ursa to consider the real reasons she wants to be with Tadpole, while at the same time trying to assuage her fear that she will be undesirable to men. Throughout the text, Ursa holds much of her thoughts, feelings and past to herself, but here Cat pushes her to confront what she has been avoiding.[38] Unwilling to hear Cat's objections, Ursa interrupts her before she finishes.

Despite cat's role as a maternal figure and caregiver, Ursa's larger fears about "what I'd come to," namely being seen as undesirable to men and falling entirely outside of her family's imperative, force her to reject Cat sexually and ideologically (90). While I agree with Swanson and others' assessment that Ursa's rejection of Cat is not entirely based in homophobia, the subject requires further exploration because to fully understand the operation of homophobia, we have to also understand the role violence plays both in its covert and overt manifestations.[39] Ursa not only fears lesbianism and what it stands for, namely "sex apart from male penetration" (Swanson), but she rejects Cat's reasons for becoming a lesbian. While convalescing at Cat's place, Ursa is sexually molested by fourteen-year-old Jeffy. When she awakes to find Jeffy feeling on her breast, her reaction is physically and verbally violent toward her: "I shot awake and knocked her

out on the floor. […]'Naw, bitch, you get the hell out of here,' I said. 'You take that goddamn blanket and get the goddamn hell out of here'" (39).[40] Her reaction to Jeffy is more violent than it is to any of her male partners, even Mutt who she recalls would force her to have sex when she did not want it: "When-ever [Mutt] wanted it and I didn't, he'd take me, because he knew that I wouldn't say, No, Mutt, or even if I had, sometimes I wonder about whether he would have taken me anyway" (156). While Ursa indicates that there was tacit consent, it is not entirely clear that what Mutt did does not constitute rape. In any case, her reaction to Jeffy is unequivocal, and her initial concern for her health turns callous and cold, "Well she can catch pneumonia of the asshole for all I care" (40). Despite her violent rejection of Jeffy, the incident is not enough to make her leave Cat's house. Ursa's violence towards Jeffy is consistent with an underlying violence that operates around homosexuality in the text—sexuality in general is plagued by violence, but Ursa's confrontation with lesbianism seems to bring her back to her foremothers' past, specifically Great Gram being forced to sleep with Corregidora's wife.

Lesbianism proves to be untenable with Ursa's path to health, mainly because it would locate her outside the original master/slave dialectic in which her family situates their resistance. As I highlighted earlier, in her family's narrative of abuse, Great Gram reveals to Ursa that from the age of thirteen to eighteen, she was forced to have sex with old man Corregidora and his wife: "He wouldn't sleep with her, so she made me sleep with her, so for five years I was sleeping with her and him" (13). Great Gram tells Ursa this history when she is five years old. Young Ursa questions her Great Gram—"'You telling me the truth, Great Gram?'—who "slaps" her. "When I'm telling you something don't ever ask if I'm lying. Because they didn't want to leave no evidence of what they

done—so it couldn't be held against them. And I'm leaving evidence. And you got to leave evidence too. And your children got to leave evidence," Grams tells her Ursa (13-14). Through Great Gram's insistence that they "leave evidence," the family's directive is revealed to be rooted in both a procreative and a heterosexual imperative, both of which a relationship with Cat undermines. As well, the directive is enforced by both an overt act of violence, the slap, and a covert act, the silence conveyed by the invective "when I'm telling you something, don't ever ask if I'm lying." What Ursa appears to question is not solely the abuse by old man, but whether or not Great Gram slept with his wife. The slap, sandwiched between the question of homosexuality and the insistence on silence and heterosexuality, indelibly links homosexuality, not only with racist colonial violence, but with the five-year-old Ursa's experience of violence in the contemporary. Critical assessments that link Cat to Ursa's foremothers miss this second, contemporary experience of violence and homosexuality. From this incident, Ursa learns not to question the Corregidora narrative, not until she finds herself unable to "make generations." Ursa, like Mama, never learned to question the Corregidora narrative as her father Martin had done when he asked, "How much was hate for Corregidora and how much was love" (131). This linkage between homosexuality and violence and silence and heterosexuality come to influence the decisions Ursa makes as she moves towards self-reclamation.

In Ursa's first rejection of homosexuality, the catalyst for ending her friendship with Cat is her suspicion that her friend might also be a lesbian and, further, that she might be carrying on a relationship with the teenaged Jeffy. Although Cat and Jeffy's relationship remains textually ambiguous, the possibility us nonetheless disquieting for Ursa, who upon overhearing the conversation about whether she would have returned

Jeffy's sexual advances, absconds from Cat's apartment back to Tadpole's. In the turn to Tadpole, we witness a pattern similar to what young Ursa was introduced to—a movement from homosexuality to affirmation of heterosexuality mediated by violence. As soon as Ursa returns to Tadpole's place she engage in sexual intercourse with Tadpole and accepts Tadpole's marriage proposal (49). Ironically, Cat is the one who must bear witness to their nuptials. While the ceremony happens off the pages, we do witness Ursa and Cat's exchange about the conversation between Cat and Jeffy. In her confession, Cat reveals that her lesbian lifestyle is precipitated by the humiliating indignities she suffers in the white world as well as in her heterosexual relationship. As she explains to Ursa, "You don't know what it's like to feel foolish all day in a white woman's kitchen and then have to come home and feel foolish in the bed at night with your man. I wouldn't mind the other so much if I didn't have to feel like a fool in the bed with my man" (64). Cat connects her lesbianism to the continued abuse of black women by white people and black men. Specifically, she finds her husband's inability to empathize with her daily struggles and her feelings of inadequacy in the relationship to be an unbridgeable gap between them. Ursa knows the experience well, but is unwilling to concede the point. As she confesses to herself in the next paragraph,

> She wanted me to tell her that I knew what it was like, but I wouldn't tell her. Yes, I know what it feels like. I remembered how his shoulders felt when he was going inside me and I had my hands on his shoulders, but I also remembered that night I was exhausted with wanting and I waited but he didn't turn toward me and I kept waiting and wanting him […] I just lay there saying don't make me use my fingers, and then I got up too (64-65).

In her confession, Ursa reveals that while she knows what it is to "feel foolish" with her man, she also knows "how his shoulders felt"—and thus what pleasure feels like with him.

After being cheated on and humiliated by Tadpole, Ursa reveals the real reason she did not acknowledge Cat's explanation, namely, it is a "fear of what I'd come to" (48). In an imagined conversation with Cat, she explains:

> Because I knew why he kept me waiting, Cat, that's why I knew what you felt, why I wouldn't tell you that I knew. […] *Afraid only of what I'll become*, because those times he didn't touch the clit, I couldn't feel anything, and then he… […] *Afraid of what I*. No, I didn't push it, Cat. He wanted me too. [..] I gave you what I could. You didn't ask for that. You knew about the scar on my belly. You didn't ask for children that I couldn't give. What I wanted too. […] I'm so tired of waiting. Afraid of waiting. I gave you want I could. You didn't as for that. You knew about the scar on my belly. You didn't ask for children that I couldn't give. What I wanted too. *Afraid of what I'll come to*. All that sweat in my hands. What can you do for me? (89-90 my emphasis)

In this passage, Ursa reiterates her fears to Cat as one of existential uncertainty. What that uncertainty is is left to speculation given that the only thing she points to is that she wanted children. Perhaps a lesbian relationship would make her barrenness too painful to acknowledge. The choice of lesbianism would effectively locate Ursa outside of her foremother's path to health, which Ursa rejects, mainly because, as Robinson points out, what her foremothers have to say needs to be said, just differently.[41] In her imagined conversation, Ursa conveys that Cat is her ideal witness because she "gave what she

could" and Cat did not ask for more. Moreover, the sweat in her palm connects her to a similar experience with Great Gram, whose palms, Ursa notes, were sweaty when she would recount aspects of her experience with old man Corregidora. Allowing no other interpretation besides that of absolute victimization, Ursa has no other points of entry into Great Gram's narrative. Lesbianism would also force her to face the reality, perhaps too soon after her loss, that she cannot fulfill the procreative function of her family's imperative. It would also effectively locate her entirely outside the heterosexual matrix, which is an implicit imperative in the family's demand to make generations. In this imagined conversation she recasts two things: Jeffy's age and her fear of being a childless woman as part of her fears. While it would locate her outside the realm of a certain type of violence, it would make her vulnerable to another.

At the end of the novel when Ursa runs into an older Jeffy, Jeffy reveals to Ursa that both she and Cat have suffered, and Ursa has done nothing to help them. She tells Ursa that she suffered from a pneumonia infection and that Cat was in a disfiguring factory accident at work that pulled her hair out of her head. Jeffy's illness, pneumonia, conveys the latent and real violence to the homosexual body, as this is the same illness Ursa told her she does not care if she catches of the "asshole." Cat's accident elucidates the pitfalls of being outside of heterosexual protection. It is logical to deduce that the reason Cat leaves town after her revelation to Ursa is because Ursa knows she is a lesbian, which the community may not have known or chose not to openly acknowledge. In leaving town, she left behind her business, which had afforded her the protection of not having to sell her body. It also gave her the option not to have to work in white women's kitchen. Her work in a factory environment illuminates the new threats to black

femininity, namely what she must deal with in an industrial setting, as these low-skilled, low-pay jobs are more readily staffed by black and poor women. (Jeffy's mother, also, works in a factory.) Cat's accident locates her even further outside heterosexuality, for now she is not only a lesbian, but with the hair loss, she becomes unfeminine. As Jeffy laments, "That kind of thing makes you don't feel like a woman" (177). Perhaps invoking the repetitive, blues structure of the novel, Ursa's final encounter with homosexuality mirrors her initial flight from Cat's home to Tadpoles, as now she notes that whenever she sees Jeffy, she "cross[es] the street" (178). It is also significant to note that, similar to the first "crossing," Ursa's final encounter with lesbianism is preceded by a parallel memory of Great Gram having to sleep with old man Corregidora's wife. This repetition underscores the significance of that memory for Ursa, as well as the foreclosure of that possibility (172). As before, Ursa runs from homosexuality to Mutt and, therefore, back to heterosexuality. For her, then, the choice of lesbianism would displace but not disrupt patriarchal desire, which is the goal of the novel and her foremothers.

"I Could Kill You": Blues Dialectic and Female Self-Recognition

Despite the violence and struggles between Ursa and the various characters throughout the novel, Ursa remains committed to a heterosexual resolution, which leads the novel to a disquieting closure. Much of Jones's commitment rests in her construction of the novel as a blues novel, and by extension, Mutt and Ursa's relationship as a "blues relationship." Because Ursa's journey towards self-emancipation is premised on telling the family's narrative—just differently—at the end of the novel we find her back with

Mutt. Bringing her challenges to mid-20th century patriarchal discourse full circle, Jones explores the full extent of female agency within the context of heterosexual union.

Ursa's reasons for returning to Mutt seem to be embedded in a desire to understand and improve upon her foremothers' past and the failed opportunity between her mother and father. Specifically, in having Ursa return to Mutt, Jones explores the possibility of love between black males and females, something that was denied to them during slavery: men were separated from their wives and family, and some of the women (such as her foremothers) were forced to "make love to anyone, so they couldn't love anyone" (104). In the final overlap between colonial masculinity and mid-20th century black masculinity, Ursa performs fellatio on her ex-husband and in the process uncovers Great Gram's secret, namely "'What [it is] a woman can do to a man that make him hate her so bad he wont to kill her one minute and keep thinking about her and can't get her out of his mind the next'" (184). During the act, Ursa discovers a connection with Great Gram and perhaps a side of herself she had not previously known. "I could kill you," she says to Mutt, who does not hear her (184).

The final scene of the novel has produced some of the most disparate and controversial readings of the text. At the risk of oversimplification, the controversy can be divided among three camps: critics who resolve the tension between Ursa and Mutt through an appeal to ambiguity and ambivalence; critics who read the scene as a moment of reconciliation and intimacy between Ursa and Mutt; and those who read the end, more or less, as Ursa succumbing to Mutt's demands—and perhaps even to all the other men who demanded recognition through sexual submission. Because of the ways in which colonial mastery and contemporary black masculinity are aligned throughout the text, I

read the final scene along the lines of the third approach, namely that Ursa succumbs, to borrow Ann DuCille's characterization of the moment. I do so, however, but with a caveat, namely that submission is utilized as a discursive strategy that points to another issue, the imperative towards violence that underlie heterosexual coupling. Using the same terms of Jones's engagement of colonial mastery, if we read the blues, specifically the ways in which Jones employs the medium to ensnare Mutt and Ursa within a dialectic of pleasure and pain, or love and hate, then the final scene is a moment within a blues dialectic, not necessarily a resolution to it. Recall that Robinson reads this moment as circular and inescapable. But, in its tendency towards repetition-with-a-difference, the blues form holds the potential for self-recognition, if not also mutual recognition.

Unlike the Hegelian dialectic which, in its failure to achieve mutual recognition stirs perpetually on, the blues dialectic does contain the possibility for mutual recognition, but not through the other's submission necessarily. As I have pointed out above, much of the male characters demand Ursa's recognition of their masculinity through her sexual submission, which is very Hegelian in that a Hegelian master demands the slave's submission or that of another master to achieve and maintain mastery and self-consciousness. In one respect, this Hegelian form of recognition is also emblematic of the colonial master/mistress relationship, as the colonial master demanded the female slave's recognition through sexual submission and commoditization. Whereas the colonial master is able to coerce recognition and maintain it through brute force and institutionalized capital (both through manual and sexual labor), sexual labor in its position within the public and private realm resists total incorporation in the Hegelian sense. The blues dialectic, on the other hand, captures this private component of sexual

labor that falls outside of Fanonian critical inquiry. Like the Hegelian dialectic, the blues dialectic functions through repetition, but the blues dialectic, like the blues, tends towards "dynamic repetition" (Liberating 73) or what others call "repetition with a difference."[42]

Mutt's insistence throughout the novel that Ursa recognize him as a man through the sex act aligns with this final scene in which Ursa performs fellatio on him. The scene is a bit complicated because while it aligns Mutt and Ursa, specifically through Ursa's alignment of the two with Great Gram and Corregidora—" It was like I didn't know how much was me and Mutt and how much was Great Gram and Corregidora—like Mama when she had started talking like Great Gram"—it also displaces the original colonial master/mistress relationship and substitutes the contemporary male-female relationship. Such a displacement is reinforced by Ursa's earlier imagined conversation with Mutt, where he insists that he is her "Original man," not Corregidora (100). In this displacement/substitution move, Jones displaces the Hegelian dialectic and substitutes a blues dialectic in which black male-female love struggle is played out in ritualized dialogue. Through its repetitive and improvisational structure, the blues dialectic contains the possibility for difference and hence change and mutual or reciprocal recognition.

I do not argue here, however, that such is achieved. Rather, I argue that Ursa achieves recognition through a moment of self-recognition. In this displacement/substitution alignment, Ursa's action with Mutt both magnifies and extends Great Gram's moment of self-awakening with old man Corregidora. By playing out the historical actions of her Great Gram, Ursa comes to realize that the act of fellatio puts Mutt in a vulnerable physical and psychological position similar to Corregidora. The moment of connection, "I could kill you," is also a moment of self-awareness in which

she becomes aware of herself as a producer of Mutt's pleasure, much in the way that the Hegelian slave can achieve self-consciousness through recognition of his own work and creativity. In the way that Ursa is able to acknowledge her own agency, through the potential to kill Mutt, so too does Great Gram and other women who were forced to participate in the sexual economy of slavery. At the same time, though, Ursa's repetition of Great Gram's act connects her to a long line of women who have used it to their advantage. Unlike her foremothers who insist on repeating the traumatic elements of their oppression, i.e., using the female body to "leave evidence," which Tadpole points out could also be a slave master's way of thinking, Ursa's repetition of the past is repetition that frees her body from the burdens of reproduction and places that burden, instead, onto the male body.

That the final act of fellatio is not entirely an act of liberation is supported by the fact that Great Gram had to flee Brazil, abandoning her daughter who suffers Corregidora's wrath through rape, forced pregnancy, and the trauma that comes with those experiences. As well, the story of the woman from the neighboring plantation who acted out against her master by cutting his penis with a razor when he came to rape her further challenges a conciliatory reading of the final scene. Accordingly,

> There was a woman over on the next plantation. The master shipped her husband out of bed and got in the bed with her and ... she cut off his thing with a razor she had hid under the pillow and he bled to death, and then the next day they came and got her and her husband. They cut off her husband's penis and stuffed it in her mouth, and then they hanged her (67).

Not only was this woman hanged, but the visual of her husband's penis stuffed in her mouth was a visceral warning to the rest of the slave population, and it stands as a similar warning in this novel. Read within this genealogy of resistance and trauma, perhaps the act of fellatio, specifically a penis stuffed in one's mouth, could be appropriated as a revolutionary act, but that it resulted in her death or Gram's rape seem to challenge such a reading. Further, DuCille's question on the matter bears repeating, "How long would a man lie there while his penis is being bitten off?" The question gets to the heart of what is at stake, which is Ursa's life. Within Hegelian dialectics the choice of life would relegate one to the position of a slave, but, as Ashraf Rushdy, quoting Barbara Fields, points out,

> Resistance 'does not refer only to the fight that individuals, or collections of them, put up at any given time against those trying to impose on them.' Instead, [suggests Fields], resistance 'refers also to the historical outcome of the struggle that has gone before, perhaps long enough before to have been hallowed by custom or formalized in law.'[43]

In other words, not only is resistance dependent on the historical and gendered context in which it is enacted, but resistance and change must also be conceptualized as transgenerational and transhistorical, thus liberating the choice of life from a slavish consciousness to part of a longer trajectory of resistance. Within the blues idiom of dynamic repetition and productive ambivalence, Ursa's act and the genealogy of resistance that engendered it, point to a future liberation. Though, for such to happen it requires a similar awakening on the part of Mutt, or men who insist on women's submission.

What Ursa and Jones have accomplished in this final scene is twofold: Ursa's self-awakening; and displacement of the onus of men's recognition onto themselves. On the one hand, Mutt's insistence that Ursa "suck it" places him in a position of vulnerability—supine and unaware of the danger that surrounds him, he does not hear Ursa say, "I could kill you." Caught up in the rapture of pleasure, Mutt is as much unable to hear Ursa's threat as she is unable to articulate it. In essence, then, black men's fear that black women's success contributes to their figurative and actual emasculation misses the ways in which their abusive insistence on sexual submission as a recognition of their masculinity threatens a literal castration. This final encounter that we witness between Mutt and Ursa, namely a mouth closing in around a penis, is reminiscent of the first time that Ursa sees Mutt. "When I first saw Mutt," Ursa recalls,

> I was singing a song about a train tunnel. About this train going in the tunnel, but it didn't seem like they was no end to the tunnel, and nobody knew when the train would get out, and then all of a sudden, the tunnel tightened around the train like a fist (147).

Read together both images form a private and public dimension to Ursa's warning, as well, in the second instance, she makes some progress as she is able to sense a connection to her foremothers, which triggers her own self-awakening. More dangerously, they serve as warnings to Mutt, which is perhaps why he initiates this plea to Ursa at the end, "I don't want a kinda of woman that would hurt you" (183). It is curious that Mutt does not say he does not want a kind of woman that would hurt him or that he does not want to be the type of man that will hurt her. But, there is progress in the relationship because he is

focused on her pain, for once, not his. Nevertheless, Mutts still installs himself as Ursa's protector, which she obviously does not need.

That Jones does not intend castration to be a resolution to the heterosexual conflict is reinforced by violence against Gram and the woman from the neighboring plantation. The implausibility of this act as a successful strategy against patriarchy is underscored by two points. The first is the fact that in her second novel, Eva's Man, the protagonist, Eva Canada, castrates her lover, but only after she has poisoned him. And second, biting Mutt's penis threatens to silence blackness given that neither Mutt nor Ursa would be able to reproduce. Moreover, if women's power within heterosexual coupling is relegated to a literal castrator, it not only reinforces stereotypes of black women specifically, but it harkens back to archetypal representations of women as vagina dentate, and, therefore, eternally dangerous to men. More disquieting is the equation set up by this act, which is that black women's agency is predicated on black men's emasculation, which seemingly reaffirms the issues with which the novel grapples and tries to disrupt.

Instead, the power of the mouth that Jones advocates is not to be found in castrating men, but in Ursa's ability to tell her family's narrative through the vehicle of the blues. While Ursa undertakes a twenty-two year act of celibacy and journey to find self by uncovering her ancestral and personal memories, the novel takes no steps in revealing what if any changes Mutt has undergone. Ursa points out that she can tell by looking at Mutt that he has changed, but she cautions that while he might have changed some things, he will still be making other demands of her: "I don't know what he saw in my eyes. His were different now. I can't explain how. I felt that now he wouldn't demand

the same things. He'd demand different kinds of things. But there'd still be demands" (183). Beyond this unexplored issue of how Mutt has changed, Ursa admits that she has not forgiven him, which means that she probably still holds some resentment towards him: "I knew that I still hated him. Not as bad as then, not with that first feeling, but an after feeling, an aftertaste, or like an odor still in a room when you come back to it, and it's your own" (183). Finally, Ursa's discovery that she could kill Mutt and the final cry at the end of the text serve as warnings to Mutt and other men who believe that things can go back to the way they were. That she did not bite holds out the possibility of a future.

Notes

[1] It should be noted that Fanon does in fact discuss black women's sexuality, but only in the context of interracial desire and pathology. As others have pointed out, where he is sympathetic to similar failings in the man of color, Jean Venuese in particular, he condemns black women. Also, Fanon does not limit his analysis of Mayotte Capécia to her as an individual; rather, he generalizes about all Caribbean women, and later, women of color across the African diaspora. Finally, as I have pointed out in the first chapter, Fanon engages Capécia in order to dismiss her and her type as a problem. During a point at which he could recuperate or articulate black women as subjects, he states explicitly that he knows nothing about them.

[2] See chapter 1 for a more detailed analysis of this point.

[3] Sharpley-Whiting. Conflicts and Feminisms.

[4] An example of the gendering of violence is the accepted axiom that men are doers (of violence) and women are receivers (of violence). This construction derives from the sexist notion that men are active while women are passive. The same logic also holds with regard to sexuality, namely that men define heterosexuality through those who fuck and those who are fucked; Ursa invokes this same principle when she asserts, "A man always says I want to fuck, and a woman always has to say I want to get fucked."

[5] See the works of Jennifer Morgan on the double labor—manual and maternal—that black women bore. "Some could suckle over their shoulder: Male Travelers, Female Bodies, and the Gendering of Racial Ideology, 1500-1770" and Laboring Women: Reproduction and Gender in New World Slavery.

[6] I fully understand the motivation behind projects such as Sharpley-Whiting's where she is interested in finding ways in which black male nationalists' projects can speak to and with feminist projects. But the question remains how do we undertake such projects without becoming apologists for projects that do not readily conceptualize women on the same plane as men?

[7] See Ashraf H. A. Rushdy's A Neo-Slave Narrative: Studies in the Social Logic of a Literary Form.

[8]The term racialized-sexuliaty is taken from Abdul R. JanMohamed's formulations in "Sexuality on/of the Racial Border: Foucault, Wright, and the Articulation of 'Racialized Sexuality'." See pg. 94.

[9] As Dubey and a number of scholars show, Corregidora and Eva's Man, Jones's second novel, were attacked by both black men and women for its supposed negative representations of black men, and to a

lesser extent, black women. Not only did these two novels challenge the foundation and stretched the boundaries of black aesthetic ideology, as Dubey's volume and essay demonstrates, but as a number of scholars have argued in their work on Corregidora, Jones sits comfortable in ambiguity which poses a challenge to the political and aesthetic ideologies of black cultural nationalism.

[10] Carmichael first used the expression during James Meredith's "March Against Fear." He later clarified its meaning to signify "black people coming together to form a political force." For more information see Nikhil Pal Singh's Black is a Country, p. 184. And for a more sustained discussion of the development of the expression and its intersection with Civil Rights rhetoric and ideology, see Joseph E. Peniel's Waiting 'Til the Midnight Hour: A Narrative history of Black Power in America. New York: Henry Holt and Company, 2006. Especially chapter 7. Pgs. 132-173.

[11] See Lawrence Jackson's "Richard Wright and Black Radical Discourse: The Advocacy of Violence." Critical Review of International Social and Political Philosophy 7.4 (Winter 2004): 200 – 226. Though mentioned briefly, Jackson also notes the influence of Wright's work on Fanon's.

[12] For a discussion of Wright's place within this tradition see Jackson's "Richard Wright and Black Radical Discourse."

[13] Singh, Black is a Country: Race and the Unfinished Struggle for Democracy.

[14] See Rushdy's A Neo-Slave Narrative: Studies in the Social Logic of a Literary Form.

[15] See chapter 1 for my discussions of the issues of castration and Negrophobia**.**

[16] Quoted in Dubey's Black Women Novelists, p. 17.

[17] Quoted in Dubey's Black Women Novelists, p. 17-18.

[18] See Manning Marable's "Grounds with My Sisters: Patriarchy and the Exploitation of Black Women." Traps: African American Men on Gender and Sexuality. Indianapolis: Indiana UP, 2001. 119-152.

[19] For discussions of the blues see Claudia Tate, Madhu Dubey, Donia Allen, Janice Harris, Keith Byerman, and Amy Gottfried; discussions of the mother-daughter relationship see the works of Missy Kubitschek, Joyce Pettis, Madhu Dubey, and Francoise Lionett; discussions of the past as traumatic return see Bruce Simon, Elizabeth Swanson Goldberg, Naomi Morgenstern, Madhu Dubey ("Matrilineal

Metaphor"), and Elizabeth Yukins; discussions of black male-female love relations see Stephanie Li, Ann DuCille, and Melvin Dixon.

[20] Sally Robinson's Engendering the Subject (1991), Ashraf H. A. Rushdy's "Relate Sexual to Historical': Race, Resistance, and Desire in Gayl Jones's Corregidora" (1999), and Elizabeth Swanson Goldberg's "Living the Legacy: Pain, Desire, and Narrative Time in Corregidora" (2003).

[21] See Rushdy's definition of neo-slave narrative in A Neo-Slave Narrative: Studies in the Social Logic of a Literary Form.

[22] Both Robinson and Elizabeth Swanson Goldberg employ the term "ancestral memory," but neither offers an explicit definition. Here, I use it to denote the relationship between personal memory and historical memory as passed down from generation to generation.

[23] Michael Harper and Gayl Jones, "Interview". In Chant of Saints.

[24] Most critical essays on Corregidora point to the overlap between old man Corregidora and Mutt. Others also highlight the fact that Tadpole also inhabits a similar narrative juxtaposition. I would go even further to suggest that all male characters, even young Harold or the men Ursa encounters on the street, mirror old man Corregidora, one, through their demand for access to Ursa's or Mama's body and, two, through their equation of Ursa or Mama with sexual commoditization, namely prostitution.

[25] Moynihan's usage of Glazer was not aberrant as it was a common perception to view Brazil, the U.S.'s closest competitor in population size, political culture, and history of slavery, as a racial democracy. Brazil emerged as an exemplary model of assimilation not least because abolitionists carefully crafted an image of the nation and its path to abolition as different from and better than that of the U.S., in part, argues Celia Maria Azevedo, to avoid the violent pitfalls of civil war and disruption exemplified first in the Haitian Revolution and then in the U.S. Civil War. For more information, see Azevedo's Abolitionism in the United States and Brazil: A Comparative Perspective (New York, 1995). The last country in the western Hemisphere to end slavery, 1888, 20 years after the United States, Brazilians were careful to craft an image of peace and reconciliation between white Portuguese, formerly-enslaved Africans, and its original inhabitants, the Amerindians. Additionally, Glazer's thesis of Brazilian democracy comes out of Brazilian sociologist and cultural anthropologist Gilberto Freyre's 1933 book, *Casa-Grande & Senzala, translated as* The Masters and the Slaves, where he initially forwarded this thesis of racial harmony.

[26] See Stuart B. Schwartz's works on Brazil, Sugar Plantation in the Formation of Brazilian Society: Bahia, 1550-1835 (1986) and Slaves, Peasants, and Rebels: Reconsidering Brazilian Slavery (1991), for a refutation of this perspective of Brazilian master/slave arrangements.

[27] Moynihan report http://www.blackpast.org/?q=primary/moynihan-report-1965. Accessed March 4th, 2010.

[28] See the work of Jennifer Morgan, Laboring Women.

[29] Abdul JanMohamed, "Sexuality on/of the Racial Border: Foucault, Wright, and the Articulation of 'Racialized *Sexuality*'." Ed. Donna Stanton Discourses of Sexuality. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1992.

[30] Although he does not distinctly distinguish between manual and sexual labor, there is little evidence in Fanon's work to suggest that his connotation of "work" encompasses sexual labor as I've defined it.

[31] This question comes from Sally Robinson's critical engagement of Corregidora through a similar analysis of mastery-masculinity. See Engendering the Subject, specifically chapter 2, in which she offers a reading of Corregidora and Eva's Man.

[32] These "on-going relationships" are analogous to the distinction between "house slaves" and "field slaves." Another example can be drawn from Madhu Dubey's discussion of the contradictory role of slave women's reproduction in the U.S. context. "Slavery," argues Dubey, "constituted a site of oppression and power for black women slaves" ("Matrilineal Metaphor" 246). Given the ways in which black slave women's sexual labor was constituted in the marketplace, a similar position of power and oppression existed in Brazil.

[33] I realize as well that making this distinction between slaves open up the possibility for the suggestion that these enslaved women held some level of power or agency in these relationships. I am under no illusion about who holds the power in these relationships as the slaves serve at the behest of the master and are subjected to his violence, perhaps even more so than other slaves because of that very relationship and those times when the master realizes his own vulnerability.

[34] JanMohamed goes on to argue that because silence and repression played strategic roles, R/S is "structured by a set of allegorical discourses, rather than the analytical imperatives of bourgeois sexuality, the stereotypes and symbols that produce it reveal themselves best through the fictive."

[35] For other essays that make this connection see Claudia Tate's "Ursa's Blues Medley." Black American Literature Forum 1979. P. 141. See also, Stephanie Li's "Love and the Trauma of Resistance," Sally Robinson's Engendering the Subject.

[36] Streeter, Caroline A. "Was Your Mama a Mulatto?" (2004)

[37] Li contends that Mama and Mutt are Ursa's "most significant audience members" (139). While I would grant that Mama does function in some capacity as an adequate witness, her reading of them as such comports with her goal, which is to read the novel within the context of heterosexual reconciliation, a reading that this chapter contests by arguing that the issue is not settled at the end of the novel. Li mentions Cat, but does not explore her role as witness in relation to her project. Mutt as ideal or adequate witness is severely compromised by the level of violence he enacts against Ursa and because of the tenuous nature of their "reconciliation" at the end of the novel, which, as I go on to show, is predicated on her withholding violence against him.

[38] For a discussion of silence, or the "mute, missed, detained, and stifled," in the novel, see Jennifer Cognard-Black's "'I Said Nothing: The Rhetoric of Silence in Corregidora" (2001); see also Amy Gottfried's "Angry Arts: Silence, Speech, and Song in Gayl Jones's Corregidora." African American Review 28 (1994): 559-70.

[39] For essays that examin lesbianism in the novel, see Caroline Streeter's "Was your Mama a Mulatto? Notes Towards a Theory of Racialized Sexuality in Gayl Jones in Corregidora and Julie Dash's Daughters of the Dust," Madhu Dubey's Black Women Novelists, Barbara Smith's "The Truth that Never Hurts: Black Lesbians in Fiction in the 1980s," Ann DuCille's "Phallus(ies) of Interpretation: Engendering the Black Critical 'I'," and Bruce Simon's "Traumatic Repetition: Gayl Jones's Corregidora."

[40] It is interesting to note that Ursa is able to "feel" Jeffy fondling her breasts as she sleeps, but she is unable to feel during sex with Tadpole unless he touched her clitoris and, during a play session as a child, she is unable to feel the young boy poking a stick in her anus. In no way do I intend to undermine or excuse

Jeffy's violation of Ursa's body, but in the context of her inability to feel anything with her male sexual partners, the following lines do give pause: "I was drowsy, but I *felt* her hands on my breasts. She was *feeling* all on me up around my breasts" (39, my emphasis).

[41] Robinson, Engendering the Subject.

[42] Jones, Liberating Voices.

[43] Ashraf Rushdy. "Relate Sexual to Historical" (2000).

Chapter Three
'My Story is Not After All About Death': Dangarembga's Corrective to Fanon's Revolutionary Project

The status of "native" is a nervous condition introduced and maintained by the settler among colonized people *with their consent.*

Jean-Paul Sartre, Preface to WOE

Their first encounter was marked by violence and their existence together—that is to say the exploitation of the native by the settler—was carried on by the dint of a great array of bayonets and cannons.

Frantz Fanon, WOE

Scholars who have examined Tsitsi Dangarembga's engagement of Frantz Fanon agree that Dangarembga revises Fanon, but they differ on the degree and extent of that revision.[1] Some scholars proffer a somewhat conservative reading, as is the case of Susan Z. Andrade, who agrees that Dangarembga complicates Fanon through the introduction of a gendered dimension to his portrayal of decolonizing nationalism. She goes as far as to suggest that the character of Nyasha exposes Fanon's so-called universal subject as decidedly male (52), but Andrade stops short of fully considering how that revision of Fanon's revolutionary subject also bespeaks a revision of his revolutionary philosophy, namely that violence can be restorative of the subject and the nation. A more radical reading, such as Clare Counihan's, takes Fanon to task for his mistreatment of women in Black Skin and, to a lesser extent, A Dying Colonialism, specifically for what she calls the "ghosting" or disappearance and reemergence of women at strategically useful moments in his texts. While Counihan's assessment of Nervous Conditions positions the text, relative to her argument with Fanon, as a text that restores the feminine

within the landscapes of colonial and postcolonial subjectivities, she too does not explore what this restoration implies for Fanon's larger nationalist project.

In "Fanon and Beyond: The 'Nervous Conditions' of the Colonized Woman," Renee Shatteman comes closest to tackling the issue of Fanon's revolutionary subject. After a studied examination of the multiple and creative ways women in Nervous Conditions resist and negotiate their various conditions and experiences of violence, Shatteman reasons that "the partial liberation that the women gain in [the novel] implies that female enslavement can be more readily overcome than the oppression imposed by colonial structures [on men]" (215). She argues that this might be the case only because colonized men are "so much more invested in their oppression than are the women" (215). And, in her concluding paragraph, she sums up her essay thus:

> By the time Frantz Fanon writes The Wretched of the Earth he is convinced that it is only through violence that the colonized person can be freed of his inferiority complex and can restore self-respect. Fanon also celebrates the creative and positive qualities of violence. Dangarembga's text *perhaps* offers a revision of Fanon by suggesting that the subject of a colonial world, like the woman of a patriarchal structure, can take creative steps between victimization and armed rebellion to relieve the strain of a life marked by deprivation and uncertainty (215 my emphasis).

Here, Schatteman begins to make a powerful assertion about Dangarembga's revision of the foundation of Fanon's philosophical and political project in WOE, but she backs away from this in hinging her conclusion on "perhaps." Curiously, she undertakes her examination of Fanon, not through WOE, but through those psychological conditions

Fanon articulates in Black Skin. While they are certainly related, there are qualitative differences in those conditions described in Black Skin than those in WOE. For instance, in WOE Fanon talks about those nervous conditions not only as they occur under colonialism, but also under the outbreak of decolonization; whereas, the same is not true for his subjects in the Black Skin. Significantly, Schatteman relates the women's suffering in Nervous Conditions to that of the men by way of analogy, i.e., colonial violence is analogous to patriarchal violence. To agree to some extent, but the novel clearly suggests that the women suffer both because of the weight of colonialism and patriarchy. In this chapter, I take Schatteman's essay as a point of departure, and undertake an examination of Nervous Conditions both for how it engages WOE and how it upends Fanon's revolutionary project of subject and nation-formation by centering women's experiences of violence and journey to postcolonial consciousness.[2]

Tsitsi Dangarembga's Nervous Conditions is the only novel in this dissertation to directly engage the work of Frantz Fanon. Dangarembga not only takes the novel's title from Jean-Paul Sartre's preface to WOE, but in relegating the then on-going nationalist struggle to the novel's background, by splitting her subjects, and by focusing on violence against them, Dangarembga challenges Fanon's central tenet that violence is *the* means of securing black/subaltern subjectivity. In so doing, Dangarembga exposes—similar to the other authors discussed throughout this project—the collusion of patriarchy, colonialism, and nationalism. She illuminates the ways in which the violence inhered in these discourse impacts the female body and mind and, further, how that violence bespeaks the making of the postcolonial male subject as opposed to the postcolonial subject generally. Significantly, the novel begins to articulate the ways in which centering women's

experiences of violence and their acquisition of subjectivity can serve as a basis for a nationalist project of identification, if not also liberation.

What's in an epigraph? Dangarembga's Engagement of Fanon

A bildungsroman, Nervous Conditions tells the story of a young Rhodesian girl, Tambu/Tambudzai Sigauke, who is caught between the bifurcated world of British colonial Rhodesia and her native[3] Shona culture. From the opening page to the last, Tambu insists that her story is a collective one that encompasses those of the women in her family and "our men" (1, 204). She tells this collective narrative through her struggles to receive an education in British and, later, American missionary schools, and the struggles she encounters within her family in attempting to do so, namely her endeavors to "escape" her father's sexism and the benevolent tyranny of her paternal uncle, Babamukuru, the family patriarch and benefactor. While the novel is clearly told from Tambu's perspective, we come to understand that who she becomes is a function of the women around her, namely her grandmother, mother, aunts, and, mostly, her young and rebellious cousin, Nyasha. Through the double/split subjects of Tambu and Nyasha, Nervous Conditions confronts the issues of violence, community formation, and self-formation. This contention with violence begins, however, before the reader encounters Tambu's first-person narrative; it begins with Dangarembga's epigraph.

As I noted earlier, Nervous Conditions is the only novel in this dissertation to directly invoke Fanon and his work. Yet, that directness is called into question when one realizes that Dangarembga did not encounter Fanon's WOE until after she had finished her manuscript.[4] Moreover, her level of engagement rests on an epigraph to the novel,

which, no less, is taken from Jean-Paul Sartre's preface to the text, not directly from the body of Fanon's work. How Nervous Conditions can be said to engage Fanon, specifically WOE, is not readily apparent. However, a careful analysis of the part of Sartre's statement that Dangarembga uses and its relevance to Fanon's larger theory of violence and revolution will help to elucidate this relationship of engagement.

As Charles Sugnet points out in his essay, "Nervous Conditions: Dangarembga's Feminist Reinvention of Fanon," Dangarembga's use of Fanon, specifically the epigraph to the novel—"The condition of native is a nervous condition"— has the "odd status of being part of the novel's text, but not part of Tambu's first-person narrative" (47). Though Sugnet makes this astute assessment to highlight the gap between the author and narrator and the development of the narrator's consciousness, I point to it to highlight how Dangarembga uses the epigraph as a meta-textual signifier, which both bears the weight of critiquing Fanon and drawing out the implications of her novel for Fanon's project.[5] That the title of her novel also comes from the epigraph speaks volumes. In its critical fecundity, the epigraph points to a central feature of Fanon's treatise on nation-formation and a hallmark of colonialism and nationalism, the relationship between subjectivity and violence.

From the outset, Dangarembga engages Fanon not only at the level of a gendered revision or "reinvention," but she complicates the singular, male paradigm, emphasizing the multiple ways colonialism and other socio-political hierarchies impact upon the lives of men and women. Dangarembga takes the title of her novel "nervous conditions" from Sartre's preface, but whereas Sartre points to a singular "condition," Dangarembga revises it to highlight the plurality of "nervous conditions" brought about by the status of

native. Given the ways in which the novel centers women's experiences under colonialism and patriarchy, then certainly what Dangarembga has added to Fanon is the condition of gender. As the novel focuses on a community of women, it moves beyond a simple gender binary to the multiple ways colonialism and patriarchy operate in people's lives. Not only does the novel explore the lives of Tambu, her cousin Nyasha, aunt Maiguru, mother Mainini, and aunt Lucia, but also her father Jeremiah, brother Nhamo, uncle Babamukuru, and distant relative Takesure. While some characters share certain gender and class conditions, they suffer in individualized ways, highlighting, again, the plural nature of the title and its differentiation from Sartre/Fanon's singular native.

The choice phrase of nervous condition/nervous conditions points to a central issue in both Dangarembga's and Fanon's work, specifically the issue of violence. Within the context of the epigraph, "nervous condition" denotes the violence inflicted by the colonial condition, essentially that the label of "native" is an imposition of colonialism that masks the African subject. Sartre's statement and the passage more broadly reveal that there are several layers of violence embedded in the entirety of this label. Sartre's full statement reads, "The status of 'native' is a nervous condition introduced and maintained by the settler among colonized people *with their consent*" (WOE 20, original emphasis).[6] Here Sartre highlights the layering of violence embedded in the "status 'native,'" namely that the operation of colonial violence is carried out through self-violence, as it is the native's consent that secures the process. This line of reasoning then gives way to another crucial concern: how does the native rid her/himself of this violence? This is the question pursued by Fanon throughout WOE and it is the heart of the impending passages for Sartre. The answer to the question of how to rid

oneself and community of colonial violence is through a similar means of violence. As Fanon himself explains it, "Their first encounter was marked by violence and their existence together—that is to say the exploitation of the native by the settler—was carried on by the dint of a great array of bayonets and cannons" (36). Echoing Fanon's assessment, Sartre goes on to explain the solution:

> No gentleness can efface the marks of violence; only violence itself can destroy them. The native cures himself of colonial neurosis by thrusting out the settler through force of arms. When his rage boils over, he rediscovers his lost innocence and he comes to know himself in that he himself creates his self (WOE 21).

First, as in Sartre's ubiquitous usage of the masculine pronoun and subject, Fanon's subject by implication and articulation is decidedly masculine and the genealogy of violence he explicates is similarly gendered. Second, Sartre explicitly notes that only a corresponding, overt act of violence will disrupt colonial violence. Thus, he reiterates Fanon's position of violence begetting self-awakening in his insistence that "when the rage boils over" the native "comes to know himself in that he himself creates his self." This process of self-actualization through violence is captured in Fanon's infamous passage, "At the level of individuals, violence is a cleansing force. It frees the native from his inferiority complex and from his despair and inaction; it makes him fearless and restores his self-respect" (94). Within the context of the preface, Sartre introduces this concept of "nervous condition" to describe the pent up rage of the "native" man as a response to the colonialist policies of the settler. In essence, it comes as an explanation

and a justification of the anti-colonial and decolonizing violence being waged across the globe, as well as a solution to colonial violence and the manufactured status of "native."

It is significant that the novel was written in 1984, and set in the early 1960s to the mid-1970s, yet it does not overtly reference, except in a few brief instances, the events of either The Unilateral Declaration of Independence (UDI) declared by white Rhodesians or the later *Chimurenga*, or guerilla-style warfare, of black Rhodesians for control of the country. As other scholars, most notably Sugnet and Andrade, point out, Nervous Conditions does make glancing references to these events. But, unlike Sugnet's contention that they are clearly discernable to any reader with knowledge of Zimbabwe history, the fact that their presence requires a studied archeological dig of the history highlights Dangarembga's attempt to minimize these events.[7] That Dangarembga does not register *Chimurenga* points to a different alternative than what the movement stood for. By doing so, she displaces the method and tactics of the *Chimurenga* and decolonizing violence generally as an inadequate solution to the specific conditions she examines in the body of the novel. As the *Chimurenga* movement drew on the tactics and theories advocated by Fanon,[8] by not focusing on the movement, she draws attention to the multiple discourses that inform the label "native" and, hence, the multi-pronged approach that must be applied in negotiating the conditions she examines.

In displacing the nationalist narrative of colonial violence as well as its approach to liberation, Dangarembga does not subsequently avoid the issue of occupation and colonial violence. Instead, through Tambu's Mbuya, or grandmother, Dangarembga offers a female-centered version of history through which we can understand how colonialism took root and compounded women's suffering. Accordingly, Mbuya's

version tells the story of how the Sigauke family had money until the "[white] wizards well versed in treachery and black magic came from the south and forced the people from the land" (18). They took all of the land except "the grey, sandy soil," which is the homestead on which the family current lives. Not satisfied with taking the land, [the wizards] beguiled people into working for them, after which they discovered that such labor was tantamount to slavery. In particular, the wizard that her great grandfather worked for had no use for women and children, and so threw Tambu's great grandmother and her children off his farm (18).

In Mbuya's version of history, she recounts a gradual process of colonization that runs contrary to Fanon's contention that the process began through "a great array of bayonets and cannons." She also invokes Sartre's assertion that the process is secured through the consent of the native, as Mbuya admits that they were "tricked" into working for the wizards even after they confiscated the family's land.[9] Her focus on trickery calls into question Sartre's notion of consent and, thus, the 'native's' level of culpability. As equally crucial to the foregoing points, in Mbuya's version, she accounts for at least one of the ways that colonialism excluded women from the domain of work and relegated the African family to the impoverish land of the homestead. Because colonialists imported their gendered biases about who could work, they came to depend heavily on men's labor and so excluded women. This division of labor, in addition to traditional gender divisions, granted men further authority over women and thus worked to compound women's experiences of violence. In making this point, Dangarembga not only demonstrates that the violence the women of Nervous Conditions experience is not solely a consequence of patriarchy, both indigenous and foreign, but also a consequence of

colonialism as an economic system that rewards men's labor above that of women's. She also illuminates the ways in which the system eroded women's control within the family by making them depended on laboring men's income as opposed to the cooperative work that would be possible on a family farm, for instance. As I will demonstrate later, this system of male privilege operated in a number of different ways, as men such as Babamukuru come to hold particular investments in the system.

By drawing on the frame of a fairytale or fable to recount this history, Dangarembga roots her narrative in both a female and an African tradition of storytelling. As the only history of colonialism offered in the narrative, comparatively, Nervous Conditions as a story of African women and their men stand as more of a "historical" document than the "actual" history that Mbuya recounts Tambu. The novel, then, supplants the one-sided history of violence and domination often at the center of decolonizing nationalism and, instead, offers women's stories as central to African identity-making, specifically, it offers the stories of Tambu, Nyasha, Lucia, Mainini, Maiguru, and their men.

Rethinking Subjectivity

As I have shown in chapter one, Fanon draws heavily on his biography to structure his evaluation of and solution to colonialism.[10] Specifically, Fanon's own feelings of homelessness in Black Skin come to structure his search for a homeland, i.e., a nation, as well as his attempt to assert black/subaltern male subjectivity. Likewise, Dangarembga draws on her experience to structure Nervous Conditions, yet she does not appear to seek self-certainty through a literary alter ego. From the facts of

Dangarembga's journey, both Tambu and Nyasha, the main characters, come to embody different aspects of the author's life story. Born in Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe) in 1959, Dangarembga moved to England with her parents during her formative years during their pursuit of higher education. She returned to Zimbabwe to attend a mission school in the city of Mutare. Through the character of Nyasha, Dangarembga represents these early facts of her life. Correspondingly, Tambu's journey at the mission to her attendance the American convent academy upon to Dangarembga's emergence as a writer are reflective of Dangarembga's life.[11] By not privileging the western-educated and -influenced Nyasha above the more Shona-identified Tambu, Dangarembga signifies on Fanon's drive towards subjective unity.

Understanding how Dangarembga comes to displace Fanon's appeal to revolutionary violence requires also understanding how she challenges the unitary, consolidated subject that Fanon attempts to resuscitate through decolonizing violence. Specifically, through her uses of the bildungsroman, Dangarembga calls into question Fanonian subjectivity. As I mentioned in the previous section, Nervous Conditions is a bildungsroman, which, traditionally, registers the coming of age narrative of a young, white bourgeois male. However, in Nervous Conditions Dangarembga shifts the register from male to female, from white to black, from single subject to double—Tambu and Nyasha.

Whereas Fanon shuns fragmentation, portrayed throughout Black Skin as a form of alienation brought on by racism and colonialism and in WOE as the compartmentalization of colonial space, which contributes to the nervous condition of the "native," Dangarembga embraces it through the motifs of splitting, doubling, and

twining. These motifs operate as a means of questioning the unity or presumed coherence of the humanist subject, while at the same time functioning as a registry of violence (colonial, patriarchal, and national) throughout the text. Upon attending a school dance, for example, Tambu insists that she was not quite herself until she was in the "security of the group" of friends (110-11). As well, in their separation when Tambu goes off to boarding school, Nyasha writes to her: "[The] fact is I am missing you and missing you badly. In many ways you are very essential to me in bridging some of the gaps in my life, and now that you are away, I feel them again" (196). As with these two examples, the fragmentation trope also functions as a vehicle for women's emergence as both subjects and citizens, as it is through the loss of her brother that Tambu is allowed to pursue her education. From the very outset of the text, Tambu boldly claims, "I was not sorry when my brother died. Nor am I apologising for my callousness, as you may define it, my lack of feeling" (1). As readers, we come to accept Tambu's lack of remorse as it is through her brother's death that she is able to pursue her education, write the narrative, and perhaps, inspire a nation of women.[12]

As a female in her patriarchal Shona culture, Tambu's education and development outside that of a worker and a wife/mother is not nurtured or cultivated. As the heads and future heads of households, boys' education is privileged. Tambu's father unselfconsciously explains to her that an investment in her as a girl is an investment in another family's fortunes: "Have you ever heard of a woman who remains in her father's house?' […] 'She will meet a young man and I will have lost everything'" (30). Therefore, in her brother's death and in the absence of another male heir to pursue the family's uplift, Tambu's uncle, Babamukuru, grants her temporary access to the

privileges of masculinity and therefore education. In Ifi Amadiume's formulations of pre-colonial Nigerian social arrangements, if I may be permitted to make a temporal and cultural transfer, Tambu becomes the equivalent of a "male daughter," or one who is given access to male privilege in the absence of a male heir (31).[13] In this capacity, Tambu is given the opportunity to be educated so she may care for her family before she gets married, but in the process she comes to question the institution which, in the words of her mother, forces her to carry the "heavy burden" of womanhood (16). Though she takes on the economic responsibility for her family, Tambu is not granted any other male privilege.

In allowing Tambu to come into existence as both author and subject through her brother's death, Dangarembga lays a profound challenge to Zimbabwean and Fanonian gender politics. Certainly, Tambu's emergence comes from Nhamo's loss of life, but this loss is not equivalent to Fanon's emergence through violence. Nhamo's death symbolically represents the ideological clearing of a rigid patriarchal mentality that actively works to keep women subservient within the family and social order. Dangarembga provides little to no explanation of his passing: Maiguru, Nyasha's mother, explains to Mainini that Nhamo complained of neck pain, he was taken to the hospital, but they could not identify a specific condition. After being hospitalized for a couple days, he returns home and by the time he was taken to the hospital again he died. While Tambu's father clearly articulates why he refuses to invest in his daughter's education, Jeremiah merely reflects the cultural attitude towards girls. As Nhamo wryly explains to her when she sought encouragement from him: "'It's the same everywhere. Because you are a girl. [..] That's what Baba said, remember'" (21)? Nhamo, too, seems to be

echoing a patriarchal logic, yet he more than any other male character is determined not to see his sister succeed, even when she undertakes double the work to ensure she is educated. In addition to actively sabotaging Tambu's efforts by stealing and giving away her maize when she gardens to earn her own school fees, Nhamo also represents a neo-colonial native mentality, one that no longer finds value in his traditional culture when given access to English, western culture. As Tambu reveals about her brother's changing attitude, after he begins to attend school at Babamukuru's home in the city: he would purposely make his sisters go retrieve his luggage when he comes home although he could have carried it himself; he refuses to return home when given holiday recesses; and when he is at home, he pretends to not be able to speak his native language, except when it suits him. Positioned to be the next wave of "educated Africans" and thus the new leadership, Nhamo's success threatens to be even more damaging that Babamukuru's benevolent tyranny. His demise, then, literally clears textual and ideological space for the emergence of a new subjectivity and approach to reconciling Shona culture with western culture.

Importantly, Dangarembga does not install Tambu or her individual narrative as the heir apparent to Nhamo's death. Based on sentence structure and narrative development, Tambu's birth through her brother's death also gives birth to the stories of the women in her family. As she ends the first paragraph, Dangarembga/Tambu writes:

> For though the event of my brother's passing and the events of my story cannot be separated, my story is not after all about death, but about my escape and Lucia's; about my mother's and Maiguru's entrapment; and about Nyasha's rebellion—

> Nyasha, far-minded and isolated, my uncle's daughter, whose rebellion may not in the end have been successful (1).

In the final sentence, Tambu draws a direct link between her ability to tell *her* story and the stories of the four women she names. The punctuation of the sentence, namely the use of semicolons as opposed to commas, elucidates the shared relationship among each of the women she names. What is more, Tambu connects their search for agency and freedom to her ability to write their stories. This use of the semicolon, a symbol used to show connections, is not used so much to connect the women, which it does, but based on its placement, works to connect the forms of protest each woman undertakes. In this sense, Dangarembga/Tambu does not privilege one form above another. This subtle, but important move in the execution of the narrative is, I believe, demonstrative of the larger feminist ethos of Tambu's narrative. It espouses that there should be a number of approaches to combating the conditions of the natives, that subjectivity is not a unitary, coherent process, and that overt violence is destructive rather than creative.

"Self-Damage of Rebellion": Recasting Rebellion as Madness

In "The Pitfalls of National Consciousness," Fanon discusses the next step once a nation undergoes violent revolution. By structuring her narrative in the same temporal and geographical space as the *Chimurenga* without making reference to it, Nervous Conditions stands as Dangarembga's alternative to the violent, bloody tactics of this struggle.[14] Specifically, the novel engages Fanon's discussion of the shortcomings of framing a national reconstruction project through the native bourgeoisie by casting his class dilemma as a gender problem. Mainly, Tambu and Nyasha's struggles to claim self

both challenge Fanon's appeal to violence and offer instead an African female-centered model for subject and national construction.

In recasting Fanon's class dilemma post revolution as a gendered problem, Dangarembga first demonstrates how the native bourgeois' investments in colonialist approaches are also an investment in gender inequality. In Mbuya's version of colonial occupation and control, Dangarembga lays the foundation for how colonial masculinity and native bourgeois identity come to intersect, or as Tambu puts it, how the family was able to survive and have their "meagerness" "reduced a little" (19). Accordingly, upon her husband's death, Mbuya took her eldest child and son, Babamukuru to a mission to be educated by "holy wizards." Babamukuru succeeded because he was "diligent," "industrious" and "respectful," qualities that helped to perpetuate a system that thrives on docility, subservience, and self-effacement. Tambu notes as much when she states that the holy wizards "thought [Babamukuru] was a good boy, cultivable, in the way that land is, to yield harvests that sustain the cultivator" (19). Through his hard work he garners scholarships, which helps him to secure a master's degree, money and status among the wizards. These accomplishments also secure Babamukuru's position as head of his family, as now he is in a position to help members of his family and community rise from poverty.

Importantly, Babamukuru's status is not only among his family and his rural community, but as "the only African living in a white house" (63), he is placed above the "new crop of educated Africans." Babamukuru stands as a role model not only for this new group through the care of his extended family, the governance of his immediate family, and his general comportment. This hierarchy of status, marked most visibly

through living arrangements at the mission and through the ostentatious and elaborate celebrations of his arrival back at the homestead, places high demands on Babamukuru to not only maintain the qualities that promoted him, but to cultivate others around him to reflect and maintain his status. As Tambu explains it

> Luckily, or maybe unluckily for him, throughout his life Babamukuru had found himself—as eldest child and son, as an early-educated African, as headmaster, as husband and father, as provider to many—in positions that enabled him to organize his immediate world and its contents as he wished. Even when this was not the case, as when he went to the mission as a young boy, the end result of such periods of submission was greater power than before. Thus he had been insulated from the necessity of considering alternatives unless they were his own. Stoically he accepted his divinity. Filled with awe, we accepted it too. We used to marvel at how benevolent that divinity was. Babamukuru was good (87).

In Tambu's assessment of Babamukuru, we come to understand that the power he has acquired comes from a practice of submission to the whites who have educated him—and thus the colonial system generally. As well, it comes from his gender and the privileges that come with it, namely as eldest son, husband, and father, his authority in a patriarchal gerontocracy is to be respected and obeyed. Essentially, his power comes from both colonial and patriarchal sources, which means challenging Babamukuru's, or the native bourgeois', authority is to challenge both systems of power.

Similar to Dangarembga's portrayal of Babamukuru, Fanon's formulations represent native bourgeois identity and authority as grounded in the organizing logic of colonialism. He goes on to argue that this self-submission and respect for colonial

authority simply places the native bourgeois in the position of "intermediary" between "the people and the former settlers" (152), which works to undermine the nationalist project of self-sovereignty. Dangarembga, at once sympathetic yet critical of Babamukuru's approach, demonstrates that this approach is also damaging to the native bourgeois, as Maiguru, Babamukuru's wife, on more than one occasion, cautions Tambu and Nyasha not to disturb Baba because his "nerves are bad" (102, 154, 155). Babamukuru works late, at times is unable to eat, and is constantly fielding requests and trouble-shooting family problems. While he clearly suffers, some of these problems are self-induced. Consider for example Jeremiah, Tambu's father, who constantly calls upon Babamukuru for money and favors. If Babamukuru epitomizes the "good native" within a system that overvalues hard work and diligence, then such as system manufactures a character such as Jeremiah, who epitomizes the "bad" native or the lazy, shiftless non-worker. Unraveling this false dichotomy requires understanding how the colonial system operates with respect to who can advance within its ranks. For one thing, the work on the homestead does not permit all of Mbuya's children to pursue education—nor is it likely that anyone other than Babamukuru would have been chosen. The choice of an education is determined by the wizards, not the natives. Though Jeremiah more than any other manipulates the system, Dangarembga, through Nyasha, registers his behavior in part as brought on by colonialism generally and Babamukuru specifically. Babamukuru likes to be asked for things because it bolsters his ego, and so Jeremiah, like others in the family, lauds him with lavish praises to get what he wants. This is not to exonerate Jeremiah for his general unhelpful attitude around the homestead—he does not fix things such as the family's leaky roof, he engages in an illicit sexual relationship with Lucia, his wife's

sister, and he takes undue credit for his wife and daughter's labor. Instead, I point to his behavior because it highlights a system that implicitly values one approach over any other and punishes those that do not conform. As well, I do so to underscore that Babamukuru's 'bad nerves" are brought on by his investment in a system that endows him with the authority over his immediate family, extended family, and community, who in turn come to depend on him for the privilege and access he gets from whites and his gender. Certainly, Babamukuru did not ask for such a structure, but neither does he challenge it nor allow others to do so.

If Babamukuru stands as an example of Fanon's problematic native bourgeois, Nyasha, in rebelling against her father, comes to model the female version of Fanon's revolutionary subject. While others, including Tambu, are reluctant to question or challenge Babamukuru's "divinity," Nyasha challenges his "right" to dictate to her. Because of her gender and age, which denotes family status, Nyasha stands in direction oppositional authority to Babamukuru. Having intimate access to the workings of Babamukuru's household and knowledge of the colonial system, Nyasha begins her challenge to Babamukuru on two fronts: at the kitchen table, where his patriarchal authority is on full display; and on her body, where she believes she holds the power.

While other women in the family challenge through various means Babamukuru's authority, Nyasha's come as the most overt and the most striking example in the text. As the only daughter, the youngest female in the house, and the most outspoken, Nyasha bears the brunt of Babamukuru's violence. Early in the novel Tambu introduces Nyasha upon her return from England by noting her disapproval of Nyasha's style of dress. She notes that unlike her mother, Nyasha looks as if she has really been to England and that

she wears a dress that is "barely enough to cover her thighs" (37). Here in the first passage Nyasha's body, specifically her thighs are on display, and in the final discussion at the close of the novel, Nyasha's claim to corporeal sovereignty is marked once again on her thighs. This time Tambu observes that they are so emaciated her nightgown fills the space where her flesh is supposed to be (200). But her journey from wholeness to emptiness comes through her battles with her father and his attempts to lay claim to her body.

The first quarrel between Nyasha and Babamukuru occurs at the dinner table the first night Tambu begins to live and attend school at the mission. The dispute starts because Babamukuru has confiscated Nyasha's copy of D. H. Lawrence's Lady Chatterley's Lover, which Nyasha believes her mother has taken. At fourteen years old, he believes that Nyasha should not be reading "such books" because doing so shows a lack of "decency" (81). Nyasha confronts her mother telling her that she has no "right" to confiscate her book without at least telling her. When she begins to fuss with her mother, Babamukuru, looking into his food, tells Nyasha to sit at the table and eat her food. Curiously, he does not tell her that he took the book; instead, he tells Nyasha that she should not speak to her mother that way. Although many critics point to Nyasha's reading of this novel and her subsequent confrontation of her father as her attempts to claim her sexual self and body, such readings miss the larger context in which this quarrel occurs. Lady Chatterley's Lover is infamous for its detailed passages of sexual intimacy, but equally important to the protagonist's sexual fulfillment is her efforts to achieve subjective wholeness. By telling Nyasha to forget about the book and to sit at the table and eat, Babamukuru is telling Nyasha to forget about developing her mind and spirit and

instead focus on her body and her filial subservience to her parents, both of which are valued female commodities in her Shona culture. In a number of ways, then, Nyahsa's attempt to articulate self, sexual, intellectual, and otherwise, mirrors Lady Chatterley's; the difference between them is that where Lady Chatterley finds fulfillment in her union with Oliver Mellors, Nyasha finds self-completion, or the possibility of it, in Tambu, which undermines the hetero-patriarchal mold into which her father wants her to fit. Furthermore, reading Nyasha's interest in the novel exclusively along lines of sexual awakening reinforces Babamukuru's over-determined interpretation of his daughter's behavior.

The dinner table, the site of the first confrontation, marks a masculine field of contest on which Nyasha stakes her claims to self-sovereignty. The kitchen is, traditionally, the domain of women, but the dinner table is where patriarchal ideologies are on display. As with traditional arrangements men sit at the designated head of the table, and are usually served first, while women or children must interrupt their meal to bring whatever is missing from the table. All of these roles and performances are on display at the Sigauke dinner table, but they are complicated by Babamukuru's insistence on silence at the table, which Nyasha often disrupts with her questions and debates. Nyasha further challenges these norms by serving herself before her mother has finished serving her father. In an effort to control and silence Nyasha, Babamukuru resorts to controlling Nysaha's food intake, insisting that she not only eat her food, but eat all of it. In this first quarrel, Nyasha leaves the table before she finishes eating, but in subsequent encounters her father insists that she not leave until she finishes her food. For her part, Nyasha tries to assert control of her body on her terms by appearing to obey her father

only to immediately go to the bathroom to evacuate her body of not only patriarchal meaning, but, as Tambu puts it, "vital juices." Certainly, Nyasha's and Babmukuru's efforts to assert control over her person marks the body as constructed in discourse, but Tambu's observation that it also empties it of nutrients marks its biological materiality and hence the paradox of using the body as a mode of protest. As the battle ground between patriarchal authority and female self-articulation moves from the kitchen table to the body, the true import of this paradox is rendered on Nyasha's body and mind, which threatens to disintegrate under the weight of the violence she experiences at the hands of her father and herself.

While she is certainly not shy to discuss the topic of sex, Nyasha's battle with her father is not about her right to sexual freedom; it is a right to self-construction. By framing the issue, however, as one of sexual decency, Babamukuru exposes his anxiety around losing his social status and authority within the family and community. Furthermore, he moves the issue from the need to restructure his authority to the exposure of Nyasha's body and her supposed indecent behavior. The most striking example of this comes one night after Tambu, Nyasha, and Nyasha's brother Chido arrive home from a school dance. Nyasha lags behind her cousin and brother in an effort to learn a new dance step from one of the white missionaries' sons, who the family knows and with whom her brother is friends. She enters her home just a couple minutes after Tambu and Chido, but Babamukuru, who has been waiting up for them, decides that Nyasha's behavior is inappropriate, and so confronts Nyasha about her tardiness: "No decent girl would stay out alone, with a boy, at that time of the night. […] But *you* did it. I *saw* you. Do you think I am lying, that these eyes of mine lie" (113)? As with other

confrontations, Babamukuru's questions are rhetorical and are not intended to obtain responses from Nyasha but to exercise his God-like control over his daughter. Nyasha, nevertheless, responds, "What do you want me to say? You want me to admit I'm guilty, don't you. All right then. I *was* doing it, whatever you're talking about. There. I've confessed" (113). Unwilling to have his authority so brazenly challenged, Babamukuru resorts to physical violence against his daughter:

> "[He gathered] himself within himself so that his whole weight was behind the blow he dealt Nyasha's face. 'Never,' he hissed. 'Never,' he repeated, striking her other cheek with the back of his hand, 'speak to me like that.'
>
> Nyasha fell on the bed, her miniscule skirt riding up her bottom. Babamukuru stood over her, distending his nostrils to take in enough air.
>
> 'Today I am going to teach you a lesson,' he told her. 'How can you go about disgracing me? Me! Like that! No, you cannot do it. I am respected at this mission. I cannot have a daughter who behaves like a whore.'
>
> […] 'Don't hit me, Daddy,' she said backing away from him. 'I wasn't doing anything wrong. Don't hit me.'
>
> […] 'You must learn to be obedient,' Babamukuru told Nyasha and struck her again.
>
> 'I told you not to hit me,' said Nyasha, punching him in the eye.
>
> Babamukuru bellowed and snorted that if Nyasha was going to behave like a man, then by his mother who was at rest in her grave he would fight her like one. They went down on the floor, Babamukuru alternately punching Nyasha's head and banging it against the floor, screaming or trying to scream but only squeaking,

> because his throat had seized up with fury, that he would kill her with his bare hands; Nyasha, screaming and wriggling and doing what damage she could. Maiguru and Chido could not stay out of it any longer. They had to hold him (114-15).

Throughout this altercation, Babamukuru's framing of the issue is about Nyasha's "behavior" threatening to bring him down in the eyes of his family and his community. His violence then is to engender Nyasha as a "decent young woman" and to secure his authority as patriarch and respected leader. Similarly, in his insistence that if Nyasha behaves like a man that he would treat her as one, Babamukuru reveals that the right to go about as one chooses and to use physical violence is the right of men, not women. The most remarkable moment is not so much Babamukuru's violence against his daughter, which is harrowing and indefensible, but Nyasha's physical defense of herself. Nyasha's fighting-back mirrors Dangarembga's authorial attempt to write back against parental tyranny and violence so prevalent in African culture and fiction. Additionally, it also represents Nyasha's attempts to fight back against her father, not just physically, but ideologically, as well; though, she is outmatched on both accounts as she turns her fight on herself.

Though Nyasha and her struggles with her father stand as the narrative vehicle of critique against colonialism and patriarchy, she is not presented as the model of postcolonial futurity. Tambu occupies that position. Nyasha, instead, in her narrative and ideological opposition to her father, comes closest to Fanon's revolutionary subject. Similar to Fanon's subject, Nyasha is educated in the west, possesses a hybridized identity in which her Englishness is too "authentic" for her Shona culture and her Shona

is not authentic enough (196). Although Fanon offers this self-conflict as a problem of belonging in French colonial cultures, it is clear that this is a central feature of his revolutionary subject, especially if Fanon himself stands as a model of this subject. Like Fanon's subject, Nyasha is willing to risk death in service of self-sovereignty. Unlike Fanon who recuperates violence as creative and cathartic, Dangarembga exposes it as a paradox, namely that it threatens to obliterate the subject through the obliteration of the body, or what Ellke Boehmer calls the "self-damage of rebellion."[15]

Boehmer does not define the apt phrase, "self-damage of rebellion," but Nyasha's mental breakdown and physical deterioration at the close of the novel exemplify its meaning. Towards the close of the novel, Tambu and Nyasha are separated because Tambu has received a prestigious scholarship to Sacred Heart, an all-girls American convent school. In her eagerness to attend the school and her uncritical consumption of its culture, Tambu loses ties with Nyasha who writes to her with no response. When she returns to the mission after having been absent a year, she finds Nyasha looking svelte and consumed by her school work. At the dinner table she observes that things are as Babamukuru wants them, quiet and agreeable. But lurking behind this facade is what Tambu calls a "horribly weird and sinister drama" in which Babamukuru dishes out large plates of food that Nyasha gulps down only to excuse herself from the table to head to the bathroom to flush them out of her stomach. Nyasha has shifted her tactic of confrontation with her father; instead of speaking back to Babamukuru and risk aggravating his bad nerves or incurring his wrath of physical violence, she writes to Tambu that she has taken to "disciplin[ing] my body and occupy[ing] my" (197). What this amounts to is purging her body of nutrients and studying relentlessly, so much so,

that she has gotten to the point where she passes out in her food at the dinner table and is unable to focus on relatively simple mathematics problems.

The true horror of what Nyasha has done manifests itself in her skeletal figure and the state of madness/hysteria she undergoes towards the close of the novel. One morning she wakes quite early and begins to lucidly outline the ills of colonialism. The next minute, she flies off into a fit of rage:

> Nyasha was beside herself with fury. She rampaged, shredding her history book between her teeth ('Their history. Fucking liars. Their bloody lies.'), breaking mirrors, her clay pots, anything she could lay her hands on and jabbing the fragments viciously into her flesh, stripping the bedclothes, tearing her clothes from the wardrobe and trampling them underfoot. 'They have trapped us. They've trapped us. But I won't be trapped. I'm not a good girl. I won't be trapped. Then as suddenly as it came, the rage passed (201).

In her attack on her body, Nyasha attempts to empty it of all meaning: western ideals of beauty and femininity, hence her attack of the mirror and her clothes; colonial history and culture, her shredding of the history book; and Shona/Zimbabwean notions of obedience and femininity, her breaking of the clay pot, a symbol of her attempt to reclaim a lost Shona identity.[16] Like the other characters in the text she manifests an extreme "nervous" condition that threatens to destroy her in her attempt to remake and reclaim herself.

Most scholars refer to Nyasha's condition as a case of anorexia/bulimia. In "Disembodying the Corpus: Postcolonial Pathology in Tsitsi Dangarembga's Nervous Conditions," for example, Deepika Bahri argues that Nyasha's disorder is not just a

simple “eating problem [but is] a rampant disorder in the socio-cultural complex that determines her fate as a woman and native on the eve of the birth of a new nation” (6), yet she starts of calling it a anorexia/bulimia (2). In the first passage, Bahri complicates the idea that this is merely an eating problem and links it with issues of colonization, patriarchy, and the quest for national independence. These three discourses are no doubt interacting upon Nyasha’s body, and the first two are well linked throughout the novel. However, my question is simply, if this is more than an eating disorder, what damage is done ideologically and politically in labeling it anorexia/bulimia? Is there a more appropriate name for her condition? As Brendon Nicholls states in “Indexing Her Digest: Working through Nervous Conditions, “Nyasha is indeed a category disturbance, regardless of whatever we consider her in Western categories or Shona categories, and something of this disturbance is elided in the bulimia [and anorexia] diagnosis” (104). If under the definition of anorexia/bulimia African women were never considered, and still are not thought to suffer from such an illness, then why persist with the label? Raising Nicholls own question on the issue: if Nyasha rebels also against western notions of femininity, why use a western concept to conceptualize her suffering? As the western psychiatrist to whom Nyasha is taken for evaluation tells the family, “Africans do not suffer in the way we had described Nyasha’s condition,” namely because under such a condition, Africans were never imagined (201). Although the doctor’s inability and unwillingness to diagnose Nyasha’s condition is no doubt a failure to recognize the young woman’s capacity to be self-reflexive and/or self-determining, it is valid that he should not have a diagnosis because of the limited applicability of the term and his own blind-sightedness about the issues with which she contends. Nicholls draws attention to

the fact that Dangarembga is trained in both the fields of psychology and medicine and so trained it is "significant that neither anorexia nor bulimia is mentioned" anywhere in the text (104). As well, it is significant that Fanon himself in the last chapter of WOE, "Colonial War and Mental Disorders," labels some of the conditions he encounters in Algeria anorexia, which means Dangarembga would have also had access to the term in her reading of WOE. The persistence in labeling Nyasha's condition under western formulations is an act of "epistemic violence" that does not render her knowable as a subject attempting to reconcile her identity with various competing discourses, which include western and Shona notions of femininity, as well as colonialist practices generally.

Unlike the anorexic, who may or may not be able to cogently point to the reasons for her suffering, in her mental and physical breakdown, Nyasha accurately identifies some of the reasons for her and her family's nervous conditions, namely that "they [colonizers, missionaries, the English] have done it" to her and her family (200). Similar to Tambu's sobering assessment of the women in her family, Nyasha points out that the men, too, have become "reflections of self." According to Nyasha, "They've taken us away. Lucia. Takesure. All of us. They've deprived you of you, him of him, ourselves of each other" (200). She articulates the reasons for her father's treatment of her and her parents:

> They did it to them too. You know they did,' she whispered. 'To both of them, but especially to him. They put him through it all. But it's not his fault, he's good.' Her voice took on a Rhodesian accent. 'He's a good boy, a good munt. A bloody good kaffir' (200).

In the end, she insists that she is "not a good girl" and that she will not bow to the effects of colonialism, though she fails to articulate the reasons for her own breakdown.

In casting Nyasha as Fanon's revolutionary subject, Dangarembga demonstrates that women can effectively articulate the ills of colonialism, but she also points out that indigenous and colonial cultures make additional demands of them as women that still remain to be articulated.[17] While Nyasha lucidly outlines the mechanisms through which colonialism usurps the native's identity and disrupts relationships, she is less articulate about how patriarchy operates. For instance, Nyahsa's opposition to her father does not come from a well-reasoned analysis about the condition of women or about his patriarchal authority. As scholars such as Brandon Nicholls and Deepika Barhi have shown, Nyasha's offensive against her body is clearly an attempt to control the patriarchal meanings of woman and femininity various family members attempt to conscript her into; however, Nyasha herself is only able to articulate that she will not be "a good girl." While the "good girl" label can be subsumed as part of her rebellion against colonialism, specifically by juxtaposing it to her sardonic characterization of her father as "good kaffir" or a "good munt" –derogatory and condensing labels used by white Rhodesians to describe black Rhodesian men mostly—her use of the term can also be understood as part of her larger gendered protest against her father who constantly scolds her for not being a "decent," i.e., good, girl. Before Tambu goes off to Sacred Heart, she asks Nyasha why she forces herself to throw up after she eats and she replies, "Don't ask me why. I don't know" (190). There and in her final assessment, Nyasha fails to point out that she suffers and continues to suffer because her father refuses to acknowledge her right to self-articulation and she fails to recognize that colonialism

doubly compounds women's conditions, hers, Maiguru's, Lucia's, and Tambu's, for example. She fails to recognize that her father's "God-like act," which she cannot allow herself to bow to (190), is not solely a factor of colonialism, but due, also, to his investment in a patriarchal system that demands women's obedience and, further, that they make themselves exchange commodities among men. In a culture that commoditizes plumpness, Nyasha seeks to turn herself into "angles" as a way of removing herself from this system of exchange, e.g., a system in which women are exchanged for cattle. In her breakdown she points out that she does not blame her father for his actions towards her, but she at no point in her attack on colonialism identify patriarchal practices as complicit in her breakdown. She does not consider why, for example, she suffers in this way, but not also her brother? Like Lucia, Nyasha's revolt against her father comes from her desire to pursue her own path—whether is it to read whatever book she desires, to eat whenever and however much she wants, or to wear whatever she likes. Unlike Lucia, whose actions (appeasing Babamukuru and sleeping with Jeremiah and Takesure) and plump body allow her some modicum of room to maneuver within the system, Nyasha falls under Babamukuru's direct authority and is thus more subjected to his wrath. Her rebellious approach, while implicitly posing a feminist challenge to Babamukuru and hence colonialism and patriarchy, exposes a fundamental flaw at the heart of western feminist and Fanonian projects. Essentially, she exposes the contradiction inherent in a resistance politics that bases liberation in madness and potential self-destruction. As well, it points to such actions as forms of powerlessness that are not yet articulated.

In "Disembodying the Corpus," Bahri argues that "Nyasha's potential for agency cannot be acknowledged until one understands that the bodily still remains the threshold for the transcendence of the subject" (8). Throughout her essay she privileges the body as a text of analysis in her reading of Nervous Conditions, but here she devalues it as a viable mode of asserting agency. The idea that full agency is achievable only outside the body is a western, masculine metaphysical construct that privileges the mind over and above the body. To use Bahri's own words against her, "[in attempting to] 'embrace the abjection that comes from seeking a "pre-objectal" relationship,' [one cannot] become separated from their own body 'in order to be'" (9).[18] I cite Bahri in order to point out that our recognition of Nyasha's agency is only possible if we see her not as an isolated, autonomous free woman who must overcome her corporeality, much like Fanon's construction of his revolutionary subject, but instead as a part of a community of women for which Nervous Conditions is their manuscript to freedom (their manumission papers, if you will).

Dangarembga's Feminist Ethos

As I have argued, Dangarembga does not position Nyasha as the model of feminist politics nor does she position her as the model of postcolonial futurity. Instead, she offers Tambu and her narrative. At the same time, Tambu does not come as an individual subject. Recalling my earlier reading of Tambu and Nyasha as split subjects as well as Tambu's insistence that her story is also the story of the women in her family and "our men," we must read Tambu through communal lens. In this way, Dangarembga

articulates an African feminist ethos that runs contrary to western and patriarchal models subjectivity and liberation.

In identifying the tenets of a feminist practice that encapsulates the particular approaches of the women in the novel—specifically Tambu's—Obioma Nnaemeka asserts, "The language of feminist engagement in Africa (collaborate, negotiate, compromise) runs counter to the language of Western feminist scholarship and engagement (challenge, disrupt, deconstruct, blow apart)—African feminism challenges through negotiation and compromise" (Nnaemeka 6). In a review essay on African feminism, Beverly Guy-Sheftall gives a more expansive definition of African feminism as asserted by Carole Boyce-Davies:

> African feminism…recognizes a common struggle with African men for the removal of the yokes of foreign domination and European/American exploitation. It is not antagonistic to African men but challenges them to be aware of certain salient aspects of women's subjugation which differ from the generalized oppression of all African peoples…[it] recognizes that certain inequities and limitations existed/exist in traditional societies and that colonization reinforced them and introduced others. It acknowledges its affinities with international feminism, but delineates a specific African feminism with certain specific needs and goals arising out of the concrete realities of women's lives in African societies…[It] examines African societies for institutions which are of value to women and rejects those which work to their detriment and does not simply import Western women's agendas. Thus, it respects African woman's status as mother but questions obligatory motherhood and the traditional favoring of

> sons…it respects African women's self-reliance and the penchant to cooperative work and social organization…[it] understands the interconnectedness of race, class, and sex oppression (32).

To the first tenet of recognizing a common struggle with African men, it is significant to point out that while patriarchal practices constrain the women's development and agency in the novel, Tambu, Nyahsa, and Lucia, for example, would not have achieved what they have without the assistance of men. Mr. Matiba helps Tambu to sell her mealies to pay her school fees and finds a way for her father not to confiscate her money. And, despite his tyranny, Babamukuru has given all three women access to education, a place to live, and food to eat. For their part, Tambu and Nyasha insist on not hating the men in their lives, if only as Nyasha explains, because the system makes them that way.

Second, the novel also insists on an interconnectedness among the women, which comes to light most explicitly through Tambu and Nyasha's relationship as well as Tmabu's relationship to her mother. Tambu's development as a conscientious novelist and African feminist would not be possible without the aid of Nyasha and Mainini. At the outset, Mbuya's history of colonial wizardry serves as the foundation of Tambu's knowledge of colonial practices. However, Nyasha comes to replace or add to her understanding of that history when Tambu begins to live at the mission. When Tambu begins to share her thoughts with her cousin, Nyahsa, who has become engrossed in books about "real peoples and their sufferings," tells Tambu that she has been "reading too many fairy-tales" (93). Certainly her reference is to actual books, such as <u>The Wind and the Willows</u>, that Tambu has been reading, but it is also a textual reference to Tambu's reliance on Mbuya's fairytales about the family and colonialism. Dangarembga

inscribes her own text as a historical narrative that stands in contradistinction to "fairytales." This inscription is exemplified by moments such as when Tambu admits that passages in the narrative, or what she refers to as "this bit of history," are written by Nyasha who would fill in the gaps in the histories she was learning from the missionaries (63). The most poignant example of Nyasha's influence on Tambu, however, comes when Babamukuru decides that the solution to dealing with the mountain of misfortunes in the family—spousal abuse, unplanned pregnancies, Lucia's love triangle between Jeremiah and Takesure, poverty—is to legitimize Jeremiah and Mainini's union with a Christian wedding. At first excited by the idea, Nyasha lectures Tambu on the "dangers of assuming that Christian ways were progressive ways" (147). This incident comes not too long after Nyasha and her father's altercation, for which Tambu notes that she is impressed with Nyasha's resilience (119) and then later she begins to wonder if with time and familiarity, if she too will "stop deferring to him" (129). Throughout the course of planning the wedding, Tambu decides that she cannot support Babamukuru's decision because it makes her existence illegitimate. On the day of the wedding she refuses to get out of bed and she refuses to identify her illness. Surely her decision to oppose the wedding comes from her own conviction shown most resolutely in her opposition to her father and his refusal to send her to school. But, there is no doubt that Nyasha's fight with her father emboldened Tambu to stand up against a God such as Babamukuru.

From the outset, her mother, too, has been able to help her see that she is impacted by race, class, and gender. When Tambu comes to ask for her assistance in getting her father to acquiesce to her requests for seeds to grow her own crop, Mainini tells her:

> This business of womanhood is a heavy burden. […] Aren't we the ones who bear children? When it is like that you can't just decide today I want to do this, tomorrow I want to do that, the next day I want to be educated! When there are scarifies to be made, you are the one who has to make them. [… And these days it is worse, with the poverty of blackness on one side and the weight of womanhood on the other. Aiwa! What will help you, my child, is to learn to carry your burdens with strength (16).

Though Tambu confesses that she doesn't understand her mother, she eventually understands that if she wants to attend school she would have to devise a way to do it; she must plant her own crop to pay her fees. Along with Nyahsa, Mainini is the only other character to point to colonialism as a primary and exacerbating influence in their suffering, as she says on various occasions, too much "Englishness" is killing the children or causing them to lose touch with their family and culture. She does not possess the same critical acuity as Nyasha, but her assessment that it is the Englishness that killed her son and that affects Nyasha and Chido, who is so engrossed in his white friends and boarding school that he has all but disappeared from the family, correlates with Nyasha's own assessment of the problem during her nervous breakdown. And, when Tambu seems poised to make the same mistakes as her brother, her mother reminds her that she needs to be careful because too much Englishness is not good for her: "it's the Englishness,' she said. It'll kill them all if they aren't careful.' […] 'The problem is Englishness, so you just be careful!' (202-03). Importantly, Mainini does not tell Tambu that Englishness is bad all together, but that "too much" is dangerous and threatens to erase the self. She recognizes that the acquisition of education for women and girls helps

to expand their choices, but she is cognizant that too much Englishness can be devastating. It can lead to social death, if not also actual death. Her words are the last piece of advice Tambu hears before she closes the narrative, before she tells her readers that the seeds have been planted and have grown over time.

Despite Sugnet's speculation that Tambu's consciousness as narrator develops because of the *Chimurenga* that would have helped to inform Dangarembga as author, the novel provides enough textual evidence to take Tambu's words that the seeds have been planted, by the women and men around her, and they do grow. Her development and Nyasha's potential to recover are grounded in a communal understanding of identity and belonging, a willingness to compromise and negotiate, while at the same time being critical of the various discourses that act on them as women and 'natives.' Tambu, unlike Nyasha who sees things in "fundamental terms," is more open to "revisions" and thus stands as Dangarembga's answer to Fanon's revolutionary subject. To revisit Schatteman's speculation with which I began this chapter, certainly Dangarembga's focus on the multiple and creative ways that women resist patriarchal and colonial impositions offers a corrective to Fanon's violent and masculinist approach to colonial violence. Dangarembga, instead, offers an African feminist vision that is not hostile to men, recognizes women's penchant towards cooperative work, and creatively blends indigenous and western approaches, while challenging indigenous and western and sexism, as well as violent, self-destructive nationalist practices.

Notes

[1] Examples of these essays include: Charles Sugnet's "*Nervous Conditions*: Dangarembga's Feminist Reinvention of Fanon;" Heather Zwicker's "The Nervous Collusion of Nation and Gender: Tsitsi Dangarembga's Challenge to Fanon;" Susan Z. Andrade's "Tradition, Modernity and the Family as Nation: Reading the Chimurenga struggle into and out of *Nervous Conditions*;" Liz Gunner's "Mothers, Daughters and Madness in Works by Four Women Writers: Bessie Head, Jean Rhys, Tsitsi Dangarembga, and Ama Ata Aidoo;" and Clare Counihan's "Reading the Figure of Women in African Literature: Psychoanalysis, Difference, and Desire."

[2] In many ways this chapter and argument is indebted to the previous scholarship on Dangarembga and Fanon, but it diverges from these works because of my exploration of the larger implication of Dangarembga's work for the whole of Fanon's project.

[3] I use the term "native" here to note the two separate spheres of influence impacting Tambu's life and consciousness. As well, the term is useful because it also highlights the survival of African/Shona practices and epistemologies that flourished despite the violence of colonialism. At the same time, I highlight my own reservations about the term "native" because one of the things the reader learns from the novel, specifically from Tambu's grandmother's recounting of colonial occupation, is that while the contemporary rural/urban split seems to fall along a native/British divide, it is in fact a false divide. Specifically, the relegation of "natives" to the rural, or on homesteads, is a direct consequence of colonial occupation and land grabbing. So then, the compartmentalization of native and colonizer to separate spheres of colonial spaces, while the colonizers' presence may not be visible in those "native" spaces, the creation of those spaces is a direct consequence of colonialism.

[4] Referenced in Sugnet's essay as coming from a statement made by Dangarembga at a reading at the University of Minnesota, November 10, 1991.

[5] Sugnet makes the above assertion to point out that the protracted nationalist struggle for independence, *Chimurenga*, perhaps serves to bridge the gap between Dangarembga as author and Tambu as a conscientious narrator, which he does not believe happens in the text; whereas, I believe that the novel

displaces the *Chimurenga* through its omission of these events. I discuss the implication of this omission in the later section of this chapter.

[6] All references to The Wretched of the Earth are taken from the 1963 edition, translated by Constance Farrington.

[7] Andrade argues against this assertion by Sugnet. See "Tradition, Modernity, and the Family: Reading the *Chimurenga* Struggle into and out of *Nervous Conditions*."

[8] In "Black Skin, 'Cowboy' Masculinity: A Genealogy of Homophobia in African Nationalist Movements in Zimbabwe to 1983," Marc Epprecht asserts that such movements "articulated most of their revolutionary analysis in Marxist-Leninist and Fanonesque terms." Although he talks specifically about their approach to homosexuality and control of the African body, it is not a stretch to see how their move to violence also resembles Fanon's advocacy of violence.

[9] Given the poor quality of homestead land and the meagerness of economic opportunities for blacks, Mbuya's version does call into question Sartre's notion of consent, namely to what extent can it be said that one consents to his condition when her/his choices are so circumscribed?

[10] See my analysis in chapter one for the specifics of Fanon's biography to his theory of violence and liberation.

[11] See "An Interview with Tsitsi Dangarembga" by Rosemary Marangoly George and Helen Scott, p. 309.

[12] In her interview with George, Dangarembga reveals that she wrote Nervous Conditions for young girls of Zimbabwe, clearly identifying the feminist mission of her project.

[13] While Amadiume argues that "male daughters" were a part of Nigerian society prior to colonial encounters, I note that Nervous Conditions does not imply or suggest that this has been the case in colonial Rhodesia. In fact, while Tambu has fought valiantly for her right to be educated, and has gone to the extent of working to provide her own school fees, her entry into the mission school comes at the decision of Babamurkuru, who, as the head of the family and chief income earner, gets to make all final decisions. As well, his immediate family's arrangement attests to the non-radical nature of what he as done. It was a

choice of necessity. In his own house, Maiguru works, yet her money is given over to him, which he uses to care for his family. Given this arrangement, Babamukuru would not see Tambu's education and access to resources outside the homestead as a threat to the gender system that ensures his privilege and authority.

[14] See Andrade for a discussion of the *Chimurenga* and its appearances in the novel. She argues specifically that it's curious that the *Chimurenga* would have been gaining steam at the same time in the same location as the setting of the novel, yet Dangarembga does not mention it outright.

[15] See Boehmer's "Tropes of Yearning and Dissent."

[16] See Brendon Nicholls "Indexing her Digest," for a similar reading of Nyasha's breakdown. See especially pages 121-22.

[17] As I noted in the second section of this chapter, I am not arguing that Dangarembga's recasting of these Fanonian types are direct responses to Fanon. Instead, in focusing on women's lives in contexts similar to the ones Fanon writes about, it is inevitable that we would recognize similar characters. I am arguing, instead, that Dangarembga presents other types, e.g. Tambu, that Fanon does not.

[18] Full quote from which the above responds: "Instead, the usually appearance-centered practices of anorexia and bulimia become narrativized as artful, if grotesque, protest that will prevent Nyasha's maturation into full fledge commodified 'womanhood,' even as she embraces the abjection that comes from seeking a 'pre-objectal relationship,' becoming separated from her own body 'in order to be'." (Bahri)

Chapter Four
Cartographies of Healing: Diaspora, Sexual Violence, and Healing in Edwidge Danticat's Breath, Eyes, Memory

> At the level of individuals, violence is a cleansing force. It frees the native from his inferiority complex and from his despair and inaction; it makes him fearless and restores his self-respect.
>
> The Wretched of the Earth

In chapter one, I argued that Fanon's experience of homelessness in Black Skin comes to embed itself in his drive towards the nation in WOE. As the epigraph to this chapter exemplifies, violence is the lynchpin in Fanon's restoration of masculinity, humanity, and nationhood. In Fanon's construction, violence is "cleansing" for the colonized subject because, as he lays out in Black Skin, the black/subaltern-white/western relationship is corrupted by the problem or racism and colonialism. While he articulates a vision of violence in its actualization, he also notes elsewhere in WOE that violence need not be real; it could be "symbolic" (94). But whether actual or "symbolic," violence is the only means to eradicating the toxin that is colonialism. Though Fanon projects decolonizing violence as the "creation of a new type of man" (36), his conflation of the discursive and the material nature of violence makes it difficult to discern whether or how "symbolic" violence could be affected without the bloodbaths that constitute (decolonizing) wars. Relatedly, he does not consider the consequences and legacy of decolonizing violence or the ways in which women's bodies function as a discursive field for the nation. If we are to imagine that as the first black colony in the western hemisphere to gain independence precisely through the means Fanon outlines in chapter one of WOE, "Concerning Violence," then Haiti becomes an apt case study for considering the legacy of

decolonizing violence—especially as it relates to women and the articulation of the postcolonial nation. Edwidge Danticat's Breath, Eyes, Memory presents just such an opportunity to consider Haiti as she attempts to rethink women's relationship to the nation through an exploration of their experiences of violence at the hands of the new nation-state.

In the introduction to Daughters of Caliban: Caribbean Women in the Twentieth Century, editor Consuelo López Springfield argues that the Caribbean is marked as a space of transition (and transmission) in which people are moving and being moved in and out of place and production (1997: xi).[1] A central marker of Caribbean identity specifically and diasporic identity generally, movement is defined by one's ability to maneuver both within and across space, within and outside of one's natal land. The ability to move across and within space, however, is often signaled by gender, race, and class locations—signifiers of power. For women operating within this diasporic circuit of exchange, movement is both a vehicle of survival and, when measured against those who cannot travel, a complicated source of privilege. Within Danticat's Breath, Eyes, Memory it is the ability to move back and forth, to leave and return, that truly marks (im)migration as a vehicle of liberation.[2] In positioning migration as agential, the novel challenges Fanon's contention that the nation is the dominant space in which identity is created and negotiated black/subaltern women. It also highlights the troubling and abusive elements of the nation that often coerce women's participation and cooperation through violence, exclusion, or an overly narrow or shortsighted definition of identity and belonging. Breath, Eyes, Memory situates healing as both diasporic and trans-generational, as opposed to being achievable in a singular space, act, or historical moment. This trans-

generational and trans-historical focus on change belies the often violence-laden discourse and practice of nation-formation endemic to anti-colonial, and postcolonial, narratives such as Fanon's; moreover, the novel exposes the myriad ways in which such nationalist violence operates on and in women's bodies.

Focusing on the mother-daughter dyads of Grandma Ifé and Atie and Martine and Sophie in Breath, Eyes, Memory, I argue that transnational geographies are constructed as a source of healing. By charting each daughter's journey to find self and her individual relationship to her mother('s)land, both of which are deeply rooted in her ability to cross borders, maneuver within space, and form diasporic communities, we can better understand the function of migration in women's quest for freedom and sexual health as a mode of diaspora making. In so doing, this reading elucidates the dangers of establishing a Fanonesque model of the nation, i.e a "bounded" concept of the nation[3] conceptualized exclusively around race and, to some extent, class liberation absent of an overt gender-conscious politics of incorporation, as the space of healing and liberation.[4] An emphasis on the healing of the (feminine) body calls for a refiguring of both the national and physical body outside of violence—especially the nation-state as an agent of violence and women as victims. By privileging the physical body above the national body, we witness a splintering of the nation and a movement towards diasporic selves and transnational communities, paradoxically figured as a movement towards whole, cohesive minds, bodies, and communities. I begin first with an examination of the intersection of gender, migration, and the Haitian nation-state.

Migration, Gender, and the Haitian Nation-State

Edwidge Danticat's first novel, Breath, Eyes, Memory (BEM), employs migration as a complicated vehicle/path of healing, particularly for her central female characters. Set in rural Haiti and metropolitan New York, USA, BEM charts the physical and psychological journeys of the Caco women: Sophie, her mother Martine, her aunt Atie, and her Grandma Ifé. The central struggle of these women is coming to terms with a painful inheritance: a history of sexual abuse against women perpetuated through state sanctioned rape; the practice of "testing", i.e. the manual penetration of an unmarried female's vagina to verify her virginity; and, more broadly, the cultural devaluing of women and girls. In overt and suppressed ways, each woman becomes victim and abuser. Told from Sophie's relatively young but experienced perspective, BEM charts Sophie's migration from Haiti to the U.S., her experience of being tested, her battle with bulimia, and her efforts to heal by breaking the vicious cycle of abuse. Sophie's journey to health and wellness, however, is possible only through understanding her mother's history, her aunt's struggles, and her grandmother's motives, which she gathers in her travels between Haiti and the United States. Within the larger political structure of the novel, Danticat locates the family's struggles in Haiti's neocolonial experiences with the United States, as well as in Haiti's own gender and class politics, all of which play out on and in these women's bodies.

Within Fanonian conceptions of violence, Haiti stands as the exemplar model of Fanon's new nation. Haiti is the first black colony in the western hemisphere to gain independence through violent uprisings. And while this fact continues to be a source of pride for the Island's population, its state apparatus has experienced continued instability

through both lingering colonial legacies and neocolonial threats posed by the U.S. and other neighboring powers.[5] Noting the island's long history of political instability, Myriam Chancy argues that such instability is, on the one hand, due to early heroes of the Haitian revolution and leaders of the nation such as Toussaint L'Overture and Jean Jacques Dessalines retaining deleterious European models of governance despite a hybrid African, Taino, and European mixture and admixture of the population.[6] On the other hand, she contends that the U.S. occupation of the island from 1915 to 1934 inflicted significant and further deleterious consequences for the relatively young nation (Chancy 1997: 51-52), including making fertile the emergence of the thirty-year reign of the Duvaliers, François ("poppa Doc") and Jean-Claude ("baby Doc"), the brutal father and son dictators who ruled the island from 1957 to 1986.[7]

Undeniably, under both U.S. occupation and Haitian rule, Haitian women have experienced severe setbacks to achieving full citizenship. Yet, the roots of the violence and exclusion at the hands of the Haitian state, while certainly exacerbated by the American occupation, lie deeper in the structure of the modern post-colonial nation specifically, and the nation-state as constitutive of identities generally. Building on the work of Benedict Anderson, postcolonial scholar Anne McClintock asserts that "All nationalisms are gendered, all are invented and all are dangerous" because they "represent relations to political power and the technologies of violence" (352).[8] Built on an ethos of ethno-racial pride and sovereignty, and to some extent class consciousness, the contemporary "post" colonial nation-state, not unlike other forms of nation-states, is a space for the reintegration of the black/native male subject, rendered often, in Chancy's formulations, as "the people." In reference to Haiti, she asserts, "The neutralizing of

nationalism from the onset of independence contributed to the general exclusion of women from the nation's historical record" (43). Although Chancy rightfully points out that this "neutralization" occurs through an appeal to "the people", the seemingly benign language of "neutralization" obfuscates the particular ways in which post-colonial nationalisms, and nationalisms generally, are articulated on women's political exclusion, and are deeply rooted in hetero-masculine practices of violence, practices that overlap with colonial patterns of dominance and control.

Within the colonial imagination, figured as the white, western imagination, the metropole comes to stand as the center of modernity, and the primordial colony, by contrast, marks the periphery of empire, the space of alterity.[9] Not surprisingly, colonialist discourse represents this space as dark, feminine, and outside of time—backward looking. This spatio-temporal concept for understanding the formation of the white, western subject, as well as the development of western modernity, is often used to mark formerly colonized and neo-colonized peoples and spaces as lacking and imitative, as well as to justify violence against these peoples and places and the exploitation of their human and natural resources. The 1915 U.S. occupation demonstrates the operationalization of this rationale, specifically the U.S.'s rationalization that it took action on the island's behalf because it "lacked the basis of a modern political culture" (Chancy 51). Fanon and other anti-colonial and post-colonial scholars interrogate this paradigm to reveal the deleterious psychological, economic, and physical impact on colonized and formerly-colonized subjects. But as I have shown in chapter one, and throughout the project, Fanon's promotion of revolutionary violence to overcome this condition creates foreseeable and unforeseeable conundrums and dangers for margalized

populations that were never figured into his original equation. In Fanon's exploration of colonial violence, for example, he articulates the disorienting and fragmenting encounter between black and white, native and colonizer, which produces an "orientalizing" and effeminizing effect. In his desire to escape this violence, he ends up advocating for the violent expulsion of the colonizer. However, by not fully unpacking longstanding concepts of gender relations in addition to the colonial feminization of black/subaltern men, he ends up creating a model of the new nation along new socio-corporeal lines that exclude women and other vulnerable populations.[10] Haiti's history bears out these issues.

Building on the works of John Garrigus and McClintock, women's exclusion from the Haitian state rests in a far more troubling alignment of national citizenship, violence, and masculinity than Chancy's benign language of neutrality would seem to suggest, one that became exposed and exacerbated during the U.S. occupation and subsequent Duvalier rule. In the case of Saint-Domingue, French-colonial Haiti, revolutionary violence was a necessary tool in securing black and brown men citizenship and securing masculinity, while women's incorporation within the black, post-colonial state occurred through reproductive and cultural or discursive inscriptions. Although women participated in the revolution, their stories go untold in official historical texts, and when recounted done so in folk tales.[11] Writing of the intersection of race, class, gender and Haitian independence, historian John Garrigus argues that gender, articulated through shifting meanings of virtue, was central to the "systematic, biological racism" that emerged in mid-18th century Saint-Domingue, as well as to the subsequent Haitian Revolution. "The Revolution, like the racism that preceded it, was not just about civil rights but about communities of virility and virtue" (5). In an effort to control and

regulate the freedom of freed blacks and mulattos, Garrigus contends, the image of the "tropical temptress," or the *mulâtre*, and the effeminate black male were central to constructing the freed population as corrupt and degenerate, and hence, worthy of exclusion from a putatively weakened public sphere (3-4).[12] While black and brown men eventually gained acceptance as full French citizens, the "deracialization of 'virtue'" was not complete until "colonial courtesans were refashioned as republican wives" (10), which Garrigus traces through the literary records, not the official historical records. So, while Haitian men entered the public arena as full citizen-subjects, women disappeared within the private-domestic space. They also reemerged within the space of the discursive, which Danticat highlights through the ubiquity of folktales she draws on throughout BEM. And while working, peasant, and rural classes of women were publicly present in the marketplace, they too disappeared within the culture of virginity and marriage, even if neither reflected their lived realities.[13]

If women's past relationship to the state was marked by silence in the historical records and subordination within discourses of the domestic and the cultural, then under the Duvalier regimes it was marked by bodily violence and the omnipresent threat of such violence. Between the U.S. occupation and the beginning of the Duvalier regimes, Haitian women emerged politically to form alliances across class and color/racial lines (Chancy 42). Those coalitions and their resulting political activism were squelched under Duvalier, as he began to subject all women, not just the working class and poor, to all manner of violence and torture, which resulted in "the destruction of any feminist political outlets" (43). The regime labeled women "subversive, unpatriotic, and 'unnatural'," according to Carolle Charles, and hence "enemies of the state and nation"

(Charles, 1995: 140); they began to be detained, tortured, exiled, raped, and executed. The most prominent victim of this terror was journalist Hakim Rimpel, and her two daughters, who were arrested, tortured, and most likely raped (Fuller 1999: 42). Under Duvalier, then, the seemingly benign strains of paternalism, within the context of the emergence of women's political voice, took on a sadistic garb. Being so overtly targeted by the administration, women became more hyperaware of themselves and their relationship to the state and were able, as Charles notes, to situate themselves within the political framework of the struggle for democracy (141).

One of the primary means through which violence against women, and Haitians generally, was carried out was through the use of cultural folk tales in which Duvalier drew on a rich Haitian folk tradition. In particular, he appropriated the legend of the *Tonton Macoutes,* the Haitian equivalent of the bogeyman to terrorize the citizenry. The legend goes that if children did not listen to their elders, then the bogeyman would come and take them away and kill them. This particular tale illustrates the ways in which the Haitian folk tradition operates as a second code of conduct, outside of the state apparatus, and further, how it can be manipulated to control people's lives. In employing a metaphysical legend to wreak corporeal violence, Duvalier twisted the cultural and national psyche, thus invading people's imaginations and thereby disallowing the possibility of documentable legitimacy of their experiences. Sadistically, his terrorism was corporeally felt, but linguistically and psychologically inexplicable; this phenomenon is most strikingly represented in Martine's experiences in BEM.

Migration, in all its complexity, surfaced as a method of resistance to the Duvalierist state. Despite the historical and current reality of violence suffered by

Haitians, and Haitian women in particular, migration became one of the tools that these women employed. Charles divides Haitian migration into three forms: the 1960s, which was dominated by Duvalier political opponents, mostly the upper and mulatto classes; the 1970s and 1980s, which witnessed an increase in number of the middle and working classes; and lastly, the mid-1980s, which was marked by a massive influx of people to the U.S. and Canada, especially New York (146). With the evolution of jobs women held in migration—these jobs ranged from low-level domestic and healthcare work, to pink-collar and service jobs, to white-collar professions—came different expectations, sexual and social roles, and identities. To this end, "the experience of migration generally entailed a change in women's control over resources in the household" (Charles 149). With the outmigration of women and their shifting roles in the home country, women began forming transnational communities and families that helped to bridge the divide between metropole and colony. In addition to the overt feminist groups and activities that arose in these diasporic communities, the shifts in roles and expectations of women in migration served to expand and challenge conventional Haitian models of womanhood.

Notably, Charles does not talk about the ways in which women in migration dealt with the trauma of the Duvalierist state or what other types of social capital women imported in their travels between Haiti and the U.S. In bringing into conversation issues of women's health, the violence of the Duvalierist state, and women's migration between Haiti and the U.S., Edwidge Danticat offers us one possibility of reading the health of women and the nation within the context of migration. Importantly, in placing women's experiences of violence within the context of national violence, Danticat argues that the two cannot be separated, and, further, highlights the ways in which national unity

depends on women's corporeal and psychological disunity. It is equally important to provide a language and space that render women's experiences visible and knowable, a task that becomes the work of the novel, considering the Duvaliers' reliance on the cultural as a conduit of violence and terror and the emergences of a feminist voice within this medium.[14]

'We must graze where we are tied': Cultural Violence, Family Violence, and Immobility

If as Charles points out, migration has been a useful tool for Haitian women in their resistance to state terror and oppression, then the inability of women to migrate under state terror and oppression constitutes another form of violence against women. As well, by mapping the role of migration and state violence in the lives of Danticat's central female characters, we can better understand the various ways in which women resisted and succumbed to such terror. Danticat firmly locates women's agency in their ability to move freely within and across space and in their ability to participate in diasporic communities. However, in undertaking such an examination, I demonstrate that such movement is intimately tied up with one's experience of violence, both self- and state inflicted, which are themselves intertwined. The relationship between immobility and silence and women's suffering within the domestic is evident in the mother-daughter relationship of Ifé and Atie.

In BEM specifically, and African diaspora cultures generally, strict delineations of motherhood prove inadequate for understanding women's intergenerational relationships to each other, young girls' early "maternal" bonds and identity

development, as well as women's economic roles within the family. For example, although Martine is Sophie's biological mother, Sophie spends the first twelve years of her life being raised by her Tantie (auntie) Atie after Martine flees Haiti because of a traumatic rape that resulted in Sophie's birth. After Sophie migrates to the U.S. years later, she reveals to her therapist that she feels more like the mother than the daughter in her relationship with Martine, who is unable to cope with the legacy of her rape. Yet, it is Martine's ability to travel and work in the U.S. that affords Atie, Sophie, and Grandma Ifé the economic and educational opportunities they enjoy in Haiti. While this complicating of the mother-daughter relationship is a feature of black diaspora communities, it is also a feature of contemporary transnational communities where mothers often leave their children "back home" to be raised by family members, or other designated caregivers, until such time as they can send for them or themselves return home.[15] A celebratory view of this pattern of mothering, or what Pierrete Hondagneu-Sotelo and Ernestine Avila term "transnational mothering," misses "the alienation and anxiety of mothering organized by long temporal and spatial distances" (Hondagneu-Sotelo 1997: 567) and, further, the ways oppressive concepts of race and gender also travel across geo-political borders. Within BEM, however, the biological, as well as the transnational, classification of motherhood prove fruitful because of how relationships based on "blood" generate complex and complicated experiences of suffering, as well as possibilities of health and healing.

The mother-daughter dyad, however it is configured, represents a vexed site of power negotiations between mothers who desire to produce socially acceptable bodies and subjects and daughters who seek to experience a range of socially prohibited desires.

While this conflict is indicative of ingrained family battles, the mother-daughter relationship represents a microcosm of larger socio-political conflicts over women's agency and access to their bodies and full citizenship. For Ifé and Atie, their struggles take place within the narrative of family obligation, but, in fact, encompass larger socio-cultural concerns and anxieties around women's sexuality and body. At the center of their struggle is a deeply-rooted reticence based in larger social mores and expectations governing Haitian women.

Atie's story is one mired in a history of testing, self-inflicted abuse through alcoholism, and family obligation. As an unmarried woman and as the elder daughter, she is responsible for the care of her mother, Ifé. When Martine flees Haiti after giving birth to Sophie, Atie and Ifé take care of Sophie; and later, it is also Atie who accompanies Sophie to the city of Croix-de-Rosets for the purpose of furthering her education. At the age of twelve, when Sophie emigrates Haiti to be with Martine, Atie goes back home to care for her mother. In Croix-de-Rosets, Atie and Sophie function as a mother-daughter pair; in fact, Sophie would make Mothers' Day cards for Atie, not Martine. They are integrated into a work-live-play community, where they take part in *konbit* potlucks, or community dinners, and maintain a fairly open emotional relationship. Ten years later, when Sophie returns to the family village of Dame Marie as a mother and wife, Atie, who is still unmarried and living with Ifé, is markedly different. She drinks alcohol regularly; barely speaks with her mother, and when she does it is hostile and antagonistic; perhaps more scandalously, she is involved in an ambiguous romantic relationship with a local woman, Louise, which is a continual point of contention for her and Ifé.

Atie's story is often glossed for its support of Martine and Sophie's experiences of sexual violence and trauma;[16] however, her suffering allows us to understand Danticat's indictment of not just the Duvalier regimes' abuses of women, but of a larger cultural tradition and the ways the mother-daughter relationship within the Haitian context functions to constrain women's agency. Before she departs for Dame Marie, she tells Sophie, who is on her way to the U.S., "We are each going to our mothers. That is what [is] *supposed* to happen" (19, my emphasis). Here, the "supposed to" reflects Atie's awareness of the cultural primacy of the biological maternal relationship as well as her familial and cultural obligations. This awareness is shared by her younger sister, Martine, who, when Sophie joins her in New York, tells Sophie, "If *Manman* would agree to come to America, then Atie would see this [New York]" (77). Ifé's unwillingness to travel and the familial and cultural expectation of the older, unmarried daughter entrap Atie to both her mother and her mother('s)land—i.e. Dame Marie and Haiti. Accordingly, the maternal resonances of the name Dame Marie, Atie's hometown, as well as the phonic similarity between Haiti and Atie, whose name in Kreyòl (*Até*) signifies earth, should not be overlooked (Samway 2003: 78). Appropriately, they gesture towards Atie as a figure of immobility and, perhaps, the interrelatedness of the feminine and the national.

Although Atie goes back to care for her mother, she does not do it with a willing heart. This unwillingness reflects a deep-seated resentment about the limitations placed on her as a woman to which she, nonetheless, resigns herself. Perhaps the novel's most outspoken or recognizable feminist mouthpiece, Atie, though confined to her tiny hamlet of Dame Marie and to her family's even smaller yard, will prove influential to young Sophie. Lamenting the abuses and restrictions against her, Atie asserts:

> They train you to find a husband. […] They poke at your panties in the middle of the night, to see if you are still whole. They listen when you pee, to find out if you're peeing too loud. If you pee loud, it means you've got big spaces between your legs. They make you burn your fingers learning to cook. Then still you have nothing (136-7).

Here, Atie suggests that, in part, her confinement to her family home is because she is unmarried. She goes further to suggest that her confinement and suffering are based in those practices designed to create the ideal wife and mother: testing for one's virginity, i.e. "poking at your panties in the middle of night" and listening to hear if one pees too loudly; and burning one's fingers learning to cook. As if resigned to her duty and her location, Atie reminds the now married Sophie that "we must graze where we are tied" (136), analogizing her familial confinement to being chattel. While she scoffs at Ifé's Catholic chastisement of her behavior, Atie's resignation is reflected in her continual overtures to Guinea, or the Vodoun equivalent of heaven, two cosmologies the family effortlessly weaves together. Atie no longer sees the possibility of liberation from her present circumstances in the flesh, but in the metaphysical hereafter of Guinea, a place, as Sophie explains, "where all the women in our family hope to eventually meet one another, at the very end of each of our journeys" (174).

While Atie confines her critique to conditions that her family enforces— testing, marriage, cooking— and specifically those things for which mothers are responsible, Danticat locates Atie's suffering and Ifé's restrictive behaviors in larger cultural codes about womanhood and sexuality, which are disseminated via the mother-daughter relationship and through cultural anecdotes and fairytales. Essentially, these two women

inhabit a world in which their existence is devalued. Based on casual exchanges among the characters, the abundance of folktales about women's abuse (e.g. the woman whose skin was peppered by her husband or the woman who could not stop bleeding), and over-heard conversations circulating in the novel (mostly the songs the sugar cane workers sing), BEM describes a culture and world in which women and girls are devalued and their virginity is prized. A poignant example is told to Sophie by Grandma Ifé as they watch a light move back and forth one night on a hillside:

> Ifé: It's a baby, a baby is being born. The midwife is taking trips from the shack to the yard where the pot is boiling. Soon we will know whether it is a boy or a girl.
>
> Sophie: How will we know that?
>
> Ifé: If it is a boy, the lantern will be put outside the shack. If there's a man, he will stay all night with the new child.
>
> Sophie: What if it is a girl?
>
> Ifé: If it is a girl, the midwife will cut the child's cord and go home. Only the mother will be left in the darkness to hold her child. There will be no lamps, no candles, no more light (146).

As Sophie and her grandmother wait, the light goes out an hour later; "another little girl [has] come into the world" (146). That there might not be a father, and, if there were one, that he would stay up with the son, but not the daughter, underscores a cultural and paternal devaluing of daughters. Ifé's repetition on the absence of light—"no lamps, no candles, no more light"—illuminates the cultural milieu into which girls are born to their mothers. Mothers are the only source of light for daughters who navigate a dark and

unwelcoming world. This societal disregard for women in turn obligates daughters to their mothers and vice versa. Highlighting this relationship, Grandma Ifé, before the young Sophie leaves for New York, tells her, "You must never forget this […]. Your mother is your first friend" (24). This, then, is the cultural milieu in which Atie and Ifé's relationship operates.

If daughters signify the unrestrained potential of women within the nation-state, then mothers symbolize, generally speaking, more circumscribed roles. Ironically, mothers also represent a reservoir of knowledge, which they at times use to enlighten, and at others to constrain, the potential and desires of their daughters. For example, Grandma Ifé possesses cultural knowledges: as a rural, poor, single mother, as a woman subjected to testing, as a mother whose daughter, Martine, was raped, and as a griot or storyteller. As a griot, she is marked by openness, exemplified in her call-and-response invocation of krik? krak! Yet, that openness is contradicted by a deeply rooted reticence in her relationship with Atie. Ifé possesses knowledge of the dangers and abuses that lie in the world awaiting women and girls, but rather than challenge the system that engenders such dangers, she desires to protect her daughters by keeping them at home. In Martine's case, which I will explore in the next section, Ifé had no choice but to send her away from home in order to save her life; but, for Atie, home is constructed as a place of safety, but experienced as entrapment.

The struggle between the safety of home and the dangers of the world outside of home is mirrored in the story of a lark, which Grandma Ifé tells Sophie when she finds out that Sophie has returned to Haiti without her husband's knowledge. Accordingly, to steal the heart of a beautiful little girl, a handsome lark plied her with the sweetest and

biggest pomegranates from his tree. After a while of supplying her with fruits, he asked the little girl to go away with him to a far away land, but, he told her, she had to bring her heart. The clever little girl, sensing the trick, told the lark that she had to return home to get her heart because she did not travel around with such a valuable thing. When she got free from the bird, she ran home to her village never to return to the lark (124-5). Told within a heterosexual frame of courtship and marriage, the story marks the world outside the home as masculine, manipulative, treacherous, and untrustworthy. That the girl chooses to leave her heart at home and chooses to stay with it means that she is a "good" girl. Conversely, the girl or woman who would choose to leave home—or to leave home in a dishonorable way—would be bad or dishonorable.

Resigned to her duties as an unmarried daughter, but refusing to adhere to the false good girl/bad girl dichotomy that keeps women loyal to patriarchy and the state, Atie finds an outlet through alcohol consumption and her relationship with a local woman, Louise, thus highlighting the particular ways in which domestic confinement in its policing of women's sexuality inflicts its abuse. The nature of Atie and Louise's relationship is never openly acknowledged in the novel; that they have an intimate relationship seems obvious. Louise is a market woman who sells petty food stuffs in the local village square. Her job and her mother's death afford her a modicum of independence that Atie does not have. Not surprisingly, the reader's first introduction to Louise occurs in the public market square, at the cross-roads, a place marked by transition and exchange, where Sophie describes her as "plump and beautiful with a russet complexion" (96). Consistently, Atie and Louise are described as inseparable. Louise describes their relationship to Sophie as "like milk and coffee, lips and tongue.

We are two fingers on the same hand. Two eyes in the same head" (98). Here, and certainly elsewhere, the movement from complimentary pairs to like-pairs is perhaps indicative of their homosexual relationship.[17]

Like the treatment of their relationship, Louise is relegated to the margins, the periphery of the Caco yard. Louise's position outside of the family property remains consistent with the family's rejection and silence around the possible sexual nature of the relationship. Grandma Ifé speaks of her with disdain. When she and Sophie pass Louise's shack on their way back from the market, she spits as she passes (118); when she is invited onto the property for the first time, Grandma Ifé "furiously" rakes the leaves (128); and later still, Ifé refers to her as "trouble" (137). Louise's entry into the yard, however, causes Sophie, on two separate occasions, to take notice of the physical and emotional connection between her and Atie, and Atie as well becomes more engaged and open with the family. The first time Louise enters the property, Atie shows marked improvement in her willingness to share from her notebook, something she refuses to do on other occasions. The poem she reads is overly homoerotic in her reference to a "cardinal bird," like the red Caco bird after which her family is named, "kissing its own image," and again in its invocation of the man who drank his wife's blood in a glass of milk, "I drink her blood with milk" (134-135). If as Grandma Ifé suggests elsewhere, "Let the words bring wings to your feet" (123), in her turn to reading, and specifically in her expression of this poem, Atie's utterance is a form of liberation, a psychological and spiritual migration, an assertion and insertion of self, though it is one that Ifé refuses to let take wings. It is too simplistic, however, to classify Ifé's rejection of Louise as solely

a rejection of the homosexual nature of their relationship; instead, her rejection should be read also as a rejection of the competition for Atie's care and affection that Louise poses.

While Atie does not face direct physical violence for her relationship with Louise, the violence she experiences is emotional and psychological, yet visible on her body. Mentioned several times throughout the text, Atie has grown a lump in her calf, which plagues her movement. The lump is suggestive of her vein being constricted from being in one position for too long, or not enough movement generally, which results in poor circulation of the blood. Given that she feels trapped and confined to her yard and Haiti, her mother('s)land, the significance of the lump should not be overlooked. Additionally, Atie's suffering plays out in her overconsumption of alcohol, which could also be a culprit in her poor circulation. Whenever Atie leaves the house, she comes back drunk and passes out on the floor of her room, only to get ready to leave by evening, or whenever she wakes. This relationship between emotional and physical suffering is one supported throughout the novel. Early in the story, before the twelve-year-old Sophie goes to live with her mother in New York, Sophie notes that "to my grandmother, chagrin was a genuine physical disease. Like a hurt leg or a broken arm. To treat chagrin, you [drink] tea from leaves that only my grandmother and other old wise women could recognize" (24). Atie and Louise's eventual separation sends Atie into a fit of chagrin.

That Atie's family knows of her suffering, yet does nothing to help her makes them complicit in her abuse. Grandma Ifé remarks to Sophie that Atie only drinks and runs off to see Louise. The day Grandma Ifé and Martine buy Louise's pig, which gives Louise the money she seeks for her boat trip to the U.S., is the same day they go to register their family's land, officially giving all four women claim to the property, Dame

Marie, and Haiti, simultaneously. Atie's one outlet, the person who inspires and helps her to read, is sent off the island—with the assistance of her family—potentially, to her demise. For Louise, migration, despite its dangers, represents a potential site of healing and escape from the omnipresent threat and presence of violence in Haiti. But her desire to take the dangerous boat trip across the Caribbean Sea to Florida holds as much potential for liberation as it does suffering. That she desires to make such a journey speaks more to the state of affairs for people in Haiti, particularly poor women, than to the significance of her relationship with Atie. Migration, then, is seen as a liberatory possibility, despite the problems that come with it. Conversely, Atie's inability to migrate, to leave her mother(')sland, her disapproval of having been tested, and the familial and cultural rejection of her relationship with Louise, manifest on and in her body through a lump in her calf, alcoholism, and chagrin. Atie's resignation to Haiti, the place and source of her abuse, results in fragmentation and disfiguration of her body. The implications of this relationship, between the corporeal and the national, are most evident in Martine's experience of rape, however.

'When I am here I feel like I sleep with ghosts': Sexual Violence, State Terror, and Migration

Unlike Atie, who resigns herself to Haiti, Martine, her younger sister, is able to travel. Again, we gain access to Martine's story through Sophie. Accordingly, Martine, at the hands of an unknown assailant, suffers a violent rape which produces Sophie. Unable to deal with the haunting memories and nightmares of that traumatic experience, Martine flees Haiti with the help of a "rich mulatto family" shortly after Sophie's birth. Her

suffering does not end once she reaches the shores of the US; in fact, it becomes more real when Sophie joins her in New York and when she becomes pregnant by her lover, Marc. By highlighting the ways in which trauma resides in Martine's mind and body, Danticat troubles the simplistic formulation that migration equals liberation or healing. Martine's experience of suffering and attempts to heal, when placed within the context of migration, illuminates the complicated ways in which migration can and cannot aide women in healing.

In addition to marriage, migration is one of the primary ways the women of BEM construct their possibilities of freedom, imagined throughout the text as possibilities for sexual and psychological health. Recalling the metropole/colony dichotomy, if New York or the United States, Martine's new haven, represents the metropole, or the point at which the black/postcolonial subject is "othered" or confronted with her/his alterity, BEM challenges this model by showing the ways in which the post-colony, specifically through gender-based violence, is a site of unmaking for the female subject. While the domestic space of home serves as a site of alienation for Atie, for Martine, the cane field in which she was raped serves as her site of alienation. As actual land, the cane field becomes metonymic of the geographical space of Haiti as nation, and, as a source of sugar cane production, it evokes a legacy of colonial rule and domination as well as the economic ground of the new republic.

By choosing to focus specifically on a family of women from rural Haiti, though, Danticat sheds light on the specific ways in which such poor, rural women suffer, highlighting the intersectional, or multi-pronged, nature of these women's experiences. Although Donette Francis rightly notes that as the site of Martine's sexual trauma the

cane field serves as one of the primal scenes in the subjection of the female Haitian subject (Francis 2004: 80), her lack of attention to class limits our understanding of Martine's suffering. Recall that Martine and Atie's father died of a heart attack while working in the cane fields; therefore, the field functions as more than a site of gender domination. Though women at all levels of the Haitian class system were subjected to attacks under the Duvalier regimes, poor and rural women remained more vulnerable as a subpopulation. According to Marie-Jose N'Zengou-Tayo, from 1945 to 1995, Haitian law stipulated that the designation "paysans" appear on the birth certificate of all peasants (1998: 119), which worked to mark the secondary status of poor, rural Haitians. Atie's exhortation to young Sophie highlights the secondary status of the Caco family: "We are a family with dirt under our fingernails. Do you know what that means? That means we've worked the land. We're not *educated*" (20, original emphasis). The connection Atie makes between body and dirt/land and citizenship and education/poverty cannot be overlooked in analyses of Martine's story, and the Caco women more broadly, as it serves to mark their marginalized status with the Haitian social hierarchy.

So then, it is in the act of violence, i.e. the rape or the ravishment of the female body by agents of the state, that one finds the unmaking of the female subject and the making of the Haitian state. The *Tonton Macoutes*, foot soldiers of the Duvalier regimes and representatives of the Haitian state, reinforce the gendered subjection of Martine in this primal scene. Much like the manifestations of suffering in and on Atie's body, Martine's body—as both female and poor—is the literal and figurative ground for the nation. As Carol Charles notes, under the Duvalier regimes, terrorism against women was a specific tactic of constituting proper Haitian subjects, and while the *Macoutes* did not

limit their violence solely to Haitian women, women were especially marked in their bodies for state terrorism.[18] Martine has to leave the island in order to maintain her sanity and life and she could not articulate her trauma. When she does finally speak, it is affectless. The persistence and intensity of Martine's memories point to one way "trauma travels" (Francis 86), as well as the connection Martine makes between Haiti and her health.

Breaking down Martine's experience of rape at the hands of the *Macoutes* elucidates how the production of the unified state bespeaks the disfiguring or fragmenting of the female body and spirit. Martine's experience of violence, and the story of Sophie's conception, is shrouded in silence and symbolism. Not only do Grandma Ifé and Atie not speak of the incident, Martine herself is unable to speak about her trauma neither to Sophie nor Marc, her boyfriend. Martine's recounting to Sophie, perhaps her first since the incident, is robotic and matter-of-fact: "A man grabbed me from the side of the road, pulled me into a cane field, and put you in my body. […] I did not know this man. I never saw his face. He had it covered when he did this to me" (61). After twelve years Sophie pieces together the details of Martine's rape, and her conception:

> My father might have been a *Macoute.* He was a stranger who, when my mother was sixteen years old, grabbed her on her way back from school. He dragged her into the cane fields, and pinned her down on the ground. […] He kept pounding her until she was too stunned to make a sound. When he was done, he made her keep her face in the dirt, threatening to shoot her if she looked up (139).

Unlike Martine, Sophie carefully crafts a narrative that shows how Martine is robbed of her agency and voice through repeated physical violence and death threats. While silence

and loss of vision—not looking at her attacker—were essential to her immediate survival, by remaining silent and refusing to visualizing her attacker, Martine continues to relive the trauma and to exacerbate her suffering. One element that remains consistent in both Martine's and Sophie's version is Martine's inability to identify the source of her pain, her attacker. If we imagine that the source of the pain is not the individual per se, but the system that grants such individuals the right to "roam the streets in broad daylight, parading their Uzi machine guns" (138) as Sophie notes of the *Macoutes*, then, in important ways, it matters not what her attacker looks like since he has the power to do as he pleases. In refusing to objectify the source of Martine's pain and suffering in a single male's body, Danticat puts on the hook state and patriarchal practices that violate women's bodies and their rights as full citizens; appropriately, she locates her suffering in the apparatus of the state and by extension the nation. Moreover, Martine's decision to accept migration as instrumental to her survival further implicates the nation-state as culpable in her suffering.

That the women of the text use the term M*acoutes* for both Martine's attacker, who would have been under the Duvaliers' control, and for the soldiers who roam the streets in the early 1990s when Sophie returns as an adult means that Danticat makes little to no distinction between the state under Haitian rule and the state under U.S. control—especially when it comes to the use of violence and women's suffering. Significantly, the refusal to make a distinction points to the continuation of violence against the Haitian people post-Duvalier.[19] Moreover, such a doubling speaks to the ways citizens experience violence and trauma regardless of the actors involved. Martine's experience and memory of the trauma over a twenty-year-plus period is both a testament

to the irrepressibility of trauma[20] as well as to the continued nightmare suffered by the Haitian people under the Duvaliers and under U.S. occupations. Given the ways that Danticat indicts the U.S. through Martine's continued nightmares while abroad, a facile conceptualization of the relationship between healing and migration proves inadequate, especially for Martine.

Migration, like her initial and continued reliance on silence, serves as a form of trauma management. In migrating, Martine is able to get a brief respite from her pain, but as she tells Sophie when she joins her in New York, "I don't sleep very much at night" (57). In fact, she works all night as an in-home nurse's aide to avoid sleeping, and when she does go to sleep she has nightmares from which she cannot wake. According to Sophie's version, when Martine was first raped, she spent her days and nights terrified that her attacker would come back for her, come back to tear the baby from her belly: "At night, she tore her sheets and bit off pieces of her own flesh" (139). Sophie's presence proves especially destabilizing for Martine, who finds it difficult to deal with the fact that Sophie resembles her attacker, for as she points out to Sophie, "a child out of wedlock always looks like its father" (61). Almost anything serves as a trigger for Martine: her lover Marc, who she attacks in her sleep; her homeland Haiti, where she notes she cannot return for more than a couple days because when she is there, she feels as if she sleeps with ghosts. She tells Sophie about returning, "'I have to go back to make final arrangements for your grandmother's resting place. […] I don't want to stay there for more than three or four days. There are ghosts there that I can't face, things that are still very painful for me" (78). Martine's pain and suffering, however, are not relegated to Haiti as we learn that while in the U.S. she has undergone a mastectomy due to breast

cancer and, further, that she bleaches her skin. While the mastectomy marks Martine's body as decidedly unfeminine, the skin bleaching highlights how colonialist constructions of blackness continue to plague black-skinned people even in the "post-colonial" era. Together, her cancer, skin bleaching, and nightmares produce an almost unrecognizable body for Martine, one that eventually aids in her demise, despite her migration.

Martine constructs permanent migration in the US, a sort of exile status, as her ultimate form of containment of her trauma and identifies Haiti exclusively as the source of her suffering rather than the political system operating in the country. Being unable to travel back and forth, between Haiti and the US, forecloses one route within the circuit of healing. Moreover, in locating her trauma in the geographic space of Haiti, and not also in her body, Martine fails to seek assistance. Although motherhood proves to be a difficult role for her for the first twelve years of Sophie's life, in deciding to bring Sophie from Haiti to the U.S., Martine chooses to confront, in no small way, her fears, but as Sophie's therapist advises her, she must convince her mother to seek help—even if that means doing an exorcism or whatever may be tolerable for Martine. Despite her one trip back, the closure remains permanent when Martine commits suicide, attacking her own belly because she imagines her unborn child as her attacker. Ultimately, Martine succumbs to her own fears, and the work of restoring the past becomes the work of the next generation, i.e. Sophie.

‘Some People Need to Forget…I need to Remember’: Intersubjective and Diasporic Healing

Unlike her Tante Atie and her mother Martine, whose possibilities for healing are curtailed by immobility and silence, in BEM, Sophie emerges as the figure of diasporic health. Sophie’s healing is marked by several elements: her ability to travel back and forth, within and across space; her openness to talking to and learning from Ifé, Atie and Martine; and, finally, her participation in disaporic communities such as her sexual phobia therapy group and other sources of support, e.g. her individual therapist, pediatrician, and husband. As a figure of diaspora, the text does not position Sophie as an ideal; her bulimia serves not only as an indicator of the dis-ease of the postcolonial subject, but how patriarchy continues to discipline the female body.

The first element in Sophie’s journey to sexual health is her ability to move back and forth, across and within space. Born in the 1970s, Sophie was born into, but does not have significant experience under, the Duvalier regime. Sophie, then, is a living product of that era of torture and violence against women, while Martine bears its wounds. If we take the publication of the novel, 1994, as the time period from which Sophie narrates BEM, then twelve years prior would place us in 1982 or thereabout. Conceived during the height of the Duvalier regime’s reign of terror, Sophie travels during the early to mid-80s, a period of mass migration of asylum seekers, though her journey does not follow this pattern. For a rural girl, she lives a fairly privileged life, first in Dame Marie, where her family has the biggest house because Martine sends money back to the family, and then later in Croix-de-Rosets, where she and Atie lived for the purpose of furthering her education. Specifically through her mother’s sacrifices, Sophie begins to travel between

the rural and more urban parts of the island. Indirectly, migration, via monetary remittances by Martine, aids in Sophie's upbringing.

The full accord of her ability to travel back and forth comes at the age of twelve when she leaves Haiti to join her mother in New York. The United States presents an opportunity for several things for Sophie: the possibility to reconnect with her mother line, the opportunity to secure honor for her family via education, and the hope of not succumbing to state violence as her mother and other women have. Becoming aware of not just a new life, but a new self, the first night of her arrival Sophie comes to learn that she does not look like anyone in her family, not her mother or her auntie. Looking at her face in the mirror the next morning she notes that she greets her new life as "my mother's daughter and Tantie Atie's child," i.e. she is born of Martine but raised by Atie. In this acknowledgement Sophie installs both Atie and Martine as maternal figures, but also she acknowledges a weakened bond between her and Martine, as she notes much later in her life, she was not able to bring herself to say I love you to Martine (79). The United States also represents the possibility of restoring family honor through education. The night of Sophie's arrival, Martine tells her, "Your schooling is the only thing that will make people respect you" (43). "You are going to work hard here […] and no one is going to break your heart because you cannot read or write. You have a chance to become the kind of woman Atie and I have always wanted to be. If you make something of yourself in life, we will all succeed. You can *raise our heads'*" (44). Martine's statement confirms Danticat's assertion in her interview with Renee Shea that the mother-daughter relationship is "an evolving relationship" in which mothers see themselves mirrored. She continues, "Many of the mother's dreams are transported to the daughter who might do

all the things she did not get to do" (Shea 1996: 383). In this case, however, migration facilitates this process of transference. Later, Martine reinforces education as the key to dignity: "If you get your education, there are things you won't have to do," referring to her work as a nurse's aide (58). In her focus on education, constructed in opposition to bodily pleasure and motherhood, Martine links migration with the opportunity for building social and financial capital.

Sophie does undergo a form of education of sorts, but not the one Martine has planned for her. In her ability to travel, to cross borders and boundaries, Sophie educates herself about the history of the women in her family. Perhaps, ironically, when she returns to Haiti after her initial stay in the US, she declares to Louise that she is a secretary. As a figure of wellness and openness, Sophie reclaims this traditionally devalued female job through her role as narrator and family griot. The first part of Sophie's education comes through understanding her mother's relationship to an ideal image she has of her, then it comes through her own experience of testing, and later her attempts to rewrite or reshape the future of the Caco women, specifically her young daughter, Brigitte Ifé. In uncovering the familial and cultural codes governing her and other female family members' behaviors and attitudes, Sophie discovers a rich and complex history where, "nightmares are passed on through generations like heirlooms" (234). Determined to disrupt this pattern, Sophie must first experience some of what her foremothers have.

Unlike her mother and Tantie Atie, Sophie was not subjected to testing while in Haiti. This, however, changes once she expresses sexual interest at the age of eighteen. The first six years of her life with her mother pass by relatively uneventfully, until she

meets Joseph, an older man about her mother's age. Sophie's experience of testing differs slightly from Martine's and Atie's; whereas they were tested in order to preserve the family's honor and to secure their social status as acceptable brides, Sophie's experience of testing comes from Martine's inability to manage her trauma. For Martine who has been coping with her nightmares with Sophie's assistance—she wakes Martine at night to prevent her from hurting herself—the possibility that Sophie would leave her is frightening and terrifying. When Sophie reveals to her mother that she is interested in their older neighbor, Joseph, Martine begins to test Sophie. As she explains to her earlier,

> When I was a girl, my mother used to test us to see if we were virgins. She would put her finger in our very private parts to see if it would go inside. […] The way my mother was raised, a mother is supposed to do that to her daughter until the daughter is married. It is her responsibility to keep her pure (61).

Martine's explanation of why mothers test their daughters reveals the ways in which women are made complicit in the workings of patriarchy; specifically, they become gatekeepers and monitors of acceptable sexuality. Given Martine's explanation of testing and her earlier assertion that Sophie is not allowed to have a boyfriend until she is eighteen (56), the purpose of Sophie's testing is to keep her at home. As Martine explains to Sophie while she tests her, "The love between a mother and a daughter is deeper than the sea. You would leave me for an old man who you didn't know the year before. You and I we could be like *Marassas*. You are giving up a lifetime with me. Do you understand?" (85) For Martine, the terrifying possibility of being left alone causes her to inflict a traumatizing practice on her daughter, a practice that Sophie notes has been passed down in the family like *heirlooms*. Testing, then, is a practice designed not only to

keep daughters pure, but to keep them immobile and at home, at least until they find suitable husband. As well, given Danticat's explanation of the relationship between mothers and daughters, testing becomes another way in which mothers try to balance their desire to see themselves fulfilled through their daughters and the reality that daughters are their own people.

Ironically, for Sophie to perform her "act of liberation," as she terms it, she first appropriates the garb of abuser by inflicting the same violence on her person. Motivated by age and the possibility of love, she decides to break her hymen with a pestle, a deconstructive cooking instrument, a tool used to breakdown things in order to create something new. Like the spices she previously used the pestle to blend for a creative and nourishing meal for her and Martine, Sophie constructs her sexual body as a text for *her* to deconstruct and reconstruct. Not quite pen and not quite penis, yet both, the pestle doubles as a particularly feminine tool of inscription in which the blood of the broken hymen serves as ink. Unlike Tantie's sexual relationship with Louise, which, in never being revealed within the context of the novel, is relegated to, literally, outside the margins of the pages, and Martine's experience of rape which must be narrated by Sophie and after her death, Sophie's own violence against herself is literally written on the pages despite her attempt to double during the act.

As she reveals elsewhere, whenever Martine tests her, Sophie doubles, or uses stories to distract herself from what is happening, i.e. she disconnects mind and body. Sophie's own attempt to double while she performs this act occurs sequentially as opposed to simultaneously, in which case the latter would serve to hide the action. Accordingly, she tells the story of a woman who could no longer stand to bleed and so

goes to Erzulie, the virgin mother, to be transformed into a butterfly. Sophie, appropriately, narrates this story of reincarnation through suicide to narrate her own act of self-inflicted violence. Directly after this story, Sophie narrates her breaking the "manacles" of a destructive practice: "My flesh ripped apart as I pressed the pestle into it. I could see the blood slowly dripping on to the bed sheet. I took the pestle and the bloody sheet and stuffed them into a bag. It was gone, the veil that always held my mother's finger back every time she tested me" (88). The breaking of the hymen outside of heterosexual coupling signals her entry into a specifically extra-Haitian form of womanhood, in which her body is reclaimed, albeit violently, for its own ends. This reclamation, however, is complicated by Sophie's immediate turn to marry her love interest, Joseph. While the novel gestures towards a total reclamation of the female body for its own purpose, it is held in check by the need for companionship and belonging.

Sophie's disruptive and transgressive act is complicated by her inability to take pleasure in the sexual act, which manifests in the form of bulimia. Similar to Nyasha's eating disorder in Tsitsi Dangaremba's *Nervous Conditions*, Sophie's bulimia is a nervous condition indicative of the imperiled social location of the female post-colonial subject. As a diasporic figure, Sophie must negotiate her position in the cultural interstices of being and disintegration. Writing on the intermediary function of food in Sophie's attempts to negotiate a place between Haiti and the U.S., Valerie Loichot asserts, "[Sophie's] body becomes the currency of exchange between two incompatible cultural values," namely the Haitian value of "plumpness" and the U.S. value of "bony." Moreover, her bulimia, which gets named in this text, unlike in *Nervous Conditions*, highlights the recognition of a common form of corporeal suffering for women in both

the American and Haitian cultures. Sophie's bulimia is not unlike Atie's chagrin, alcoholism, and lump, or Martine's traumatic rape, subsequent nightmares, bleaching, and eventual suicide. The difference among them, however, is that where they deploy silence and are hampered by immobility, Sophie is able to overcome, or challenge, both, though not without assistance.

Sophie's reclamation of self, then, does not come from an unequivocal ownership of her body, but from her journey to her mother('s)land, back to Grandma Ifé and Tantie Atie, to excavate the history of her mother's story and theirs. Sophie's first journey upon breaking the manacles of patriarchy is to Joseph's house, after which they elope and move to Providence, Rhode Island, which in its moniker of island invokes Haiti, while Providence invokes Guinea. While limited in scope because of its confinement within a decidedly heterosexual framework, by turning to Joseph, her new husband, Sophie's healing is not predicated on the absence of the masculine. However, Joseph, or the love of a man, and the safety of a heterosexual union prove insufficient in aiding her recovery and connection to her foremothers. She is determined to be happy in Providence, Rhode Island, a place in which "destiny was calling me to. Fate! A town named after the Creator, the Almighty. Who would not want to live there" (89). The question is answered in the very next chapter as Sophie decides to return to Haiti shortly after giving birth to a baby girl, Brigitte Ifé. Providence, Rhode Island proves to be an intermediary and insufficient substitute for Haiti. As she tells the taxi driver who brings her to Dame Marie, "Some people need to forget […] but I need to remember" (95). She needs to remember what happened, so she can understand and break the cycle.

In her willingness and ability to travel back to Haiti, Sophie is able to convene all four generations of women together. In so doing, she is able to confront not only her grandmother about the ways in which she and Atie have suffered because of testing. In one of the moments of confrontation with her grandmother concerning testing, Sophie learns the connection between womanhood and a daughter's sexual purity: "If a child dies, you do not die. But if your child is disgraced, you are disgraced. And people, they think that daughters will be raised trash with no man in the house" (156). Sophie goes on to tell her grandmother about the lasting consequences of testing, revealing that unlike what her grandmother believes, testing does not "go away" "with patience" (156). As Sophie's therapist later notes, she has taken an important step in the process of healing: confrontation (207). This moment of confrontation between Sophie and Grandma Ifé is paramount in her return to Haiti and her path to healing. Healing for Sophie particularly in this trip is tied to understanding the actions of her mother and grandmother, as well as understanding how those decisions are influenced by larger social norms and political forces. What she discovers in this instance, and which is true of other exchanges, is that Grandma Ifé and Martine's actions are not self-motivated and malicious, but that family honor, social status, as well as each woman's lost opportunity are tied to the control and discipline of women and girls' bodies and sexualities. Moreover, where Martine and Ifé have been silent, Sophie is able to voice her objections to the practice as well as make known her pain and suffering. In confronting Grandma Ifé instead of Martine, Sophie also gives voice to Atie's suffering and objections, which she knows from direct conversations with Atie.

It is in these conversations that she is also able to reconnect and learn from the women of her family, Atie in particular. Since Sophie's birth, Atie has always been a primary influence. Significantly, in her return to Haiti, Sophie is once again able to reconnect with her Tantie, as she affectionately calls Atie, who imparts to her some of the hard lessons she has learned as a woman growing up in rural Haiti. While being in Haiti has allowed her to reconnect with her cultural roots, specifically through cooking and its communal capacity, Sophie is able to recall lessons she has learned from Atie: "*The men in this area, they insist that their women are virgins and have ten fingers.*" As she goes on to explain:

> According to Tantie, each finger had a purpose. It was the ways she had been taught to prepare herself to become a woman. Mothering. Boiling. Loving. Baking. Nursing. Frying. Healing. Washing. Ironing. Scrubbing. It wasn't her fault, she said. Her ten fingers had been named for her even before she was born. Sometimes, she even wished she had six fingers on each hand so she could have two left for herself (151, original emphasis).

Here and elsewhere, Atie names for Sophie the various issues women encounter in Haiti, giving her lessons that function intersubjectively in Sophie's healing. Specifically, by being able to identify with and reconnect with Atie's sense of suffering, Atie's assessment of her condition, Sophie is able to employ similar methods in her healing. Atie is the most outspoken member of the family, specifically as she engages Sophie, but also in her willingness to challenge Ifé regarding the purpose of her suffering. Whereas Ifé locates Atie's fate in the hands of God, Atie challenges whether or not God got it right. Shortly thereafter Sophie is able to confront Grandma Ifé about her ability to deal

with testing. As well, by taking note of Atie's suffering, Sophie is able to talk directly to Grandma Ifé about it. Ifé, however, tells Sophie that Atie can leave if she desires. For her part, Atie confirms for Sophie that familial obligations and social mores dictate that she fulfils her duty to her mother: "I know old people, they have great knowledge. I have been taught never to contradict my elders. I am the oldest child. My place is here. I am supposed to march at the head of the woman's coffin. I am supposed to lead her funeral procession" (136). It is also Atie who helps Sophie understand the significance of connecting with her ancestors. As they take a walk through a family cemetery, Atie instructs Sophie to "walk straight, you are in the company of family" (149). Significantly, Sophie's intersubjective learning does not come from a direct process of modeling, but it comes from observing and listening to the multiple ways that Martine, Atie, and Ifé do and do not communicate with each other, as well as the various ways they refuse to and are not able to remedy their individual and collective suffering.

For Sophie, finding a way to heal becomes crucial to her and the women in her family. As a diasporic figure, she is able to negotiate her healing by undertaking psychotherapy and later by employing Haitian specific release rituals, in essence, installing her sexual and psychological health as a bridge between the two cultures. In her turn to psychotherapy, a particularly western approach to mental health, Sophie is able to fuse this technique with culturally specific support agents, thus marking her as a diasporic figure. Sophie has two forms of psychotherapy: her sexual phobia group and her individual counselor. Three women comprise her sexual phobia group, Buki who is Ethopian and has undergone a clitoredectomy by her grandmother, Davina who is Chicana and was raped by her grandfather, and Sophie who was subjected to testing by

her mother. These women have all undergone different forms of sexual trauma committed by members of their family. Here, again, Danticat is able to connect Sophie's suffering to other culturally specific ways that women are sexually violated and abused. Testing, then, is not unlike clitorecdomy or incest. In addition to being a part of a diasporic community centered on wellness, Sophie's individual therapist is a black woman who is studied in the cultures of the African diaspora, specifically the Dominican Republic; furthermore, in her collection of Brazilian and African art, her therapist demonstrates not only an affinity for African and African-derived cultures and artifacts, but perhaps a deeper understanding of Sophie than a Euro-American trained and identified therapist. In addition to these more formal therapy groups, Sophie surrounds herself with other therapeutic agents. Specifically, her daughter's pediatrician is Indian or South Asian and her husband is Creole from New Orleans and is also a Jazz musician versed in African-derived practices and traditions, such as call-and-response. Joseph is also presented as a sensitive and supportive spouse who is dedicated to helping Sophie work through her experiences, particularly in his willingness to wait for sex and not to pressure her to perform. In many ways, then, Sophie is immersed in an environment rich with possibilities of healing.

Still struggling with bulimia and other issues, such as Martine's trauma, Sophie must confront not only the legacy of testing, but her mother's own rape and eventual suicide. In her death, Martine reveals for Sophie that healing, if it is to be long-lasting, must transcend the individual to the familial, cultural, and eventually the political; it must be able to travel, to move beyond its confinement. Martine's suicide is as Sophie articulates, like the woman who could not stop bleeding or the woman who gave in and

changed into a butterfly. Martine, like these women, stands as an allegorical figure among those ubiquitous tales of women's suffering; however, in linking Martine's suicide directly to the state sanctioned terrorism against Haitian women, and therefore to national political practices, Danticat elevates all those circulating allegories of women's suffering to issues of national, political concerns. Sophie buries Martine in all red; a red Sophie notes is "too loud for a burial. I knew it. She would look like Jezebel, hot-blooded Erzulie who feared no men, but rather made them her slaves, raped *them*, and killed *them.* She was the only woman with that power. It was too bright a red for a burial. […] people would talk" (227). In her evocation of Erzulie, Sophie at once imbues Martine's dead body with the power she did not have when alive to avenge her rape, but perhaps noting the feebleness of such an allusion, Sophie notes that only Erzulie has such a power. On the one hand such an acknowledgement recognizes that the power of Erzulie is not the power of the average woman; on the other hand, by elevating Martine's death to the level of national allegory, Sophie displaces Erzulie in favor of real women's suffering.

Sophie's final act of reclamation and healing comes, as well, through Martine's death. Before Martine's death, Sophie's therapist suggests that she should encourage Martine to seek help for her nightmares and trauma. She suggests that if Martine did not want to go to a traditional therapist, that she might consider a release ritual, an exorcism. Martine, however, commits suicide before this option is made known to her. Building on the ways in which suffering travels from woman to woman in BEM, Sophie picks up where Martine could not. In the final scene of the book, as Martine is being lowered into the ground, Sophie, unable to articulate her pain and grief, as well as those of other women, runs into the cane field and begins to attack the stalks of cane. She returns to the

original site of Martine's trauma, which is also the figurative and literal ground of the nation, to articulate her grievances. In this, her and the novel's, ritual of release, Sophie brings the community to the site to be able to articulate the central journey of the novel. The intersubjective nature of this act is revealed through the call-and-response nature of Sophie's cry borne out by Grandma Ifé's call of "*Ou Libéré?*[Are you free?]" to which Atie responds, "*Ou libéré!*" (233). In returning to the cane field, Sophie points to that site as instrumental in Martine's and other women's suffering; Sophie, then, begins the work of moving the site of trauma from that of the feminine body to the nation's body.

Conclusion

In BEM, Danticat offers us a look at the healing possibilities that lie within the diaspora by representing the lives of four generations of rural, Haitian women. In doing so, she highlights and elevates the ways in which women's experiences of suffering—mental, physical, and emotional—are intimately tied up with articulations of the nation-state. Through the medium of the female body, specifically the sexual body, Danticat is able to register the complicated, tragic, and, at times, healing possibilities that lie within the diaspora. BEM, then, represents healing as transhistorical (across time), transnational (across space), and transgenerational (across bodies). In focusing on women's movement towards health and wellness, the novel articulates a simultaneous splintering of the nation, manifested in an articulation of the diaspora as that which interrupts the practice of the nation without constituting its other.[21] In Danticat's representation, diaspora, consequently, challenges the primacy of the nation-state as the site for the making of the black (female) subject.

Like Hondagneu-Sotelo and Avila's warning against a facile celebration of the transformative possibilities of "transnational mothering," I, too, offer a similar caution regarding celebrations of diaspora. While Danticat is able to link women's suffering and subsequent healing to national-political practices, the political dimensions of the novel are intricate and can be overlooked. On the metatextual level, the Haitian diaspora is a vast and complex place that while it holds liberatory potential for its inhabitants, it is also home to agents, such as Jean Claude Duvalier, who are complicit in the very suffering from which people like Martine and Louise seek refuge.[22] Additionally, while Danticat levels a scathing critique of the practices of gendering and nationalism in BEM, the text is short on the impact of U.S. neocolonial history and present practices on Haitians and Haiti.[23] And finally, while it was not articulated in this chapter, the novel does gesture towards recuperating masculinity and men within reconstructions of the nation and nationalism; although, Danticat, through the figures of Martine's lover, Marc, and Sophie's husband, Joseph, represents these possibilities within the diaspora, and not within the space or context of Haiti or the nation more broadly. Masculinity, then, represents the next frontier for reconsiderations of the nation generally, and issues of healing and violence specifically.

Notes

[1] Here López Springfield marks this circuit through the forced transportation of Africans to the islands, the immigration of Asiatic peoples post emancipation, and later the migration of peoples in and out of the Caribbean. Although she did not mention the rapid influx of tourists, tourism as the dominant product of the islands should not go unmentioned. Highlighting this primacy of "routes," Paul Gilroy writes about this as an emphasis on "routes" as opposed to "roots"—a focus on contingency and fluidity as opposed to fixity.

[2] Potter, Conway, and Philips, too, argue that "migration and remigration, and oftentimes remigration and return, have been an institutionalized aspect of Caribbean societies" (1). See The Experience of Return Migration: Caribbean Perspectives for this discussion.

[3] See the work of Linda Basch, Nina Glick Schiller and Cristina Szanton Blanc Nations Unbound: Transnational Projects, Postcolonial Predicaments, and Deterritorialized Nation-states (1994) for an explication and definition of the concept of the "unbounded" nation. As well, see the introduction to Geographies of the Haitian Diaspora (in which a version of this chapter appears) in which editor Regine O. Jackson writes, "A fundamental feature of what Basch, et al. (1994) captured in their groundbreaking work, *Nations Unbound*, is precisely how nations, previously conceptualized as territorially exclusive […] are reconceived as 'exhaustive' so that everywhere the nation's people reside is incorporated in its symbolic jurisdiction" (See the introduction).

[4] By framing women's sexual health within the context of migration, Danticat also challenges the widespread perception that lower-class and rural migrants sought refuge in the U.S. solely on the basis of economic poverty and not on the grounds of political persecution.

[5] In Framing Silence, Haitian feminist scholar Myriam Chancy, referencing Robert Heinl and Nancy Heinl, writes, "Between 1843 and 1915, Haiti had twenty-two rulers (only one of whom served out his term, and four of whom died in office), suffered through one hundred and two civil wars in seventy-two years of independence, and had its waters navigated by U.S. warships twenty-eight times before 1849 and the first year of Occupation" (51).

[6] Schiller and Fouron make a similar argument in their articulation of "long-distance nationalism." See Schiller and Fouron, George Woke Up Laughing: Long-Distance Nationalism and the Search for Home. See especially chapter 6 on gender and long-distance nationalism.

[7] Chancy points out that in the course of the occupation, the U.S. controlled the military, political, and economic vehicles of the island, while it stifled the press and exploited the island's natural and human resources (52-53). Moreover, she identifies several ways in which the occupation exacerbated the conditions of the up-and-coming republic: by instilling further authoritarian rule, exploiting the poor and working classes, facilitating the exacerbation of racial tension, and undertaking uneven infrastructural development, such as the railroad, which benefited the well-off and the U.S. military-colonial class (52-54).

[8] Speaking of Haiti specifically, feminist sociologist Carolle Charles avers, "Up to the U.S. occupation in 1915, all Haitian constitutions put conditions on the rights of citizenship and access to property for Haitian women married to foreigners" (Charles 1995: 138). Presumably, no such law existed for male citizens.

[9] For a discussion of the distinction between "metropole" and "colony," see Ann Laura Stoler and Frederick Cooper's introductory essay, "Between Metropole and Colony: Rethinking a Research Agenda," in Tensions of Empire: Colonial Cultures in a Bourgeois World; and, for a more formalized discussion see the entry on "Metropolis/Metropolitan" in Key Concepts in Post-Colonial Studies, edited by Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin

[10] This argument is taken from my examination of Black Skin and WOE in chapter one. I bear articulating the issues here because Haiti serves as good example of the issues I alluded to in that chapter. Namely, By incorporating women from the start, they become misrecognized and hence susceptible to violence within the decolonized nation-state.

[11] See Chancy's and Marie-Jose N'Zengou-Tayo's essays cited in this chapter.

[12] Hence, the French colonial discourse on civility, rendered through the lens of virtue, is tantamount to the U.S.'s claims of modernity, which contained both a racial and gender critique, yet the independence movement responded primarily in masculinized terms disguised as a racial universal, which worked to exclude women and sexual minorities from such a conception of the nation.

[13] See Marie-Jose N'Zengou-Tayo's essay "'Fanm Se Poto Mitan': Haitian Women as the Pillars of Soceity," in which she talks about the various ways that poor and rural women negotiate the social values of marriage and virginity despite the economic hardships that mediate their participation.

[14] Chancy's *Framing Silence* provides a useful discussion of how Haitian women writers have used the literary as a medium of protest.

[15] The pattern of mothering that BEM describes is consistent with Pierrete Hondagneu-Sotelo and Ernestine Avila's concept of "transnational mothering." Writing on the ways in which Latina migration to the U.S. complicates our notions of motherhood and mothering and how it further "provides an opportunity to gender views of transnationalism and immigration," Hondagneu-Sotelo and Avila argue that transnational motherhood redefines the physical circuits of travel "as the circuits of affection, caring, and financial support that transcend national borders" (Hondagneu-Sotelo: 1997 552).

[16] Chancy's reading of the novel in Framing Silence diverts from this pattern. However, she argues that Atie emerges as "the novel's true heroine," a position my reading of the novel problematizes (Chancy 128).

[17] This notion of like-pairs or twins is supported by Myriam Chancy's reading of the relationship as one manifestation of the theme of twining which appears throughout the text. See Framing Silence, chapter 4.

[18] See the works of Charles, Chancy, and Fuller cited in this chapter for further discussion of the relationship between state terror and women's bodies.

[19] In a review essay, "Diasporic Disciplining of Caliban? Haiti, the Dominican Republic, and Intra-Caribbean Politics," Jana Evans Braziel makes the same point with respect to Danticat's The Dew Breaker. See pages 157-158.

[20] For a discussion of trauma, the ways in which it is stored in the body and mind and the stages of healing, see Judith Herman's Trauma and Recovery: The Aftermath of Violence from Domestic Abuse to Political Terror.

[21] See Introduction for a discussion of Axel's formulations of "interruption."

[22] Danticat takes on this issue in her 2004 work, The Dew Breaker. See also Jana Evans Braziel's essay referenced in this chapter on the problems with situating the diaspora over and against the nation.

[23] Danticat's second novel, The Farming of Bones, deals more explicitly with this issue as well as her short-story collection, Krik? Krak!

Afterword

To Fanon, With Love: Paradigm Shifts

For Europe, for ourselves, and for humanity, comrades, we must turn a new leaf, we must work out new concepts, and try to set afoot a new man.

Frantz Fanon, The Wretched of the Earth

In addressing some key concerns in feminist scholarship on Frantz Fanon, I have attempted to shift the conversation from a wholesale dismissal of Fanon or a total recuperation of his thoughts to consider the ways in which Fanon's work may or may not be deployed for a contemporary feminist politics of liberation, specifically, a politics that moves away from violence. I utilized the concept of "national interruption" as mode of critical intervention, or "talking back," to Fanon's articulation of cathartic violence and impenetrable masculinity. This act of interruption also extends to Fanon's feminist interpreters who either embrace and/or overlook the nexus of violence and masculinity in his politics of liberation. By pairing Fanon's two seminal texts, Black Skin, White Masks and The Wretched of the Earth, with diasporic women's novels, I implicitly and explicitly argued that Fanon's work cannot stand alone with regard to his thoughts on women and homosexuality specifically and violence and nation-formation more generally. To do so is to leave in place a system of corporeal politics in which the bodies of women, homosexuals, and other vulnerable populations are the material and discursive plane on which Fanon's masculinist and nationalist project is carried out. Stated differently, these subjects become vulnerable to various forms of violence in ways that the hetero-masculine is not. Scholarship that selectively deploys Fanon's revolutionary and humanist politics without unpacking his corporeal gender politics collude in shifting

some from the margins to the center without troubling the very paradigm of margins and centers.[1] Rather than unwittingly replicate this system of violence, I argue that contemporary feminist engagements with Fanon might begin to consider the limitations of his work as regards his pairing of masculinity, violence, and nation-formation and how that nexus stand to impact the populations he renders invisible.

If the first critical act of this dissertation has been to "interrupt" Fanon's and Fanonian discourse by deploying African diasporic women's novels, then the second component of this intervention, as the title of this dissertation alludes to, is to "write to" or to add to Fanon's thoughts by suggesting ways we might fill the space opened up by the interruption. Another way to conceptualize this effort is that in addition to "interrupting" Fanon we begin to "speaking with" or "write to" him and his feminist interpreters. This double act of "interrupting" and "speaking/writing to" can be said to constitute the sixth stage of Fanonian scholarship. Recall Gordon, Sharpley-Whiting and White's identification of the five stages of Fanonian scholarship. The fifth stage, they argue, "consists of engagements with the thought of Fanon for the development of original work across the entire sphere of human studies. Its purpose is neither to glorify nor denigrate Fanon but instead to explore the ways in which he is a useful thinker" (6-7). In the sixth stage, then, scholars and critics would begin to take an honest examination of Fanon and begin to engage his oeuvre. Rather than cherry-pick those "useful" elements of Fanon's thoughts, we should take a comprehensive look at his body of work to begin to unpack those troubling and difficult aspects (the work I began in Part I). Further, new scholarship would look to merge those difficult aspects of Fanon's thoughts with other discourses and projects that successfully address these concerns or whose goals address

these concerns (the task I undertook in Part II). I do not advocate for the dismissal of Fanon or his work because he adds a critical hetero-male perspective that needs to be addressed and contended with in feminist scholarship. Rather, as this project does, we must supplement Fanon through a third component, which is to explore ways that we might productively engage his work.

As the epistolary inscription of this dissertation's title suggests, this project is a critical act of "writing back" and "writing to" Fanon, or the black masculine. As such, this project is in line with African, anti-colonial, and black feminist theories that acknowledge the inclusion of men and masculinity in their projects of liberation. As the "with love" piece of that address conveys "writing to" need not be an act of antagonism. And, criticism need not be taken as an act of antagonism. Love in this context is marshaled as an epistemological and ethical mode of engagement. And, it reflects Fanon's commitment to the subject as well as a feminist approach to engaging men and masculinity through non-antagonism. Fanon himself says at the outset of Black Skin that the problem of his era is a problem with "love and understanding" which blocks the way to transcendence. And in the chapter on Capécia he begins by noting that he engages her work because he believes in "the possibility of love," which is why he "endeavor[s] to trace its imperfections, it's perversions" (42). As Fanon interrupts Capécia's narrative of "anti-black femininity,"[2] we too must interrupt his perversion of love through violence. In his quest for fraternity or homosociality with white men, certainly we can see his drive towards a violent, suicidal masculinity as a perversion of love and healing. Certainly Fanon's approach to realizing this vision of "love and understanding" took shape based on his historical moment, but that does not mean we have to accept it in the contemporary

era as liberatory or healthy. Throughout his work Fanon insists on love as an ethic of engagement between black and white, men and women, and men and men—he says nothing of women and women. And, at the end of his work, he speaks to the possibility of creating new models, new paradigms for existing, or what he calls the 'new man'. I would like to close by exploring the form that the 'new man' might embody. To this end, I offer a brief reading of Toni Morrison's Love, specifically her character Romen Gibbons as model of a new masculine type—one that is conscious of the feminine within and without; and, one that is vulnerable to violence, but in his vulnerability does not seek to do violence to the other.

Morrison's 'new man'

Love is Toni Morrison's seventh novel, and it features as its focal point the black bourgeois and patriarch William "Bill" Cosey and a supporting cast of family, community members, and associates—mostly women—whose lives revolve around the life, love, and legacy of Cosey. The novel is structured through a series of flashbacks and vignettes in which the relationships and quarrels in the present become more lucid as the events of the past are revealed to be more complicated and sordid than first intimated. For instance, throughout the narrative the reader is led to believe that Cosey and his wife Heed had a great love story; but in the final chapters, we come to learn that Cosey took Heed as a child bride. And, the real love story is between Heed and Cosey's granddaughter, Christine. For some fifty-plus years, Heed and Christine have been at war with each other as their girlhood friendship and love were ripped apart by this marriage. The bulk of the novel revolves around Heed and Christine's feud, namely their effort to

decipher who is the "Sweet Cosey Child" referenced in Cosey's last will and testament. In the narrative, Romen is Christine's assistant who helps her with sundry tasks. And, his grandfather, Sandler Gibbons, is Cosey's former fishing buddy.

In many ways, Morrison utilizes Romen to both continue and extend her ongoing writing of the black masculine and the black human.[3] Presented at a crucial stage of adolescent development, Romen Gibbons struggles to define his masculinity outside of violence, specifically through his refusal to engage in violence against black women and himself. In so doing, Morrison not only presents Romen as a revision of the patriarchal Bill Cosey, but as a 'new man' whose masculinity is defined in his vulnerability to violence and his refusal to engage in violence. The newness of Romen as a masculine type is presented both in his struggles with articulating a sexual/gender subjectivity and his naming (Romen v Roman).

As a young adolescent caught between the world of his guardians, grandparents Sandler and Vida Gibbons, Romen struggles with trying to find a place within the ultra hetero-masculine worlds of his new school friends—with whom he has known for only a short two months—and being true to the "real Romen." Romen's struggles are Morrison's struggles, namely, how does one construct a viral hetero-masculinity without succumbing to violent, hateful practices towards women and others?

According to behavioral and social psychologists, adolescence is often a critical transition point at which children "draw on elements of the larger culture (including parental socialization efforts), but they do so creatively, inevitably constructing new peer worlds that are distinctive in multiple respects" (1819).[4] For young men in particular, they may "develop peer norms that reward scoring with women, […] but individuals

likely react to these themes selectively, considering such peer pressure alongside divergent messages from others in their networks" (1819). At fourteen years of age, Romen is in this stage of development and he's faced with all those decisions that psychologists suggest. The reader is first introduced to Romen as he refuses to engage in the gang rape of a fellow female schoolmate. Romen recalls that he was the last of seven boys primed to participate in the rape of Pretty-Fay, whose name he initially thought might have been Faye or Faith. Both Romen's renaming of the girl as Faith and the fact that there are seven boys in the room invoke references to the biblical or the divine. In the Judeo-Christian tradition, seven signifies completion or perfection. Through these references, Morrison suggests that Romen's refusal to participate in the rape, as had his six other associates, might have be due to an act of divine intervention. In his thoughts about the incident and why he behaved as he did, Romen, too, lacks any human explanation for why he untied Pretty-Fay, warped in her a blanket and took her to safety. Devoid of an understanding of his actions, Romen draws on terms adolescent boys deploy to shame each other, namely, describes himself as "girlish", "weak", and "punking out" (46). In this crucial moment of self-awakening, young Romen lacks the vocabulary to explain "the melt [that] flooded his chest" when he saw her hands" tied to the bed (46). However, it is his capacity to feel for or empathize with Pretty-Fay that leads him to rescue her, and which Morrison develops as central to his manhood.

In recovering Romen as a new type of man, Morrison relies on his ability to feel as central to his capacity to act. Specifically, she utilizes Romen's grandfather, Sandler, as a mentor who embodies a willingness to recognize the female other. Sandler is the only character in the text that is sympathetic with Heed and Christine. His sympathy

arises from his relationship with Cosey. Over the years of fishing with him, he comes to understand that Bill actions were not about love for the young Heed as he professes publicly, but a fetishization of her youthful body and a desire to possess her. Armed with this knowledge and understanding of a dominant type of masculinity, e.g. Cosey, Sandler comes to function as Romen's mentor into manhood.

Encouraged by his wife Vida to talk to Romen, who they suspect is having sex, Sandler takes Roman for a ride. Their ride is a purposeful one of delivering meals made by Vida to the sick and shut-in. Their much masculinized exchange about sexual identity takes place within the parameters of Vida's care work, namely making and delivering meals to elder members of the community. In doing so, Morrison positions Sandler, as well as Vida, as instrumental in Romen's development, suggesting also the necessity of generational knowledge exchange. Within this context, Sandler engages Romen about his sexual relationship with Junior, Heed's new assistant. Finding the appropriate tone or language with which to engage Romen is a central concern for Sandler, and it highlights the difficulty of trying to create cross-generational dialogue. It also signifies the newness of the type of man Morrison tries to articulate. Sandler, for instance, admits to himself that he has no other models on which to draw. Instead, he pulls from what he knows about "young people" which he combines with a what- not- to-do approach base on his experiences with his father. Romen confirms his grandfather's suspicion that he is engaging in sexual intercourse, but he reveals a disturbing element to his relationship with the young woman Junior, namely that violence is often an eroticized element in their relationship. Intrigued and disturbed by the revelation, Sandler offers Romen some critical advice: "I never believed much in free will. It ain't nothing if there's nothing you

can control. […] You're not helpless, Romen. Don't ever think that. Sometimes it takes more guts to quit than to keep on" (154). In this exchange, Sandler interrupts both Morrison and Romen's earlier suggestion that perhaps he rescued Pretty-Faye through divine intervention. Sandler determinately claims the power of choice for Romen, and it is this very moment of exchange Romen recalls when he decides to go against Junior's advice to let Heed and Christine perish.

While there are several other incidents that contribute to Romen coming into his manhood, I want to close by looking at how Romen's name inscribes his newness. Water is an important trope throughout the novel. For that reason, I agree with Susan Mayberry when she notes that, phonetically, Romen sounds like roe-men, meaning fish eggs and perhaps hailing a new breed of men. She writes, "[The name Romen] calls to mind […] the concept of fish eggs, especially those still massed in the ovarian membrane" (287). As well, in his name, Romen also invokes the ancient Roman Empire and all the significance that comes with that allusion.[5] Within the context of a Roman reference it is telling that Morrison does not name her character Roman, which is the common spelling within western and western-influenced cultures. In naming him Romen, the pluralization of the name signifies a sort of everyman from whom other men are birthed—hence Mayberry's reproductive reading.

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Love marks Morrison's continued and sustained efforts to grapple with black masculinity, while she tries to articulate a vision of black femininity and community. Viewed as generous and fair in her treatment of black men,[6] Morrison's portrayal of the

men in Love, and Romen in particular, is no less fair. Her work in general serves as a model for how we might put into practice the critical mode of engagement I outlined above and demonstrated in this project, i.e., "interrupting" and "writing to" master narratives and constructions. In her coupling of Romen and the patriarch Bill Cosey, Morrison points to one avenue contemporary scholarship on Fanon may take. We might examine Fanon's work more vigorously through the lens of masculinity and love, two concepts central to Fanon's thoughts. We might also consider his place in other discourses and fields, such as disability, transnationalism, among others.

In her portrayal of Romen and articulation of a 'new man', Morrison gives voice to what each of the three novels I have examined grapples with, defining a new type of masculinity. In their search for health and wellness each of the central characters attempts to articulate some aspect of Romen that Morrison lays out. In Corregidora, Ursa is unwilling to forego a relationship with men. And in her final sexual encounter with Mutt, she points out that she does not want a type of man that will hurt her. In Nervous Conditions, Dangarembga articulates a vision of feminism that is also willing to struggle with men and masculinity. In her displacement of young Nhamo to make room for the emergence of Tambu, she alludes to the need to displace patriarchal types. And, certainly, in both Tambu and Nyasha's struggles against their fathers, Dangarembga points to the need to interrupt specific constructions of femininity. In Breath, Eyes, Memory, both Sophie and her mother seek out partners, Joseph and Marc, who are nurturing and supportive. And, despite the trauma they have suffered, they, too, are not willing to abandon men.

What Morrison tackles in Love, and what I did not discuss, is the need also to address issues of same gender-loving—specifically between women. As I pointed out above, love between women, whether platonic or romantic, is not something Fanon's works address. And, each of the novels in Part II struggle with articulating this: Ursa's refusal to acknowledge a lesbian possibility for herself; Tambu and Nyasha getting in bed together; and Atie and Louise's present but unspoken of relationship. Interrupting and writing to Fanon mean also going beyond Fanon to address those issues he does not tackle.

Notes

[1] See the work of bell hooks' Feminist Theory From Margin to Center.

[2] This characterization of Capécia comes from Sharpley-Whiting's assessment of Capécia's work. See "Anti-black femininity and Mixed-race Identity: Engaging Fanon to Reread Capécia" in Fanon: A Critical Reader, eds. Gordon, et. al.

[3] See Susan Neal Mayberry's 'Cain't I Love What I Criticize? The Masculine and Morrison for a discussion of Morrison treatment of black masculinity throughout her oeuvre.

[4] Giordano, Peggy C., Monica A. Longmore, Wendy D. Manning, and Miriam J. Northcutt. "Adolescent Identities and Sexual Behavior: An Examination of Anderson's Player Hypothesis." Social Factors 87.4 (June 2009): 1813-1843.

[5] See Tessa Royson's essay, "New 'Romen' Empire: Toni Morrison's *Love* and the Classics."

[6] See Mayberry's Can't I Love What I Criticize?

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