

**NARRATING MARGINALISATION: IDENTITY, VIOLENCE, AND
TRAUMA IN SELECTED TEXTS FROM EAST AFRICA**

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DECLARATION

DECLARATION BY CANDIDATE

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DEDICATION

To the memory of David Kirui, my father, who always pushed me to begin this journey.

I wish you were here.

To Caroline Kirui, my loving mother who has nursed my dreams and stood by me through the good and the bad. Who took care of my children while I worked on this. You are my strongest pillar. Thank you, mama!

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ABSTRACT

The study examined the processes of othering in seven selected texts from East Africa: Ebrahim Hussein's *Kinjeketile* (1969), Abdurazak Gurnah's *Afterlives* (2020), Emmanuel Jal's *War Child* (2009), Kinyanjui Kombani's *The Last Villains of Molo* (2004), Gil Courtemanche's *A Sunday at the Pool in Kigali* (2000), Gael Faye's *Small Country* (2016), and John Ruganda's *Shreds of Tenderness* (2001) to determine how violence is used not only as a tool to subjugate groups but also as a means through which the subjugated groups are traumatised and challenge marginalisation. The study also analysed violence-induced trauma and its impact on the characters as well as how authors give agency to the marginalised victims of violence and trauma in the texts. The texts were purposively selected based on their representation of marginalisation, violence, and trauma across the East African region. The study highlights the importance of literature in representing experience and its role in fostering dialogue on 'otherness' and marginalisation. It employed Edward Said's post-colonial theory of 'the Other' and Sigmund Freud's psychoanalytic theory in its discourse analysis. Said's concept of 'the Other' as outlined in *Orientalism* is extended to examine how stereotypes and half-truths constructed by dominant groups foster a culture of violence through the marginalisation of other groups. Freud's 'Uncanny' is instrumental in exploring trauma as a consequence of violence affecting the characters within the texts. The study utilised a qualitative approach, involving close textual analysis of the primary texts to investigate how violence, trauma, and notions of identity are constructed and represented. To achieve this, it examined narrative strategies used to portray marginalisation, violence, and trauma. The findings indicated that dominant groups assert their power by subjugating subordinate groups. This subjugation occurs through the degradation of the language of the "subordinates", thereby ascribing inferiority to both their language and to themselves. While violence is used as a tool for marginalisation, marginalised groups can also utilise it to contest their oppression. The marginalisation and violence lead to trauma. The study concluded that literature does not merely aim to depict experience but also to evoke reflection. Therefore, while literary works depict real-life moments, they offer alternative perspectives for understanding these situations and provide a platform where both characters and readers can re-experience the events and confront the resulting trauma. Although the study established a direct link between marginalisation, violence, and trauma, it recommends further research on whether there is a possibility for the marginalised to negotiate for space without resorting to violence.

DEFINITION OF TERMS

Healing

Healing is a “holistic transformative process” (Firth et al (2015, 46), that is “personal, innate, multidimensional and involves repair and recovery of mind, body and spirit” (46). Herman 1997 explains that healing is meant to help the victims of trauma regain control over their lives after a traumatising experience. Egnew (2005) defines healing as the process of making the victims of trauma “sound” or “whole”. The study recognises that wholeness does not signify the return to an “old self” as trauma affects victims permanently. The study, therefore, examines wholeness as a transformation into a whole that has control over their lives in the new self after trauma. In this study, healing is defined as the making sound or whole of an individual depending on the kind of trauma that they underwent.

Identity

Identity is defined, as the personal and collective attributes that define people. It “refers to the question, who are you?” (Vignoles, 2017) Vignoles posits that this question may be posed at a personal or collective level. Identity as such may include location, race, ethnicity, beliefs, gender, and employment (Bamberg, 2013). While this study includes these attributes in its definition of identity, it also includes how an individual view the self. For example, gender and ethnicity are social constructions while a sense of self and self-esteem separate the individual from the collective.

Marginalisation

Marginalisation is defined as the process of relegating, downgrading, or excluding people from the benefits of society (Dwivedi & Khator (2007). Marginalisation can be done through the creation of stereotypes and cliches that place the dominant groups at

the centre and the subordinate groups on the periphery. It can also stem from depriving subordinated groups of social opportunities, exclusion from economic resources, denying them political and leadership opportunities, and denying them access to education.

Trauma

The term trauma originates from the Greek trauma “wound” which can be interpreted as psychological and physical wounds. Caruth 1991 describes trauma as “an overwhelming experience of sudden or catastrophic events in which the response to the event occurs in delayed, uncontrolled, repetitive appearance of hallucinations and other phenomena” (Caruth 1991, 11). The American Psychological Association (APA) defines trauma as the emotional response someone has to an extremely negative event. An overwhelming event can cause trauma and while the reaction is normal to such an event, the effect can be devastating. Trauma threatens the health and well-being of an individual and creates an overwhelming fear that one or a loved one is about to suffer severe injury or death. It also overwhelms individuals coping mechanisms and significantly disrupts their functioning of the individual. (Cordon et. al, 2004). Trauma, Hutchison notes is characterized by how it terrorizes, breaks down the understanding of people, and places them in utterly different worlds of feeling. Trauma isolates the people who experience it putting them in extremely different worlds from the people around them. This study defines trauma as psychological and physical wounds, whether sudden or delayed that cause both psychic and physical pain after its occurrence.

Violence

Violence is defined in two ways, first as an act of using excessive or destructive force to cause harm and second, as the violation of rights (Bufacchi 2005). The use of

physical force however entails some form of violation. Keenan (2020) defines violence as “an act that attempts to minimize the importance of those in the out-groups” (1), by discriminating against the out-group to enhance the image of the ingroup. This study defines violence as any form of violation be it the use of physical force, violation of rights, or discrimination.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

Many scholars have examined marginalisation and the history of exclusion across numerous areas, including racial prejudice (Fanon 1961, Said 1968, Spivak 1985) and women and gender relations (Beauvoir 1949, Irigaray 1973). Marginalisation is widely recognised as deeply rooted in colonialism, particularly in the relationship between the colonised and the coloniser. A central pillar of colonisation was the creation of a perceived subordinate, inferior native and a powerful, superior settler.

Fanon (1961) offers an analysis of how colonialism and the resultant marginalisation subjected the natives to violence. Fanon points out that settlers reduced the natives to the level of “superior monkeys” (15) to justify the need to dominate them. Violence in Fanon’s view was not just meant to keep the natives at a distance but also to “dehumanise” (15) them. Violence was employed to “wipe out their traditions, to substitute our language (coloniser) for theirs and to destroy their (colonised) culture without giving them ours” (15). In Fanon’s view, the native’s land was seized, and they were forced to toil on it through brutal flogging, starvation, and indoctrination. All this was done to push the native to “degrade himself” (20) so that he could feel less human. Here, Fanon explains the process of marginalising the natives both physically and psychologically as they are treated as savages and expected not to see the savagery of the settler, thus remaining oppressed. In *Black Skins, White Masks* (1970), Fanon explores the psychological effects that colonialism had on Africans. For Fanon, inferiority was internalised by the natives as a result of being forced to learn and speak

the colonial languages, being forced to emulate the mannerisms of the settler in an attempt to gain acceptance, thus fracturing their identity.

Said (1978) takes a critical look at the West's invasion of the East, the justification behind this invasion and the process of creating the other. Said terms this process Orientalism, a system of representation that contains a set of forces that brought the East into Western consciousness and later into physical invasion. The idea of the *Orient* in Said's view is purely a Western innovation of idioms, beliefs and clichés fashioned to recreate the *Orient* as backward and in need of civilisation. The process of "othering" the Orient included studying them to understand their beliefs and culture and manipulating that knowledge to fit the West's need to dominate and also to formulate the methods to be employed in aid of this domination. The relationship between the West and the East was, therefore, that of "power, of domination and varying degrees of a complex hegemony" (5). It rested on creating a binary opposition between the "self", which is the West, and the "Other" which is the East. The East occupied a subordinate position and therefore a marginalised position, and the West, a dominant superior position.

Spivak (1985) in *Can the Subaltern Speak?* points out the subordination of the subaltern economically, socially, racially and linguistically. Spivak is in agreement with Fanon on the idea that marginalising and oppressing the natives involved the creation of controls by the dominant settler to push the natives into a marginal space and keep them there. For Spivak, the West viewed the Subaltern as not being able to speak for themselves because they were divided by gender, class, religion and region; divisions that hindered them from speaking for themselves and as such, the West had to speak for them. The silence of the Subaltern, therefore, allowed the West to create

stereotypes about them that only served to further their cause to dominate and keep them in marginal positions.

Feminist theorists bring to focus gender relations and have questioned the marginalisation of women, especially the placement of women in the position of the “other” in a patriarchal society. Beauvoir and Irigaray, who are considered to be part of the second wave of feminism, have explored the essential difference between men and women that has been used to subordinate women. Beauvoir in *The Second Sex* (1949) questions the understanding of women about men, as men occupy the role of the “self” while women occupy the role of the “Other”. Beauvoir asserts that women are oppressed by men when characterised in this way. The woman is viewed as being doomed and powerless, and thus waiting for the man who is the centre of power to save her. As such, women occupy a subordinate position in society because of the mythical representations imposed on their gender, which then rob them of individuality and render them subordinate.

Irigaray (1985) agrees with Beauvoir and continues to say that in a patriarchal, masculine culture, the woman is forced to occupy the position of the “other” as the culture privileges masculinity, which is used to signify mentality in the society. Women, for this reason, thus occupy marginal positions. Irigaray challenges the silenced position of women through the false and stereotypical view of women and female subjectivity. She believes that the male definition of women is mimetic as it submits stereotypical views about women, which are repeated often and faithfully, making women question themselves. The position of women is thus that of a subordinate other. Black feminists, by which I mean feminists who focus on African-American women’s experiences, have focused on the awareness of how sexual identity is combined with the racial identity of black women, making their life situations and

political struggles unique (Robertson, 2019). Black feminists assess the issues that black women face, including sexual abuse by men, oppression through identity politics and the cruel treatment they receive in the public domain.

Minority groups all over the world, regardless of their gender, race, or sexual orientation, are marginalised and excluded from access to resources. The notion of intersectionality as a framework helps in understanding how a person's various identities, race, class and gender affect their social interactions. Though rooted in the racialised experiences of minority women (Atewologun, 2018), intersectionality highlights how discrimination and exclusion are complex and cannot be solved by focusing on a singular issue. The experience of poverty, for example, is gendered and racialised and differs within different social contexts. The binary opposition of the 'self' and the 'other' is, therefore, complex and as such, each case of marginalisation and exclusion has to be examined separately. To understand marginalisation, it is necessary to explore and understand the systems designed to provide for some groups while excluding others. This study, therefore, examines the various forms of marginalisation presented in the texts under study, the motivations behind it and the consequences of marginalisation.

Various authors have used literary texts to not only provide information about marginalisation but also assess the biases evident in society. These authors use the texts to address issues of marginalisation by giving a voice to the dominated and turning the gaze on the 'self'. Itkonen (2009) interrogates language use in social interaction not just as a "channel for conveying information or an instrument of description" (5) but also its use in constructivism. Itkonen examines "the representation of marginalised identities which occurs in a social context" (8). The aim is to assess whether the "marginality of identities can be represented through language use" (26). Language in

Itkonen's view can be used in a revealing "manner of their constructing reality" (26). Characters thus view themselves in various ways according to situations. Language, he observes, is used to illustrate the marginality of the characters' identities within society. The use of language by characters greatly determines the features of identity that can be granted in the mainstream of society and those that keep them in the margins. Itkonen's focus seems to be the representation by the characters in the text, which by no means equals the intention of the narrative or that of the author.

The study explores the role of literature in representing experience. According to Thiong'o (1981), literature is a product of human creativity and imaginative activity, and as such, it captures in words and images the tensions, conflicts, and contradictions at the core of a community's existence. The texts chosen for this study are not only manifestations of the authors' creativity but also depict actual historical events. This research, therefore, investigates how literature portrays historical events and employs narrative techniques and figures of speech to highlight the tensions and conflicts inherent in these moments. It also considers how questions of identity are constructed in ways that marginalise certain groups, thereby fostering violence and resulting in trauma. It is important to recognise that while identity and marginalisation are primary causes of violence, the reverse can also be true. Violence may give rise to new identities particularly those of perpetrators, victims, and bystanders. Whether originating from dominant or marginalised groups, these new identities help delineate involved and implicated individuals from their groups, leading to the formation of new identities.

1.1.1 Texts and Contexts

East Africa has experienced a series of violent conflicts since the colonial period. The British colonised Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Sudan and Somalia; Germany colonised Tanzania, Rwanda and Burundi; Belgium colonised Rwanda, Burundi and Congo; France colonised Congo, Rwanda and Burundi; and Italy colonised Somalia at different times. Ndege (2009) points out that explaining Africa without a dissection of its colonial experience is impossible. While it is true that colonialism was not the genesis of violence in Africa, the consistent marginalisation that was carried out at this time and the forms of violence used either to subjugate, force conformity or wean out rebellion, had lasting impacts on Africa.

The colonial governments used their military to wield these communities together, which led to “genocide and forced mitigations” (Ndege 2009), on all communities that met force with force. According to Ndlovu (2012), the coloniser engaged in systematic marginalisation of the colonised, portraying them as inferior and impediments to modernity in many cases. This justification often led to the suspension of normal ethical conventions, thereby rationalising the utilisation of violence to modernise both the colonised individuals and their respective regions. In the same breath, Ndlovu continues to explain that the colonisers also popularised the notion of colonised people as barbarians and savages as they sought to justify their domination, exploitation and repression of Africans through the use of violence. Said (1989) asserts that violence and racism remained an important force with murderous effects in ugly colonial wars and rigidly unyielding policies. All the resistance during the early years of colonial rule took the form of armed resistance.

Some countries, like Tanzania, waged full-on war with the Germans. The Maji Maji uprising is one of the best-known cases of mass anti-colonial resistance in African

history (Moyd, 2011). With the institution of the German rule in Tanzania, the accustomed peace and freedom that had been known among the people ended. The Germans started farming cotton, forcing the people of the then Tanganyika to work under inhumane conditions and taxes on the natives while at the same time not allowing them to earn their income. Though other revolts had been mounted against the German rulers, the colonialists had suppressed them. The Maji Maji rebellion was thus the last and the most widespread resistance to colonial rule in Tanganyika (Beverton, 2009). The Maji Maji rebellion, however, resulted in the death of thousands of Tanganyikans as they could not match the armed power of the Germans, with the magic water promised by Kinjeketile did not work.

In Kenya, the British colony was also met with resistance, especially from the Nandi, Agiryama, Bukusu and Kikuyu communities. In 1895, the Nandi people staged a series of attacks against the British (Ng'etich 2023, Anderson 1993). This resistance was also met with force. For the Nandi in particular, their resistance ended with the capture and killing of their leader, Koitalel arap Samoei. The fight for liberation was also a bloodbath in many of the East African countries. Between 1940 and 1965, every country in East Africa experienced a liberation struggle of one kind or the other as imperial occupation and colonialism came to an end (Anderson & Rolandsen, 2014). During the 1950s, the Mau Mau sustained a rebellion against British colonial rule. At the core of the rebellion was an agitation for the increase of their wages, return for their alienated land and access to basic rights and African self-determination (Scullin, 2017). Although the Mau Mau was defeated, it contributed to Kenya's eventual independence in 1963.

Violence was utilised by the post-colonial leaders as a "principal instrument in the creation and consolidation of authority in East Africa" (Anderson & Rolandsen 2014).

It was also used by those who wished to challenge authority through insurrection and secession. Thus, since independence, many states in Africa have witnessed civil war, mass killings and other forms of indirect political violence (Strauss, 2012). According to Anderson and Rolandsen, the first signs of violence in Sudan came only two years after independence, with a coup led by General Abboud, who introduced the harsh suppression of urban elites and militarisation of local government structures. The country was also divided along cultural and religious lines, as the government was dominated by the Muslim people of the north who treated the people of the south as second-class citizens (Roberts, 2006). The large oil fields in the southern part of Sudan also contributed to instability, as everyone sought to capitalise on the new source of wealth.

Kenya also experienced several internal conflicts as the government used “coercion and violence to maintain control after independence” (Anderson & Rolandsen, 2014). According to Ndege (2009), the colonial setup, save for its racial trappings, was inherited mainly by the post-independence regime. The independent Kenya, he says, inherited and exacerbated the colonial governance crisis, leading to severe human rights violations. Clan and clan-based violence was also used as a technology of power and became entrenched in state institutions (Anderson & Rolandsen, 2014). The types of violence that emerged in Kenya were mostly anchored on land issues. The unequal subdivision of land after the colonisers' exit was the cause of discontent and eventually led to violence. Political leaders used their position in power to amass huge tracts of land for themselves and divide the rest among their kinsmen and their ethnic communities, and as a result, groups of landless people were created, and thus, groups of homeless people were created. Karinya (2009) asserts that the structure of land ownership directly reflects the distribution of power, with its concentration firmly

rooted in economic and political influences. Different ethnic communities thus waged war on one another, all in a bid to get land and eject other communities from ‘their communal land’. The demand for multiparty democracy also contributed to the violence experienced in the early 1990s. Leaders who had been marginalised by Jomo Kenyatta and Daniel Moi regimes sought alternative ways of articulating their demands by reintroducing multiparty democracy. These demands were, however, met with force.

Political and election-related violence has also been prominent, especially in Kenya. Most of the violence experienced during the election period is often due to a struggle for dominance, discontent with the electoral process, and longstanding grudges held by the community prior to the election. According to Mueller (2008), politics in East Africa, particularly Kenya, is viewed as ‘winner-takes-it-all’. For this reason, supporters of politicians will go to great lengths to ensure a politician from their ethnic group wins. Ethnicity becomes polarised and politicised during the election campaign, while institutional checks, balances, and rules concerning accountability are often overridden by politicians, civil servants, and others (Mueller 2011). Electoral disputes are therefore frequently resolved through violence on the streets rather than in round tables or courts. Atuobi (2012) identifies eleven manifestations of election violence. These include: murder/killings, looting and destruction of property, assault and death threats, bombings, forceful dispersal of political rallies, conflicts among political parties, violent street protests and hooliganism, arbitrary detention and arrest without warrants, abductions, economic repression or sabotage, and voter intimidation.

Violence also occurred in Tanzania, although not on the same scale or with the same prolonged intensity as in other East African States. Rwanda was the worst hit by violence. Rwanda’s violence was ethnically motivated. The colonial government had favoured one ethnic community (the Tutsis) over the other (the Hutus). The tension

between the two communities had already escalated even before Rwanda gained independence. This violence continued for years following independence as the Hutus attempted to assert their superiority due to their vast numbers. The first genocide in Rwanda occurred in 1959, where many of the Tutsi minority were forced to flee into exile. The resentment created by the colonial divide and rule bred violence (Beauchamp, 2014). After gaining independence, the Hutu developed a desire for revenge and retribution against the Tutsi for the atrocities committed against them, spurred on by the Belgian colonialists. In April 1994, Rwanda erupted into violence. The war was a premeditated attempt to eliminate an entire Tutsi population. Backed by the government, the militia went from town-to-town slaughtering people. A report by the BBC (2019) shows that in just 100 days, about 800,000 people were slaughtered in Rwanda by ethnic Hutu Extremists. Burundi experienced the same kind of violence, but though close to 300,000 people lost their lives and hordes of others were displaced, it has been termed as a civil war and not genocide as in the case of Rwanda.

As outlined above, East African countries have had a culture of marginalisation and violence, starting right from the colonial period, the fight for liberation, post-colonial politics and election-related violence. The texts selected for this study take as their subject matter the violent upheavals faced in East Africa since the colonial period. They represent, through plot, thematisation and characterisation, the processes through which identities are marginalised either because of race, spatial organisations or ethnicity. Ebrahim Hussein's *Kinjeketile* (1969) and Abdulrazak Gurnah's *Afterlives* (2020) offer an insight into the marginalisation of the natives during the colonial period. They represent the marginalisation of the natives through language and violence. Emmanuel Jal's *War Child* (2009) and Gael Faye's *Small Country* (2016) assess the child's point of view of the war of violence as a result of marginalisation. Kinyanjui Kombani's *The*

Last Villains of Molo (2004), Gil Courtemanche's *A Sunday at the Pool in Kigali* (2000), and John Ruganda's *Shreds of Tenderness* (2001) present the trauma of marginalisation. The study teases out the presentations on the processes of marginalisation in these texts and the role of constructions of marginalised identities in the creation of violent conditions and the resultant trauma.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

East Africa's history has been marked by liberation struggles, ethnic conflicts, land disputes, and political unrest, all of which have left enduring legacies of exclusion, violence, and trauma. Writers from the region have responded to these histories by producing narratives that grapple with the realities of marginalisation and its consequences. While much scholarship on African literature has examined themes of violence and resistance, relatively little attention has been given to how East African texts specifically construct marginalised identities and represent the interplay between exclusion, violence, and trauma. Existing studies often treat violence primarily as a political or historical phenomenon, overlooking the literary strategies through which marginalised characters are othered, silenced, or stereotyped. Likewise, trauma has been explored largely in relation to individual suffering, with limited focus on how collective identities are fractured or reconstituted through violent encounters. This creates a critical gap in understanding how East African writers employ narrative, language, and form to dramatise processes of marginalisation and to give agency, however fragile, to the oppressed. This study addresses that gap by examining seven texts: *Kinjeketile* (1969) by Ebrahim Hussein, *Afterlives* (2020) by Abdulrazak Gurnah, *War Child* (2009) by Emmanuel Jal, *Small Country* (2016) by Gaël Faye, *The Last Villains of Molo* (2004) by Kinyanjui Kombani, *A Sunday at the Pool in Kigali* (2000)

by Gil Courtemanche, and *Shreds of Tenderness* (2001) by John Ruganda. It interrogates how these works represent the processes of othering, the stereotypes that sustain exclusion, and the violent conditions that generate trauma. By doing so, the study seeks to illuminate the ways literature both reflects and critiques the construction of marginalised identities in East Africa

1.3. Research Objectives

The main aim of this study was to examine the processes of marginalisation in the selected texts and how violence is used not only as a tool to subjugate groups but also as a means of challenging marginalisation, which then results in trauma. The specific objectives were to:

- a) Investigate how writers frame marginalised identities through their linguistic, structural choices and strategies in the texts
- b) Interrogate violence as an agent of marginalisation, as a response to marginalisation, and how it affects the child characters in the texts
- c) Explore violence-induced trauma and its impact on the characters in the selected texts
- d) Critically examine how the authors give agency to the marginalisation, violence and trauma presented in the texts

1.4. Research Questions

- a) What strategies have the authors of the texts utilised to depict dominance and marginalisation among the dominant and subordinate groups?
- b) How does marginalisation manifest in the texts, and how do both perpetrators and victims respond to it?

- c) What is the result of the violence used as a tool for and as a response to marginalisation?
- d) What roadmaps to coping or healing do the authors of these texts offer for the trauma they present?

1.5. Research Premise

The study was premised on the notion that fiction serves as an important space for the expression of lived realities. It also provides a platform for reflection, articulation and confrontation of the processes through which marginalised identities are constructed and in which violence and trauma manifest. It is believed that through literary presentations that authors give agency to experiences and afford possibilities of coping with trauma.

1.6. Scope and Delimitations of the Study

This study examined how marginalised identities are constructed and how these constructions breed violence, thus creating traumatic conditions. The study purposively selected seven texts from six countries in East Africa namely: Ebrahim Hussein's *Kinjeketile* (1969) and Abdurazak Gurnah's *Afterlives* (2020) from Tanzania, Emmanuel Jal's *War Child* (2009) from South Sudan, Kinyanjui Kombani's *The Last Villains of Molo* (2004) from Kenya, Gil Courtemanche's *A Sunday at the Pool in Kigali* (2000) from Rwanda and Gael Faye's *Small Country* (2016) from Burundi and John Ruganda's *Shreds of Tenderness* (2001) from Uganda. The countries in which these texts are set represent the colonial and post-colonial state of the East African region, having suffered a spate of conflicts and instability.

These texts represent the construction of narratives that manifest dominant and marginalised groups and the use of violence by the dominant groups to control the marginalised, as seen in *Kinjeketile* (1969) and *Afterlives* (2020). *The Last Villains of Molo* (2004) examines land wars and post-election violence, the role of violence in creating refugees and the plight of these refugees after the war as seen in *Shreds of Tenderness* (2001). *A Sunday at the Pool in Kigali* (2000), though written by a Canadian national residing in Rwanda, describes the events before, during and after the genocide in Rwanda. It could be argued that this text is not East African since it was not written by an East African, but it is important in assessing the role played by bystanders and especially the international community in fuelling war and the traumatic effects of genocide. These texts are juxtaposed with Gael Faye's *Small Country* (2016), which describes the events both in Burundi and Rwanda, though from a child's point of view. The study also examines the effect war has on children as seen in Emmanuel Jal's *War Child* (2009). It should be noted here that Faye, the author of *Small Country*, adopts the narrative style of the novel in this text as it provides him with the freedom, he needs to represent events that occur over a long period. However, the text is a mirror of Faye's life, and thus, in this study, I group the text with Jal's *War Child* not just because they both use the child narrator's point of view in their narration but also because the two texts are representations of the authors' lives. The study, therefore, examines Faye's text as a memoir about his own life that utilises the narrative model to tell his personal story with the freedom of the novel.

1.7. Justification of the Study

While numerous studies have been conducted on the presentations of the various forms of violence that have been experienced in East Africa for the last few decades, little has been done to assess the presentations of systematic constructions of marginalised identities that culminate in violence and eventually trauma. This study, therefore, sought to address this gap. The study also sought to examine the role of literature in the representation of experience. Thiong'o (1981) asserts that literature arises from human creativity and imaginative expression, reflecting the underlying tensions, conflicts, and contradictions essential to a community's well-being. The texts selected for this study not only showcase the authors' artistic ingenuity but also serve as vital representations of significant historical events. They bridge the gap between creativity and reality, enriching our understanding of the past. This study thus interrogates the role of literature in the representation of historical events and how it uses narrative techniques and imagery to bring forth the tensions and conflict at the heart of these historical happenings.

1.8. Significance of the Study

The study is a continuation of African literary trauma studies, which seek to underscore the importance of literature in the representation of experience. It is premised on the notion that literature provides a mirror where various issues and experiences can be viewed. The narrative however not only mirrors the society but it is space through which the marginalised can discuss their "otherness" and negotiate for space. Onbelet (2015) views the narrative as having the ability to open up space to bring biases to the foreground of inquiry. It not only gives a voice to the marginalised to air their grievances but also allows the dominant to turn their gaze inward and examine their

own biases. This study examines how authors use the narrative not only as a space for the representation of marginalisation and how constructions of marginalised identities may result in violence but also the effect this violence has on the victims. It aims to assess literature's ability to connect with readers while providing them with the space within which they can hash out these experiences. In essence, the study examines the role of literature in turning the gaze inward and allows the readers to analyse their own experiences about the fictional representations in the texts.

1.9. Literature Review

Extensive research has been undertaken on the interconnected themes of identity, marginalisation, violence, and trauma. Scholars present diverse perspectives on the significance and intent of this body of work. The current study aims to provide a comprehensive literature review that critically examines existing studies and primary texts on these important subjects.

1.9.1. Review of Literature on Marginalisation, Violence and Trauma

African literature, according to Brar and Singh (2011), has strong links with movements of liberation and modernisation of Africa. African writers rally behind independence movements. The search for cultural identity is a fundamental concern in their works. They believe that African fiction is a product of experience and a reflection of history. Writers document people's pasts but also expose and fight injustices. Though this study examines the role of fiction in the representation of experience, it also goes further to critique violent and traumatising experiences and the effects they have on those who experience them.

Kurtz (2014) applies the “Trauma Theory” to analyse the representation of traumatic experiences. He argues that trauma impacts a community and shapes what its members feel when they experience something so horrific that it influences their memories and sense of identity. According to Kurtz, African literature documents trauma and responds to it. In this context, it provides new insights that may lead to a deeper understanding of trauma and the potential for healing. For Kurtz, many significant texts of modern African literature mirror a history marked by violence and fragmentation, and because African literature has evolved from a history of trauma, writers feel a responsibility to respond to that trauma. This study investigates these experiences of violence and trauma from the perspective of the characters portrayed in the texts. The focus is on violence as a means of marginalisation, as well as a response to marginalisation and the trauma that arises from this cycle of violence.

Simatei (2005) examines the link between violent experiences in Kenya and the liberation struggle. According to Simatei, the colonial period, marked by the conquest of land and territory, caused conflict between the natives and settlers. The colonial settlers aimed to legitimise land ownership, which required them to cultivate the land. To do so, they first had to clear, demarcate, and enclose it. The natives resisted these actions, perceiving them as acts of deprivation, and responded by activating collective memory. Enclosing land increased the threat of violence, leading the natives to form resistance armies against the colonials. It is this same struggle over resources—often resulting in the marginalisation of groups—that this study focuses on. Nonetheless, the study also explores other forms of marginalisation.

Kundi (2021) examines the “*Representation of marginalisation in the Life Writing of African American Women writers*”. Kundi views literature as “a medium of honest self-expression and a platform to express the true self for women”. (172). Kundi views

writing about marginalisation as a way of exploring “subjectivity” and assuming “authorship of their own life” (176). He points out that life writing is a way of giving space to the female voice to raise awareness of the female self and exhort women to break the silence imposed on them. Marginalisation, oppression and exploitation of women are thus given a voice which is a signifier of resistance that is meant to end domination. Here, Kundi focuses on literary representation and the authors' quest to expose various biases and tools of marginalisation, thereby providing agency to those marginalised. In writing about their experiences, Kundi views the life writing of women as instrumental to taking control of their experiences and freeing themselves from marginalisation. Onbelet (2010) views the narrative as the medium through which marginalisation can be reflected, as the narrative provides the space to reflect on biases of othering.

Maughan-Brown (1981) also analyses Ngugi's *A Grain of Wheat* and *Weep Not, Child*. He examines the nature of violence represented in the two texts. According to Maughan-Brown, literary work as a social construct relies on the historical happenings of the community from which the text draws its subject matter. In this case, it is therefore important to understand the historical accounts of how the Mau Mau fought for independence to understand the violence Ngugi presents in the texts. The essential function of criticism, Maughan-Brown explains, is to determine the conditions that determine literary production and the extent of this determination. The use of violence by the Mau Mau, he says, might have nothing to do with the Kikuyu culture or the myths woven by the colonial governments; instead, socio-economic factors may have pushed the Mau Mau to adopt violence as a strategy to attain independence. Maughan-Brown's interest in the violence used by the Mau Mau in fighting for independence, as represented in Ngugi's texts. This current study examines the factors that contributed

to these violent acts, as represented in the texts under study. In other words, it looks at the constructions of identities that then create conditions for violence and then goes ahead to examine the trauma resulting from this violence.

Burkeywo (2015) examines a more recent text that too describes the failure of the Kenyan state. He focuses on a novel that details Kenya's 2007/2008 post-election violence that led to the killing and displacement of thousands. Burkeywo here pays close attention to the nature of fiction and the fictionalisation of Kenya's history in Yvonne Adhiambo Owuor's *Dust*, through stories of violence, corruption, alienation, and disillusionment. He examines how the novel portrays historical events as documented in journals and newspapers, and how these sources highlight the stories of people on the margins of the country, breaking the silences of history.

Burkeywo's study takes narratology and new historicism as its theoretical framework. Narratology, he says, examines the form taken by the narrative and attempts to appreciate the possible relations between its elements, such as mood, narrative instance, narrative level, and time. He, therefore, employs narratology to examine how the story in *Dust* is told and the discourse in which it is conveyed. He also uses the theory to examine the narrative voice, time and narrative perspective. He uses New Historicism to analyse the text in its historical context. He focuses on the issues of power and how power is exercised during and after the colonial period. In his analysis, Burkeywo exploits New Historicism to analyse the subjectivity of history. He explains that history is subjective because it is told from the point of view of the powerful in the state but those on the margin have their stories repressed. Fiction, according to Burkeywo, plays an important role in narrating and interpreting historical realities of a particular time to reflect the silences present in the history of Kenya and to give people on the margin a voice. He believes that fiction provides a voice to the marginalised by allowing them to

tell their own stories. This study agrees with Burkeywo that fiction provides space within which the marginalised can discuss their bias. It, however, goes ahead to examine the biases faced by these characters and the violence that is bred by marginalisation.

Tembo (2017) on the other hand, offers an analysis of how narratives represent the traumas of civil wars. His focus is on how the authors of the texts he uses in his study reimagine intra-state conflicts. He draws texts from Ethiopia, Eritrea, Somalia, South Sudan, Uganda, Sudan, and Rwanda, countries he believes have suffered the most instability and upheaval. Tembo argues that the conflict in these countries shapes the styles of writing chosen by the authors. Authors from Rwanda, Sudan and South Sudan, according to Tembo, focus on the tensions caused by ethnicity and how it haunts the characters and their compatriots. Authors from countries like Ethiopia, Eritrea, and Somalia, on the other hand, focus on the plight of the refugees. Those from Uganda focus on how characters feel trapped by domestic life. All these texts, according to Tembo, represent the trauma experienced by the people and the conflicts that affected their individual and collective identities. Each of the texts exhibits a collective trauma which is presented from a personal point of view and pays particular attention to a personal experience of trauma. The difference between Tembo (2017) and the current study is that the latter focuses on the notion of “the Other” created through marginalisation and the construction of identities.

Machogu (2019) examines six texts set in Rwanda, Burundi and South Sudan. In these texts, Machogu explores how writers narrate the processes of nation formation without further propelling the trauma. He examines the link between trauma, nation and nation formation. He also examines the relationship between the traumatic experiences of war and genocide and the writer’s imagination of nation formation. Though Machogu and I

examine texts from the same region and probably on the same subject matter, the difference lies in the objectives. While Machogu's interest is in the role of violence in nation formation and the resultant traumatic experiences, this study examines the construction process of identities intended to marginalise communities and the role played by constructed identities in producing violence.

To achieve his objectives, Machogu applies post-colonial theories, trauma theory semiotics and Benedict Anderson's ideas of nationalism and imagination of the nation. He uses the trauma theory to examine how the texts deal with post-traumatic experiences; he applies semiotics to analyse the writers' employment of language and assemblage of signs in the texts to represent events that are hard to fictionalize. He also uses Anderson's ideas of nationalism and imagination of the nation to analyse the representation of nation formation in the texts. Both Machogu's study and this study examine the traumatic effect of violence in fictional texts and its role in creating imagined communities. This study aims to analyse the process of constructing these identities as communities try to negotiate for space. For that reason, my theoretical framework varies from that of Machogu. This study employs Said's ideas on "the other" to examine how the creation of an "us" versus "them" society can not only marginalize communities but also create violence as various communities fight for dominance. The study also uses Freud's ideas of "the uncanny" to examine the traumatic effects of violence.

1.9.2. Studies on the Primary Texts

O'Okemba (2013) examines political motifs in *The Last Villains of Molo*. He follows the lives of five youngsters who are caught in the clashes that erupted at the height of presidential campaigns that threaten President Moi's stronghold on Kenyan politics.

According to O'Okemba, this violence is told alongside a love story whose main objective is to numb our senses from the violence represented in the text while laying a foundation for the resolution of conflict. O'Okemba's aim here, is to examine the role played by shared memory in the lives of these youngsters and the bond it gives them. These memories, however, also haunt them as the girl who had witnessed her father being killed is keen to avenge his death. Despite all this, the characters eventually fall in love and forgive each other. Nonetheless, the girl is now in danger because her community sees her as a traitor for forgiving her father's killers. O'Okemba views this as an opportunity for the warring communities to reconcile. He perceives this as hope for the Kenyan communities represented in the text; that their new beginning lies in its younger generation; a generation willing to let go of the existing animosity and try forgiveness and reconciliation. This study bears similarity to O'Okemba's, especially in interrogating how violence and trauma manifest in memories of the characters in the texts. The study, however, concentrates on the violence bred by constructions of marginalisation and revenge as a response to trauma.

Ndivo (2013) analyses the use of flashbacks that take readers into the past of characters through acts of memory, constantly shifting from past to present to describe what happens during the war. Flashbacks in this case are seen as a narrative technique that brings out the experiences of characters during the war. Ndivo agrees with O'Okemba that the novel revolves around the tribal clashes that rocked the country from 1992 to 1997 that the novel lays bare the effect of violence both physically and psychologically. Ndivo posits that though the reader knows that the story is fictional, it mirrors the violence in an autographic manner, thereby anchoring it in Kenya's history

According to Ndivo, the characters share a history that is scarred and have, therefore, chosen to leave their old identities behind and start afresh. The choice of their names is

symbolic of their suffering. These four young men come from different communities and serve to show that friendships can be formed from the least expected socio-cultural groupings. The old generation cannot forge unity and consequently cannot live in harmony. This new generation refers to itself as blood brothers, completely disregarding their communities of origin. Though this study examines the narrative strategies used in the novel to describe the violence and the experiences of the various characters, it also dwells on violence in itself as a subject and how it affects the characters' sense of identity. The study, while examining the traumatising effect of violence on identity, goes on to explore vengeance as a response to trauma.

Chepkwony (2017) explains that Kombani's *The Last Villains of Molo* focuses on where history intersects with reality. He argues that literature is a representation of the everyday happenings in society and thus writers are inspired to participate in the debate about the ideologies in the community. According to Chepkwony, the literary text traces the destruction of human lives and property to politics. For Chepkwony, therefore, the text is a product of the socio-historical environment and thus mirrors Kenya's history. It fictionalises Kenya's historical events, particularly violence, leading to the multiparty elections of 1992 and the violence. The author, he explains, gives the narrative life by using fictional characters that can project the real. The novel also makes use of an omniscient narrator to portray the pain experienced during the clashes and their desire for revenge, and in this way, the text creates a parallel connection between history and fiction.

Chepkwony also gives vivid descriptions of the events leading to the violence and the nature of violence itself. He, however, does not give much importance to the effect of this violence on the characters presented in the text; both to their psyche and their collective sense of identity. This study just like Chepkwony's examines the role of

violence in the making of social and political order but it also goes further to examine how this violence, in turn, produces marginalised and hybrid identities. The study also examines how characters who are caught in the crossfire cope with the traumatic situations that they find themselves caught in.

Busolo (2019) examines “the twin notion of amnesia and complicity” (2019, 31), in literary presentations of violence in East Africa. He explores how literary works create narrative structures and characters to represent the traumatic experiences of violence. Busolo views Kombani’s novel as being the first to deal with ethnic violence experienced in Kenya, especially the clashes of 1991 and those that were even more pronounced in 1997 and 2007-2008 elections. For Busolo, texts provide a forum through which literary writers provide the space within which the victims can engage with their pain.

Busolo notes that flashbacks reflect on the disorientation and the shattered the lives of the characters. He also notes that the text represents the complicated nature of victims and victimhood as the reality of the concept of victims and perpetrators narrows until it is collapsed into one. The return to the scene of trauma however is a mechanism for overcoming it. It is necessary for the mastering of pain and confronting the original site of trauma and thus the acceptance of reality, which is important for victims to heal. This study examines the traumatic effect of violence on the characters as represented in the text. However, the study goes further to examine how the identities are manipulated and the role this plays in creating the conditions of violence. It explores how the quest for dominance creates conditions for the marginalisation of the while the latter fights recognition and assertion thus resulting in violence. The study also examines revenge as a coping mechanism and a response to trauma.

Keren (2009) examines the role of the bystander in the Rwandan genocide in Courtemanche's *A Sunday at the Pool in Kigali*. He explains that though the bystanders could swear that they had nothing to do with the genocide, they abetted it since they turned their ears and eyes away from what was happening when they could have stopped it even in the planning stages. *A Sunday at the Pool in Kigali* is similar in circumstances to *The Last Villains of Molo*, in its historical background. Politics and power running back into the colonial era are the main causes of violence. Negative ethnicity also takes centre stage.

Claxton (2003) explores the themes of ignorance, hatred, sexual obsession and lust for power in *A Sunday at the Pool in Kigali*. He describes the novel as an account of government-sponsored violence and racial politics that divide and destroy the human species. The thematic concerns are important because they undergird the causes and effects of violence. This study examines the structures and narratives that are meant to marginalise groups that pit the Hutu against Tutsi communities and, in the end, result in violence.

Gibbs (2003) evaluates the role played by the author, *A Sunday at the Pool in Kigali*, in outlining the causes of war. He views violence as a product of wrong choices made by various individuals. He, however, observes that though the text describes the violence, it is less about the genocide than what the genocide destroyed, which includes the beauty of the country and the consciences of those who failed to intervene when the atrocities were committed. According to Gibbs, Courtemanche succeeds in outlining the various crimes committed by the international community, including Canada, Belgium and the UN. But to understand the story of Rwanda he says, one has to read Philip Gourevitch's *We Wish to Inform You That Tomorrow We Will Be Killed with Our Families*. Gourevitch's text being non-fiction documents the events that took place

in Rwanda but unlike *A Sunday at the Pool in Kigali*, it does not have the emotional appeal. This study did not dwell on the history of Rwanda but rather it scrutinized how identity was manipulated to favour one community over the other thus creating fertile grounds marginalisation and for violence in the texts.

Miano (2003) examines the atrocities that were committed during the genocide and their effects on the characters in *A Sunday at the Pool in Kigali*. Miano perceives the novel as a love story between Gentile and Valcourt. He also describes it as a novel about ethnic cleansing. Unlike Gibbs and Claxton, who describe the novel as a tale of genocide that was sponsored by the government and executed by the locals, Miano is of the idea that the novel also denounces not just those who perpetrated the violence but also indicts the international community and agencies that stood by and watched these atrocities being committed without lifting a finger. This study, just like Miano, examines the atrocities that are committed during the genocide and the effects they have on the characters. However, it also goes further to examine the body as a site for violence and as a witness and testimony of trauma.

According to Keren's (2009), the author of the novel is critical of the failure of the international community to intervene and stop the murders. The Rwanda genocide thus stops being just an event that took place and becomes a reality that the said international community took part in and is responsible for. Keren views the international community of bystanders as perpetrators who cannot claim not to have known what was happening because the signs were clear to the international community. A project of such a magnitude, he says, cannot be missed because it requires a lot of planning and therefore, there were a lot of signals that could have been detected. Once the genocide was underway, the local officials and the foreign officials began to weave false versions of the genocide, either to hide what was going on (in the case of the local authorities)

or to excuse their failure to act (in the case of the international community). Courtemanche, Keren explains, shows the discrepancy between the events that take place in Rwanda and what is reported to the outside world. The international community, according to Keren, is thus as guilty as the then Rwanda government. Though Keren analyses the nature of violence, his main focus is on the bystanders' role in perpetrating this violence by keeping quiet. This study dwells more on the experiences of the victims, the manifestations of violence and the traumatic effects borne by the victims as expressed in the texts under study.

Eaglestone (2008) connects the Rwandan genocide to the Holocaust. He juxtaposes what he views as complexes of colonial and postcolonial empires in the Holocaust to those presented in *A Sunday at the Pool in Kigali* using the Third Reich's theory of the Holocaust. For Eaglestone, the Holocaust and our knowledge of how traumas are represented and even the damages that they cause differ. Eaglestone's interrogates the correlation between the literature on the Holocaust and that of genocide mass murder and atrocity in Africa.

He explains that though there is no clear Holocaust theory, there is a wide range of issues that stem from this field of study, which include:

the debate over the relationship between representation and fiction...history and events of the past...over genre and form...overwriting and how we might understand the truth...over ethics and responsibility and relation of these to sexuality...over the concept of working through...over the right to right and the public sphere etc (2008, 29).

According to Eaglestone, recent years have seen an outburst in narratives about trauma and distress in Africa. In Eaglestone's view, these narratives are a result of a guilty conscience from the Western world that over the years has not been keen on the

happenings in Africa. African traumatic literature, he says, seems to be reproducing myths and various complexities ranging from the civil war to military coups to genocide. These narratives depict Africa solely as a place of suffering. He cites Binyavanga Wainaina (2006) who asserts that if one wants to write about Africa, one has to describe people who are starving, warring and emigrating. Africa is thus a continent that is supposed to be pitied or dominated.

For Eaglestone, the dedication of the text to Gentile illustrates the violence of the genocide. He makes a distinction between holocaust testimonies, which are a construction of memory and thus are subjective and holocaust fiction. Testimonies he says often break from the narrative to discuss the wider historical events while the text has no support from the outside. According to Eaglestone, therefore, *A Sunday in the Pool in Kigali* is not a holocaust testimony since it is more focused on the experiences of Valcourt, the protagonist, rather than the events in Rwanda during the genocide. The aim of the text according to Eaglestone is not to reach the West as a cry for help but to describe Rwanda's state before and during the genocide. This study not only interrogates the state of Rwandan politics presented in the text before and during the genocide but also examines the violence experienced by various characters. The interest of the study lies in the construction of identities long before the genocide which then results in violence. It then goes ahead to analyse the physical and psychological scars witnessed and testified to by the body as a result of the marginalisation and consequential violence.

Njeru (2014) takes a thematic approach to the analysis of *Shreds of Tenderness*. According to Njeru (2014), the play is a realistic representation of the present-day African state. It describes how power has been used by the authority to force submission and conformity. The play for Njeru is about the plight of refugees and the lack of

acceptance while they are on the run and when they come back to their home country. It describes a tyrannical regime and the many atrocities that it commits against its people resulting in a war of liberation. The people who stay behind according to Njeru suffer so much but their pain does not match that experienced by those who go into exile. The study analyses the experiences of the refugees both in exile and back home when they return. It then goes further to examine the conditions that favour the creation of these refugees and the trauma experienced as a result.

Cummins (2018) describes Gael Faye's *Small Country* as the memories of the Rwandan civil war brought to life by an eleven-year-old. For Cummins, Gabriel narrates the escalation of the feud between the Tutsis and the Hutus after the assassination of the Rwandan president. Narrating this story is, however, a challenge for Gabriel because of his age and thus his inability to provide a political context. This problem according to Cummins is mitigated by Faye's description of Gabby's father's explanations and Gabriel's habit of eavesdropping which allows the text to discuss violence and how it begins. Cummins also examines the child narrator's point of view in the description of the events leading to the genocide and the genocide itself. Cummins's analysis of the text puts a lot of weight on the narrative point of view. He examines the effectiveness of the child narrator in describing the gruesome events created by violence. This study, unlike Cummins', does not focus on the point of view but rather it is concerned with the conditions that lead to the violence and the effect of this violence on the protagonist and indeed the entire community presented in the text.

Roese (2018) describes *Small Country* as a text that holds a mirror to the childhood of Faye, the author. It is Roese's opinion that the early dialogue between the protagonist, Gabby and his father is formative in understanding the regular clashing. As he ages and the violence continues breaking his family apart, he fails to understand how the

difference in the shapes of the noses could cause so much hatred and thus cause ethnic attacks. He fails to understand that pitting the Hutu and Tutsi against each other causes a war that extends across the border of Bujumbura where the protagonist and his family live. The Hutu and Tutsi tension is not separate from growing up, therefore as Rwanda and Burundi rub against each other, so does Gaby's childhood against adulthood. The current study looked at how violence affects the identity of the victims. This study aimed to examine how identity is constructed to marginalise groups. It examined how marginalisation leads to and how violence breaks the child protective frames that are erected by adults to shield children from violence.

Shaji (2021) describes *Afterlives* as a story that intertwines the lives of the natives and the German settlers in German-occupied Africa. In Shaji's view, the text illustrates the characters' lives while pinning them to the historical happenings in their country. The novel brings out the postcolonial identity of people who are from a territory that is occupied by the Germans. It is a story, of people who spoke German but never really belonged, fought for the Germans and even at times subscribed to their beliefs. The current study examined language as a tool that is used by the Germans to marginalise the natives. For Mbue (2022) *Afterlives* depicts the white man's racism. The white man, according to Mbue, feels that the only way to rule Africans is by striking terror in them. The Germans recruited Africans either willingly or through coercion and sent them to the villages to torture people who dared question the Germans' rule. In addition, these Askaris fight for their white masters with so much zeal killing and starving thousands of their own people. Mengiste (2020) views *Afterlives* as an account of the horrifying consequences of the German rule in Tanganyika. He describes the text as a story of those who are long forgotten but who have refused to be erased from history. These studies mostly deal with the historical presentations depicted in the text. The present

study interrogates the process of othering that was employed by the Germans to alienate the natives from their resources while creating in them a new mindset; that of a backward populace that would do better being ruled than set free to their autonomy. It examines the preconceived stereotypes of the settler against the natives and how this greatly informs their interaction with them.

Pompom (2021) describes *Afterlives* as a story about young soldiers and their families. A story that follows their lives from the time before the war, during the war as the native soldiers fight native civilians and the difficulties they face while trying to fit into their communities. In Pompom's view, these characters are caught between the horrors of colonisation and their suffering as they try to liberate themselves from the merciless grip of the colonial powers. This current study examines the otherness of the African Askaris both in the camp while fighting for the Germans and back at home after the war as they try to fit in with the same people they fought against.

War Child by Emmanuel Jal is a memoir that is set in Sudan during the civil war between the Christian and Arab Sudanese. According to French (2009), the story is a "declarative statement about the human condition of cruelty and wretchedness that afflicts the lives of countless young people in different African lands, people whose stories we are unaccustomed to hearing" (2009, 1) The memoir, from French's point of view, vividly describes the ethnic differences between the "pure Africans and the Arab Africans" (1). It presents the dependence of refugees on the help of Western humanitarian workers whose impact in the region is thought of as philanthropic but in reality, they collude with the perpetrators of violence. French here focuses on the conflict itself, the parameters leading up to the civil war and the role of the international community in this war. This current study interrogates the differences in the identities of the so-called pure Africans and Arab Africans and their fight for dominance over

each other. It examines the process of marginalisation of the groups and the subsequent eruption of violent conditions as the groups attempt to jostle for space. The study also assesses the role of the child narrator who has been exposed to this violence, in these violent experiences.

Tembo (2017) believes that *War Child* mimics the ethnic tensions in Sudan and how both the government and the rebel forces trade blame and resentment. In Tembo's view, it is this tension and hatred that propels the narrative structure of Jal's memoir. It also informs his drive to take revenge on the Arabs. *War Child*, thus, offers a vivid description of how ethnicity and religion collude to divide a nation. The text, Tembo explains, follows the story of a young soldier who is caught between home and loss of home. It is these experiences of the young soldier that this current interrogates. It examines the feeling of in-betweenness of the victim turned perpetrator and how it affects the narrator. The study further assesses the juxtapositions of religion and ethnicity that contribute to marginalisation. The current study examines the liminality of the child soldier and the memoir. It views the child soldier as residing in an in-between space between childhood and adulthood and is both victim and perpetrator and the memoir.

Mwaifuge (2014) studies the use of memory in *Kinjeketile*. He explores how the play uses the memory of Tanganyika's tragic yet heroic event to reconstruct the past. Mwaifuge feels that there is a direct connection between current-day Tanzania's struggle with imperialism and neo-colonialism and the memory of the liberation struggle. The text then becomes the site for remembering the past struggle between the Tanganyikans and the Germans while at the same time reflecting on their present and future. The memories recast the violence, fear and terror experienced during the struggle for liberation, the hostilities of colonial encounters, the questions of identity

and the traumatic connotations of these experiences. Here, Mwaifuge analyses the use of memory in reconstructing the past. This study, however, dwells on the presentations of forms of marginalisation as a result of colonisation.

Affiah and Eni (2018) explore “the symbiotic relationship between literature and revolution focusing on the dramatic gene” (57). They observe that the oppressor will not stop oppressing the oppressed unless the oppressed revolt. *Kinjeketile* is thus a “dramatic re-presentation” (61) of the struggles of what is now Tanzania against the brutal German coloniser. Affiah and Eni tease out Hussein’s presentation of the role of revolutionary drama in the restoration of dignity that the people have been denied. This current study, though similar to Affiah and Eni’s study in its examination of the natives’ struggle for liberation from German oppression, goes further to analyse violence as a tool for the marginalisation of the native and the body as the site for this marginalisation.

Oluruntoba-Oju (2012) conducts a comparative analysis of Ngugi wa Thiong’o and Ebrahim Hussein’s plays. The focus is on the

Exploitation of source materials and deployment of the African aesthetic matrix in their proposition of revolutionary craftsmanship of these playwrights yields two cognate models of revolutionary drama (205).

OLuruntoba-Oju asserts that the two authors merge the facts as presented in history and the Africans’ belief in their revolutionary writing, especially in the case of *Kinjeketile*. Hussein here, in Oju’s opinion, blends history and myth to illustrate how myths function when juxtaposed with reality. This current study examines the circumstances leading to the revolution and the effects of the violence that accompanies it on those affected.

It examines violence as a tool that the coloniser uses to marginalise the natives and violence as a response to this subjugation.

1.10. Theoretical Framework

The study took an eclectic theoretical approach in the analysis of the texts; post-colonial and psychoanalytic theories. It utilises Edward Said's post-colonial theory, particularly his concept of "the Other" as outlined in *Orientalism* (1978), to analyse how stereotypes, half-truths, and the desire for dominance contribute to the creation of marginalised identities. The theory provides tools to critique the marginalisation, stereotypes, mimicry, hybridity, othering and exclusion of specific identities, especially in contexts shaped by colonial and neocolonial structures. Additionally, it drew upon psychoanalytical theories as they offer explanations to the trauma resulting from marginalisation and violence. Specifically, the study used Sigmund Freud's psychoanalysis and his ideas about the *Uncanny* (1919) to explore how trauma influences the cognitive and psychomotor abilities of victims. The framework of the *Uncanny* was employed to describe the manifestations of trauma, to categorise the various types, and to interrogate their effects on the victims. The study also relied on other trauma and feminist theories, which may not have been core in the study but find their expression in the psychoanalytic bend of trauma theories.

1.10.1. Edward Said and the Representation of the 'Other'

The study employed *Orientalism* to explore the techniques of othering in the text, including stereotyping and violence. The study, here, though it borrows Said's concept of the West creating the 'other' as a strategy to subordinate the East, applies this concept to the colonial and post-colonial African situation. As such, the study assessed how the colonial master and the post-colonial African elite assert their dominance over the

minority and 'subordinate' groups through stereotyping and the use of violence as tools for subjugation.

Said (1978) defines *Orientalism* as "a way of coming to terms with the Orient that is based on the Orient's special place in European Western experience" (1). The Orient, which in Said's case was the East, was Europe's source of riches and power through colonisation. To dominate the East, the West had to restructure the East through representations and depictions that would put Europeans in a position of power over what was otherwise a "dangerous space beyond familiar boundaries" (54). Said observes that the relationship between the Occident (the West) and the Orient (the East) was that of "power, of domination and varying degrees of a complex hegemony" (5). The West created a consistent set of ideas that portrayed Europeans as superior and the Orient as backwards. For the West, the Oriental could not speak, or represent its emotions or history, but it (the West) could, because, though they spoke different languages, they knew the Oriental, they understood him. They could speak of his beliefs and cultures. The West thus created a "body of theory and practice" (6), which has been reproduced and believed to be true for many generations.

Said, nonetheless, cautions that it would be wrong to assume that the structure of Orientalism was nothing more than myths and lies. He asserts that it contains some truths that cannot be easily dismissed. The constructions are not far from realities but rather a manipulated representation of the other (the Orient) "through an accepted grid for filtering through the Orient into Western consciousness" (6). They created the notion of 'us' (the Europeans) against 'them' (the non-Europeans) while always maintaining the upper hand against the Orientals. Many other scholars have, over the years, described this creation of "us" versus "them" in various ways. (Moosavinia et al. 2011, 105), term it as the process of "othering". Moosavinia et. al. describe this as a

process in which the colonisers treat the colonised as not fully human and, as a result, they dehumanise the natives. Othering “codifies and fixes the self [occident/west] as true, truly and the other [orient] as other than human” (105). The West thus embodies proper humans and the colonised savages. Orientalism in this sense must create the “Other”, which it can use to strengthen its identity and superiority. This process is what Staszak (2008) refers to as the “creation of otherness” (p. 1). The process, for Staszak, involves classifying individuals as “them” and “us”. Otherness for Onbelet (2010) is defined as “anyone or anything that is not me” (2). It is defined by outward differences like gender, race and ethnicity. The in-group, which in this sense is the Occident, creates the “Other”, and sets them apart to give themselves an identity. Stereotypes that are largely stigmatised help in building up the Occident’s identity while degrading the Orient.

This study examines the process of “othering” and “creating otherness” through stereotypes in the characterisation and plot structures of the selected texts. The study utilises narrative time and context to interrogate violence associated with colonial history that encouraged violence, the fight for geographical boundaries in the post-colonial period and ethnic domination during the election period. It is important to note here that the study does not engage in the literal study of the East (India) versus the West (Europe) as is analysed by Said, but rather it borrows the concept of marginalisation through clichés and stereotypes in the context of East Africa as presented in the text under study. The study analyses the fictional presentation of ways such stereotypes and half-truths contribute to the “othering” of identities that eventually lead to violent eruptions as one group tries to maintain its dominance while the other tries to liberate itself from oppression. The study also investigates a similar binary

opposition to that of the “Occident” and the “Orient” because just like Said, it advances that one cannot exist without the other.

The “Other” is always defined in relation to the “self”. Husserl (1931) describes the other as that which is the opposite of ‘the self’ (“us”). The Other can be defined as that which is not “us”, which is mystic, distant; that which is different from “us”. In other words, it is that which is unfamiliar. The essence of the Other as a necessary existence outside the self is based on biological, geographical, and religious factors. However, it is the imposition of inferiority on the Other that is the basis of biases. The imposition of “otherness” in Husserl’s opinion, alienates “the other” thus removing them from the centre of society and placing them at the periphery. While examining the case of women, Beauvoir (1949) agrees with Husserl that otherness is created through the construction of myths and it is not based on facts to characterise others. In Beauvoir’s opinion, men construct the concept of women from their own experience and not from the reality of women. As a result, women are oppressed by being labelled the other and being described exclusively in opposition to men. Man, therefore, becomes the subject “the self” and woman becomes the object; “the other”. Beauvoir feels that it is only natural to understand oneself in opposition to others, but the socio-cultural processes are flawed. Levinas (1961) contends that the self and the other have an asymmetrical relationship in which the self is responsible for the other. The self, therefore, surrenders itself without expecting anything in return out of benevolence and without any self-interest. He believes that the self-acts for and on behalf of the other, out of responsibility, even when the other obstructs it. This was a justification of colonization as a necessary civilization of the uncivilized. These definitions of the other, based on race, gender, language and geography, among others, illustrate the various strategies

that are utilized by the dominant groups to subjugate the subordinate groups in order to marginalize them.

The other can also be created through knowledge. Othering is connected with knowledge and power (Foucault, 1967). Foucault posits that othering involves studying the weakness of the other to make 'the self' look stronger and thus maintain power. In Said's view, for the West to dominate the East, the former had first to study the latter to understand their culture and their history. To have power over the Orient, they had to know about them. Moosavina et al (2011) explains that the relationship between power and knowledge. They argue that through knowledge, the European administrators were able to impose colonial domination. To have knowledge is to have power, or as Said puts it "Knowledge of races or Orientals is what makes their management easy and profitable: knowledge gives power, more power requires more knowledge" (Said, 1978, 36). For this reason, knowledge is synonymous with control. To have much knowledge of a thing is to dominate and have authority over it (the orient). This knowledge is thus more often subjective since the intention is to know only what can be useful to the self. It also involves constructing stereotypes that depict the other's cultures and beliefs as inferior, thus putting the self in a superior position. It is informed by earlier misconceptions about the 'Other' and in essence, justifies the self's domination. Said criticized the way the Occident views the Orient by her culturally determined, biased limited historical perspectives. (Moosavinia et al, 2011)

Said goes on to explain that anyone who speaks against the authority is an "agitator", a "troublemaker" (37) who raises difficulties instead of being a good native and overlooking the difficulties of foreign domination. The West view themselves as selfless administrators who govern even when there is no gratitude. Because the West knows the Oriental; how they feel, their history and their expectations, it can speak for

the Orient because it knows what is good for them. According to Onbelet (2015), otherness is associated with predominantly marginalised people who, by their difference from the dominant group, are robbed of their voice, their religious beliefs and the political world. Such people, thus cannot speak without the permission of the dominant group, but instead have to submit to the descriptions assigned to them by the dominant group. Spivak (2010), explains that the West saw the Subaltern as not being in a position to speak for themselves because they were divided by gender, class, region and religion. The subaltern for Spivak belongs to a Third World country. These divisions cannot allow them to stand up in unity and speak for themselves, and for this reason, the West has to speak for them. In this sense, they are robbed of their voice, identity, sense of self and value.

East Africa has, over the years, experienced a wave of violent eruptions as a result of decisions made by colonial power and the political class. The oriental, according to Said, is considered “irrational”, “childlike” and “gullible”. This notion was used by the West to justify colonialism, and it was believed that what gave the oriental its intelligibility and identity was not their efforts but rather a “whole series of knowledgeable manipulations by the West” (40). The coming of the West to East Africa was a calculated move that saw them classify East Africa as barbaric, their farming methods as archaic and their governance as non-existent. They, therefore, justified their colonisation as a civilisation and saw it as liberating the East Africans from their backward ways. This was done by stereotyping every belief and practice of the East Africans as backwards. This same stereotyping is also utilised in post-independent East Africa by dominant groups to marginalise groups and dominate them.

In Uganda, the era of Idi Amin, saw Ugandans go through violence as a result of decisions made by their leader. In Kenya, the Moi era was one of the most violent

regimes (Rutten & Owuor, 2009, Karinya, 2009). The desire to stay in power (dominate) and amass as much wealth as possible often resulted in the dispossession, murder and detention of political activists who dared speak back. Most of the violence experienced in East Africa is often politically motivated and fuelled by the political elite mobilising “their” people against the “other” ethnicities for their gain. The desire by the “out-groups” (the Other) to escape the oppression and cease being “others” is in part the cause of this violence. This is very similar to what happens in Orientalism. The study uses *Orientalism* to examine the methods that the dominant groups in post-colonial East Africa use to subjugate the subordinate groups. According to Staszak (2008), the “other” succeeds in escaping from oppression by conferring upon themselves a “positive autonomous identity” (2). This study thus extrapolates Said’s notion of *Orientalism* to examine the colonial political, social and economic factors that enable domination and “othering” through narration and characterisation and in the process create a cycle of violence. Staszak (2008), rightly points out that otherness and identity are “inseparable parts of the same coin” (2). This study explores how “othering” and “creation of otherness” affect identity.

This study analyses the use of narrative and narration in processing the biases associated with the ‘other’ and turning the gaze towards the reader. Onbelet (2010) contends that the narrative uses intimate language to draw us nearer to the dialogue. The telling of stories, Onbelet continues to say, creates space for imagining, and recognizing both the self and the other. It is also a medium through which those who have been marginalised can give meaning to the events of their life through the use of point of view. Narrative is essential to understanding “others” and “otherness”. This study assesses the function of narrative in reflecting on the biases of “othering” and its effect on the marginalised.

The marginalised use violence to negotiate their space while the dominant use violence to assert their dominance.

1.10.2. Sigmund Freud on *The Uncanny*

Sigmund Freud's Psychoanalysis theory of trauma in '*The Uncanny*' is important in understanding the manifestations and causes of trauma. Freud describes *the uncanny* as being related to something frightening, "what arouses dread and horror" (1919, 1). He equates the uncanny to the German word *unheimlich* which means 'unhomely'. According to Freud, people hear or feel something uncanny before they can experience it. They feel this by awakening the possibility of experiencing it frighteningly. The uncanny is frightening not because it is unfamiliar but because the familiar appears in a terrorising way. In this case, not everything unfamiliar is uncanny. He cites Jentsch who ascribes the feeling of uncanniness to the intellectual uncertainty of not knowing. Freud uses Jentsch's story of the Sandman to further define the uncanny. Jentsch's story is important to this study as it demonstrates how what once was known, reasonable and at times even comforting can easily turn into horror. Freud describes a student, Nathaniel's fear of the Sandman, a mystic character in his mother's story. A man, his maid also described as a wicked man who comes when children cannot sleep, throws sand in their eyes, takes their eyes and feeds them to his children. The story of the sandman sets the stage for fear in Nathaniel and unable to put a face to the person in the story, he identifies this man with another person, a lawyer Coppelius who often comes to visit his father, who conducts experiments with him and who is present during the explosion that kills his father and who coincidentally disappears after the explosion. With the disappearance of the lawyer, Nathaniel finds another Sandman in the optician, Coppola who offers him goggles, which he uses to see Olympia a doll made by the

professor and the optician. The two masters quarrel and they tear the doll apart. Coppola takes the eyeless doll, and the professor takes the eyes and throws them at Nathaniel. This triggers an attack of madness as the recollection of his father's death is mingled with his new experience. In his madness, he tries to strangle the Professor. Later after Nathaniel recovers, he is walking in town with Clara his betrothed, whom he has now reconciled with, Clara suggests that they climb the high tower of Town Hall. At the top something catches Clara's attention, Nathaniel looks down through Coppola's spy glasses and falls into a new attack of madness. Through the spy glasses, he sees the lawyer who has just returned and is thrown into another fit of madness. For Freud, it is the approach with which Nathaniel sees the lawyer, through the glasses that triggers his madness. It is the feeling of the uncanny that is directly attached to the figure of the Sandman. First the fear of loss and then the fact that the Sandman seems to disturb love. This narrative by Freud seeks to explain how traumatic experiences though external are quickly incorporated into the mind. Bloom (1999) explains that it is not the trauma itself that does the damage, but rather how the individual's mind and body react to the traumatic experience. A traumatic experience, in Bloom's view, affects the entire person including how we think. Bloom points out that humans are equipped to protect themselves so when in danger they are basically not the same people they are when calm. Even a minor threat triggers a sequence of 'physical, emotional and cognitive responses' (Bloom 1999, 8).

Freud explains that the feeling of something uncanny is directly attached to the figure of the sandman. The idea of being robbed of his eyes for Nathaniel and that of losing the things and the people he loves; his father, Olympia, his betrothed and his best friend, magnifies this feeling. The uncanny thus marks the return of something familiar in the sense of our psychic economy. The uncanny is the return of something in the

psychosexual history that had been forgotten. In this case, Nathaniel's problem emerges because he has piled up too much material of the same kind. This brings about the phenomenon of the "*double*". The double, Freud asserts, has to do with characters who are considered identical because they look alike and their relation is made more prominent by mental processes leaping from one character to the other so that with time, they look the same and one cannot differentiate one from the other. This is what Julia Kristeva refers to as the "*abject*". The "abject", Kristeva explains, is a human reaction to a threatened breaking down in meaning resulting from the loss of the distinction between the subject and the object or between the self and the other. Of course, according to Kristeva, the abject is different from uncanniness in the sense that, the abject is elaborated through the failure to recognise its kin. Freud views the double as being marked by the fact that the subject identifies himself with someone else so that it is no longer clear which his self is. There is, therefore, the doubling, dividing and interchanging of the self and then there is the recurring of the same thing, the repetition of that comes or even the names. The double, for Freud, was first an insurance against extinction in death. The double does not, however, help in understanding the feeling of the uncanny that permeates our knowledge of pathological mental processes. The involuntary repetition that surrounds what would otherwise be innocent is what makes the experience uncanny. This is what he terms as the "*compulsion to repeat*" which he describes as a structure of the unconscious that overrules the pleasure principle making some aspects of the mind scary. It is then whatever reminds us of the inner compulsion to repeat that is perceived as uncanny.

Then there is the animistic conception of the universe which Freud describes as the omnipotence of thought. This is the power of the psyche that sees itself as stronger than reality and believes in magical powers. The mind or mental processes create magical

beings including ghosts and spirits. The uncanny arises when infantile complexes that have been repressed are revived by some impression or when primitive beliefs that had been surmounted are confirmed. The *uncanny*, Freud asserts, is often depicted in literature and fiction. The contrast between the repressed and what has been surmounted cannot be viewed as uncanny in fiction without some kind of modification especially in fantasy because in fairy tales, the real world is left behind from the start and the animistic system of beliefs is adopted. What cannot happen in real life cannot therefore be termed as uncanny. Some creative writers can also choose a setting which is less imaginary and when the writer accepts all conditions operating to produce uncanny feelings in real life and has everything in the story that would have an uncanny effect in reality.

This study examines trauma as resulting in violence. It explores the various ways in which trauma manifests itself in the victims and how the said victims are affected by this trauma. Though the study utilises the concept for its form and content, it applies the theory to the context of the 20th and 21st-century wars as presented in the texts under study. The study uses the Freud's *Uncanny* to examine, how identity that was once a source of pride can turn dreadful because of the stereotypical connotations that are attached to it over time. The study explores violence as an agent of marginalisation and as a response to marginalisation and how this same violence later affects both the victims and perpetrators, resulting in traumatisation. To this end, the study examines the "latent" effect as a distortion of reality and as cause of uncertainty. The study also interrogates the ability of trauma to break the barriers of the conscious and the subconscious not only creating horror but that trauma not only appears in dreams. Trauma creates the feeling of helplessness which takes over whether the victims are asleep or awake.

1.11. Research Methodology

This study is qualitative, library-based research. The study is based on a close textual analysis of seven texts from East Africa namely: Ebrahim Hussein's *Kinjeketile* (1969), Abdulrazak Gurnah's *Afterlives* (2020), Emmanuel Jal's *War Child* (2009), Kinyanjui Kombani's *The Last Villains of Molo* (2004), Gil Courtemanche's *A Sunday at the Pool in Kigali* (2000) and Gael Faye's *Small Country* (2016) and John Ruganda's *Shreds of Tenderness* (2001). These texts are set in Kenya, Tanzania, South Sudan, Rwanda, Burundi and Uganda.

The texts were purposively selected based on their representation of marginalisation, violence and trauma across the East Africa region. A close reading of the texts was conducted to obtain information and make an analytical assessment of their subjects. The aim was to examine marginalisation as a cause of violence that results in trauma. The study examined the narrative techniques employed by the authors in the texts to present marginalisation, violence and trauma. The study conducted a descriptive textual analysis, for thematic analysis to wean out the sub-texts, symbolisms, assumptions and strategies that the authors of these texts use to present the various modes of marginalisation, and the resultant violence and trauma.

Specifically, in the primary texts, the study examined the various forms of marginalisation that characters are subjected to and the processes through which this marginalisation is carried out. Secondary texts on violence, memory, war, trauma, the colonial and post-colonial history of East Africa, identity and marginality were read and examined to establish the causes and the nature of this violence, the experiences of the different characters, and finally to determine the effect of this violence on the characters' sense of identity.

The study also conducts a comparative analysis of the seven texts to examine their authors' use of the narrative to uncover ways in which both the characters in the texts and the readers can cope with or heal from the trauma they present. To this effect, the study assesses the coping mechanisms, therapeutic strategies and healing processes presented by the authors of the texts. The study also examines the role of the narrative in the activation of individual and collective memory which is essential in the healing process.

CHAPTER TWO

MARGINALISING THE 'OTHER' THROUGH LANGUAGE AND VIOLENCE

2.1 Introduction

Marginalising the “Other” involves fostering ideas of inferiority and subordination about groups to relegate them to an insignificant position and make the group feel powerless and peripheral. The “Other” is essentially that which is distant and different from the core. The imposition of otherness alienates “the Other”, thus removing them from the centre of society. Marginalisation can stem from depriving the subordinated group of social, economic resources, political, leadership and education opportunities. For marginalisation to happen, the dominant group, made so by its vast numbers, racial hierarchy or economic power, reinforces its power by oppressing the “Other”. This chapter focuses on marginalisation through language and violence in two texts: Abdulrazak Gurnah’s *Afterlives* and Ebrahim Hussein’s *Kinjeketile*. It elaborates on how language and violence are used by colonial masters to keep the natives subjugated. The two texts portray instances where characters have been marginalised because of their racial, social and political circumstances. In *Afterlives*, the natives are marginalised using language both through the performance of language as a tool for subjugation and by assigning inferiority to the native’s language (Kiswahili) and hence the native. *Kinjeketile*, on the other hand, presents situations in which violence is used as an agent of marginalisation, through the use of brutal force, corporal punishment and torture.

2.2. Marginalisation through and with Language in *Afterlives*

Afterlives is set in Tanganyika (present-day Tanzania) against the backdrop of German colonialism in Deutsch-Ostafrika and specifically in the period leading up to and during the First World War. The novel describes how the Germans ruled with a clenched fist, utilising forced labour and violence to subdue the natives. It recounts colonial resistance, oppression, genocide, and the horrifying effects of rebellion and reprisals through which the rebellion was crushed. The novel follows the story of two young men, Hamza and Ilyas, both of whom have run away from the dehumanising experiences of poverty and starvation to join the Schutztruppe Askaris in the hope that their situations will change for the better. Hamza quickly realises this is a mistake from the humiliating experiences that he and his troops have to endure at the hands of the German officers; the dehumanising conditions of living in the *boma*, the violence and the insults. Through Hamza, the novel takes its readers through the brutalities that are committed on the *Askaris* by the German officers they work for, who view them as nothing but instruments of use to do their bidding. Through Ilyas, Gurnah describes the deep feeling of longing to belong with the elite class. Ilyas believes that the Germans are “clever” (41), “honourable and civilised” (42) and thus he would do anything to feel close to their power. It is this feeling of inferiority that has been sowed in the Schutztruppe *askaris* that drives them to murder their people to earn the respect of the German officers.

Language can become an agent of marginalisation either through “language oppression” (Roche 2019) or “language-based marginalisation” (Ndhlovu 2018). Park (2017) views language as a meaning-making tool that is important in “negotiating human relationships and building identity and affiliations”. Some languages, however, especially those belonging to minority groups, are often subjected to “discriminatory

social, political and economic practices” (Mohanty 2010, 132), which then results in the marginalisation of the language. In Mohanty’s view, language can be subjected to inequality and discrimination by creating a hierarchy between languages. Roche (2019) terms this kind of marginalisation “language oppression” (488), which he defines as the “enforcement of language loss by physical, mental, social, political and spiritual coercion” (488). For Roche, the discrimination of a particular language may result in the erasure of the said language. (Harrison 2013) calls this “linguistic genocide” or “linguicide”, where languages vanish as a result of marginalisation. Other types of marginalisation are placed on a language, not to eliminate the language but to discriminate against the speakers of the said language. This form of marginalisation is referred to as “language-based marginalisation” (Roche 2019, Ndhlovu, 2018). This kind of marginalisation is the focus of this section of the study.

According to Ndlovu (2018), language-based marginalisation can occur in “a situation in which some members of society are individually or collectively discriminated against or oppressed based on the language they speak” (119). Ndhlovu observes that if a particular language is not “recognised within the space accorded to other languages within the same linguistic ecology, it is marginalised” (119). Ndhlovu examines *“Everyday forms of language-based marginalisation in Zimbabwe”*, particularly the privileging of the Shona and Ndebele languages, which have been given national status while other languages have been marginalised. Ndhlovu observes that negative perceptions and stereotypes about the speakers of the marginalised languages have been constructed by the speakers of the dominant ethnolinguistic groups. Therefore, the communicative and intelligence level of the speakers of these languages determines the privileges the language enjoys. This study agrees with Ndhlovu, that if the language

spoken by a group of people is viewed as subordinate, then the speakers of that language assume a subordinate position.

The marginalisation of the Kiswahili language is a process that the German coloniser uses to “Other” the native in *Afterlives*. Language is an important marker of identity, and as Staszak, (2009), rightly points out, otherness and identity are “inseparable parts of the same coin” (2). In marginalising Kiswahili, therefore, the Germans manage to create a new identity for the native; that of inferiority. The process of othering is anchored in identity formation. It can be done through the highlighting of the hierarchical social differences as De Beauvoir observes in her analysis of gender differences in *The Second Sex* (De Beauvoir 1997). De Beauvoir explores how men are viewed as the norm and women as “the other or it can be done through the construction of the Orient as the “Other” (Said 1978). The depiction of the Orient as savage and backwards, according to Said, places the Occident in a superior position, thus making them powerful. Spivak (1985) advances the language of silencing as an essential to subordination. The creation of the stereotype that the “Subaltern” cannot speak for themselves because of their division offers the West authority to speak on the subaltern’s behalf. The first act of marginalisation by the Germans is to place the African under their servitude regardless of their resistance:

The empire had to make Africans the clenched fist of the German power in order that they should learn to bear the yoke of their servitude compliantly. With each passing day, German power was pushing that yoke firmly on the necks of its reluctant subjects. (16)

The Germans are presented as superior through religion, science and the grandiosity of their projects, while the natives are grouped as the “Other” who are inferior in culture,

religion, and intellect. The native is awed by the power that is displayed by the settler and in the process subordinated and marginalised.

The native's language is termed as "childish" (86) and by so doing, the language is stripped of the privileges accorded to the German language thus marginalising it. Said (1978) points out that part of othering is stereotyping. In Said's view, the West considered the Orient as "irrational", "childlike", and "gullible", thus justifying their need to marginalise and dominate the East. By assigning inferiority to Kiswahili, the settler also subordinates the speakers of this language and, in the process, justifies the need to dominate them. While speaking to Hamza, the German Oberleutnant is furious that Hamza replies to him in Kiswahili: "I teach you how to speak and read German so you can understand Schiller and you answer me in that childish language" (86). The Germans, in *Afterlives*, view Schiller as possessing a superior language, while Kiswahili is perceived as inferior and childish.

In Ndhlovu's view, a language without a high status is perceived as belonging to the "backwards and uncivilised, and the uneducated" (121). The native is then marginalised based on the language that he speaks. For the Oberleutnant, a language so inferior and not fully developed should not be used to address a man of his stature: a man of powerful culture, race, and language. "I suppose you could ask me the same question. What is a man from the lovely town of Marbach doing here in this shithole?" (85). The Oberleutnant here positions himself as just not being superior because of his language but also because of where he comes from. As such, he feels he should command more respect than what the native (Hamza) deserves. The pastor also thinks that the language is too sophisticated and should not be taught to natives, "Yes, the Oberleutnant left a book for you ... I thought the gift was too valuable for a mere native" (128). For the pastor, understanding the language and speaking Schiller is one thing, possessing a

book written in the language is a different thing altogether that should not be entrusted to people of a low stature, such as the natives.

There is also the use of derogatory and demeaning vocabulary while addressing. The Oberleutnant calls Hamza a “slow-witted baboon”. Other words like ‘swine’ (p55, p58), and “shenzi” (88) have been used to refer to the natives. The speakers of perceived inferior languages, according to Ndhlovu, are labelled using derogatory terminology that caricatures them as people whose linguistic and cultural identities are incoherent, substandard, inferior and backwards. The speakers of this marginalised language are discriminated against based on their perceived illiteracy. Hama (2015) contends that there is a relationship between language and power. He insists that language can be used to produce and maintain power by utilising certain linguistic features, vocabulary, grammar, types of speech acts and non-linguistic features as a tool of domination. In essence, language can be performed. The insults are the Germans’ way of performing language to assert their superiority. The insults are a kind of speech act. By insulting Hamza, the Oberleutnant is using language to instil inferiority. From then on, Hamza has feelings of negative self-consciousness and low self-esteem. To protect himself from this humiliation, he develops coping mechanisms to avoid more insults. “Hamza learned to look away when he sensed this mood and, if he could, kept his distance.” (84). The native lives in constant fear and is on high alert because he cannot be sure when insults or violence could be used on him. The Oberleutnant can act out his identity the way he sees fit because he can and because he has the power to do so, but Hamza cannot. Hamza’s actions and mannerisms are, therefore, determined by German officers’ moods and wants. Hamza’s imposed inferiority is quite evident:

Hamza dreaded these dark moments when he was vulnerable to any humiliation the officer wished to afflict on him. He had his ways of doing this, which involved a scornful stare, and sometimes the crash of something against a desk followed by a stream of abuse during which Hamza stood quite still while the officer raged and then gave an abrupt order for him to get out. He did his best to keep away when he suspected the onset of his mood, but this too could be viewed as a provocation if the officer called for him and he was not there or took too long in coming. (84-85)

The native is also viewed as a “savage”, who should be reminded and treated so. The word savage has been used severally in *Afterlives*: “that’s the only way savage people can be made to understand order and obedience” (42), “you savage dogs” (64), “you have no civilisation, that is why you are savage” (64), “we are dealing with backward savage people” (85), “to him, they were savages” (93). The word “savage” is often used to signify bestial qualities that are not only untamed but also wild, barbaric and violent. The use of the word in reference to the Africans in the novel, therefore, equates them native to beasts. Hadley (2013) argues that every time a person speaks, they are signalling their relation to discourse. In my opinion, the German is not just signalling his discourse but also his place and status in relation to that of the native. The word “savage” becomes very important in differentiating the settler from the native and the status that each of them holds.

The term “savage” in literary studies has often been used to refer to the literature of the indigenous people, be it among Native Americans or Native Indians. The use of the term in the text, however, does not just signify the indigenous people of Tanganyika, but rather it is used as a signification of status. Edward Said points out that the West has to become the embodiment of power while the native is viewed and treated as the savage. The centre of power can thus describe what the “self” is and what the “other” is. However, often the other is constructed in reductionist ways that “affirm the

legitimacy and the superiority of the powerful and condition identity formation among the subordinate” (Jensen 2011, 65). By constantly using insulting language against the native, the settler is performing power and superiority over the native and thus othering him.

Language here is deployed and performed to establish a hierarchical relationship. Hamza learns to observe the Oberleutnant and how to adapt his behaviour to match his moods. So, he endures whatever the German officer does to him without question and without openly acknowledging what he feels deep inside. Hamza here occupies the place of the “Subaltern” who inherently cannot speak for himself because his language has been silenced by being denigrated as inferior. The native’s identity is marked. He is inferior because his language is. In entrenching the said inferior identity, Hamza is protecting himself from further humiliation. The German officers abuse many more Africans:

The Feldwebel was tall and solidly built, with a loud booming voice [...] he cocked on his hips as he rebuked them in foul and abusive language, which poured out of him like sewage down a gutter (59).

This does not bother Hamza because it is what he expects from the Germans: “He was everything Hamza had expected in a German officer” (59). According to Hadley (2013) power accounts for conditions of language use, and these conditions are often derived from social settings and relationships. The language used by the Germans with the natives is determined by hierarchy. This in itself signifies the expectations that the oppressed natives have placed on the German officers, whom they view as being superior and therefore can get away with anything. It also signifies their acceptance of their inferior status. This is why we see Hamza trying his very best to impress the Oberleutnant by conforming and acting as required, even anticipating what the

Oberleutnant needs from him and acting accordingly. “Hamza learned not to look up when he sensed [his]mood, and if he could, he kept his distance” (84). This act by Hamza also suggests a consciousness about how the German is treating him, and therefore an act of resisting the humiliation he is being constantly subjected to.

The only role that the Kiswahili language is allowed to play in the text is to affirm that they have received the instructions given by the German officers. Whether the orders are understood or not is not the officer's problem. All he needs to hear is “*ndio bwana*” (58), and if the Askaris dare say otherwise, then the consequence is “twenty-five strokes of the cane on your buttocks”. Here, the hegemony of language is used to create inferiority amongst the native Askaris. That their language can only operate on the margins of society creates a subdued identity in them.

The language in the text serves two main purposes. First, it aims to make the natives feel comfortable and more welcoming towards Germans in East Africa, presenting themselves as harbouring only the “best” intentions for the natives. This is because the Germans tend to use Kiswahili only when trying to appear friendly; however, as mentioned earlier, when giving orders, such matters of authority can only be communicated in German. They position themselves socially within the identity of the native by creating an illusion of sameness. Hall and Bucholtz (2004) define identity as sameness. If we adhere to the same social norms and speak the same language, then we are considered the same. Language plays a significant role in helping people identify as the same, and therefore, sharing the same language is equated with belonging to the same identity. One can thus be recognised as a member of the in-group based on language.

Nonetheless, learning and speaking Kiswahili can be seen as a necessity for communication rather than a mistaken belief in common identity, since racial boundaries have already been established. The German settler, therefore, learns to speak Kiswahili in an effort to identify with the natives as he attempts to gain a foothold in their territory. “Sometimes the lesson was reversed and the officer asked for the Kiswahili word for something” (83). It is more probable that the native would be more receptive to leadership and more open to his style of governance if they see themselves as one of them. The settler does this not out of a genuine desire to share the native identity, but purely for practical purposes, power, and prestige.

The officer spoke Kiswahili carefully, searching for the right vocabulary, but it was as if he was performing a language he had no control over, as if he had the words but not their emotion, wanting them to speak in a way they were not suited to (65)

By not attaching any emotion to the words he speaks in Kiswahili, the officer appears to be communicating his disrespect for the language and affirming his superiority by demonstrating his ability to learn and speak it, even though he deems it inferior. On the other hand, the settlers' lack of emotion as they attempt to speak Kiswahili may also be attributed to their alienation from the language.

Secondly, language is used to perform the duality of identity. Having learnt the native's language, the German is also able to identify with the natives, but he can just as easily dissociate from it when he feels it is not serving his purpose. Yes, he is compassionate and warm sometimes. He would even extend some of the privileges that are meant for his people to the natives, “it was clear for them [the Germans] that violence alone was not enough to subdue the colony and make it productive, so clinics were proposed and campaigns against Malaria and cholera were initiated” (16). Nevertheless, these small

acts should not be mistaken for the settlers' acceptance of the Africans and their language as operating in the identical spheres as theirs. The settler can dissociate and pull away from the language. He will sometimes need a translator to convey his message to Hamza and the Schutztruppe askaris, just because he can.

When he is trying to be friendly, he speaks in Kiswahili, but when he needs to assert dominance, he switches to German. This is his way of asserting his superiority and emphasising the inferiority of the natives. The German officer begins speaking to the officers first in Kiswahili, "Nini jina la mathematics kwa lugha yako? Then switches to German:

You don't even know what mathematics is, do you? We have come here to bring you mathematics and many other clever things you would not have without us. This is our Zivilisierungsmision [...] this is our cunning plot, which only a child could misunderstand? We have come here to civilise you. Unafahamu? (65)

These proclamations laced with insults serve one purpose: to label the native as being childish, stupid and unintelligent, thus keeping him in a marginal position.

Although the German is portrayed as a non-feeling beast with psychotic tendencies, he is sometimes also portrayed as seemingly humane. Hamza and the Oberleutnant have the most seemingly human relationship between a German and a native in the entire text, one that cannot be acknowledged due to their status. The Oberleutnant has taken Hamza as his pet project, and teaches him to write, read and speak Schiller, after all, he says, they came to Africa on a civilisation mission "Zivilisierungsmision" (65). This "supposed" show of humanity, as viewed by other Germans, however, can be interpreted in one of two ways. Either the German is evolving and is learning to treat the native as a human and not as a savage beast, or he is just performing what Staszak (2019) refers to as "exortism",; making the native feel valued when it is just a

stereotypical way of comforting himself in his superiority. The Oberleutnant does this often with Hamza.

He gave him an almost imperceptible nod of approval when he did well and smiled with reluctant glee when he perceived something unexpected. You are doing well, he told him, but you are not ready for Schiller (84).

These patronising comments from the German officer are often interchanged with moments of insult. It is as if, in a way, the Officer is trying to convince himself that even though he is the superior species, he can still be friendly.

Being taken in by the Oberleutnant and being taught to speak Schiller attracts another form of marginalisation for Hamza. It attracts anger from the German officers, and as a result, they insult him:

Hamza was inseparable from the Oberleutnant, at his commander's insistence, which aroused some of the other officers to glowering indignation, others to mockery and the Feldwebel to more hatred (93).

More often than not, he is insulted and blamed for the failings in war "This traitor whore of yours betrayed us" (116). Again, language is used here to belittle Hamza and remind him of his place as an inferior. Sometimes he is subjected to brutal violence.

Then he stepped forward and with a wild swing slashed at Hamza who turned sharply to avoid the blow. It caught him on his hip and ripped through the flesh and bone (116).

All the hatred Hamza endures stems from his perceived attempt to gain admission into the superior group, which would lower the rank of this group. The creation of the other, according to Said (1978), is used to strengthen the identity and the superiority of the self while emphasising the inferiority of the 'other'. Staszak (2009) argues that the creation of otherness stems from applying a principle that allows for a hierarchical classification of groups, where "them" and "us" are distinguished. "Them" remains an

out-group while “us” is the in-group. The in-groups, in Staszak’s opinion, will thus dominate the out-groups by stigmatising the difference, whether this difference is real or imagined, and by setting themselves apart and giving the “self” an identity. The German officers, therefore, seem to insist on maintaining the status quo, and anyone who tries to break the boundaries is met with violence to remind them of their place. Even the pastor who treats Hamza after he is hacked points out Hamza’s place:

Perhaps it did not seem right to the other German officers that he...befriended you, that his...protection of you was so ...intimate. [...] Perhaps his behaviour was seen as undermining German Prestige. I can understand how people might think like that (128).

This speaks to the appropriated superiority of the German race, that even having a friendly relationship with the native is deemed an insult to the entire race.

The privileges that the Oberleutnant accords Hamza also attract reverse marginalisation from Hamza’s troops. While the Oberleutnant attempts to assimilate Hamza by taking him under his wing and teaching him the German language, fellow askaris do not take this assimilation kindly. As a result, Hamza becomes doubly marginalised. He does not fit in with the German dominant group. Even as the Oberleutnant goes out of his way to accommodate him, the other German officers resent him for infiltrating the German in-group, and his group no longer accepts or trusts him. Learning German does not sit well with the other German officers, who feel that their language is too superior to be taught to a native speaker. The Askaris, on the other hand, think that the relationship between Hamza and the Oberleutnant is a sexual one, which would be an insult to their cultural beliefs.

It’s you he’s after. He likes you.” (82) You are a *shoga*, ... that’s why he picked you. He wants someone sweet and pretty to massage his back and serve his dinner for him (65).

Being granted preferential treatment by the Oberleutnant could cause expulsion as a member of the in-group by the members of his community, and therefore further marginalising him. By learning Schiller, Hamza seems to be creating an affiliation with them, which, as Park (2017) puts it, should help to negotiate for better human relationships or become a “resource in navigating new environments” (Hadley 2013, 2), which might work sometimes but not always. When Hamza returns home after the war, he consistently impresses people with his proficiency in speaking German. Ndhlovu argues that people adopt languages on “the basis of utility, power and prestige” (131). People light up every time he can read Schiller or speak it. Therefore, even though this language could not afford him inclusion before, it buys him an elite status back home. It is this elite status and his ability to read and write German that partly earn him Afiya's love. She is impressed by his ability and requests that he finds a German poem he likes and translate it for her into Swahili. Hamza, of course, uses this opportunity to make his feelings known to Afiya, and as a result, their romance blossoms, and he finally marries her.

The knowledge of this language, however, also causes him to be distrusted by other members of the community. This illustrates the danger of identifying with other groups. Hamza is caught in an in-between, liminal space where he cannot fully identify with the Germans who have assimilated him, nor can he easily fit into his own community because of the strange language he speaks. This sense of in-betweenness fosters feelings of otherness which, as Hazell (2009) rightly points out, “necessitates such phenomena as devaluation, negation or marginalisation of the other”. Hamza now feels marginalised within his community, as he struggles to belong. While working for the Germans, he may have been seen as part of the out-group (the natives), but upon returning home, he now becomes part of the out-group (the Germans) because he can

speak their language. Bi Asha distrusts him, claiming they do not know where he has been or what he has been doing. “Just look at him. Balaa ... nothing but trouble ... you don’t know his people or where he has been or what mischief he has done” (157). Bi Asha believes Hamza is no good because he appears not to belong. His association with the Germans has cost him his place in his own community. Therefore, marginalisation is a complex, layered, and dynamic phenomenon. It is not only the underprivileged who experience marginalisation due to the absence of a dominant language; ironically, possessing the language of the dominant group can also lead to further marginalisation. The mistrust, however, does not solely stem from the ambivalence created by living in the third space but also from his knowledge of German. “What is this about you being able to read and speak German? Where did you learn that? I thought you told me you didn’t go to school” (194). The merchant and other characters are suspicious of Hamza because of this knowledge, and his reluctance to reveal where he learnt it only deepens their distrust.

Language, therefore, has been used as an agent of marginalisation by assigning inferiority to Kiswahili and using it as a basis for marginalising the speakers of the language. Kiswahili is pushed to the periphery as it is termed a “childish” language that cannot be used to address the Germans and cannot be used to give orders during the war. As such, the users of this language, the natives who can only speak Kiswahili, are viewed as being as inferior as their language. While instances of violence have been used to reinforce the marginalisation, language-based marginalisation is principally used to subjugate the native. In the next section, I examine the use of violence as a tool for marginalising the native, through constant whipping, threat of violence and murder.

2.3. Violence as an Act of Marginalisation in *Kinjeketile*

The play *Kinjeketile* is set in the early 1900s. It represents the events leading up to the Maji Maji rebellion in Tanganyika and the struggle itself. The play fictionalises the violence performed on the bodies of Tanganyikans during German colonial rule and the subsequent resistance. Ebrahim Hussein dramatizes the oppression, forced labour and violence that are meted out on the natives and the massive bloodshed witnessed during the Maji Maji rebellion. The German colonial rule in Tanganyika is similar to what Edward Said observes in the West's domination of the East. It is in Said's view that the Western style of rule was "dominating, restructuring and having authority over the native" (1978, 3). In the play, Hussein dramatises the violent acts that the dominant Germans meted out to the black Africans as they tried to impose their superiority. Violent acts are performances of power and domination.

This section explores the forms of violence inflicted on the natives to marginalise them. Acts of violence serve as performances of power and domination, intended to reinforce the perceived superiority of the Germans and establish the inferiority of the natives. Hussein presents the body as a site where marginalisation and violence are enacted. Many scholars have offered arguments about the use of the body as a locus for enacting violence. Fassin (2011) asserts that the body is the "site where power is exerted or resisted" (284). In this context, from Fassin's perspective, the state employs violence on the body to legitimise its authority over the people. Diop (2012) interprets the use of violence on the body as a way to "disintegrate and subjugate" individuals (67). Diop specifically refers to the assault on black bodies during apartheid South Africa as a "locus for repressive violence" (68), as depicted in Alex Laguma's *In the Fog of the Season's End*. Inflicting violence on the body, therefore, aims to weaken it and prevent any form of resistance. Prokhovnik (2014) introduces the concept of "binary

dichotomy” (467), which describes the logic underpinning power relations. This binary logic of “man/woman, self/other, subject/object, mind/body and reason/emotion” (467) establishes the relationship between “subordination and exclusion of the Other” (467) on one side, and the power of the Other on the other. According to Prokhovnik, this binary dichotomy informs discriminatory practices resulting from these binary mappings. These assertions are crucial to this section of the study. The study examines the mind and the body as variables of marginalisation, which then inform the use of violence to control and subordinate the natives.

The natives in *Kinjeketile* have been subjected to all forms of violence from brutal forced labour to torture, corporal punishment, starvation and even mass murder. Kitunda, for example, is whipped for straightening to ease his back from the pain of working in the cotton plantation without rest. “He straightened up, to ease his back a little. The overseer lashed him with a whip” (3). Fassin (2011) explains that violence can be political or structural. The former is an act of using brutal force on the body, while the latter has to do with inequality in the living conditions, subjection to poverty and humiliation. Both these forms of violence serve as an act of marginalisation and otherisation. Discourses of “otherization” in Fassin’s point of view are reinforced through violence on the body, whether structural or political. Racial order also produces hierarchies that are designed to discriminate against the natives and justify the use of violence against them. In otherizing the native the settler has also otherized his body and therefore performs all kinds of violence on the body as a way of subjugating them. The play opens with Chausiku and Bibi Kitunda wondering whether Kinjeketile is cooking:

Chausiku: Look, Mother! There is smoke. It’s coming from Kinjeketile’s house.

Bi Kitunda: Perhaps they are cooking something. Go and find out.

Bibi Kitunda... and all that working for nothing. Our men work a lot, but they have nothing. We don't even have food in the house. When my husband comes back from the plantation. I have no food to give him. I have looked for roots, I couldn't get any. I have looked for cassava, I couldn't get any (1).

The people have been starved into submission. They cannot work on their lands; they have no food and thus have been robbed of their dignity. They cannot fight back because they are too exhausted from working on the farms and are too hungry to rebel. Ray (2018) argues that conditions of hunger, sickness and destitution are forms of violence, and so is dispossession. Whenever people are denied access to resources, physical and psychological, violence exists. The natives presented in the play have been dispossessed of their land, which they are forced to work for the settler without pay. These are acts of violence and exploitation against their bodies, which might not leave them with physical scars but leave them with "the creeping inscription of inequality within their bodies" (Fassin, 2011). Springler and Le Billion (2018) point out that for the colonial powers, dispossession was linked purely to profit. Therefore, the need to dispossess was explained as an act of civilisation which justified the use of physical force and violence.

From a historical perspective, the motivation for colonial invasion in Africa was a result of a "benevolent" act of civilisation. The narratives that were woven in support of this invasion depicted the natives as backwards savages who needed to be civilised. Civilisation involved the introduction of new farming methods and, therefore, dispossession of land was not viewed as an act of aggression but rather as a way of improving land use and farming practices.

The need for manpower to work on these farms then informs the use of forced labour with no pay. The men depicted in the play are overworked to the point of total exhaustion. This intense pressure that is placed on their bodies is a violation that has them too exhausted to even worry about food or lack thereof.

Second Woman: Two days to go, and then another village will relieve us. That is something to look forward to. Our men will have some rest. They work them hard. When my husband comes back, he is so tired that he can't do a thing.

First woman: Ah, so he doesn't turn towards you!

Second Woman: I don't mean that! But he does come back very tired. He immediately flings himself on the bed and sleeps like a log. Even if there is something to eat he doesn't want to (11).

This violation is done in service of dominance and to ensure that the native remains subdued. The theory is that if the native is so overworked, he remains too tired to plot and conduct a revolt, and thus he remains perpetually subordinate. This kind of violence performed on the body might be visible and not tangible, but it is imprinted in the psyche and robs victims of their dignity.

The helplessness and the inability to act are also emasculating in a world where men are expected and required to fight back. The overworking of men sexually emasculates them, rendering them "women". The men are vexed by the fact that they have been relegated to the position of women who, in a patriarchal societal view, are expected to be meek. They are men, and as such, they should be able to fight for and protect what is theirs. However, they cannot even provide for their families, which again takes away their manly pride. Alienation from their lands serves as a method of marginalisation, as it limits them from accessing their land for personal use. Yet, while they work on this land, it is for the benefit of the German coloniser.

Mkichi: The Red Earth is still in our country. What's more, he has taken our country from us by force. And we, like women, just stare at him. Now he has forced us to cultivate his cotton plantation for him. We just stare at him. He has got us paying him taxes. We just stare at him. Is it for him to demand taxes from us? He should be the one paying us tax, but oh no! We like women, just meekly sit watching, watching him do what he wants with us, with our land (5).

The violence that is meted out on these men on the plantation adds to their feeling of marginalisation. Corporal punishment is administered for little or no mistakes at all. Kitunda is lashed on the farm just for stretching and when he tries to fight back, more lashes are ordered on him.

First man: He straightened up, to ease his back a little. The overseer lashed him with a whip. Kitunda wrenched the whip from the overseer and immediately the headman was called in, who ordered Kitunda to be whipped some more. (3)

The lash acts as a nudge to force conformity. It becomes a brutal agent of asserting power that leaves scars on the natives, enough to discourage more wrongdoing. The constant lashing is, however, used even when there is no sign of rebellion as a power play. It is a reminder of who is in charge and what they are capable of. This scarification thus also functions as a kind of branding, a permanent reminder of the native's place in relation to the German.

The physical punishments the characters are subjected to have little to do with their actions but rather with who they are. The racial position of the native in the hierarchy of beings determines their treatment. The whipping and torturing of the natives are done not only as a form of punishment for inequity but also to instil fear in them and quash any form of rebellion that might be brewing. Violence, therefore, is not used exclusively as an instrument of control; it is also used as a privilege of rank. The lashing of the native's body is done just because the Germans can. Because the native is considered

inferior and the German is superior, he gets to use violence to emphasise power and to exercise his identity as a member of the in-group. The violence meted out against the people of this race is entrenched in the West's system of social discrimination that is aimed at enforcing the prescribed inferiority of the racialised group. The use of violence acts as a constant reminder that the native is inferior, thus instilling feelings of marginalisation. The issue, therefore, is fundamentally one of power. The superior race gets to exert its superiority by any means necessary. In this case, the native's body becomes not just a site in which the Germans exercise power but also a place where they can emphasise the native's inferiority and thus marginalise them. This violence on the body also serves to dehumanise the natives and equates them to animals that can be controlled with whips. The converse is also true. The German is dehumanised by denying the African the sense of humanity.

The public spectacle that comes with administering punishment serves not only to inflict pain on the body and humiliate the person who is being punished but also to instil terror in those who witness it. The certainty of punishment for every inequity and the horrifying spectacle of punishment must discourage rebellion. Terror thus forces conformity, which then allows the Germans to control the minds of the natives. Springer and Le Billion (2018) posit that violence can occur without terror but terror cannot occur without violence. Violence is, therefore, used "in service of terror" (30) and the process of terror is used in service of power. Kitunda is visibly terrified by the implications of revolt:

Kitunda: It's better to live like this than go to war and lose thousands of men.

And the few who will survive will get the same treatment, or worse as before

(8)

In this case, if the native is terrified of the settler, he will be obedient, thus keeping the settler in a position of power. The natives will be hesitant to rebel again because they are afraid of the violence that will be inflicted on their bodies. Fear of physical pain must be intense enough to impede any thoughts of rebellion; hence, control over the body also signifies control over the mind. The fear instilled in the minds of the natives is a constant reminder of their subordinate status. It thus assures conformity as they are constantly reminded of what would happen to their bodies if they do not. The treatment of the natives' bodies as nothing more than tools that can be used to work in the plantations or sites that can be used for violence and force conformity amounts to the marginalisation of the natives' bodies and hence is traumatic.

The supervision they are placed under at all times, whether they are working in the fields or going about their business, keeps them subdued. This is well captured when the Mnyapala shouts: "Quiet! There! No talking, or there'll be trouble. What's passed has passed, no tales about it" (3). There is a constant reminder of what will be done to their bodies if they do not conform, and when the *Myapala* says that there will be trouble, the men know exactly what it means. To protect themselves from the lash, they conform. Michel Foucault in *Discipline and Punish* describes a situation where the body was the primary target of penal repression in the nineteenth century. Public execution of punishment was timetabled and punishments were administered for different types of crimes by using different types of punishment for every crime. The severity of the punishment depended on the severity of the crime. The knowledge of what would happen to the body as a result of wrongdoing forces conformity. In this

case, the body is an “instrument or intermediary” (Foucault, 1977, 10) to control the mind.

This kind of punishment faded away due to humanitarian reasons and also because it was no longer effective, but it then shifted to surveillance, or at least the illusion of it. The role of the panopticon was to induce in the inmate a conscious state that they were constantly being watched by utilising the principle of the visible but unverifiable. The inmate is aware that he is being watched, but cannot ascertain whether the natives are being watched at that particular moment. The conformity is then assured because “the gaze is alert everywhere” (1977, 195).

The Germans also employ panoptic surveillance of the natives to ensure their conformity. However, in this case, it does not signify a “slackening of the hold on the body” (10), but rather a complementary approach to maintaining power and subjugating the natives. Among the natives, there is always a deep-seated suspicion that someone will inform on them, which is often true. Hunger and poverty are used as leverage, and promises of food or days off work are employed to obtain information. “The white man pays well to get information” (8). Consequently, the natives can always feel the gaze, which keeps them fearful and compliant.

Kitunda: It is easy to speak, and we all want to get rid of the German. But how do we do it? He has weapons, we haven't. As our first duty, therefore, we must collect weapons. Steal guns from the askaris, seize them if need be, in short, do everything to see that we've got guns. This will take time. Such preparation will have to be done with utmost secrecy, for, as you all know, we have got spies, informers and stooges to fill up a pot. You do one thing today and by tomorrow the askari or even the overseer knows about it. We are hungry people, and hunger drives us to betray one another. So you see, we can't afford to rush into things, recklessly. We have enemies, even amongst our people (8)

Already their bodies are being violated by being forced to work without food. But now they are forced to remain subdued by the use of surveillance or else they are subjected to violence. The revolt cannot pick up, they cannot fight back because revolt needs planning, and there is no way to plan if they live in constant fear that someone will report them. This kind of surveillance and the fear that comes with it acts as a form of repression whose aim is to keep the native marginalised because revolting equals challenging the hierarchy, which is the very essence of marginalisation.

The woman's body in the play is also shown to be susceptible to violence by the males in power (the Germans). Women are marginalised and pushed to the edges by being objectified and commodified for the benefit of both the Black and the White man. They are seen as commodities that can be borrowed and returned after use. The woman's body is used for entertainment and can, therefore, be exchanged for gain. Chausiku, for instance, is considered an object that can be exploited for men's entertainment. Beauvoir (1977) in *The Second Sex* questions the treatment of women as "the other". The male is regarded as human (positive and neutral). The fact that the woman is defined in relation to the man relegates her to the position of the "Other". The woman is imprisoned within her own body. They are victimised as sexual beings whose only role is to entertain men. Simone (2011) argues that women's bodies undergo a form of dehumanisation as they become objects that can be used for men's pleasure.

The askari asks Kitunda if he could 'borrow' his daughter.

Myapala: But think, two days! Two days with no work.

Kitunda: and what do I have to do to earn that?

Mnyapala: Hm...you can...lend us your daughter (9).

Women are often viewed as possessions (Dey, 2018). The Mnyapala does not need to speak to Chausiku about it. She is a commodity and hence has no control over what can happen to her body. She is viewed not as a human being but as a body. All that is needed is her father's consent. Chausiku is a mere transaction; her father can trade her body for two days of rest. Though Kitunda rejects this proposal, it does not make any difference because Chausiku is taken anyway. This, aside from rubberstamping the position of women, elaborates the place of the native. Kitunda fights for his daughter but is brutally beaten as a result. The rest of the neighbours cannot act because they know full well the violence that will be meted out to them if they do. Their failure to act, however, angers Chausiku's mother, Bibi Kitunda: "Get out! Get out of here, you women, you! Two little men were enough to scare the whole lot of you. You have been enslaved body and spirit" (10). The fact that Bibi Kitunda uses the word "women" to insult the men who failed to act while her daughter is taken and her husband beaten shows the place of the woman in society, as being weak and afraid and assigns a different identity to the emasculated men, who do nothing while Chausiku is carried away. This thus affirms the marginal position that women hold in the society the text presents.

Kitunda's act of trying to protect his daughter despite the violence is a brave act that is expected of men. He is therefore performing his role as a man, a protector of women in a world where women are legally defined as dependent wives and daughters. Women have also been turned into mute signs as deemed appropriate by male-dominated states and society (Dey, 2018). Chausiku is portrayed as unable to speak for herself or make decisions about her own body. Chausiku's feelings have not been given a voice. As the 'other', what she endures is not viewed as important enough to warrant any action. It is other women who put a voice to Chausiku's rape: The first woman laments: "Chausiku-poor girl! and this Mnyapala, of all the things to do! Why, did he have to procure

Chausiku for the Askari, a young and green maiden like that” (10). The women question why it had to happen to her, but that is all they can do, talk about it because they do not have the power to act.

The men, on the other hand, cannot be bothered to talk or do anything about it. They are more concerned with weightier matters of national liberation. Inasmuch as speaking about it is an action by itself, the violation of the woman’s body has not been given the same prominence as the man’s body. For, men, the struggle is greater than trivial worries about the violation of the woman’s body. Women are then relegated to the sidelines. They are barely recognised as equal players in the national dichotomy. It is the women who worry about the men’s broken bodies, they cannot even be bothered. It is as if to do so would be an admission of weakness. The entire text portrays the struggles of men in society as they attempt to liberate themselves from colonialism. It is a man’s affair and women have been relegated to cooks and gossip mongers who have nothing else to offer in the liberation struggle. Women can take the backstage and are dependent on the men, but men are supposed to fight. Their failure to act thus relegates them to the position of inferiority to women. This, in itself, is an act of othering the female gender.

What happens to the male body is, however, of utmost importance, hence the reason to stage a revolution. It is their marginalisation that is viewed as being the most important subject of discussion and therefore calls for action. No oppressor willingly ceases to oppress the oppressed except the oppressed revolt and changes the status quo (Affiah and Eni 2018). For the oppression to stop, the native has to fight to negotiate his space and assert his identity. The native has to renegotiate his space and as the play rightly depicts, the native might have to reconstruct his identity.

Reconstructive identities according to Hernandez et al (2010) can be done through violent means. The use of violence is thus a way for the natives to challenge their marginalisation. Affiah and Eni (2018) agree, and go on to cite that Hussein uses a revolutionary approach to restoring the dignity of the people. To stage a successful revolution against the German oppressor, there needs to be a different form of construction of identity. This, in Hernandez's point of view, can be done through "primordial attachments" (282). In other words, people need to activate other ways within which to do both. Hussein uses kinship, ethnicity religion, and language to form ties that would finally have the natives on one side and the Germans on. Previously, though the natives are all suffering under colonial oppression, they are still divided as a community.

Kinjeketile: We Will unite and we will fight as one body.
 And as it is in a human body
 When a toe gets hurt, the whole body feels pain.
 When a Mmatumbi gets whipped,
 It is the Mzaramo who will feel the pain.
 When a Mrufiji gets tortured,
 It is the Mngoni who will cry out.
 When we reach this, stage, then we will be united.
 We will be one people (16)

This is an elaborate metaphor that links their unity to human anatomy. The metaphor is important in positioning the colonial oppressor on one side and the oppressed native on the other. Kinjeketile's words in this excerpt are meant to assure the natives that although they are from different tribes, from different tribes, they are all blacks and are all being oppressed by one oppressor, the Germans. In creating the myth of Hongo and the water, *Kinjeketile* succeeds in uniting the groups that would otherwise remain

divided. This unity is only assured if the seer can guarantee the safety of the body. Therefore, the phrase “No bullet will penetrate the body” becomes very important. It is something that men must constantly remind themselves of as they go to war. Commendably, by creating this myth, Kinjeketile, is able to appeal to the mind of the oppressed. The emphasis on the importance of the water to their cause is repeated throughout the play to create a new belief in their capabilities if they present a united front. This newfound immunity against the oppression of the white man is important as it signifies that the colonial master no longer has control over them. If he cannot control the body, he cannot control them. Kinjeketile promises the people.

Kinjeketile: This water will make our bodies unassailable by bullets. This water will make you an invincible army. It will destroy the Red Earth (19).

Even though Kinjeketile assures them that the water is sacred and would help them defeat the Germans, the ethnic groups need assurance that they are worshipping the same god, who only has different names given by the ethnic groups. Here, Kinjeketile is activating the collective consciousness of the native to demand action. The men do not want to lose their identities while fighting against the larger oppressor. This is particularly symbolic because the communities have already lost their identity and dignity when the German settlers marginalised them. It would therefore work well for them to be liberated from one form of marginalisation only to be subordinated by another ethnic group. They need to know that they still can maintain their independence as a community after the rebellion is over. Kinjeketile then has to assure them they are not letting go of their beliefs, and neither are they dropping their god to obey a different god. This is a reassurance of maintaining their ethnic identities:

REPRESENTATIVE OF THE WAZARAMO: We believe in Kolelo. We can only follow his guidance ... we come to ask you whether this is Kolelo or Hongo, or whether these two names belong to the same spirit. If it is so then we are ready to join you. If not then we cannot fight together (31).

It is only right then that if they are different parts of the same body, they worship the same god. Though Kinjeketile has doubts, he cannot voice them, for it will threaten the newfound unity.

During the struggle, thousands of natives are murdered. Mass murder becomes a way of subduing the body. Since German seems to have lost control over the native's mind, the body is his only bet and mass murder becomes the means. The natives presented in the text are killed by thousands.

Kitunda: his people forgot our war stratagems, and took up the chant Maji! Maji! Maji! And rushed towards the fort. And all the time they were being mown down by thousand. I sent soldiers to curb this madness, but it was no use. I personally went, but there was not a sane man among them and nobody would listen. We lost more than one thousand two hundred men from the Second Company.... (48)

Kitunda uses the word "Mown" to explain how the native is murdered. The adoption of a word used to refer to the cutting down of grass signifies the dehumanisation of the natives' bodies. Melenotte (2020) advances dehumanisation as having a fundamental role in mass killings; executioners no longer perceive those being killed as human beings and therefore can be "mowed down" (48) without giving it a second thought. Dehumanisation is one of the ways, in Melenotte's view, that perpetrators of genocide legitimise the elimination of minority groups. Stereotypes and forms of defamation are spread to designate the groups as inferior, thus legitimating the use of force and murder to discipline. The conditions they are subjected to throughout the text are a process of

dehumanising, which leads to this very moment where they are murdered without emotion.

In addition, the leader of the revolution, Kinjeketile and the survivors of the rebellion are placed in cells and tortured. He is an “agitator, the troublemaker” (Said 1978, 37) as he raises difficulties instead of being a good native and overlooking the difficulties of domination. Kinjeketile himself is captured, jailed and tortured into declaring the water was a lie and does not have healing powers, something that he refuses to do. The use of torture is an abuse of power and an offence against human dignity (Copelon, 1994). Copelon explains that torture is meant to intimidate, obliterate personality or silence agitators of these rights. The settler is operating under the assumption that Kinjeketile would do and say anything to stop the pain being inflicted on his body, but for Kinjeketile reneging would mean legitimising colonialism:

Askari: He refuses to retract his words. The master gave him the order that the water was a lie, that it was nothing, that it certainly was not medicine. He has to say this to the people before he is hanged. (51)

Kinjeketile, however, seems to have detached himself from the body. His resistance to torture is an affirmation of his mind’s freedom, which then renders the pain inflicted on his body non-consequential. The freedom of his men is dangled on him to help persuade him to denounce the water. The German officer tells Kinjeketile; “Listen, if you agree to tell the people that the water didn’t have medicine, we will let all these people go free” (51). Here, the German seems to have realised that controlling the body without controlling the mind is useless to them. The body might be easier to confine but the mind is a whole other thing. Kinjeketile is certain he will be hanged, so speaking up the words will not help him, but then he also realises the power of the word.

Kinjeketile: The moment I say that people in the north, south, east and west will stop fighting. They will fall into hopeless despair-they will give up. I will not say that! A word has been born (53).

He thus goes through pain and torture to protect the ideology that has given his people unity that they were not achieving before. He does not want the body and the fear of pain to control him. The “word” is bigger than him and as such he has to sacrifice his own body to continue to unite and give courage to his people even long after he died in the hope that this strength will finally free them from oppression.

2.4. Conclusion.

Racial orders in the two texts establish hierarchies intended to subjugate native characters through domination and the exercise of power. These orders create conditions where natives are marginalised through language and violence inflicted upon their bodies. The first aspect of marginalisation involves creating a sense of inferiority in the subjugated groups, making them vulnerable to domination. Language is used to assign status to its speakers; thus, the superior status of a language confers power and privilege on its speakers, while the inferior status results in subordination. Consequently, language is either privileged or subordinated for the purpose of domination. It is also performed as a tool of subordination. By employing language to insult and humiliate the natives, the Germans succeed in marginalising them. Feelings of inferiority and low self-esteem are embedded, leading characters to seek acceptance within the in-group by learning their language or obeying their commands. In this context, this involves going to war for them and killing their people to gain entry into the elite German identity.

The second aspect of marginalisation in this chapter is the one enacted through the use of violence. Marginalisation in *Kinjeketile* is enacted through corporal punishment, starvation, hard labour, rape, mass murder and torture. The violence instils feelings of terror in the natives, thus keeping them subdued. The feelings of terror induced by inflicting pain on the body discourage rebellions and inspire conformity and discipline. Detachment from the body, therefore, frees the mind, giving the transformed natives the ability to resist domination and thus develop agency to confront their marginalisation.

CHAPTER THREE

CHILDREN IN VIOLENCE: SHATTERING CHILD PROTECTIONIST FRAMES AND CREATION OF LIMINAL IDENTITIES

3.1. Introduction

Children have always been considered passive and uncomprehending victims of war (Berents, 2019). Due to their dependency on adults and their perceived irrationality, adults often believe that children should not participate in active conflict and should be protected from it. Child protectionist frames are put in place to shield children from the atrocities of war (Bessner, 2002). Some memoirs, though written by adults through selective memory, have challenged the effectiveness of child protectionist frames. This chapter analyses two texts: Gael Faye's *Small Country* (2016) and Emmanuel Jal's *War Child* (2009) to examine marginalisation resulting in violence that effectively shatters the child protective frames and places children in liminal spaces. Gael Faye's *Small Country* illustrates how war permeates the protectionist frames that parents put in place to protect their children from the effects of war. The chapter also examines how children use their invisibility and curiosity to circumvent these protectionist frames.

3.2. Shattering Child Protectionist Frames in Gael Faye's *Small Country*

The protagonist in *Small Country*, Gaby, is a ten-year-old boy who tells the story of a country on the brink of ethnically motivated violence. The novel is set in Bujumbura during the 1990s, a time of conflict in Rwanda and Burundi. Before the war, Gaby lives a comfortable life with his French father, Rwandan mother and seven-year-old sister Ana before the war wreaks havoc on his childhood and family. There is talk of war, but it seems so far as Gaby and his little sister are protected from the horrors of it. Living in the suburbs with his expatriate father in a fenced compound, complete with an

electric fence, a gate and the sign “*Imbwa kali*” (beware of the dog)’ (25) and servants catering for their every need, the war seems very distant from Gaby and his sister. They are also shielded from all other outside forces that are seen as having the potential to tamper with their innocence.

This section examines memoirs of war as a challenge to child protectionist discourses. Memoirs are works of memory and, as such, they present a selective account of past events (Longo, 2018). *Small Country* is a representation of how war shatters the child protective frames put in place by parents and guardians to shield the children in the context of armed conflict. This section, therefore, examines the memories of war and its effects in reflecting the shattering of the protectionist frames. Child protectionist frames define the child’s identity and what they should be protected from. Definitions of ‘child’ depend on the conditions. The Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) defines a child as a person under the age of eighteen. The International Criminal Court (ICC) and International Child Protection Laws describe a child as one under the age of twelve years. The ICC’s definition is anchored on the conditions of war and the role children play in times of war.

Child protectionists hold that children require protection because their physical and mental capabilities differ from those of adults (Bessner, 2002). O’Mahony (2021) argues that the child is considered safe from harm if they “enjoy a safe, suitable standard of accommodation” (15), if they are safe from sexual abuse, neglect, violence and exploitation, domestic violence and trafficking. Yuvaraj (2016) advocates for children’s protection from use in hostilities as child soldiers. For Yuvaraj, as long as the child is not involved in “active” and “direct” participation in hostilities, then the child is protected. Stone (2019) identifies potential harm to children as “stranger danger”, which entails “sharing space with strangers or non-family members without

parental supervision” (116). As such, protectionist frames are influenced by parenting perceptions. Child protectionists view the child as vulnerable, dependent and at risk of being abused (Stone 2019, Bessner 2012, Yavaraj 2016, Delap 2015). Stone (2019) goes on to explain that children are viewed as defenceless victims due to their innocence and vulnerability. “Children are irrational, incomplete ... passive recipients of socialisation” (Berents 2019, 464). For Berents, the only pressing needs that children have are “safety, shelter, food and healthcare” (461). Child protectionists, therefore, agitate for “environments and services that will develop them into mentally and physically healthy adults” (DOJ, 2015).

The child protectionist frames often placed by government authorities, parents and guardians are meant to exclude children from volatile or violent situations, placement into definite spaces, and even relocating them from places and situations that are perceived as hostile. This study argues that child memoirs on war challenge these protectionist frames. They question what is considered a danger to them and the limitations of parental protection in civil war and genocide situations. This study contends that protection of children from physical harm and from being made active participators in hostilities might not be enough, since war permeates these protectionist structures meant to shield them. The atrocities of war still affect children even though they are not on the frontlines of war. For instance, when children lose their parents, siblings and relatives, they bear the brunt of the trauma. This study interrogates violence and the place of the child in violence, and that war takes on structures that are a danger to both adults and children, however much adults attempt to protect the children.

Gaby is an adult narrator who is telling the story of a child who, despite being shielded from active participation in war, is still affected by it. King (2022) asserts that authors foreground child narrators in adult fiction. However, memory is not the only factor at

play, since memoirs are not simply a recounting of past events. Memoirs follow major dramatic points in the writer's life, whether painful or happy, but as Longo (2018) explains, it is hard to verbalise all the thoughts and events that take place in a lifetime. Moore-Slater (2020) notes that a memoir serves as a snapshot of one's life, rather than an entire life story. The writing of the memoir is, therefore, an act of filtering, in which the writer filters events and thoughts to produce desired results. In writing the memoir, the writer determines "how they would like to be viewed and adjusts the filters to produce those results as best as they can" (Longo 2018, 24). What is intriguing for King is the child narrator's perspective in precarious situations. The child narrator is perceived to have an innocent perspective in every situation, and their curiosity only accentuates their desire to document events and situations as they are presented to them, without necessarily adding their opinions to these situations. Thus, *Small Country* is a filter of the author's memory in a way that represents how war shatters the child protectionist discourses put in place to shield him and his sister from the effects of civil war.

In the prologue, Gaby paints a life in France where he resides after the war, in which he is "haunted by the idea of returning" home (3). He mentions that he "blames his childhood for ...failure to adapt to the new world" (5). He cannot fit into his place of work, does not have a permanent residence or meaningful relationships, and all he wants is to return to a country that his sister calls "cursed" (3). The rest of the story is a memory of what he recalls about his childhood, a recollection of the war's impact on his life and that of his family. Englund (2021) contends that one of the advantages of featuring child narrators, especially in the literature that is situated in post-colonial resistance and violence is the ability of the "precocious child" (2021, 890) to provide a balance between "being overtly instructive on the one hand and profoundly helpless, in

need of protection and guidance on the other” (2021, 890). The narrator in *Small Country* is not just telling a story of the Civil War, but rather his personal story as he remembers it. The narrative primarily focuses on the impact of war and the marginalisation of him and his family. His mother is a Tutsi refugee in Burundi, made so by the violence in Rwanda. Gaby explains why his mother and her family escaped Rwanda and the problems they encountered in Burundi as refugees:

For the most part, Mamie’s neighbours were Rwandans who had left their country to escape the carnage, massacres, wars, pogroms, purges, destruction, fires, tsetse flies, pillaging, apartheid, rapes, murders, settling of scores and I don’t know what else. Like Maman and her family, they fled those problems only to encounter new ones in poverty, exclusion, quotas, xenophobia, rejection, being made into scapegoats, depression, home-sickness and nostalgia. The problems of refugees (47-48).

Gaby tells the story of a family that has been subjected to marginalisation for years and is now in exile as a result of violence. The marginalisation that they are subjected to in Burundi as a result of their refugee status keeps them in constant fear of what might happen to them. His mother makes this clear when she challenges his father: “I’m a refugee, Michel. And I always have been, in Burundian eyes. They make it very clear, with their insults and insinuations, their quotas for foreigners and restricted intakes in schools” (16). This outburst from Gaby’s mother aptly illustrates how the Rwandan refugees in Burundi have been marginalised. His memory of his childhood paints a picture of how marginalisation and violence are responsible for breaking his family. Gaby recollects the events leading up to his current life in France and his experiences as a child living with a privileged expatriate father and a scared mother.

At the beginning of the text, Gabby explains the observations that he makes from his curiosity.

The war between Tutsis and Hutus...is it because they don't have the same land?

No, they have the same country

So...they don't have the same language?

No, they speak the same language.

So, they don't have the same God?

No, they have the same God.

So... why are they at war?

Because they don't have the same nose. (1)

For Gaby, it is ridiculous to be at war just because people have different shapes of noses. Again, his father here does not continue to explain this, "and that was the end of the discussion. It was very odd" (2). This aptly highlights how children are often left out of important discussions, which are perceived as either too advanced or too controversial for their understanding. This exclusion is viewed as protection from complicated circumstances and conversations. It also points to the complexities of war and the dilemmas of parenthood. While parents try to protect their children from the effects of war, they seem to lack an understanding of the war themselves. Gabby's father describes the physical structures of both the Hutus and the Tutsis.

The Hutu form the biggest group, they are short with wide noses ... And then there are the Tutsi like your mother. The Tutsi make up a much smaller group than the Hutu, they're tall and skinny with long noses and you can never tell what's going on inside their heads (1)

This statement opens Gaby's mind to a whole new world he had not noticed before. For the first time, he can distinguish the ethnicities of the people he sees on the street based on the shapes of their noses and their height. However, at times it could be confusing because he and his sister realise that there are short Tutsis and tall Hutus. It, however,

opens him to the fluidity of ethnicity, and the stereotyping that ultimately contributes to the marginalisation of certain groups and therefore makes them susceptible to using violence to respond to this marginalisation.

Gaby's curiosity and need to understand the cause of this rift between the two ethnicities is the child's way of questioning the irrationality of marginalisation and the violence that comes as a result. As much as children are considered "miniature adults frequently at the mercy of a society or an environment" (ICRC, 2004), their curiosity offers them the ability to question phenomena from a very personal perspective without their significance being questioned in the broader narrative (Russ, 2015). Writing the story years after his return to Burundi and finding his long-lost mother, who has been rendered insane by the trauma that she experienced during the civil war, Faye activates selective memory to describe the specific events that lead to this moment. *Small country* is, therefore, not an episodic recounting of his entire childhood but rather of the events that detail the effects of war on him and his family.

Gaby and his sister are protected from all outside forces. They must remain on the compound grounds unless visiting friends. They are also shielded from the political talk: "Papa didn't want us talking about it. He thought children should stay out of politics" (2), and they cannot be allowed to join in adult conversations. News and politics are often marked as confusing to children, therefore posing a danger to them. They are also protected from viewing dead bodies; "whenever there was a dead body by the side of the road, Papa told us not to look." (143) and when the adults are talking about the war that is beginning, Gaby is sent to his room "Maman told me to go to bed, adding that grown-ups needed to talk now" (112). The removal of children from the adult space and these discussions about things they are deemed unable to comprehend "reinforces their incomplete status and legitimises their marginal condition and

silencing” (Berents 2019, 464). The study views this as also excluding children from that which is seen as a danger to them, and placing them in definite spaces considered to be safe for them, which is the purpose of child protectionist frames.

Removing them from this public sphere does not, however, impede the children from trying to unpack the mysteries presented to them. The restricted view of children of the world makes them dependent on the adults’ understanding of the world, but that does not mean that they are oblivious of what is happening outside their worlds. They watch everything from the periphery and are often assigned an invisibility status that allows them to access more information than their parents would deem possible. Gaby here utilises memory to take the reader through the methods he uses to get information that he is denied from assessing and, therefore, effectively shattering the protectionist frames put in place by his parents to exclude him and his sister from these situations. He, therefore, engages selective memory in his writing for two reasons: one, he demonstrates that war and violence permeate all protectionist frames and two, he explains how children circumvent these frames through their curiosity to access that which they are not allowed to access.

Gaby’s curiosity enables him to find answers to most of his questions and fears, mostly through his friend, Gino; “Gino would fiddle with the aerial to reduce the hissing. He translated every sentence for me, putting his whole heart into it” (2019, 64). He also finds answers from eavesdropping on adult conversations. When his mother asks him to leave the room, for example, he hides in the hallway and listens in; “Reluctantly, I turned to leave, but instead of doing as was told, I stayed in the hallway, just behind the door, where I could watch them unseen” (112). From this vantage point of invisibility, Gaby learns of the extent of marginalisation to which his mother and her relatives have been subjected to:

The media is being used to incite violence, and massacres and targeted killings are being carried out. Politicians give hate-fuelled speeches, calling on people to hunt us down and throw us into the Nyabarango River. (50)

Here, marginalisation is done through hate speeches about the Tutsi, and the action that must be taken against them is spelt out. Gaby can see what these acts of marginalisation are doing to his mother and relatives; “Neither Mamie nor Rosalie said anything. Maman’s eyes were closed as she rubbed her temples” (50). Eavesdropping on adult conversations helps Gaby gain a perspective on this war that he cannot understand. In this way, he breaks the protection protocols placed by the adults to prevent him from listening to these traumatising conversations. Gaby is keenly aware of the acts of marginalisation presented in the texts. Even though adults fail to provide explanations, he remains attentive and engaged.

The presidents of Burundi and Rwanda were killed last night...A few minutes later, on the radio, they announced the death of the president, accusing Tutsis of being responsible for the assassination. The Hutu population has been called to take up arms in retaliation. I think it’s clear this was their own goal to eliminate us. (132-133)

The government is determined to eliminate the Tutsi population, and Gaby can notice the fear it instils in his mother. Despite his mother's attempts to shield him from all this, he cannot escape it. The stereotypes about how evil the Tutsis are and calls for their elimination, as aired on the radio, have also reached Gaby’s school. The ethnic differences that are at play in the country make their way into the schools and turn children against each other, thereby breaking the fences erected by child protectionists and parents to shield the children. Even when children fight amongst each other, the insults are about ethnicity:

Burundian boys started fighting behind the main playground ... promptly divided into two groups, each supporting one of the boys. ‘Filthy Hutus! Shouted one side. Filthy Tutsis! replied the other (109).

In this little altercation, Gaby finally realises the children are no longer passive participants in the war but rather have been immersed in it.

That afternoon, for the first time in my life, I entered the dark reality of this country. I was a direct witness to Hutu-Tutsi antagonism....war always takes it upon itself, unsolicited, to find us an enemy. I wanted to be neutral, but I couldn’t. I was born with this history. It ran in my blood. I belonged in it.

Gaby witnesses first-hand as the police harass his mother, aunt, sister and cousins, first because they are Tutsis and secondly because his mother has a French passport.

What was he saying?

He said all cockroaches must die.

Cockroaches?

Yes, cockroaches. Inyenzi

They use that word to talk about us, the Tutsis (118)

His family is subjected to this kind of hatred because their identity is marginalised, the Tutsi are dehumanised to insects. Through this encounter, Gaby is stripped of his innocence. It is what Berents (2019) terms as “diminishing childhood” or “losing childhood”. Gaby explains that, “... a month earlier, I wouldn’t have grasped any of these. But now- Hutu soldiers in one camp, a Tutsi family in another- I had a ringside seat for this spectacle of hatred” (119).

I was like a blind person who had regained their sight, as I began to decipher people’s body language and glances, words left unspoken and ways of behaving that had previously passed me by (109).

The children are shown to find a way of escaping the harrowing effects of marginalisation that have destroyed their families by creating a “happy place” for

themselves. Gaby, to begin with, tries to create a happy place to counter the arguments for his parents' separation; a condition that has been brought about because his mother thinks they should move to France for their safety and his father not agreeing to it because for him there is a prestige that comes with being a white man in Burundi that he would not get in France. "Here we are privileged. There, we'd be nobodies" (16). Gaby's father seems to be oblivious to his mother's struggles because of belonging to a community that is facing the danger of being massacred. According to Gaby, he is not truly happy; he is merely existing "I clung to my happy existence for the last time" (22). Gaby's memories of his childhood aren't joyful, but they undeniably surpass those of his friends. Gaby's friend Gino loses his mother to the war. He, however, never tells anyone about it and always creates stories about where she is, "none of us had ever seen her. Sometimes Gino told us she was working in Kigali, sometimes she was in Europe" (57). It is easier for the child to believe that his mother is safe somewhere far away than to admit she is dead. It is not until Gino is faced with death as the neighbourhood bully attempts to drown him that he finally admits that his mother is dead. "Gino stammered: 'Dead'. I heard the word. 'My mother is dead', he said a second time with a sob," (105). Gaby's portrayal of the struggles he and his friends face during the conflict highlights the vulnerability of children in times of war.

The complexities children face during the war transcend those presented in direct conflict. Whether the children are "actively" participating in a conflict or not, the violence that is brought about by marginalisation breaks into their "safe spaces" and leaves them traumatised. As a result of this marginalisation that has threatened to wipe out an entire community, the Tutsi have vowed to fight back to ensure their survival. Marginalised communities resort to violence as a powerful form of resistance against their oppression. Gaby's mother is happy when the war in Rwanda finally begins

“Maman danced and sang when she heard this news. I had never seen her so elated” (48). His uncles join the war because they want to fight for their existence. “It’s up to us to organise ourselves in response. We have to be ready to fight back if peace agreements fail. This is about our survival, big sister!” (50). Gaby’s representation of these struggles undermines the notion of him as merely a passive participant in the experience. It provides him with an authoritative voice in questioning the experiences brought forth by marginalisation and “limitations of protectionist-dominated approaches” (Berents, 2019, 463).

Marginalisation not only affects Gaby through his refugee mother, but also his skin colour. Coming from a mixed-race family, Gaby has always been subjected to marginalisation and has faced numerous insults because of it. The rebels shout at the mixed-raced boys; “Your mothers are white men’s bitches!” (103). Gaby and his friend are also almost drowned by a bully who hates them because they are a privileged “Bunch of spoilt brats...” (103). For the first time, Gaby realises that he is not protected and even begins to understand what violence is, “so was this what violence meant? Raw fear and disbelief?” (103). Gaby’s father can only protect him from the effects as long as he stays within the bounds of their compound. Their compound and their house are, for that reason, a safe space, but as soon as he gets out, the protection is gone, and he is plunged right into the chaos of civil war. With innocence lost, children also immerse themselves in the war. Roese (2018) points out that the Hutu-Tutsi tension is not separate from growing up, as Rwanda and Burundi rub against each other; similarly, Gaby’s childhood rubs against adulthood. The fear in the adults has seeped into their little lives. “I still wonder when it was that our little gang began to feel scared” (63). Even the children now have to take a stand. One has to belong to a gang in order to feel secure.

The war breaks the barriers of childhood and forces them to respond. Gaby's friend Gino stamps that they have to take a stand, "If we don't protect ourselves, they will kill us like they killed my mother." (139). Though Gaby understands his reasoning, he does not see violence as a solution to their woes. "I wanted to tell Gino that he was mistaken, that he was making generalisations, that if we took revenge every time, then war would never end. (139). Gaby, here is taking a critical stance that is uncharacteristic of children. But then again, he realises that his friend would probably not understand because he is in pain. "Suffering is a wild card in the game of debate, it wipes the floor with all other arguments" (139). This immersion of children in violence now transforms them into active participants. Gaby seems to question the effectiveness of the protective measures placed around children when he is forced to murder to protect his family:

I pictured Papa and Ana lying peacefully on the couch, in front of the television. It was a vision of their innocence, of all the innocence in the world teetering on the edge of an abyss. And I felt sorry for them and also for myself, for the purity that is ruined by a-consuming fear, which transforms everything into wickedness, hatred and death (172)

Gaby is again plunged into the centre of violence as a result of marginalisation. He is labelled "the French kid" (172) and is made to kill a man to prove he supports the Tutsis. Gaby is confronted with a dilemma that transforms his passive, uncomprehending victim status into a 'combatant' status. He now has to choose between the life of a man who is a stranger to him and the lives of his father and sister, who are now labelled as innocent, as they are unaware of Gaby's struggles or the potential danger that they could find themselves in if Gaby chooses not to kill the man. Faced with an impossible choice, Gaby can no longer play the innocent, irrational, passive participant card and has to decide, as he is no longer protected.

I tossed the zippo and the car caught fire. ... Before leaving, I searched in the dust and ashes. I found the identity card of the man who had just died. The man I had killed (173)

He is once more robbed of his childhood as his mother describes the horrors she experienced in Rwanda after the civil war. The horrors of marginalisation, war and retaliation strip his mother of her “sanity” and Gaby and his sister, a mother and a happy home. When his mother returns after going to Rwanda to try and locate her family, she is not the same because of the trauma of what she has witnessed. The pain of seeing his mother’s state when she returns without really being in a position to help is too much. This pain is further accentuated when his mother narrates what has happened to her family. At this point, war has crumbled all the parenting structures and the children are no longer ordered to leave the room when subjects of war are being discussed. The tales his mother narrates are horrifying:

When I stepped onto her land, I wanted to turn back because of the smell. Somehow, I found the courage to go on. In the living room, there were three children on the floor. I came across the fourth body, Christian, in the hallway. ... I had to bury the children in the garden by myself (147).

The trauma that his mother goes through changes the dynamics for Gaby. He tends to her, hoping that he can get her back. Gaby nurses his mother with the hope that she will recover but, of course, she does not. It takes the trances and the constant narrations of her experiences to him and his sister for Gaby to realise that he has lost his mother and he will never get her back. The sole responsibility that he has now is that of protecting his sister and for that reason, he wishes his mother would go away and never come back. Of course, when his mother finally goes away, again, he is riddled with the guilt that it is his fault.

I learned to accept her condition when I stopped searching for the mother I had known before. Genocide is an oil slick: those who drown in it are polluted for life. (154)

The barriers between adulthood and childhood are broken, the roles of the children and parents seem to have been reversed. The child is no longer the passive participant who needs protection, as the complexities of war have reversed the roles, thus breaking all the child protectionist frames and putting the children at the centre of the conflict.

Gaby, nonetheless, finds his mother upon his return to Burundi at the age of thirty-three, now an adult and his past meets the present: “I plan on staying here, looking after Maman, waiting for her to feel better ... but I do remember how it all began” (183). The entire text appears to have been tailored for this moment. At the beginning of the text, Faye seems to be wondering why his parents separated, “I’ll never know the true cause of my parents’ separation” (7). The story concludes with him finding his mother and vowing to care for her. The rest of the story is a careful selection and filtering of memories from his past to explain the events that led to the shattering of his family. He blames the civil war and the marginalisation that the Tutsi are subjected to, both in Rwanda and Burundi, for these eventualities. Gaby projects the civil war as being responsible for his detachment from the war. He demonstrates how the civil war affects him and his family despite his parents’ efforts to protect them. Gaby seems to challenge the effectiveness of the Child protectionist frames during civil wars through memory. The memoir reveals the traumas faced by children during war and the limitations of the child protectionist frames. No matter how much children are shielded from the atrocities of war, they find a way of breaking all shields and seeping into children’s lives. The memoir also challenges the portrayal of children as uncomprehending and vulnerable

victims of war and, as such, offers an authoritative voice on the effects of war and marginalisation on children.

3.3. The Liminal Identity of the Child Soldier, the Uncanny and the Memories of War in Emmanuel Jal's *War Child*

War Child represents the role of marginalisation and violence in placing children in liminal spaces. The child soldiers participate in active conflict after undergoing intense training meant to make soldiers out of the children. The study contends that this training and eventual participation in active conflict places children in liminal spaces, as there exists a paradox in the binary opposition of child versus soldier and victims versus perpetrator. This chapter, therefore, explores the child protectionist frames placed to shield children from the effects of war and how the child characters circumvent these frames. It also assesses the liminal spaces in which children are placed when they participate in active conflict.

In *War Child*, Jal tells a story of the civil war in Sudan, fuelled by ethnic, political and religious divisions. He describes how he witnesses, as a child, the hate his community is subjected to by Muslim Arabs who regard them as slaves. "They will remain slaves beneath us just as they are meant to be" (4), "We will conquer them. It's Allah's will that they are slaves" (5). Jal narrates the civil war that takes his mother and tears his family apart. As a child, even though his community stereotyped as inferior and should be enslaved because that is what God created them to be, Jal still looks at life through a positive lens because his mother is a constant reminder of what is still good in the world. However, as the civil war rages on, he experiences a lot of violence and deaths that change his view of life. He watches his aunt raped, people beaten, burnt alive, shot dead and experiences constant attacks that always have him, his mother and his siblings

running for safety. He and his family also lose touch with each other for long periods because of the war. Despite all this, the situation is still not too atrocious for Jal, until his mother dies and his father gives him up to be a child soldier. The kind of training that Jal and other child soldiers are put through, coupled with his hate for the Arabs, who blame them for what he has gone through, fuels Jal's craving for revenge. The training, separation from his family, and the need to prove that he is mature enough to be a child soldier create a situation where he is caught in an in-between world of adulthood and childhood. His young age and physique create conditions of marginalisation in him and other children of his age, so that they struggle to get by. The children are constantly under pressure to prove themselves.

This section examines the liminal space occupied by child soldiers during war. The study argues that the active participation of children in war places them in a liminal space, as it is not their war. Abdullah (2004) posits that child soldiers are recruited to the battle fronts because of the diminishing manpower that is often occasioned by the death of grown-up, able-bodied men who can fight. This recruitment is both necessary and due to the ease with which children can be manipulated because of their young age (Hynd, 2020). The recruitment of these child soldiers, whether voluntarily or forcibly, is made possible by the circumstances that each of them faces back at home, including poverty, death of parents as a result of the war, separation from family or lack of education (Oloya, 2013). Having parents or responsible adults to take care of the children gives them stability. Being separated from their families deprives children of "protection, sustenance and authority of their families, communities and social institutions" (Abdullah, 2004). The entry into the armed forces and becoming a child soldier is often due to the failure of their parents to protect them. Jal is recruited as a

child soldier, after losing his mother to war, with the lure that he will get an education and return to help his community.

The recruitment of children situates them in spaces between child and soldier, cruelty and warmth, protection and brutalisation, tenderness and hardness (Tembo, 2017). Nuxoll (2009) believes that the initiation hardships during the training of child soldiers are considered necessary for converting children into adults who can fight. During this initiation, childhood is suspended or discontinued altogether to construct a new self, a soldier (Kyulanova, 2010). The identities of these children are thus rendered fluid and liminal. The concept of liminality was introduced by Arnold van Gennep (1909), who viewed it as a transitional period between a previous world and the incorporation into a new one. Gennep calls this a “rite of passage”.

Turner (1969) describes liminality as a “threshold” (358), a place “betwixt and between the positions assigned and arrayed by law, custom, convention” (359). Liminality is thus a threshold that separates one space from another. Haskam et al. (2022) assert that liminality encompasses both the past and the future. For Wels et al (2011), liminality is the middle of a phase, “a place in between no longer and not yet” (1). Moosavania et al. (2018) call this liminal space, a “third space” (334). Homi Bhabha conceptualizes liminality as a dynamic in-between space marked by ambiguity and indeterminacy. This unique space fosters hybridity, encouraging new identities and perspectives to emerge. These definitions suggest an in-between space that is ambivalent, ambiguous and fluid. This study utilises the concept of liminality to explore the space occupied by child soldiers during their initiation into war and their rehabilitation back into society afterward. The study posits that liminal spaces signify places in the margins that constitute otherness, therefore, the recruitment of children into war is an act of marginalisation.

The definition of the term child soldier in itself is problematic as it presents a paradox that suggests a place between adulthood and childhood. The child soldier (Denov 2010) or juvenile combatants (Abdullah, 2004) blurs the notion of “childhood innocence” (2010, 2) with the brutality of war because it presents the children as being vulnerable and yet also “vicious persecutors” (Abdullah 2004, 239). In Denov’s view, age is not the only problem with the definition of the term child soldier as the symbols that are conjured up by the term soldier represent “men with extensive military training in active combat” (2). The term “soldier” denotes a man, a grown-up who is physically independent and rational enough to make certain decisions. Since the child lacks these attributes, they cannot fully participate in the adult world (Saro-Wiwa, 2017). Soldiering, according to Saro-Wiwa, compels children to engage in mature behaviour that is otherwise prohibited by age. As such, the child soldier is forced to commit acts that are beyond his comprehension and which he should be protected from. In this sense, therefore, there is an apparent oxymoron that accompanies the definition of this term, which suggests a place in between the world of childhood and adulthood, and the child soldier resides in the margin. Oloya (2013) seems to prefer the use of the term “child-inducted soldier” as opposed to “child soldier” or “juvenile combatants. This is because, in Oloya’s view, for children to be viewed as soldiers they have to go through intense training that is meant to transform them into “hardened killers” (21).

War Child portrays how the child soldiers are being stripped of their identities and “re-socialised into the cultures and power hierarchies of armed groups, which were often framed as 'new family units to capitalise on juvenile loyalties and disciplinary structures” (Hynd 2020, 8). Hynd describes the child soldier narratives as highlighting the liminality of child combatants by presenting the binary oppositions of child versus soldier and victim versus savage. Jal’s memoir describes the liminal spaces that

juxtapose the state of the child soldiers as the sacrificial victims and unfeeling robots who kill indiscriminately. Jal comes from a community that is already marginalised because of its race and religion.

The memoir adopts a katabatic approach in its writing. Jal frames his experiences in a jagged manner that brings forth his disrupted childhood, the militarisation of identities and the constant liminal spaces between war and peace, safety and danger, protection and brutalisation. This style of writing is necessitated by the fact that the memoir is written from memory. Memory, apart from being selective, does not chronologically present itself (Longo, 2018). Since the author is piecing together memories of the past, the jagged back-and-forth manner in which the memories are presented is to be expected. The civil war that Jal presents is a result of the historical placement of the Christian Sudanese on the periphery by the powerful riverine Sudanese living in the heartland along the Nile (Collins, 2007).

The colonial regimes pitted the two communities (the North and the South) against each other based on their race. They encouraged the North to practice Islam because it was perceived as more similar to the Middle East. In contrast, the South was encouraged to practice Christianity because it was perceived as more similar to the people of East Africa (Tembo, 2017). The independence of Sudan from the British granted the North more power over state resources, leaving the South marginalised. Francis (2001) claims that the North always saw the South as “weak and underdeveloped” (1) and thus could be easily “moulded along the Islamic lines of the North” (2). According to Francis, the North advocated for Arabization and Islamization to promote national unity. However, the South met this with resistance, further widening the differences between the North and the South. These differences thus escalated to genocidal levels.

Apart from the religious and racial differences, there was also the fight for resources, especially oil produced in the South, which left the North with less revenue. However, since the North controlled the government, they waged war on the South, aiming to control all the resources. Sudan has been entrenched in a series of civil wars since 1956, but the longest one, which Jal represents in his memoir and which he participates in as a child soldier, is from 1983 to 1992, when he is rescued. During this war, close to 2 million civilians were killed, and more than four million were forced to flee from their homes. It also resulted in the conscription of young boys to fight as “*Jenajesh*” (child soldiers). In *War Child*, Jal describes the hate that he feels for the Arabs, whom he blames for his circumstances and those of his people, which fuels his desire to be trained as a soldier and “kill the *Jallabas*” (Arabs). Jal writes this story from the point of view of a child who witnesses the violence that is meted out on his family and community by the Arabs and the circumstances in which he loses his entire family and how his father surrenders him to the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SLPA) to be trained as a child soldier and how he later participates in the killing of the Arabs.

The recruitment and training of the young boys presented in the text place them in liminal spaces as they struggle between pleasing their commanders and fearing these commanders, as well as the fear of death. Liminality creates the feeling of the *uncanny*, which inherently refers to the return of something familiar in a way that arouses dread and horror (Freud, 1919). This horror is often aroused by repressed fear. The familiar, therefore, returns in a frightening way that makes it unfamiliar. Bhabha views the uncanny as a state of lacking a home, a feeling of the breakdown between the world and the home, a state he refers to as the “unhomely”. Bhabha defines the unhomely not as a state of homelessness, but as a sense of dislocation that arises when the boundaries between the outside world and the domestic domain blur (Quoted in Russell 2017). One

then experiences fear and displacement. Once the familiar is rendered unfamiliar, the homely becomes unhomely. The death of Jal's mother and the war that wreaks havoc on him and his community create in him the feeling of the unhomely that leaves him in the margins always traversing through safety and danger. Even in the uncertainties of war, Jal's mother is his steady hand, his happy place. His mother's death destroys that stability and makes him vulnerable.

The hungrier I got, the more I missed my mother. I was sure that if she was with us, we wouldn't have struggled so much, and I longed for her so much, her smell, her sound. But most of all I missed her presence -fixed and reassuring in all the chaos. Without her, I feared the war would suck me into its dark heart at any sound and my chest felt hollow with longing (36).

It is this vulnerability that dominates him, and the SPLA exploits it. The naivety of the armies' intentions draws him and his fellow child soldiers into war because they believe in their good intentions and because there is always a promise of a better tomorrow in their hands. Being a child who has experienced intense pain and trauma, resistance seems like a good relief, as does the desire for revenge—the urge to fight back and free his community from years of oppression and murder. The adoption by the SPLA replaces parental protection, creating a new family. Fellow child soldiers and the SPLA become their new family, and for a moment, the familiar returns—the feeling of home, albeit in a frightening way.

I knew more than ever now that the SLPA would one day save me. Babba had sent me away, Nagai, my brothers, and my sisters must have forgotten me, but the SLPA were still looking after me and would one day win back my country. (68)

Contrary to the unconditional love that these child soldiers previously enjoyed in their homes, the protection that is offered to them by the SLPA is conditional and has to be reciprocated through unflinching obedience towards their commanders. The fear of being deserted or punished fuels this obedience. Kakhuta-Banda (2014) observes that fear and the lack of mental development of child soldiers make it easier for them to be controlled. There is also in these children a deep-seated fear of abandonment, as most of them have already lost their families. Their superiors manipulate this repressed fear that often lingers in their subconscious. This fear is involuntary and brings back an old and familiar feeling that repeats itself or as Freud puts it is a “compulsion to repeat” (1919). The involuntary repetition of what would otherwise be innocent is what makes the experience uncanny. The child soldiers are, therefore, left in a liminal state of love and admiration for their commanders and fear of being punished for every small indiscretion or being hurt by older boys. This liminal state denotes “the double” (Freud, 1919), as the SLPA is a source of safety and protection on the one hand and a source of fear on the other hand. What is homely at one point can also be unhomely.

For these children who have been accepted into the military, they must undergo rigorous induction training. Oloya (2013) defines induction as a process through which the child enters into the process of becoming a combatant. The induction is a torturous, messy and bloody process that often leads to the death of many while the survivors emerge not as children but as young adults; men ready to fight a war. “Week after week, we were drilled. Pulling ourselves on bleeding elbows along the ground as bullets were fired into the air above us to make sure we kept low” (86). Liminality resulting from training suspends the rights these children had before recruitment or eliminates them (Kyulanova, 2010). The intensity of the training is supposed to discontinue childhood completely and prepare them for the battlefield. Jal writes, “If boys bled, vomited,

fainted or fell, they were left behind” (87). The intense training is a rite of passage and like any such rite ritualistic. First, ideological teachings and propaganda are fed to them daily to fuel hate and make them more receptive to killing.

“The Arabs have no mercy”, he roared. “They are to blame for every drop of blood spilt, for every child left lying in the dust, for every boy stolen as a slave, for every girl taken. They have destroyed our people, our homes, our land, and our religion. They have starved and murdered us, and now it is time for us to fight. (73)

This propaganda is meant to create hate and anger, which motivates them to kill without remorse for their victims. They are taught war songs, which they sing throughout the training and even on the battlefield as a way of celebrating their killings. These war songs carry ideological and political messages and snap out fear. As Nuxoll 2009 explains, they “create sociality, comradeship and courage in the fighter” (3).

The children of southern Sudan
Are not scared
Yes, yes, we are all men
So what if we die?
I swear, I Swear
Even if I do
I’ll fuck your mother and your father too. (95)

The training is, therefore, a third space that the soldier occupies before becoming a fully-fledged soldier. The training period, for that reason, is a transitional space between childhood and adulthood, between being a boy and being a soldier. This intense training serves one primary purpose: to strangle childhood and create an adult that is capable of going to war, that is capable of killing. Nonetheless, vulnerability is inevitable since while training is intense, the recruits are still children. Jal has to remind himself that he is a soldier constantly. “I was a soldier” (85) “I am a soldier” (87) “I was a soldier ...I was a man, not a coward” (100). This phrase is repeated throughout the memoir when

he feels vulnerable, emotional or weak. This is meant to give him strength and take away the childhood in him while inviting the man, the soldier. This illustrates the struggle to completely abandon the old world of childhood and fully transition into the new world of adulthood. The child soldier resides in an ambiguous in-between world that is a hybrid of both worlds. More often than not, the child soldiers also find themselves in spaces between pity and hate, between being a victim and being a perpetrator.

Regardless of the intense training, age and body size still keep in marginal positions, especially with older child soldiers. Younger child soldiers like Jal experience hardships as the older boys take advantage of their helplessness. They are beaten, raped, or used to cool porridge.

Soon they had learnt to smear it on the backs of smaller boys, who screamed as the burning porridge cooled on their skin before the bigger ones picked it off in sticky chunks, leaving red burns behind (82).

These younger soldiers, therefore, remain marginalised as they cannot receive the same privileges as their teenage counterparts, while simultaneously being unable to show weakness. The young soldiers need to prove themselves to avoid constant punishments, and the only way to do so is by demonstrating bravery and fighting in the war. Jal is angry with the commander because he will not let him go to war. He tells Jal, “You are still a small boy, you are a junior, and you will have a bright future one day when we send you to school. We need you to go there and learn things to make our country great.” (132). The need for the young soldiers to prove themselves worthy of being soldiers and hopefully get out of the margins dehumanises them into killing machines that are feared. Their actions on the battlefield determine how they are viewed and treated among their peers and the leadership. Fighting and perpetrating violent actions

and truly asserting their power over others is a way of challenging their marginalisation and putting themselves at the centre of power.

I knew I had passed, the test when I wasn't punished the next day and the *Talemgi* gave out promotions and rankings to the best boys. I was among them. I had the biggest rank among boys like me, and I felt proud. It meant I could tell older boys to fetch me water and they had to do it ... I had earned my rank ... I was a good soldier. (91)

The advantages that accompany their show of bravery in training and war, further fuel their need to perform better. It is for them a survival tactic. In an either-kill-or-be-killed situation, the child soldiers' survival rests on their performance on the battlefield. These child soldiers perfect the art of murdering at random and without thinking. They shoot at random and with the slightest provocation. "I've heard the big soldiers talk. They are scared of the *jenajesh* because we shoot too quickly" (133). There is also the fear of being seen as weak that drives them to be deadly killers. "Looking down at my still feet, I knew I had to keep moving and attack as I'd been taught to. I would be known as a coward if I ran away." (101). The repressed fear of abandonment and being punished is again at play. For many boys, violence, not only becomes an attractive and accessible way to manhood (Hynd 2020, 10), but it also gives them a sense of power (Gagiano, 2020). The best way to get out of the margins and be treated with the seriousness they feel that they deserve is by showing their prowess at war, in the way they handle the guns, how they handle the training, how they take punishment and how well they know in the battlefield. Jal is lauded by a senior soldier for killing as many Arabs as he could. He is promoted for showing he could handle the gun.

“Well done, Jal,” the big soldier said as he walked up to Arabs, pointing his gun at the two injured who lay in the dirt. “Your bullets did this.” He moved his gun to point at the three bodies on the ground. “And it was your bullets that did this too. You are a brave boy.” (140)

According to Hynd (2020), “Power and social status are garnered through displays of force and the skills, discipline, and knowledge developed to become an effective soldier” (11). In my opinion, young combatants like Jal need to excel to overcome the marginalisation they face. It is their way out of the liminal spaces they are placed in and their way to access power. Violence is, therefore, a way in which they legitimize their place and being.

Jal’s memory of his past both during the training and the war serves a very important purpose. The memory occupies an in-between position of the past and the present and therefore is liminal. Jal crosses borders between his childhood and his present state of adulthood, sifting through memory to write the narrative. The narrative, therefore, occupies a fairly fluid position moving from a child’s voice to the memory of an adult. According to Mueller-Greene (2022), “memory oscillates between the inside and the outside, connecting the subjective and the objective, the imaginary and the real, the self and the other, the individual and the collective” (264). Memory then, is the nexus between the psychological and the physical. It is located in an “in-between zone, on the threshold where the outside world meets the inside” (264). Memory in narrative writing can be viewed as being liminal in the sense that it borders between remembrance, imagination and creativity.

Berents (2019) views child soldier memoirs as “a powerful, culturally recognised space for children’s voices in accounts of war” (463). Hynd (2020) contends that child soldier memoirs give audiences to the African conflicts and the effects of war on children.

Although these memoirs are often viewed as a means of engaging humanitarian organisations, as they bring to the surface children's suffering during the war, they also serve as a way of challenging protectionist discourses by showing how war permeates the frames put forth to protect children (Kaoma, 2018). Many scholars who have adopted structuralist perspectives in analysing the role played by child soldiers during the war have pathologised them as threatening and uncivilised. They present them as "killing machines" or unfeeling robots (that kill without reason). However, in writing the memoirs, these former child soldiers are telling their side of the story. They are giving a voice to their experiences of marginalisation. Though child narratives and memoirs are typically written from history and actual events that take place in history, these memoirs seem to be less about the war and more about their personal experiences during this war. The memoirs, therefore, challenge the portrayal of child soldiers in history books and instead tell their own stories.

At the beginning of the text Jal sets the record straight; "this one is not meant to be a history of a country to be read by scholars. It is the story of a boy, his memories, and what he witnessed" (Preface). The memoir, therefore, should not be considered a forensic account of Sudan's civil war but rather the story of an individual. Although memoirs typically talk about history and thus are always assumed to be true, they narrate stories that involve selection, silences, exaggeration and the creation of larger-than-life figures for the narrator. It is also a way that the narrators can process their own marginalisation and trauma while at the same time giving agency to their experiences. The writing of these memoirs is a way of telling their own truth. As Hynd (2020) explains, the writing of the memoir is by no means a recording of history or an account of the forensic truth but is a rather personal narrative that he calls "affective truth" (8). As such the author's memory of the past borders the on real and the imaginary.

Jal often finds himself traversing the past and the present throughout the text. The memories of his family, the violence and the current circumstances are to be warped and often cross boundaries. The memories of the war in his village and the murders of his people create a katabatic effect in Jal. Whenever he needs to get the strength to fight, inflict pain or kill, he goes back to his village. He places pictures of his people's suffering against his enemies. "Pictures. Pictures in my head", is a phrase that is repeated almost as many times as the phrases "I am a soldier" and "I was a soldier". This is done especially in situations where fear seems to be overwhelming him. I had to close down my fear and push it into the place where I'd hide it. I knew what I had to do" (152). As he exerts his revenge, he imagines that what he is doing is for his people:

Pictures of the past rushed in my head: Mamma screaming at me to run, Nyaruach crying as the soldiers appeared in the distance, smoke rising from a village we were running from, the bodies of the children lying on the floor, helicopters rushing overhead as I jumped into the water to escape them Babba's face as he said good-bye. (152)

Going back to the past and conjuring up the suffering of his people and that of his own seems provides him with the fuel he needs to exert his revenge. The memories then replace fear with anger. Jal writes:

Anger surged in me like a wave inside me. It was strong, hard, and clean. I remembered again. ... I would take revenge for all they had done to my family and my people. My body relaxed as I felt anger rushing into my veins. (153)

The feeling of control comes with inflicting pain, the memories of his own family give him the strength to fight and kill with no emotion and the training hardens him and his fellow child soldiers. The memories of war seep deep into the unconscious and even the safety of being with the troops does not guarantee his safety. He might be safe from physical harm among the soldiers, but the trauma affects his unconscious. The intrusion

of these horrible acts brings the feeling of the unhomely. What is homely and familiar turns into horror. The memories of his mother which once provided Jal with comfort and assurance are now a source of torture and pain. It is, for this reason, that he turns violent. The uncanny in itself is associated with the experience of liminality, margins, borders, and frontiers (Royle 2003 vii (quoted in Macmillan 2021)). Transgressions of the borders of the familiar and the unfamiliar, safety and danger, belonging and not belonging destroy the sense of the homely. The individual is, therefore, left in a constant state of marginality and liminality. In essence, there is an effect of the double that challenges what is real and what is imagined, the present and the past.

Jal and his fellow combatants sometimes cannot differentiate between what is real and what is unreal. Jal explains that he realises that the hardest part was when it was over. Jal cannot eat meat for days after he sees some burnt bodies. The past and the present are warped and the child soldiers keep traversing both the past and the present, sometimes almost at the same time. It is no wonder the smell of meat reminds them of the burnt bodies. He witnesses other boys going through trauma. The headaches that Jal gets are a manifestation of the trauma of watching his people killed or killing them himself:

When the battle at the front of the front line had been bad, I didn't want to eat meat for days as I remembered the smell. It reminded me of being a small boy and was so heavy I was sure it had sunk my heart forever, just as it had on the day I walked down the Death Route with Mamma and Nyakuoth. I felt torn inside, knowing I was safer at Kurki 1 but still dreaming of seeing a *jallaba's* face as I shot his heart (144)

The trauma of killing the Jallabas breaks the boundaries of the conscious and the unconscious so that even the safety of being among his troops does not guarantee him psychological safety. This is what Freud terms as 'the compulsion to repeat'. The

repressed memories of the atrocities committed on the war front overrun the pleasure principle, making some aspects of the mind scary. The traumatic experiences, though external, are quickly incorporated into the mind. Bloom (1999) explains that it is not the trauma itself that does the damage, but rather how the individual's mind and body react to the traumatic experience. In Bloom's view, a traumatic experience affects the entire person and their thought process. The trauma of war affects a lot of child soldiers to the point that some go mad while others commit suicide.

At the end of the civil war, child soldiers are expected to be rehabilitated and reintroduced into society as children. However, most of them come out as young adults. This is what Moynagh calls 'the unmaking' of a child soldier or what Kyulanola (2010) terms as "undoing the rite of passage" (28). Moynagh views this process as a futile task since "once made, the child soldier cannot be unmade" (538). The training and participation in active conflict is a deformation that becomes permanent. After the war, the former child soldiers are subjected to a rehabilitation process that is meant to restore the status of the once "adulterated" children (Saro-Wiwa, 2017). Withdrawal from military life is supposed to transform them back into children. Saro-Wiwa names four stages that are normally followed in the rehabilitation of these soldiers which include "removal of the child from the battlefield, treatment of their numerous traumas, adoption by a Westerner, and finally resettlement" (49). Nonetheless, what is done cannot be undone, at least not instantly. According to Kyulanova, liminality has a transformational power that destroys the past to construct a new self. Kyulanova explains that the rehabilitation process demands that the former soldier denounce his acquired maturity and goes back to being a child.

Jal's adoption by McCune is supposed to bring back his childhood. However, this forced reversal places him in yet another liminal space since what has been learnt and

the experiences during the war cannot be simply unlearned. The problem with most of the rehabilitation strategies placed to remove child soldiers from war situations involves basically just that, removal from the battlefield and placement into the community. What is lacking, however, is the counselling services and thought-out structures that would be useful in incorporating them into this new world. Fitting into the new world becomes a major challenge because he is used to living in a constant state of alertness and danger. It is then no wonder Jal finds it difficult to fit in. Referring to him as a boy makes him angry.

“You’re a young boy,” Emma would say as she put me back. “You must sleep and grow”

It made me angry when she said such things. I wasn’t a boy. I was a soldier, and at night my dreams haunted me more than they ever had. I would see pictures in my head-machetes cutting, mouths screaming, helicopters firing-and wake up covered in sweat as I should in the darkness. Sometimes Emma would try to cuddle me, but I didn’t like it. She was a woman, who should not see my fear (182)

Expecting them to renounce to simply forget their former life of difficulty and go back to being the children they are supposed to be instantly is not possible. The suspicions of the world outside are not of help to the situation either, “he was a child soldier, he’s crazy’, they said” (190). The suspicion and the ill-treatment that is meted on him outside the military camp keep him in another liminal space. It is not enough that he is being forced to reclaim his childhood, he is also being taken back to war by still being referred to as a child soldier. The child soldiers, therefore, occupy liminal spaces during training, during the war and after the war as they reintegrate back into society.

The writing of this memoir for Jal is a purposive selection of the memories of war to illustrate how children are placed in liminal spaces by being recruited and trained as child soldiers and later sent into armed conflict to fight a war that they should not fight.

3.4. Conclusion

War affects children no matter the boundaries or protectionist frames that parents or guardians place to shield them from the atrocities of violence. Children are not often the passive participants in conflict as it is thought to be. Their curiosity, invisibility and observations allow them to see more than what is thought. Child soldiers also find themselves in marginal spaces where they are victims of war and perpetrators at the same time. The hate that is instilled in them through experiencing violence and being fed with propaganda, coupled with their need to survive during conflict, creates situations that demand the use of violence. This violence, though they feel is justified, finds a way into their subconscious and creates the feeling of the unhomely.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE BODY AS A SITE FOR, WITNESS TO AND TESTIMONY OF TRAUMA.

4.1. Introduction

Violence causes both physical and psychological trauma to its victims. Though traumatic events are external, they are quickly incorporated into the mind causing psychological trauma, since the body, mind, and soul are aligned (Kiao, 2019). Trauma is also known to shatter the body's response, making it hard for those who experience it to react immediately (Helsel, 2014). The thesis in this chapter is that since the body is present in traumatic situations, it witnesses these experiences and can testify to them. It is the argument that though traumatised bodies are sometimes deemed rightless as in the case of refugees, the body finds its way of coping and responding to trauma when it is finally able to. The chapter, therefore, examines the body as having the ability to survive trauma, testify to it, and finally respond to traumatic experiences through revenge. The chapter analyses Courtemanche's *A Sunday at the Pool in Kigali*, Ruganda's *Shreds of Tenderness*, and Kombani's *The Last Villains of Molo*. These three texts present the trauma of marginalisation and genocide, the trauma of 'refugeeism' and revenge as a response to trauma respectively. The chapter traces how the body is subjected to, experiences, and responds to trauma.

4.2. The Body as a Witness and as a Testimony of Trauma in *A Sunday at the Pool in Kigali* (2000)

A Sunday at the Pool in Kigali describes Rwanda before and during the genocide that left many people dead and hordes of others traumatised. The text presents two ethnic communities, Hutu and Tutsi, which have been pitted against each other by the colonial regime. The bias of the colonial community over which ethnic group they could work

with over the other has created discord between the two ethnic communities, a hatred that continues even after independence. The elevation of one group over the other culminates in ethnic violence that leads to the loss of hundreds of thousands of lives while survivors are left with traumatic physical and psychological scars. Gentile, a Hutu girl is subjected to humiliation and torture because she looks like a Tutsi. The novel follows the life of Gentile and uses her as a representation of the marginalisation and the kinds of violence that her community suffers. Through Gentile, the author not only brings to the fore the inner fears of the Tutsi community but also the ambiguity of identity.

The body, while being the recipient of the acts of violence performed on it, is also the cover of the soul and mind. Violence though exerted on the body affects both the mind and the soul. In essence, all forms of violence have a physical and psychological effect on the body, as the body is intrinsically connected to the mind (Kiao, 2019) and are thus traumatic. It is the supposition in this part of the study that the body testifies to these violations. The characters in the text, are subjected to violence that results in mutilations on both their bodies and their psyche. They are therefore left with wounds to the mind body and soul that comprise trauma.

The word trauma originates from the Greek word for '*wound*'. Though the word is now used to describe emotional and psychological wounds, Greeks only used it to describe physical injuries. Medically, the word is still used to describe the physical injuries of patients but it is also used to describe psychological injuries. This section assesses physical injuries as a form of trauma that is a testimony to deeper psychological injury. There is, therefore, a relationship between physical and psychological trauma though it is not always linear. Caruth (1991) describes trauma as "an overwhelming experience of sudden or catastrophic events in which the response to the event occurs in delayed,

uncontrolled, repetitive appearance of hallucinations and other phenomena” (Caruth 11). Caruth views trauma as an event that fragments consciousness, but does not follow a direct pattern and cannot be explained. She bases her sentiments on psychological trauma’s tendency to recur through memory and hallucinations that do not always tell the story in a linear pattern. Mambrol (2018) seems to agree with Caruth and adds that trauma can be defined only in relation to remembering. The study agrees with Caruth and Mambrol that trauma as Etts (2008) puts is a “sudden disorienting and painful event” (2) that disrupts the sense of order and control. The study contends that this trauma is as much physical as it is psychological.

The body is present as a witness of trauma and can testify to what happened though not in totality. In this case, the testimony rendered by the body is as fragmented as that told verbally by the victims from memory. It is physical at times and psychological at times and sometimes it is both at the same time. The term ‘testimony’ on the other hand, is derived from the Latin word “testimonio” and can be defined as an authentic narrative, told by a witness who is moved to narrate by the urgency of the situation (Gorge Yudice (n.d) cited in Cubilie and Good 2004) Testimony is, therefore, the voice of a witness about a traumatic experience. The witness testifies by giving a true account of the traumatic experience. The study takes the body as a witness to the traumatic experience that the characters are subjected to and testifies to it through scars and wounds both physical and psychological.

The period preceding the genocide in *A Sunday at the Pool in Kigali* is characterised by the classification of ethnicities according to their bodies’ physiques. It is an exercise that began from colonialism, not just as a way to tell the two ethnicities apart but also to justify the inclinations of the colonial government to work with the Tutsis over the Hutus. The Hutu majority are placed by the colonial government in the margins, as they

are termed irrational and unstable while their Tutsi counterparts are considered skilful, intelligent, and elegant, therefore, aristocrats; cut for leadership.

The Hutu, a poor farmer, is short and squat and has the nose characteristic of the Negroid faces. He is good-natured but naïve, coarse and unintelligent. The Hutu is deceitful and lazy, and quick to take offence. He is a typical Negro. The Tutsi, a nomadic cattle grazier, is tall and slender. His skin is light brown on account of his Northern origins. He is intelligent and skilful at trade [...] the colonial administration in Ruanda-Urundi would do well to obtain the assistance of Tutsi... (Courtemanche 2000, 22)

This stereotypical classification of the two communities paves the way for the marginalisation of the Hutus. As such, the Tutsis get all the government jobs from the colonial government as they are viewed as being more trustworthy than the Hutus. The physical appearance of the Rwandan people becomes a testimony of ethnicity. The Hutus and Tutsis are easily told apart by looking at their physical structure. The Tutsi is tall, slender and with a long nose while the Hutu is short, stout and with a wide nose. The body, however, is used in this context not just as an identifying feature of ethnicity but also of intelligence and temperament which forms a basis for the subjugation of the Hutu people.

This systematic marginalisation of the Hutu by the colonial government forces the Hutu people to find ways to assert themselves. Gentile's grandfather, for instance, works hard to ensure that his children acquire the Tutsi status. "Kawa would not allow his sons and the sons of his sons to be officially inferior beings forever, negroes among negroes" (26). By using all of his wealth to secure intermarriages for his children, he is trying to alter the body, to give his grandchildren the Tutsi identity and hopefully give them a "respectable" place as prescribed by the colonial government. On the other hand, the marginalisation also activates their collective identity and the need for self-

preservation in other members of the Hutu community. According to Bloom (2018), to deal with stress, people tend to affiliate in order “to receive joint protection in threatening times” (7). Be that as it may, as Bloom explains, the same affiliatory behaviour that was initially activated for survival may result in “moral injury” (cited from Shay 2012). This “moral injury” results from feelings of hurt and betrayal and could turn destructive. As the Hutu majority rely on each other for comfort, they also want to take revenge and presumably, take their country back. They are the majority, which should mean that they should hold power and have the best jobs, but their physique has become a hindrance according to the West.

The Hutus’ affiliation and need to survive thus culminates in genocide aimed at eliminating the Tutsi minority that they blame for their marginalisation. Marginalisation, in this case, is an act of violence since it reduces the potential of people and makes them feel less human (Young, 2006). Since violence exerted on the body is an exercise of power (Fassin, 2011), the desire of the Hutu majority to eliminate their Tutsi counterparts is not only a power move but also an act of keeping mementoes or trophies of their conquests through scars left on the bodies of their victims. Power and violence here, seem to be “mirror images” that are proportionately related to the body as cause and consequence (Fassin 2009). The Tutsis that were once at the centre of power now find themselves at the peripheries and their identifying marker is the body. The physique, appearance, height, and weight among others become the calibration used by their Hutu counterparts to assess their identity and thus put a target on their backs. The Hutu are now using the classification that the colonial regime once applied to marginalise the Hutu to take revenge on the Tutsi.

The identity cards issued in Rwanda before the 1994 genocide, as presented in the text, cite the ethnicity of the cardholder but during the days preceding the massacre, the

militia is warned about the cards and told to look at the physical features other than what is stated in the identity cards. According to the militia, the card could be bought, but the body could not. Who is and who is not to be eliminated in the genocide can no longer be determined by what the identity cards say but by what the body testifies. Colonel Athanase tells the militia:

And don't trust identity papers, use your heads,' snapped Colonel Athanase. 'If they're tall, if they're thin if they're pale, they're Tutsis, cockroaches we must wipe off the face of the earth (204-205).

The Tutsi and the Tutsi look-alike, even if they are Hutu, are subjected to trauma based on what they look like and not just who they are. Gentile, for example, is considered a Tutsi because her body testifies to a Tutsi physiology even though she is Hutu, which puts her life in danger. Cyprien makes this clear to Valcourt on many occasions: "that narrow nose, that milk-chocolate colouring and that figure (75). "Valcourt, your Gentile is Tutsi, even if you swear, she isn't. Her death's already written in the sky" (89). No matter what the identity card says, she is Tutsi. "You've a Hutu card because you bought it or you slept with an official" (89). No one believes that Gentile is Hutu because she looks like a Tutsi.

The violence, however, does not begin with physical maiming and murders. It begins with psychological and emotional torture. Methodical descriptions, over time, of the physical features of those to be tortured and maimed have created constant fear of what might happen to the bodies of these characters thus also creating psychological trauma. Their bodies have become a constant reminder of who they are and what will be done to them because of what they look like, and the insinuations about what people with these kinds of bodies will be put through. The elimination of the Tutsi is referred to as work. One of the radio stations uses this word during its broadcasts; "We're starting the

work and the work's going to be done right" (94). It is a term that radio stations use to mask murder. The people, however, know exactly what is going to happen based on the preparations that have been going on. Cyprien explains to Valcourt what will happen in a not-so-euphemistic way as is done by the media:

We are going to plunge into horror never seen before in history. We're going to rape, cut throats, chop, butcher. We're going to cut open women's bellies before the eyes of their husbands, then mutilate the husbands before the wives die of loss of blood, to make sure they see each other die. And while they're dying, coming to their last breath, we'll rape their daughters, not just ten times, twenty times. And the virgins will be raped by soldiers with AIDS. We'll have the savage efficiency of the primitive and the poor. With machetes, knives and clubs we'll do better than the Americans with their smart bombs (61).

These graphic descriptions of the forms of violence to be meted on the body are gothic. Driving terror into the targets of violence aims to instil psychological trauma as the body and the mind are connected. The body that was previously the pride of the Tutsi and that acquired them respect, wealth, stature and even envy from their Hutu counterparts has now turned 'unhomely' (Bhabha, 1992). Bhabha defines 'unhomely' as the state of lacking a home, a state in which there is a feeling that there is a breakdown between the world and the home. In my view, this sense of relocation from home is brought out by marginalisation, which often dislocates people from the warmth of the familiar and creates what Gordimer terms as "freak displacement" (cited in Bhabha 1992, 145). The community that was before at the centre of power not just because of who they are but also what they look like, now find itself in the margins, afraid of losing their lives because of the same body that once kept them at the centre.

The fear of what will happen to the Tutsi body inspires recklessness in others. The body and sexual favours are traded for money, protection, revenge and temporary pleasure

that takes victims away from the grimness of their realities, however temporary. Fassin (2011) describes the body not just as a site for violence but also as a site for desire and pleasure. The Tutsi women at the hotel gladly offer their bodies up to the expatriates and the government officials to buy favours and protection.

The White refused to issue identity papers.... However, he would take the girl in exchange for silence... This is how Clementine became the property of a very ugly, pimply-faced Belgian who came and abused her every time he was in the neighbourhood. (27)

The fear of being reported to the local government officials for trying to falsify papers is so traumatising that the locals have no choice but to use their bodies as a transaction to protect themselves from more trauma. The body is thus stripped of personhood and rendered a mere object which is ironic in a way since to protect the body, the same body must be subjected to more trauma. When the body is finally infected with AIDS because of these pleasures, it also becomes a testifying spectacle of the scars inflicted on it by the disease. Methode, for example, is one of the characters who die of the disease; “Methode now weighed only about forty kilos. An insubstantial, fragile assemblage of memories and vague evocations of what once had been arms, legs, a neck” (38). The trauma of illness produces scars that bear witness to the abuse to which the body has been subjected.

While these physical scars leave tangible imprints on the body, they also testify to deeper trauma, the fear of what is coming. For some characters, the thought of the brutalities they will be subjected to once the war begins inspires recklessness. Bloom (2018) explains that judgement and decision-making become impaired under extreme stress. Fear turns into recklessness. The Rwanda that is presented in the text is not only fighting war and ethnicity but also battling with the AIDs epidemic; “men and women

dying of AIDS and malaria, thousands of small households that know nothing of the pool” (2). The characters, however, are seen to be more afraid of the war than they are afraid of the disease. Characters like Cyprien make it clear that they would rather die from “pleasure” than from the machete; “What is the difference if a machete or an infected cock did the job? Yes, there was a difference. A cock was kinder than a machete” (93). The characters are well aware that they cannot escape violence, the only choice they have is what form of violence their bodies would rather endure. This choice grants them a semblance of power, determining their fate which no longer makes them victims and thus a way of coping with trauma.

Characters like Justin, the pool attendant, use their afflictions to exert revenge on what they see as their marginalisation. Like Gentile, these Tutsi men are objectified and seen as objects of pleasure because of their body structure. Justin, the pool attendant, is angry at the white people for his objectification and the mere fact that he is a pool attendant and capitalises on the body as a tool for his form of revenge. “He was getting even for being a pool attendant and mere lust object for the boss ladies. He was getting even, too, for being black” (129). Justin uses his body and his sexual skills to entice white women. He claims to torture them through the withdrawal of passion, something he freely offers during his first encounters with these women. By offering them the best of what he feels they have never had, he is making them anticipate more encounters and more clandestine relationships. In withdrawing his body from them and subsequently his affection, he is torturing their bodies. “And it was then, when they were begging for a second humiliation, that real vengeance came. He said no” (130). Coupled with the fact that he is infecting them with HIV, he views himself as exerting complete revenge for his objectification by the white women at the hotel.

The genocide produces masses of mutilated bodies, both dead and alive. The dead bodies on the side of the road or in buildings are witnesses to what the departed souls went through and now testify to their trauma. According to Moore (2009), bodies are walking texts that can remember and speak. Moore asserts that the body can act as a “map for traumatic happenings” (176). Long after the characters are dead, the body, which was a witness to their experiences, testifies to their trauma and the atrocities that these people have endured. Every wound tells a story. The body again becomes a site for memory. It remembers the infliction it has witnessed and testifies to its effects. The body remembers through wounds and scars from survivors and tells a story that most trauma victims cannot tell.

Looking at the bodies that have been mutilated, one can piece together the attack that was carried out, which blow came first, and what the victim must have been doing when it happened. Most of the women at the side of the road are found with their skirts pulled up and their inner wears at their knees and most of the time with blood oozing out of them; “The women were exposed, legs spread, breasts bared, pink or red underpants around their knees” (217). This is a clear indication that they were raped and sometimes not just by one man. The fact that these bodies are also found at the side of the roads and often near roadblocks also testifies to who committed the crime. Throughout the text, Courtemanche has made it clear that the only people who guard the roadblocks and indeed every street in the country are the militia. Therefore, the reader can already tell that the Hutu militia carries out these rapes. Long after the person is dead, the body speaks.

They found the same formless carpet of bodies, the same stench of putrefaction that enters not through the nose but through the mouth and invades one's guts. It was as if the smell of death was trying to purge everything living from Valcourt's body. (234)

Gentile goes through the most traumatising experience because of her Tutsi appearance. She is mistreated, raped, and has her breasts chopped off. This, however, is only the climax of years of humiliation and objectification. Her body, which is considered the exemplification of beauty, has become her constant source of humiliation. In the end, when the war begins, she suffers the most as the Hutus use her for revenge against the Tutsi, ironically. She writes, "Today I'm only two dirty, sticking holes they keep trying to make bigger. For them, I do not have eyes, or breasts, or thighs. I do not possess cheeks or ears" (242-243). These words written by Gentile to her husband, clearly explain what the perpetrators of violence see in the victims not as human beings but as bodies. When Gentile feels that her body has been defaced enough that death would be better, she runs to her death. Since the militiamen cannot rape her anymore as she is considered unclean, they cut off her breast, the only thing that had remained untouched and thus the only part of her body that is still feminine and also the only thing that still testifies to her beauty.

But Gentile no longer had the beauty that had driven men wild with desire ten days earlier. She was only a mass of bruises and swellings now. The two militiamen who came to look reacted with distaste. The younger, who could not have been more than sixteen, bent down and tore her shirt-dress, then, ripped off her bra. Only her breasts had been spared. They stood up, pointed and firm, like an accusation and a contradiction. The boy gave two quick strokes with his machete and Gentile's breasts opened like pomegranates. The militiamen dragged the young woman to the side of the road and left her there (246-247)

The physical trauma that Gentile has been subjected to is so intense that it is no longer just physical. The mutilation of her body robs her of her identity as a woman. For that reason, she turns her husband away when he finally finds her after months of searching. “I am not a woman anymore. Don’t you smell the sickness? Bernard, I don’t have breasts anymore.” (255) “I’m not any human anymore. I’m a body that is decomposing, an ugly thing I don’t want you to see” (255). The mutilation of her body; a physical act, has resulted in psychological trauma, resulting in self-hatred. Her identity as a woman has been dismembered and as such, she feels she is not worthy of love or to be considered a woman on account of the physical deformities inflicted on her body. Bloom (2018) posits that trauma in itself does not destroy the person, instead, it is how the mind and the body react to violent experiences that turn them traumatic. Bloom’s assertion resonates with Terr’s definition of trauma. Terr (1990) defines trauma as an external event that is quickly incorporated into the mind. Therefore, as much as it is the body that is affected by physical violence, it is how the mind processes the violence that then makes it traumatic. The body, as a witness to this violence, can only testify through scars and body language. Gentile’s body remembers the experiences as physical markers of distortion, as the mind tries to fathom the intent and ramifications of the violence.

Aside from the physical scars or verbal testimonies, the body also testifies in its own language, through actions and reactions. As Valcourt drives around the country in search of Gentile, he interviews some of the victims of the genocide. Even without having to verbalise their trauma, their body language in itself is a testimony to the extent of their trauma.

Their gaze was not empty but chillingly absent, turned inward, or quite simply dead. Like people who can see but will not. Only a few women would speak, in hushed voices, their eyes fixed on the ground, where they kept them long after they had finished their almost clinical descriptions (for they had only concrete words) of the murders of their husbands and sons. (231)

Lam (2015) explains that both physical and emotional trauma are associated with silence but while the victims of trauma cannot verbalise their experiences, the body “offers a powerful testimony to the interior world of the traumatic experience even when the survivor cannot yet speak about it” (46). Fassin (2011) asserts that the body dramatizes pain. The body language of the victims of trauma is thus a testimony of psychological pain which advances the body as a canvas for the mind and soul. Immense trauma causes numbing. Some victims cope with trauma by dissociating themselves from their experiences. It is then no wonder the victims give clinical descriptions of their experiences as if they did not happen to them. As a means of survival, they appear to have completely detached themselves from the experience. In this case, the victims appear to be devoid of emotion and only function in automation. This body language in itself portrays the magnitude of the trauma experienced.

When all is said and done, the trauma that is experienced not only affects the victims but also their witnesses and those who listen to the testimonies of these experiences. Most of the testimonies of the violated bodies that have been subjected to violence are delivered in a single session especially when it comes to the dead. As Valcourt and his friends drive all over the country in search of Gentile, they see bodies on the side of the roads, in houses, and everywhere else. They can piece up what happened to them but only have a few minutes to look before moving on to the next heap of bodies. The time spent with these witnesses is therefore not enough to develop a rapport or connection of any kind. The session is too short that it does not allow for the

development of the relationship between the witness and the listener. However, the testimony aspires to be as definitive as possible. Listening to these testimonies also leaves scars on the listener. As Levine (2006) puts it, the testimony of trauma includes the bearer, who speaks, and the listener who is no longer a bystander but a participant and co-owner of the traumatic event. The listener in Levine's point of view partially experiences the trauma too, just by listening. The listener cannot detach from the experiences of the victim. These experiences affect them too. Valcourt is a listener in most of these tragic experiences. The bodies he encounters during his search for his wife, both dead and alive, testify of trauma.

It was as if the smell of death was trying to purge everything living from Valcourt's body. His stomach had emptied repeatedly for days. Now only a trickle of bile wet the corners of his mouth (234).

The trauma affects not just the victim but also the listener. This effect is, however, not only physical but also psychological. One of the emotions that are experienced by those who listen to traumatic experiences according to Levine is bewilderment. Valcourt is so disgusted by the murder of his friend Cyprien and his wife that he has to take action. He goes from one government office to another trying to find justice for his friends even though he is fully aware no one will do anything about it. As a listener, he is burdened by his friends' experiences and apart from arranging for their descent burials and adopting their only surviving child, fighting for their justice is the only other thing he can do.

The body as presented in the text is a witness to trauma through the violence that is inflicted on it to marginalise groups and exert power over them. Though the body is a transient testimony as the flesh eventually rots, physical scars are visible and testify to the experiences of the person. The body remembers and can testify to whichever

atrocities it has been subjected to. The body and the mind are intrinsically connected and therefore the body can narrate the psychological and emotional trauma that is experienced by the victims through mannerisms (body language) and general body language like numbness and dissociation. Those who listen to the testimonies of these bodies therefore would do well to listen to the physical, verbal and psychological if they are to get the full story.

4.3. Faceless bodies: Traumatized rightless refugees in John Ruganda's *Shreds of Tenderness*

Ruganda's *Shreds of Tenderness* dramatises the military coup in Uganda in the 1970s that Idi Amin used to overthrow Milton Obote. It represents the regime's use of violence to gain and retain power. The text represents the state's use of violence to assert power through intimidation, torture, assassination, and imprisonment. The dictatorial regime arbitrarily arrests and eliminates real and imagined enemies. The text follows the lives of three siblings, Wak, Odie and Stella. Wak has been forced into exile after betrayal by his brother who puts a target on his back. Odie stays behind but seems mentally unstable, as he is seen addressing termites and conducting experiments on them. He suffers violence at the hand of the state that turns on him after he informs on his brother. Stella is worried about his mental state as she feels the atrocities suffered by Odie have affected his state of mind. However, we find out that Odie is afraid of his brother's return, what it might mean for the wealth that he has amassed because of his absence, and for his relationship with Stella. After he betrays Wak, Odie feels that Stella might betray him and take Wak's side; as such, he keeps reminding Stella that he and she are blood siblings unlike Wak who is only their stepbrother. Aside from family betrayals and rivalry, the play also portrays civil war's political, social, and economic effects on

its citizens. More specifically, it describes the plight of refugees in both exile where they escape for fear of persecution, and back home where they return to a hostile and suspicious reception.

This section examines the trauma of refugees who are viewed by dictatorial regimes as mere political statistics whose governments want to exterminate and who are despised by the hosts in exile. The study views refugees as rightless traumatised bodies that have to fight for their survival. Dictatorial regimes always use violence and terror to gain and maintain power. In the greed for power, imagined and real enemies are persecuted thus necessitating the escape to exile to save their lives. While these regimes struggle to gain and maintain power, the people they consider their enemies are reduced from actual humans to mere bodies that can be eliminated if need be. The fear for life and the fight for survival drives most exiles and eventual refugees into foreign countries. While this move is considered a product of fear, which insinuates a psychological effect, it is also an attempt to escape death and in essence preserve the body.

Isaksen and Vejling (2018) define a refugee as “a person seeking a hiding place in one way or another” (3). The UNHCR defines a refugee as someone who has been forced to flee a home country because of persecution, war, or violence. Wak, the protagonist in *Shreds of Tenderness*, flees into exile when his life is threatened by the dictatorial regime that views him as a danger to its reign because of his criticism against their policies. The text is also a presentation of circumstances of civil war, that drive many others into exile. While coming to Wak’s rescue, Stella explains to Odie why Wak had to flee, “They had put a price on his head. Ten thousand dollars. Dead or alive. You know that. Someone informed on him” (14) unbeknown to Stella, it is Odie who informs the SRB against Wak. The reference to Wak’s life as a “head” advances the view of the refugees as mere bodies. “Dead or alive”, further infers that Wak is not

viewed as a person but rather as a body that can be discarded to maintain power. The fear of persecution and the attempt to preserve the body thus leads Wak and others to flee from their homeland. Just like the elimination of the marginalised communities is advanced in *A Sunday at the Pool in Kigali* as a necessity to gain and maintain power, so is the elimination of supposed troublemakers in *Shreds of Tenderness*. Both the genocide in Rwanda and the civil war in Uganda as presented in the two texts respectively produced both refugees and scarred victims who did not manage to escape. These victims whether in exile or at home are subjected to different types of trauma. While the previous section focused on those who were subjected to trauma at home, this section focuses on those who “escaped” the carnage at home and examines the experiences of “escapees” in exile.

In her poem “Home” Warsan Shire writes; “You only leave home, when home won’t let you stay” (n.d). This aptly demonstrates the refugees’ lack of choice. UNHCR holds that a refugee has a well-founded fear of persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality, political opinion, or membership in a particular group. They cannot stay home for fear of persecution. Wak’s options and those of other exiles are to stay and be killed or leave and survive. For Wak whose father has already been assassinated, leaving is his only option. The need to preserve “the flesh” precipitates “refugeeism”, a condition Njogu et al, (2013) view as being necessitated by the desire to live. To save the body, one must abandon their home and beliefs and head into exile. The psychological implications of this self-preservation are halted for a while. In-flight instinct, one does not get the chance to internalise what has just happened. Wak, for example, his safety and that of his family are his main concern.

Wak: I kept hoping that no one I knew would pass by and reveal my identity accidentally. No one did. So my gamble worked. I dashed home, put a few things in a plastic bag, got some money from the family kitty, left a note for Beth to lock up and go to the village, and began the long torturous trek into exile (122).

The feelings of loss and the horrors of exile are not just delayed but are non-existent at the moment. The urgency for self-preservation takes precedence and like any other form of trauma, the internalization of what has just taken place comes later, a phenomenon that Caruth terms as *Latency*. The loss, however, is not just about the home or family but also that of his language, dignity, and identity.

In exile, the refugees are viewed not as humans deserving of dignity but as statistics; faceless bodies that have to be sheltered and fed. The argument here is that refugees are rendered faceless because when the hosts think of them, they do not think of them as actual suffering people but as numbers; additional mouths to feed. As much as the refugee has a right to seek asylum, that right does not extend to receiving the basic necessities or the right to privacy. Spouse (1999) contends that “refugees often have neither security nor freedom” (398). The camps they live in, she continues to say, are in equally poor countries, which in themselves have little to give to their citizens, let alone hordes of refugees. The bodies of these refugees are cramped in small spaces where social amenities are not guaranteed:

WAK: ...but for now in here in this little space, this little tattered shack really, in which he finds himself after crossing, there are ten tired, exhausted and hungry bodies slouched in there, waiting for manna from reluctant donors...so ten or twenty in a tent does here. Who cares for the Hams of the world? Shivering and huddled together like sim-sim sacks. For warmth. Then the sweat, the stench, and water isn't for washing or a thing but for drinking only. If you are lucky to find it.

STELLA: You mean God's good water is being rationed like the staple food and everything else?

WAK: And Public lavatories too, have learnt to deny him T.P if he opens his mouth or yawns, or sneezes, that's another matter. (86)

This aptly illustrates the conditions of refugeeism. Basic human rights are not a privilege that can be enjoyed by the refugees as their conditions strip them of their personhood and humanity. As much as hosting the refugee is an act of charity, the presence of refugees in the host country is a constant reminder to the locals of what "privileges" the refugees are supposedly enjoying at the expense of the hosts:

STELLA: You grabbing our jobs and using our women... And fouling our air. What do you think gives you the right to come here, crawling and cringing like centipedes? Is this Jerusalem where every crackpot can scurry to? (103)

The refugees are viewed as mere bodies occupying what cannot be rightfully theirs and therefore infringing. This is what Isaksen and Vejling (2018) term as "rightlessness", an actual traumatic state that prompts the traumatised body to remain "timid and terrified" (Ruganda 2001, 87) not just as a reaction to trauma but also as a way to protect itself from further trauma. As such, refugees have to remember their place. The image of a "good refugee" is anchored on mannerisms and general demeanour that has to be that of a person who is grateful and obedient but at the same time, harmless and afraid. This general disposition is aimed at denying the refugees any power they might have had and handing it over to the host because if they are financing their stay, they are also financing their lifestyle and choices.

The refugee camp is also a cage that serves the host but obliges the refugee. For the host, it is the basic confinement unit that keeps the refugees in their place and keeps them out of their world while for the refugee, it is the only space they can get a place

to sleep and necessities, however, meagre. “This tattered shack is all the UNHCR can afford for now” (86). So, even without physical boundaries, the refugees are trapped by their inability to provide for themselves. The camp though their saving grace, is nothing short of a prison. It is a confinement zone where the body is caged and thus has no control. Turner (2015) terms camps as preferred spaces for “containing displaced people” (139). The use of the word “contain” suggests an attempt to restrict movement. Turner points out that camps have boundaries, a perimeter meant to keep the refugees inside the marked territory.

This does not necessarily insinuate the presence of a perimeter fence but rather a diameter that defines a refugee camp. As such, the refugees are spatially excluded from the world of the host society while their everyday life is defined by these same hosts. Mathur (2008) explains that the demarcation of spaces results in a “loss of control and autonomy over the body” (54). The denial of “spatial mobility” according to Mathur, “violates bodily integrity” (54), which renders the caged body powerless. This confinement is traumatic as the individual feels trapped inside their own body, unable to fulfil their desires or try and achieve their dreams because the conditions of refugeeism restrict their mobility. The camp reinforces the feelings of non-belonging as they cannot participate in the host nation because they are physically excluded through confinement. Even when they are allowed to work outside the camp, they are still required by necessity and the host to return to the camp and therefore freedom away from the camp is still confinement. They cannot escape their circumstances and thus have no control over their lives.

The uncertainty of life in the camps is further traumatising, especially in poor third-world countries where refugees are less likely to be integrated and therefore end up living in the camps for half of their lives. When Wak leaves for exile, he is counting on

the crumble of the dictatorship so he and others like him can return home; “I had believed the regime would be in shambles in a matter of months. I was wrong and naïve, to be frank” (82). What was initially meant to be a temporary arrangement is beginning to look more permanent, and the fear of living in this state for life further escalates the traumatic experience. Wak says; “so days, months, years slip by you hanging on to a dream of a meaningful future and measuring your life in exile with daily doses of degradation, humiliation and bitterness” (83). The camps reinforce the temporariness of their situations and the nostalgia of home further instils the sense of hopelessness.

The insults and the humiliating comments that are hurled at the refugees are not considered as being harmful as there is no physical harm. “It’s not our fault his country is in tatters. Maybe it’s all his doing” (103), “Get out mongrel. I’m ordering you to leave!” (103), “They are pests, these aliens” (104). The insults are meant to traumatise without leaving traces since if there is no physical evidence of physical harm, the refugee is considered safe. Fassin (2011) posits that the demand for physical scars every time a person seeks asylum has caused the abuser to change tactics, the abuser has learned to “minimise the traces they leave on bodies” (287). Since the refugees cannot show physical scars from their abuse, the government agencies of the host countries and even their people in their home countries once they return, consider them to be safe. The body in this case is considered to be a testimony of trauma through physical scars, and thus if there is no evidence of physical trauma, then one cannot be said to have been traumatised. Be that as it may, there is a connection between the mind and the body. While no physical scars are inflicted, psychological ones are.

The refugees’ bodies also have to avail themselves for the wrath, dissatisfaction and uncertainty of the host. Whenever the host feels threatened or even annoyed, the refugee's body becomes a site on which they can release their frustration and anger. The

hosts point blankly ask them to leave and go back to their own country. “Return to your country refugees’ Bloody Refugees, Go home” (103). The constant reminder that they do not belong is in itself traumatising and marginalising. It is bad enough that they have lost their country and their culture only to live in constant subjugation. The constant fear of violation and the social norms that surround the place of the refugee versus that of the host defines identity. The refugee’s identity is linked to the burden and shame of dependence and is, therefore, expected to negate them as people to be allowed to be engulfed in the host’s life and expectations.

Wak: There is nothing as abominable as being a refugee, let me tell you. Shouted at. Your dignity lowered. Hell, man. It is a blight... self-exile is another matter, of course. One has made up one’s mind to take chances. And besides, he or she can always go back home without being asked questions. But a refugee, God! It’s hell man. From the sweeper to the highest official they subtly remind you that you do not belong. You are an alien. That word stinks. *Alien. Makwerekwere*, a third-rate non-citizen, was always associated with hunger, deprivation, and cheap labour. Worse than cheap labour. Because sometimes no one wants you to work. Your presence is an irritant. Whether or not you do as much work as the nationals do, they always say behind your back that you are not fully committed. You are saving your energies for your mother country. If you do more, they will jokingly tell you, ‘You are buying your stay.’ It’s hell man, You’re always living in perpetual fear of losing your job if you have one. If you have none, it is deadly worse, I tell you that. (80-81)

Public humiliation is an everyday occurrence that the locals use to insist on their non-belonging and sometimes just for entertainment. Refugeeism does not just deprive exiles of the right to defend themselves but also the right to speak. The refugee remains the metaphorical *Subaltern* who cannot speak for themselves because they are subordinate. Since the host’s body is an “embodiment of a proper human” (Moosovina 2011, 105), the ‘Other’ (refugee) cannot do right. The dependence of the refugees on

the host and the fear of what might happen to them should they be forced to return home, keeps them in check. The refugee's body becomes confinement; a captive body that is solely the benefactor of the privileges the host can provide.

The subjugation and humiliation of the refugee, like any other form of trauma, keeps repeating itself and therefore taunting them more. In this case, it is not the physical body that is taunted, but rather the psychological body (the mind). The physical body after being subjected to traumatic acts for a long period, begins to expect it. It is an everyday occurrence for them. The fear of being forced to go back home compels conformity because no matter how bad the exile is, what awaits these refugees at home is worse. As Wak puts it, "repatriation is another dread. One false move and off they whisk you back into the lion's den" (81). Wak and Stella dramatize how even in exile, some of these refugees are still hunted down and still have to continue to lay low:

STELLA: Timid and terrified. Tentative in his gait like a starved chameleon.
Hounded out by local greedy policemen and immigration officials. And
several spies from home are after him. Always dodging him

WAK: You are right. Hordes of them at every turn. Loaded with guns and other
gadgetry. To catch or kill him. For a fee or promotion. His movement?
What are his movements like, this refugee of yours?

The body language insinuates the psychological trauma. The body acts as the mind is supposed to feel. However, the mind is not the basic object of traumatising, at least in the host's mind and therefore whatever is happening or going on in the mind of the refugee remains in the mind of the refugee making their trauma more profound because of the lack of a support system. As such, the only option the victims of trauma have is resilience (Isaksen and Vejling, 2018). Since they have no control over tomorrow, their only focus can only be the present. They have to develop a thick skin that can withstand

humiliation and insults if they have to survive. However, one needs to belong, have an identity and have some control over their lives and thus the memories of home:

WAK: So days, months, years slip by with you hanging on to a dream for a meaningful future measuring your life in exile with daily doses of degradation, humiliation and bitterness. It is then that memories of home begin invading your dreams. The rhythm of life, the decency and courtesy with which things were done and conducted before the coup d'état. Your favourite tunes and taverns no more, friends and relations killed, and the wanton destruction of everything you loved and valued in life. All this suffering because of the slovenliness and bestiality of the ignoramuses whose sole purpose is to grab as much as they can, in as little a time while the going is good. Does this make sense to you? (83)

The loneliness and isolation that the refugees face in exile and the trauma of humiliation and suffering start to breed a longing for home. Even though they had faced rejection in their nations and that their return could still put them in danger, they reminisce about the identity that is attached to the nation; what they consider home. Even though these memories are of a time before the violence and the threat of persecution, they act as an escape from the humiliation that they are going through at the moment. Though the body cannot escape confinement, the mind can wonder. The relationship between the physical and the psychological is illustrated by the body's ability to respond to psychological needs. In a moment of pain and degradation, you remember what was and what it could be.

Feeling dislocated and disillusioned by the situations presented by exile, the exile develops the desire to return home. Yetiv (1976) cites this desire to return home as common with exiles. According to Yetiv, there is always a linear model that all refugees go through. It begins with discovering the new world they reside in, trying to identify, integrate and assimilate into the society and trying to belong. Next comes the failure to

integrate and the rejection that is occasioned by the knowledge they cannot truly belong and that the locals will always consider them the 'Other'. This then breeds the nostalgia of home and finally, they return. After going through all these processes and realising that he can never really belong, Wak remembers home and decides to return. Even so, he realises that he cannot just walk back as his life is still in danger. For that reason, joining a liberation movement is the only option, not just to ensure safety for him to be able to return but to get back to the country he remembers, the country that searches for him in his dreams:

WAK: But the humiliation he put me through that night, before all those people, stripping me up for display as it were, struck right down to my reason for existence. He was drunk, of course, but one could see the point he was putting across...rather harshly maybe, still, it was a valid point. ARE YOU WORTH YOUR BALLS? That was what he was asking. A week after that, without telling my family or anyone else, I took to the bush. This time for a different reason

ODIE: (This is too much for Odie) You mean...

WAK: Not to save my little neck, but other people's lives. And that's why I didn't come with my family. (117)

The returnees think that the country and the people will welcome them back after the war. Njogu et al (2013), argue that in the desire to return home, the exiles always vow to acknowledge the strengths and weaknesses of their people and learn to live with them. However, reintegration becomes a traumatic affair. When the return home brings with it the realisation that their supposed brothers and sisters already developed an attitude towards them and instead of the open arms, they thought that they would be welcome with, the people treat them with contempt, another kind of trauma sets in. Wak returns home to find that the people think they had it good in exile. "Easy life in exile. Secure job. Free education for his kids and maybe expatriate allowances while we here

suffered” (15). “When guns were booming all around me, while our dear brother there was enjoying the peace and quiet of angels and hoarding dollars” (54). Since the refugee's body is devoid of scars and mutilations that would point to their sufferings while in exile, the people at home, take that to insinuate that they were enjoying the “perks” of being an exile.

The most ignored condition about fleeing is the psychological wound that is created by the conditions of violence. In such cases, while the locals cannot see the physical scars that are meted on the bodies of the refugees, the psychological traumas are real. The same psychological traumas that are faced in exile are further reinforced on their arrival home. While the conditions of exile are viewed as temporary and force exiles to yearn for the opportunity to be home, the conditions at home prove to be no better than those in exile, sometimes they are even worse. They leave exile because they do not belong, they were always the ‘Other’ as “foreign bodies” and they come home to realise that the nightmare has not ended. They do not belong at home either. Even at home, they are outsiders. Wak realises this with bitterness and laments:

WAK: Out there in the bush, man: the heat and the rain beating our backs, lions roaring around us. Every one of us asked to tighten our belts for Motherland. One was not doing it for gain or gratitude, as you said Odie, but certainly one was not expecting the spite, the hostility and the hatred from fellow nationals who stayed behind. One had hopes for tenderness, a tiny shred of tenderness. (117)

Failing to fit in or to be welcomed home and exile, the exiles thus suffer rejection trauma. They remain as foreign bodies even at home. It is not only physical but also psychological. While their countrymen view them as returnees who escaped, the rejection trauma causes humiliation and pain which leads to hopelessness. The body's

inability to display physical evidence thus leads to rejection. The loneliness and disillusionment that accompanies rejection is another traumatic experience.

WAK: it is not this place, this house that I've come back to. It's my country, however, desecrated and dilapidated. What you called my old haunts are full of new faces. Strangers mostly-to me, at any rate. Like I am to them, I'm sure. Alien in your own country! Strange, isn't it? And yet it is true! Their linguistic register is coarse and rasp; and so are their manners. They've recklessness that flings the future flying through the windows.
(79)

Home for Wak no longer feels like home, it is "Unhomely". What was so familiar and warm, looks the same and yet unfamiliar. To put it in Freud's words, it is uncanny. The animosity with which they are welcome does not help the situation.

The refugee is a foreign body both in exile where he flees to for fear of persecution and at home where he returns after the civil war. The trauma of the refugee is threefold: first, it lies in forceful eviction from their country to save their lives. Secondly, it lies in the lack of basic needs and the confinement in the host country that results in degradation, humiliation and insults from the host and lastly, in further humiliation, suspicion and lack of trust once they return home. The refugees are viewed as being rightless and faceless both at home and in exile and as such, are subjected to physical and psychological trauma. The body being the cover and content becomes the target for the attainment of both.

4.4. The Avenging and the Avenged Body: The Paradox of Revenge in Kinyanjui Kombani's *The Villains of Molo*

The Last Villains of Molo represents the 1992 clashes that occurred in Molo because of the government of the day's resistance against the emergence of multiparty democracy.

Two communities, the Kikuyu and the Kalenjin are pitted against each other over who is the rightful owner of the land. The Kalenjin view the Kikuyu as invaders who should be kicked off their land. The ‘indigenous’ local community, the Kalenjin, are threatened by what they term as encroachment of their land by the Kikuyu. They feel marginalised in their indigenous land especially as some of them are losing businesses and contracts because of the competition from the immigrants. They resort to evicting ‘the outsiders’ from their land to regain what they feel is rightfully theirs. The Kikuyu, on the other hand, view themselves as the victims of violence when they acquire the land lawfully. Fear and anxiety engulf the Kikuyu as leaflets ordering them to vacate the villages. Due to polarised politics, the two communities that have lived together for a long time peacefully, find themselves in opposite positions wielding violence against each other. Many lives are lost in the civil war, while many others are maimed. While others are left with deep psychological wounds, others resort to revenge as their way of dealing with trauma.

Kinyanjui Kombani in *The Last Villains of Molo* fictionalises the 1992 clashes in Molo, Kenya. Kombani presents characters who use revenge to respond to the trauma they experienced during these clashes. The situations presented in the novel bear similarities to those presented in *A Sunday at the Pool in Kigali*. The marginalisation, the desire for the elimination of the presumed “privileged” community and the eventual trauma subjected to the Tutsi in *A Sunday at the Pool in Kigali* is centred on the Hutus' desire to take back control and take their revenge on those they deem responsible for their marginalisation, however ill-advised. In essence, the communal trauma is a response to another communal trauma. While *A Sunday at the Pool in Kigali* dwells on the experiences of those who now find themselves at the centre of this vengeance through no fault of their own, *The Last Villains of Molo* deals with personal and communal

trauma. The novel targets the actual cause of the victim's trauma; the perpetrators. It follows the individual lives of those who are subjected to trauma as they enact their revenge on the perpetrators of their trauma. The text also follows the lives of these perpetrators in a bid to help the reader and the victim understand the circumstances that necessitate the perpetrators to carry out these atrocities. It is centred on revenge, which is brought about by the desire to make the perpetrators of violence in Molo pay for the murders committed during the clashes. In this section, the study examines revenge as a response to trauma, the motivations and the goal for revenge and the effects of this revenge on both the perpetrators and the victims.

The body responds to a traumatic experience differently. While some people have been known to respond quickly as an act of self-preservation, other people freeze. Helsel (2014), posits that trauma has a "shattering effect on the body's response...to violations" (281). The traumatised body is overwhelmed by emotion, turning it impotent at the time the trauma is being experienced. As the traumatised person tries to process their trauma, they develop a hatred for themselves for not responding as they should and hatred for their offender for harming them. Trauma from violence that is deemed intentional often attracts fantasies of revenge as a result of the victim's hate for the person or people responsible for their trauma (Etts 2008). Revenge fantasies according to Horowitz (2007) occur in the "last phases of psychological response to trauma" (24), after shock, outcry, denial and working-through phases. Horowitz continues to explain that the hatred towards the perpetrators coupled with anger and self-disgust for allowing vulnerability, fuel the revenge fantasies. What is deemed as the body's inability to respond to trauma becomes a psychological challenge to right that wrong.

The essence of revenge is to harm those that victims hold responsible for harming them by committing acts of violence against them with the same intensity they were inflicted or with an even higher intensity (Power 2022). The aim is to get even; tit for tat. Grobbink et al (2015) define revenge as “retaliatory behaviour following perceived harm to one’s well-being” (893). Schumann and Ross (2010) term revenge as a two-fold phenomenon that involves both an act and desire. Some victims of traumatic experiences have fantasies of revenge that they never act on while others act on those desires by inflicting harm on their perceived offender. Revenge is always centred on feelings of bitterness or what Gabler and Maerker (2011) call “embitterment” (42). They explain that revenge is mostly anchored by an embitterment, which can be either “a co-occurring affective state or a motive underlying embitterment which spurs the urge to fight back” (43). Embitterment often occurs after traumatic events that are perceived as injustice and a violation that leaves the victims feeling helpless. The desire that is bred by embitterment is to right the injustice by hurting the perpetrator by taking revenge. For Power (2022), revenge is an act of frustration. It is compensation for the physical impotence that the harmed person feels at the time of their hurt.

While taking revenge at a later date, the assumption is that they are now equal or potentially equal to the one that harmed them. Revenge is, therefore, a response to the frustration of the body’s inability to react “appropriately” at the time of the hurt and thus revenge is an attempt to right that wrong. However, there is a thin line between revenge and vengeance. The two are differentiated based on the accompanying emotion: whether the victim wants retribution or to retaliate. Some view revenge as justice for the offence committed while vengeance aims to inflict pain and make the target feel powerless and helpless (Etts, 2008). Kombani tells a story in a back-and-forth formula that according to Busolo (2019) signifies the fragmented nature of

traumatic experiences. While this is true, the opinion in this study is that the back-and-forth nature of telling the story lays a foundation for the motivation for the revenge that the trauma victims undertake. It juxtaposes the characters now and who they were in the past. It presents the trauma of young “kids” going through traumatic situations of civil war against the perceived adults that they have become and the scars they carry from their childhood traumas. The children’s bodies are once placed alongside their adult bodies and the childhood traumas juxtaposed against adult traumas and responses as it takes its readers back and forth from Ng’ando to Molo to Ndoinet. Every time this is done, we get a clearer picture of who the characters are and what they have been through.

Revenge in written literature dates back to revenge tragedies in the Elizabethan and Jacobean periods (Torghabeh 2018). These tragedies were mostly plays that dramatised protagonists who seek revenge for the murder or betrayal. This revenge is characterised by murder, as the revenge itself is based on a “blood for blood” mindset (Torghabeh 2018, 235). The most popular early tragedies include Thomas Kyd’s *Spanish Tragedy*, Shakespeare’s *Hamlet*, *Macbeth*, *Othello* and *King Lear*, John Webster’s *The Duchess of Mulfi*, and Cyril Turner’s *The Revenger’s Tragedy*, just to name but a few. These plays portray revenge as being motivated by the search for justice. The avenger feels it a sacred duty to avenge personal or another person’s injustice.

The crime committed by the target of this revenge is revealed through the appearance of the ghost of the murdered person. Revenge, in this case, is attributed to the showing up of a murdered body that is supposed to remind the living person of the wrongs inflicted against the dead and their desire for justice. This revelation serves to arouse sympathy for the avenger. The revenge plays are often tragic though, because of the effect that the revenge has on the avenger or his family. Revenge, in this case, is not

revealed as not just being a psychological desire but a physical undertaking. As much as the wronged can dream and plot, the revenge plan is not complete until it is executed. This implies elaborate plans by the aggrieved body to exert revenge on the offender. Revenge is, therefore, only complete when the offender has been made to undergo both psychological and physical agony.

Revenge as a motif in fiction has evolved over the years. Fictional texts on war, for example, especially in Africa where most literary writing deals with stories of civil war, genocide and political wars, represent victims of traumatic situations as struggling with the effects that these situations have on them and their feelings of helplessness and shame. Many representations of trauma though inflicted on the physical body, however, present the victims as having deep psychological wounds that incapacitate them and make it hard for them to function well. The functionality of these victims is associated with their physical abilities; and what the body can do. Unlike the presentation in *A Sunday at the Pool in Kigali* and *Shreds of Tenderness* where victims are presented as being afraid and powerless, Kinyanjui Kombani in *The Last Villains of Molo*, seems to be challenging this portrayal of the victim as being helpless and powerless. Kombani presents revenge as a mechanism that the victims use to challenge their feelings of powerlessness and instead presents it as a way of coping with trauma. It is a psychological and physical response to trauma. The text represents traumatic experiences that spark not only the fantasies of revenge but also portray how the victims of these traumas act on those fantasies and hunt down their perpetrators.

The novel opens with a scene from Ndoinet forest where a young girl watches her father hacked to death as she helplessly stares at the attackers.

There were two men in the sitting room. One stood with a poised machete and the other was collecting himself. She gasped when she saw her father convulsing on the floor. Blood was gushing out of a deep cut in his neck, and he was shaking violently. An incoherent flow of guttural sounds escaped from his frothing mouth. Her whole body still in shock, she bent down. (vi)

Nancy finds herself helpless, unable to fight the attackers and unable to save her father. Her young body is deemed immobile, helpless and cannot respond to trauma as it “should”. All she can do is stare back at the attackers with an indifference that can only be interpreted as her body’s way of fighting back by not giving the attackers the satisfaction of seeing her fear or vulnerability. Nancy’s frustrations are accentuated by the fact that she cannot physically fight. The fact that she stands still is attributed to the fact that her traumatised body cannot respond to the experience and therefore her immobility further emphasises her vulnerability on the one hand because of her physical inadequacies and on the other hand, because of trauma’s effect on the physical body. Psychological trauma as a result of witnessing a traumatic event, paralyses the physical body leading to an inability to respond. Fear that is associated with childly inadequacy and helplessness is replaced with hate. While the rest of her body seems to the perpetrators as vulnerable, Nancy’s gaze and thus her demeanour communicates defiance; a refusal to bow down and hatred for her traumatisers:

She looked from her fallen father to the intruders, her heart quickly filling with hatred. These were the two attackers who had done this to her father, her protector ... as their eyes met, the hatred in her hit the two attackers like a cold blade of steel. (vi, vii)

This hatred which is a psychological response to both physical and psychological trauma becomes the driving force for the revenge that Nancy and her uncles take on the five friends: Bone, Rock, Bomu, Bafu and Ngeta. It is noteworthy that Nancy and her uncles blame the Kikuyu for their misfortunes and therefore their targets should be

Bone (Kimani) and Rock (Irungu). However, they also target the Kalenjin: Bomu (Kibet) and Bafu (Kiprop) together with their Luhya friend Ngeta (Lihanda) whom they view as enemies by association. Taking revenge on the traumatising body is thus an act of taking back control. The revenge plan is not just psychological but also physical. It therefore has to bind the body and mind.

A character like Kirui, on the other hand, does not get to exact his revenge because of how his trauma affects him. Most traumatised individuals are unable to enact their desire for revenge because of their physical inadequacies or their dependence on their traumatisers. Etts (2008) argues that by planning vengeance, the victim experiences pleasure at imagining their perpetrator and consequently the target of their revenge suffering and experiencing the same powerlessness, they once felt. However, most of the victims of trauma do not get to carry out their revenge because the trauma is too much for them to recover from or because some of these victims get help and can move past the urge for revenge, into a place of healing. In the case of children or even child soldiers who are dependent on those who traumatised them, they are aware of the grave consequences their attempt to exert revenge will have on their lives. In other cases, however, the trauma is so overwhelming that the victims still feel trapped in their bodies. Kirui, for example, is one character that has to watch his wife raped to death. He cannot protect her from this ordeal and cannot protect his children from having to witness it because he has been pinned down. The men that pin him down also force him to watch and though he struggles to break free, the attackers have the strength of numbers:

The whole family watched as their mother was raped in turns. Kirui was propped up to see it all, the agonized voice of his wife, her anguished face, the bloody mess on the floor, the frightened faces of the children, everything! He saw the sardonic grins on the attackers' faces as they humiliated him (83).

Kirui is trapped, powerless and helpless. He is stripped of his power as the protector of the home thus emasculated. By pinning his body down, the attackers are taking his power away and this helplessness leaves an imprint on the brain. The physical inadequacies at the time trauma is experienced, loop itself in the mind of its victims and keep replaying themselves long after the trauma is experienced. This is the brain trying to figure out how else the victim could have responded differently. Being the head of the family and therefore the protector, his job is to keep his family safe, the fact that he could not do it, haunts him. Kirui's problem, however, is the body's inability to act in tandem with the mind. While the mind fantasises about facing the trauma, the body remains immobile thus further illuminating helplessness. When all his family is gone, his body is still stuck in the psychological trauma that does not realise that he has already been released and is therefore free. The mental and physical freedom for Kirui become synonymous in a way. It is then no wonder that Kirui is still reliving the moment. He is seen running from one end of the market to another screaming 'taret' (help). He is seemingly stuck in a loop as if experiencing the trauma repeatedly and is still helpless.

Nancy, on the other hand, gets to act on her fantasies of revenge. She replaces her feelings of helplessness with feelings of anger and rage towards the perpetrators. Etts (2008) argues that by planning vengeance, the victim experiences pleasure at imagining their perpetrator and consequently the target of their revenge suffering and experiencing the same powerlessness, they once felt. The five villains: Bone, Rock, Bomu, Bafu and Ngeta, have gone through their own fair share of trauma during the clashes. The five

are unlikely bedfellows because they come from the two communities fighting but to survive, they must now put their differences aside and stick together. However, they cannot live in their community because they will be viewed as traitors and killed. They have to relocate and change their names. Changing their identities is not just an attempt to protect themselves from retaliation but to also distance themselves from their traumatic experiences by giving new identities to their bodies. As such, they never get anyone close to them and never use their real names. They seem aware of their actions and live in fear of what people might think of them if they knew their real names, where they are from and what they have done. Secrecy is therefore key to not only keeping their names hidden or changing their identities, however superficially, but also keeping their past a secret, it is an act of defending their bodies from experiencing the kind of hate and retaliation they know is possible.

The slaughterhouse five also adopt a rebellious lifestyle and attitude not only to survive in a world where life is rigged against them but to also scare away people and keep them from getting too close to know them and learning about their past. Bloom (1999) explains that victims of trauma tend to dissociate themselves from any form of emotion. The characters also adopt a dissociative lifestyle. This dissociative style is a physical response to psychological trauma. By keeping themselves from the public gaze, they are keeping a mystery of who they really are and therefore making the fear of the unknown terrifying.

The residents knew nothing about the five-man group that stuck together like Super Glue and rubber. They didn't even know where they had come from. They had never told anyone the meaning of their strange nicknames or revealed their real names. It was really strange. (21)

The fear of what might happen if people find out who they are and what they have done keeps them hostile, as hostility is the only way they can feel powerful. For them, the fear of the repercussions against the physical body is more threatening than the trauma of their past. The engagement in “irresponsible” sexual behaviour and drugs, is the body’s way of numbing the psychological processes associated with trauma. Ngeta is a mugger, Bone is a wannabe artist who turns murderer to defend his friend, Bafu is a con artist, Bomu is a tout who loves to smoke bhang while Rock stole money from the 1998 bomb blast and used it to start a business. This risky behaviour of the “slaughter-house five” as they are referred to in the neighbourhood is one of the effects of trauma. Bloom (2018) terms it as ‘self-harming behaviour and addiction’ (16) According to Bloom:

People ‘turn to substances, like drugs or alcohol, or behaviours like sex, over-eating, gambling, engagement in violence, and self-injury, all of which help them to calm down, at least temporarily in part because of the major, self-induced shift in internal body chemistry that accompanies substance abuse and self-harming behaviour’ (16)

This behaviour is adopted as a form of numbing from the trauma that both victims and perpetrators of violence have experienced. The neighbours are scared of the five and to ensure their safety and that of their children, they send a girl to their room to talk to them about irresponsible sexual behaviour in the hope that the change in their lifestyle will keep them and their children safe. The girl is, however, harassed because for them the only way they can feel powerful is by inflicting fear on those around them. They capitalise on the girl’s sexuality and use it to embarrass her so that they do not have to deal with their issues. The female body again here is sexualised and traumatised by being objectified.

“You know”. He said “If I were you, I wouldn’t waste my youth telling people to beware...you have such nice legs”, She gave him a horrified look.

Yeah, Bafu concurred. “If I had such legs...”

She flew out, livid with anger, trying to shut out the laughter of the men in the slaughterhouse”. (31)

The five of them stick together as if with an unspoken vow to keep their secrets. The trauma of what they have gone through also inspires recklessness. The house they live in is referred to as a ‘slaughterhouse’. It is described as a “den of inequities” (27) “A lot of activities which would interest the police took place there” (27). The characters also participate in very dangerous activities.

Nancy and her uncle, by proxy, use the female body as a tool to enact revenge. It has already been established that the five view the female body as weak, timid and emotional. There is, therefore, no way this same body can embody any form of power. Ziegler (2012) describes the female body as being instrumental in enacting vengeance. The female body, she deems, can be weaponised to disarm their opponent. In the masculine eyes, women; are sexual beings, nurturers, beautiful, innocent, and modest and can only be used in serving masculine sexual needs. Nancy plays into this narrative of femininity and beauty but by portraying the strong independent woman, she is playing into Bone’s ego who is already seen to be attracted to strong-willed women like Stella. Her comings and goings attributed to the male gender’s unpredictability while being able to stay feminine and at the same time financing their lifestyle grants her a standing ground. Nancy’s ability to switch from vulnerability to strength resonates with a group that is known to detach from the world when need be and still maintain her “identity” as a woman and therefore, in Bone’s eyes, remain feminine. Bone’s friends are disarmed by Nancy’s perceived “down to earth” portrayal of herself even though

she seems rich. Her body and the different emotions that she can conjure from it, grant her the power over the five men making it easy for her to take her vengeance.

In this same regard, the uncle uses Nancy and Angelina's bodies as weapons. Although Nancy is the one who is directly affected by this trauma, her uncle Rotich plans the revenge and the operation is financed by Nancy's uncle and guardian who lives abroad. Nancy is kept out of the loop and just takes the orders. Rotich recruits Angelina Chebet to help with the execution of this revenge plan. He capitalises on Angelina's hatred for those she blames for her misfortunes "She is an easy target as she blames the Kikuyu for her new life as a "barmaid and a part-time prostitute" (122). It is then easy for him to manipulate her by offering her the opportunity and means to enact revenge on her "enemies". The woman's body and in Chebet's case, the nature of her job makes her an easy target for the male body to manipulate. "What would you do if you had a chance to get even with those who ruined your life?" (122). O'Neill (2011) contends that revenge narratives represent manliness as a highly prized commodity that individuals acquire through retaliatory acts of violence, exposing the performative nature of gender by the male characters. Female ones are only seen as pawns. These male characters are seen not to be directly affected by the violence or the trauma and seem to be acting on, communal memory with no regard for what the individual female characters experience. This kind of self-fashioning fabricates his masculinity (the power wielded by the male body).

The revenge in Kombani's *The Last Villains of Molo* is portrayed as a man's agenda. It is choreographed and run by the male characters while women are only given limited information and for the most part, kept in the dark or threatened when they fail to follow orders. Nancy has the first-hand experience of this trauma as she is orphaned by the clashes. She feels marginalised because of the community that she hails from which is

no fault of her own. The female is only recruited to serve the purpose of the alpha male, carefully chosen because of their vulnerability and what they have gone through. The male, therefore, calls the shots from a distance and is seemingly unscathed by the effects of this revenge. While trying to avenge her father's death, Nancy is still kept out of the loop, which makes the revenge seem distant to her.

Revenge is paradoxical since as much as it aims to maim those who caused harm, it also affects those who enact it. The avenger in most tragedies is humanised because of what they have gone through and revenge is made to feel like it is their only option. Even while their quest for revenge always goes bad, the reader still feels remorse for the avenger for having been made to go through that on top of everything they have already gone through. However, the gruesomeness of the form of revenge that the avenger chooses seems to accentuate the gravity of the pain that they feel. The revenge that is seen to be carried out in *The Last Villains of Molo*, does not seem to come from the person who is directly affected by the trauma. It is planned by those who seem to be projecting hatred for the community that they consider as the "Other" and therefore should not have had the privileges that it did or should not have retaliated to protect themselves from the kind of violence that was meted on them. Rotich and Chebet are not directly affected by the civil war.

Chebet's problem is losing her business as a result of the aggressiveness of the Kikuyus. Rotich is not even presented as being present in Molo at the time of the clashes but rather just shows up at the end of the clashes. He views his quest for revenge as a duty and a show of loyalty to the community. For them, therefore, Bomu and Bafu's friendship with those they consider as the enemies of the community is a greater betrayal and for Chebet, who is a distant relative of the boys, she views it as a duty. They have to die for supporting "the other" community. Rotich, however, thinks that

watching the pain that Bone goes through as a result of losing all of his friends before he is killed himself is the biggest revenge ever. At some point, it stops being revenge but vengeance.

It is the same fear that Nancy has at the end of the text before being left alone with Bone to talk. Nancy is portrayed as having doubts about the results of their revenge plan on several occasions, “did you really have to do it?” (155), “Is it really necessary? I don’t like it, at all, at all” (162). The revenge here is not just affecting those that it is directed at but also the one who is enacting it. While Nancy is having second thoughts, she does not have the luxury to abandon the “project” (163). She is traumatised by what the community would do to her if she went against them, “I don’t know what to do next. They will probably kill us both” (198). At this point, her loyalty to the plan is anchored not just on her desire to see her enemies pay for what they have done to her and her family but also by the fear of what might happen to her if she decides to side with or forgive her target. Her fear for her life, therefore, supersedes any kind of remorse she might feel for her target or even the love that she feels for Bone.

The characters in the novel are therefore shown as using revenge to respond to their trauma. However, the author presents revenge as a two-edged sword that affects both the perpetrator of this revenge and the victim. Revenge presents the reverse roles of the perpetrators of violence and their victims, as victims now turn perpetrators and perpetrators turn victims. Though it numbs victims’ feelings, it is not a solution to trauma.

4.4. Conclusion

Marginalisation inspires violence, which is not only used by dominant groups to exert dominance and power but is also at times used by the victimized as a method of self-preservation and as a response to marginalisation. Both marginalisation and violence always result in trauma. The body being present in traumatic situations as both the target and a canvass, witnesses this trauma and can testify. The traumatised body remembers and testifies through wounds, mutilations and scars. These scars tell the story of the kind of trauma that is experienced and the effect that it has on its victims. The body also testifies to psychological trauma actions. The body's reaction to certain stressors communicates the experiences of the individual.

Even those who are able to escape the physical mutilations that result from violence are not able to escape trauma. Although they are able to preserve the flesh by fleeing, the same body is subjected to other forms of trauma. The caging of bodies in camps, and lack of amenities magnifies the helplessness and rightlessness of the refugee. This confinement and constant subjugation both in exile and at home, when they return, robs them of personhood. For others, traumatic experiences render their bodies impotent; unable to react to the experience in the moment it is experienced. The helplessness and lack of control that accompanies traumatic experiences delay the body and mind's response. The trauma of not being able to respond "appropriately" is traumatic and sometimes breeds desires for revenge to put right the wrong committed against the victim or to compensate for the body's inability to react. Elaborate revenge plans thus aim to exert similar pain or even more on the perpetrator with the hope that it will give back control. Revenge, however, is paradoxical because it does not just affect the person receiving it but also the person enacting it.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE LITERARY TEXT AS A SPACE FOR COPING, AGENCY AND HEALING

5.1. Introduction

This chapter examines how the authors of the texts under study engage with the subject of healing. The chapter focuses on two key aspects: firstly, it examines the various healing approaches that the authors offer by examining coping, agency and therapeutic interventions to trauma as presented in the texts. Secondly, it assesses the place of the literary text as a space for remembering, re-experiencing, coping and healing from individual and communal trauma. The chapter proceeds from the viewpoint that trauma is a complex phenomenon since it comes in various forms and affects victims differently. Though studies have shown that most of those who are exposed to violent acts may not develop Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) (Muldoon et. al (2019), trauma is common after violence. It varies in intensity depending on the kind of traumatic experience and the resilience (Kurtz, 2021) of the victims. Studies have advanced that one has to heal from trauma to live a “normal life” (Moon 2009, Egnew 2005). However, Herman (2003) believes that “resolution of trauma is never final; recovery is never complete” (211). Healing is therefore a process that is not linear and may never end.

Several scholars have advanced various definitions of healing. Firth et al (2015) define healing as a “holistic transformative process” (46) that is “personal, innate, multidimensional and involves repair and recovery of mind, body and spirit” (46). To suggest that it repairs or recovers would propose a cure for the trauma experienced. In fact, Levine (2010) believes that trauma is not only curable but the “healing process can be a catalyst -portal opening to emotional and genuine spiritual transformation” (4).

Egnew (2005) on the other hand defines healing as making “sound” or “whole”. These definitions, though they suggest that it is possible to be whole again after a traumatic experience, acknowledge that trauma changes the victims permanently. The healing process does not restore the victim’s “old self”; instead, healing restores the individual to another whole with reference to the world's equilibrium after trauma. There are as many paths to healing as there are forms and intensities of trauma. The approach or the adopted process yields different results depending on the intensity of the traumatic experience and the chosen approach. Koh (2021) affirms that there are different approaches and varied degrees when it comes to healing. Whether it is through developing agency, and coping mechanisms or adopting therapeutic interventions, victims of trauma need to find ways to assuage the effects of trauma. This chapter examines the various approaches to healing that the authors offer in their texts. I also recognise that not all texts offer explicit paths to healing. As an alternative path, therefore, the chapter examines the role played by the literary text in verbalising individual and communal. The chapter contends this verbalisation directs the reader towards memory and meditation of trauma and healing from it.

5.2. Coping, Agency and Therapy as Strategies for Healing

This section is situated within Herman’s (1997) assertion that art has “an expressive and therapeutic value” (257). It advances that the author manipulates the characters and style not just to bring out an “inner story” (Heiderizadeha, 2015) but also to remit their thoughts, and feelings to produce the most explicit account of trauma. This section thus assesses the various paths to healing that the authors suggest through their representation. It analyses the various approaches the characters choose in dealing with

the trauma they experience. It is the assumption here that the author manipulates characterisation to present various strategies for dealing with trauma.

Coping is “a mechanism which deals with threats to one’s psychological, integrity” (Lazarus 1993, 234). To cope one must avoid traumatic stressors such as negative events, chronic strains, and traumatic stressors (Thoits, 2010). Some of the coping mechanisms for trauma according to Bloom (2018), are fight or flight response, learned helplessness, loss of volume control, dissociation, amnesia, addiction to trauma, trauma bonding and trauma enacting. Most of these coping mechanisms are meant to help the victim escape the feelings of trauma while some direct the victim into trauma because it is what they are used to. People prone to nightmares, for example, avoid sleep because when they sleep, they have nightmares about their past. They are therefore coping by avoiding the stressors.

Agency is defined in this study as an attempt to survive trauma by taking control of the situation (Wyatt, 2023). Depending on the situations presented, both actions and inaction can be viewed as a way of giving agency to self by ensuring survival. Agency thus comes as a direct response to trauma as the victims try to save their lives or avoid more hurt. Therapeutic interventions on the other hand are “any action [s] intended to assuage or heal a disorder” (Ogbazi and Emelone 2023, 5). This section thus assesses the healing processes. It examines the therapeutic interventions that the victims of trauma presented in the texts adopt to survive the trauma even while still going through it (self-agency) or trying to manage the situations they are being presented with both during and after (coping with trauma) and attempting to deal with this trauma after the experience (healing).

Different characters are presented as going through different kinds of traumas and have adopted different strategies to deal with their traumas. When people are subjected to a traumatic experience, their bodies either react or freeze. Depending on the situations presented, both actions and inaction can be viewed as a way of giving agency to self and ensuring survival. To survive the traumas of training, Jal in *War Child* strives to be the best at everything, “I was becoming clever in ways I’d never even knew I could be” (82). The training and induction process is messy and invites punishments. To survive and avoid punishments as much as possible, Jal has to be quick on his feet and adapt to his environment. He has to study his commanding officers and the bullies around him and devise strategies to survive the constant pain they inflict. Samardic et. al (2003) posit that the traumatised person’s response is dependent on the traumatic situations that they are subjected to and the person subjecting them to these conditions. The victim in this case must understand the implications of their response and at the same time predict the actions of their perpetrator.

In essence, to respond appropriately, they must read the enemy. Citing Ellis and Rawicki (2014), Samardic et al. acknowledge that reading the enemy “reflects on the ability to identify various behaviours and actions to be accepted” (3). Jal reads his environment and realises that he can use jokes not just as a way to win people over but also to avoid punishments and even make friends. He has tried this technique before with the *Khawajas* (white people) and it has earned him favour. He, therefore, tries it on the commanding officers at the camp to see if it can work too. Because of his wit, he manages to become the favourite of every commanding officer in every camp because of his ability to make people laugh.

His bodyguards had wanted to beat me, but I got past them to meet the commander. I made him laugh as we talked...I just knew that if I made officers laugh as I'd done with the Khawajas, then they would usually talk to me, and I was happy when I was told that Taban had asked to see me... (2009, 110-111)

Telling jokes thus performs three functions: firstly, it is a form of agency as it is utilized to ensure survival by turning the commanding officers into allies which in turn helps him out of punishments at times and even lands him lighter duties at the camp. Secondly, it is a coping mechanism that he uses to help himself and those around him temporarily forget about the grimness of their circumstances and lastly, it helps in managing the pain of the traumas he encounters in training and combat thus it is also a therapeutic measure.

Gaby, the protagonist in *Small Country* is also very witty. His humour can be seen when he writes letters to his pen pal, "I've got brown eyes, which means I only see people in brown.... Everyone sees the world through the colour of their eyes. You've got green eyes, so I'd look green to you." (37). The same humour is reflected in his conversations with his father. His humour is deployed to take the stress away from the grim reality of war (Rollman 2018). Even in the writing of the memoir itself, Rollman notes that Gael adds child-like humour to his writing. Garrick (2014) explains that humour can assist survivors of trauma in allaying the intensity of the traumatic experience. According to Nezlek and Derks (2001) people who use humour to cope not only make their problems lighter but also ease the burden that is experienced by others. While Jal and Gaby are using humour to cope with their trauma, they also seem to be laughing at these situations and effectively making them less traumatic.

Developing friendships is also a therapeutic intervention for trauma. Friendships are necessary because they also provide safety amid trauma. Jal in *War Child* manages to make a friend no matter the situation he finds himself in:

Although we weren't allowed to fight, we weren't allowed to be friends either. Boys were punished if they seemed to be, and so Malual and I knew we must keep our friendship hidden. At night as we lay in the bed we shared, he told me his father was a fisherman. Malual had been taken from his family when the SLPA said he would be going to school. He hadn't really seen war, and so I told him my stories. I could see he was impressed when he heard them. (2009, 82)

Psychologists have argued that friendships are healing, as they create safety, support, and understanding. Calhoun et al (2022) opine that social support has several positive “protective effects” (950) including shielding one from PTSD and enhancing healing. Friendships offer a special place where victims of trauma can share their experiences or just be there for each other. Friends are also mediators during and after trauma and victimisation as they provide safety and security (Collazo, 2018). Friendship also offers an escape from the tragedies and the realities of war, that for a moment offer a semblance of safety and comfort. It is important to have someone to talk to in traumatic situations. Jal has someone who he can not only talk to but can help him escape the trauma of the present.

Gabriel in *Small Country* makes friends with other boys in his neighbourhood. Together, they form a kind of gang, a brotherhood. When things get difficult at home for any of them, they can always lean on each other. The games they choose to play, the escapades, take them away from the reality around them and remind them of the intricacies of childhood. Even when what they see on TV is too traumatising for them, they rely on each other as a means of not only escaping from their present but a form

of comfort. For a moment, when they are together, nothing else happening around them seems to matter except the thrill of their present:

We spent our days arguing the way friends do, but it goes without saying that we loved each other like brothers. In the afternoons, once lunch was over, the five of us would slope off to our headquarters: the carcass of a Volkswagen Combi on a patch of wasteland. We laughed and had heated debates inside that van, smoked Supermatch Cigarettes in secret, listened to Gino's incredible stories as well as the twin's jokes, and Armand performed astounding feats:...We were full of dreams and it was with impatient hearts that we imagined the joys and adventures life held in store for us. In short, we felt at one with the world, in our hideout on the patch of wasteland by our street (2016, 57-58)

Friendship is important in traumatic situations as it creates a sense of safety that is important not only to survivors but also to those who are experiencing it. Friendships according to LaLonde (2018) "are therapeutic alliances that help in nurturing" (198). Salas et al (2016) terms this as "relating through sameness" (1161). Since old friendships are lost in traumatic conditions new ones can be formed through experiencing trauma together or as a conscious decision to connect to survive. Wak and other refugees in *Shreds of Tenderness* are seen to derive safety from their sameness as refugees and can therefore share their experiences and their fears without shame or fear of further subjugation.

The "Slaughterhouse Five" in *The Last Villains of Molo*, find safety in their friendship. The trauma that accompanies their shared past and the fear of the consequences if people find out their past glue them together. They keep each other's secrets and show up for one another at any cost. That they can rely on one another despite their past, cements the power of friendship. The Slaughterhouse Five, however, live as if the past did not happen, mentioning nothing about their past including their real names. "They

never talked about their past experiences in Molo, they shut their minds to that part of their life completely” (2004, 137). Their wilful amnesia is meant to separate their past from their present while completely dissociating from that past, a tactic that Allen (2015) views as an attempt to gain control over painful emotions by erecting self-protective defences against them. Their silence with regard to their past is a coping mechanism that they adopt to avoid facing their traumas. By keeping the outside world at bay and making themselves scary, they are avoiding their stressors and thus avoiding their trauma. This is what Ward et al (2021) term “disengaged coping” (8), which involves avoiding the stressor by disengaging from it.

They also engage in self-destructive coping mechanisms that in turn make them vulnerable to more trauma. “That was when the sex orgies, the binges and the fights started becoming a regular feature at The Slaughterhouse” (137). These activities are meant to numb their pain while temporarily relieving the mind and the body. The recklessness that the five take like sexual escapades and their love for drugs, opens the door for Nancy who uses this opportunity to infiltrate their fortress of friendships and use their own weaknesses to attack them and take them out one by one while exerting as much pain as she can each time. Nancy herself is using revenge as her coping mechanism for the trauma of watching her father killed by two of The Slaughterhouse Five. She and her uncles figure that if they exert pain on the perpetrators of their trauma, their pain might lessen. The intensity of Nancy’s pain as mentioned in the previous chapter is tied to her inability to act at the time of the trauma due to her young age. Her decision to revenge is an attempt to take back control of her own life, the control she deems as having been taken away from her when she was forced to watch her father die leaving her helpless. These coping mechanisms have, however, been termed negative coping mechanisms since instead of healing, they are causing more trauma.

The friendships forged like all other relationships have their shortcomings. The trust that friendship commands also opens a door for betrayal which can sink the person deep into further trauma and lead to disassociation. Jal is betrayed by his friend. The betrayal is so traumatic for Jal that he swears to take revenge and never connect with any other human again.

Every moment made me stronger as the hate hardened inside me. I had learned from the day Malual beat me that I wouldn't have friends again. I would laugh and joke with other boys, tell them stories and entertain them but inside I was becoming hard as stone. (2009, 88)

This, therefore, becomes counterproductive as what was supposed to shield him from trauma becomes the source of trauma. In Gaby's view in *Small Country*, though friendship is a source of refuge it is also a source of fear. When a new person comes into their lives, he is afraid that he will lose his friend and therefore feels threatened, "I didn't want to lose Gino: my brother, my friend my better twin" (125).

Jal in *War Child* also uses music as a form of therapy to work through his trauma. Music has been known for its power of healing. Ragan and Jal (2015) describe the "redeeming power of music to heal a man who underwent horrific violence as a child" (162). For Jal, music has the power to reach the mind, heart, and soul. Long before Jal can express his pain, he identifies with the lyrics in the songs he listens; to the rhythm of the beats and the singers' voices all appeal to him. "On the streets and in school I started hearing other songs that also spoke to me" (212). For a while, he can forget his pain, though momentarily and just immerses himself in the songs, "The first time I heard 'I'm Every Woman' at a school dance, I closed my eyes and jumped to the beat..." (212). Songs and music in general serve as an escape, a place he can hide for the moment. Composing own music is another thing altogether. The authors are shown to use music to talk about

their own experiences. Jal's songs document the despair and the situations of war; the pain and the suffering but also hope for those still at the jaws of war. His songs are a means of expressing their pain and dealing with their trauma but also as a way of giving each other hope for a better tomorrow. In one of the songs, Jal sings:

My dreams are like torments
 My every moment
 Voices in my brain
 Of friends that were slain
 Friends like Lual
 Who died by my side from starvation
 In the barren jungle
 And the desert plains
 Next I was...
 But Jesus heard my cry
 As I was tempted to eat the rotten flesh of my comrade (252)

Jal's way of dealing with healing is not just coping with his pain but also helping his friends. His humanitarian efforts are, therefore, part of the healing process. In another song Jal writes "I believe I've survived for a reason, to tell my story, to touch lives" (248). He also mentions his charity foundation a few times and the role that it plays in rehabilitating and situating former child soldiers. Helping his fellow former child soldiers is a therapeutic measure for Jal as helping others is known to be a curative factor that helps both the helper and the helped (Robinson 2012). While Jal helps his friends, he also gets emotional, psychological and social gratification for helping others. Even so, not all of the boys in Jal's group are able to work through their trauma.

Their inability to deal with their trauma may be attributed to the intensity of their trauma. However, most of the lost boys had the same experiences as Jal. Jal's ability

to navigate through his trauma may thus be attributed to his resilience. Kurtz (2021) defines resilience as “the ability to cope with diversity and bounce back after that disruption” (32). For Kurtz resilience is the ability to bend without breaking. This resilience thus determines how one person can heal from the same traumatic event that the other cannot. The ability to heal from trauma in my view is also attached to the therapeutic measures taken by victims of trauma to deal with it. Jal’s use of music and poetry is certainly helpful.

5.3. The Text as a Site for Individual and Communal Healing

This section explores the literary text as not only a space for verbalising trauma but also a space for memory and healing. It proceeds from Herman’s (2003) assertion that literature recognises that the only way for psychological wounds to heal is if they are verbalised. It also borrows Pederson’s (2018) insight that the narrative poses a unique platform for contemplating the relation between what he terms the “wound and the word” (97). The study, therefore, views both the fictional text and the memoir as spaces within which the “wound” can be put into “words” thus aiding in the healing of historical, collective and individual suffering. It recognises that literary texts are not always a direct path to healing and instead, it examines the texts under study as platforms in which readers are invited to follow the experiences and struggles of the characters in the texts and meditate their collective trauma and hopefully heal from it.

5.3.1. The Memoir as a Trauma Memory

Memoirs tell real-life experiences of authors who are not only using the memoir to explain their actions and experiences but are also using it as an inquiry into their past; a memory. As Morgan (2021) explains, writing sometimes turns away from explanation to expansion. In this case, although the authors of the two memoirs under study are

taking their readers through their own experiences, they are also trying to understand these experiences along with their audiences. There have been studies that caution about literature on trauma as threading between the line of celebrating the brutality of war and simply portraying those who were affected by it (Bayer, 2018). Whether literature on war or trauma narratives as Vickroy (2002) calls it, glorify war, or simply just represent experience, remains an issue of conjecture. When we read memoirs, for example, especially those written by victims who turn perpetrators then victims, like in the case of Emmanuel Jal's *War Child*, do we excuse Jal's actions, bearing in mind that his state as a perpetrator is only necessitated by his victimhood? But still, the question lies in, whether the killing, the maiming, and his eagerness for war as a form of revenge are justifiable and are indeed what this narrative is trying to portray or is it just telling it like it is? Is the narrator in this story simply a victim or is he complicit? Vickroy (2002) offers a way of rethinking the complicity of the trauma victim. In her opinion, it is not fair to blame victims of trauma for complicity and cooperation with their abusers since for one to be said to be complicit, whether they have a choice or not should be considered.

In a moment where one's life depends on their ability to comply then the choice of whether to engage or disengage does not exist and that is where the duality of trauma lies. The narrative becomes the place where the readers are invited to follow the actions and struggles of these characters and make their judgments. Bayer (2018) also proposes that the use of the narrative is a way of inviting the reader to think back on whether the traumatic event is an act of betrayal from those who were able to protect them and failed to do so. The memoir, therefore, assuages the guilt of participating in the maiming and killing while explaining to readers, the author's circumstances at the time the atrocities were committed. For healing to take place both the wronged and the wrongdoer have

to engage in a dialogue that exposes the trauma. The memoir is thus not just important in the individual healing of the author but also for communal healing.

The situations presented in *War Child* portray characters who have been subjected to all forms of trauma by the people who were supposed to protect them, be it political leaders in South Sudan or Jal's father who gave him up to the SLPA or the SLPA that promises to protect the child soldiers but keeps hurting them. For Gaby in *Small Country*, it is the Burundian government's failure to protect its citizens. The memoir in this case serves the purpose of not just understanding the author's own experience, re-experiencing it and healing from it but also of explaining actions (especially in the case of child soldier narratives) to the public about their actions and maybe aid in individual as well as communal healing. Luckhurst (2018), quoted in Kurtz (2021) views the trauma memoir as dealing with what has been forgotten and is only being belatedly recovered with the interest assuaging it. It is within these two ideas that I anchor this section. I examine the memoir not only as a memory of trauma but also as a space within which the authors can understand their past, share with the rest of the world and work through their trauma.

The authors of the two memoirs also use the memoir as a platform within which to tell their truth, process their trauma and heal from it. Gaby in *Small Country* is a passive participator, while Jal in *War Child* is in active conflict as a child soldier. The former is protected from active conflict while the latter is thrown into it. Either way, the violence and the trauma that accompany this violence affect them though in different ways. Herman (1997) quoted in Kurtz (2021) and LaLonde (2018) offers a three-step pathway to healing which involves establishing a sense of safety, remembering, and mourning, and restoring survivors' connection with the community and ordinary life. For one to feel safe, trust must be built to provide the victim with a safe space within which one

can reconstruct one's past through memory and be able to mourn. Restoring connections seems simple when these first two are achieved. This path seems straightforward but then again it is important to note that the healing process is not always linear because of the disruptive nature of trauma. The memoir thus offers a space in which the authors safely remember their past and mourn it. It is a platform within which to explain experiences and actions. Berents (2019) explains that children's memoirs of war offer a site within which they share their experiences with a broader audience and as such, legitimise their voices. The memoir, therefore, challenges the pathological descriptions of children in conflict. Faye through *Small Country* aims to explain that even when not in active conflict children are still affected by violence through what they see and in the experiences of their loved ones. In *War Child*, Jal challenges the representation of child soldiers as "unfeeling robots" who kill indiscriminately and offers an alternative look into the motivations behind their actions. Jal at the beginning of the text writes:

The exact dates this book contains are those of events written down in history books, but most of the everyday violence of war never makes it to books, and this one is not meant to be a history of a country to be read by scholars. It is the story of one boy, his memories, and what he witnessed (Preface).

With this disclaimer, Jal not only tells the story from his point of view but his truth as he remembers. It is not a story about the civil war in South Sudan. He makes it clear, that it is about the experiences of Jal Jok, during the civil war in South Sudan. Memory, therefore, becomes a reservoir that he visits to access his past. Writing about the experience and in essence turning one's life into a narrative is a vital way of finding meaning. It is a way of creating a coherent plot of one's life and therefore understanding experience (van der Merwe & Gobodo-Madikizela, 2007). For healing to take place, the victims have to re-experience. To forget, one has to remember. The writing of the

memoir, therefore, acts as a way of re-experiencing trauma, a way of remembering. Vickroy (2002) asserts that storytelling is an act of remembering: a way of accessing emotions and older modes of contemplation.

Although victims never want to visit their past and would rather avoid any external stimuli that would remind them of their past, remembering is important if healing has to happen. In writing the memoir, the authors are reliving their painful past and, in the process, working through their trauma. Morgan (2021) propounds that fiction can be used as a form of inquiry. Because of the amnesia that is associated with trauma whether wilful or not, writing may be used to turn from “explanation to expansion” (105). The memoirs, here offer the platform within which the traumatic experiences of the narrators can be remembered. The memoirs under study are elaborate personal memories of traumatic experiences.

Memory is, however, complicated and challenging, especially in situations where silence has been encouraged. *War Child* presents circumstances in which many child soldiers in the camps are forbidden from telling the stories of their past. Remembering trauma, especially in training camps breeds nostalgia for home and, therefore, breeds empathy which is considered a sign of weakness. By being pumped with propaganda about the enemy, the trainers harden the trainee by invoking anger. Anger numbs pain and creates a killing machine, which most of the *Jallabas* become. However, memory of traumatic experiences as explained by Freud, breaks all barriers that are meant to keep it in the unconscious. Memories echo through dreams and hallucinations. These memories occur insistently against the stressor and the victims, breaking all of the individual’s coping mechanisms, and disrupting their functioning. Jal and his friend seem to be affected by these memories at night.

Most of the child soldiers have nightmares. Many times, Jal explains that he has headaches because of memories; “I got many headaches now as the memories of war kept me awake” (88). The sentences, “Pictures. Pictures. In my head.” (156,157,158, 204) is repeated severally in the text, perhaps to demonstrate how trauma breaks the barriers of the subconscious and the conscious until it is warped into one. Every time the pictures of his dead mother, his raped aunt and the burning of his villages come to Jal, he turns into a dangerous killer. The women and children whom he and other child soldiers encounter on the battlefield, who as victims, just like his mother and aunt, become the stressor that tips him over the ledge. At this point, all empathy is gone and is only replaced by anger and the desire for revenge.

Jal also explains how dreams haunt him and his fellow *Jallabas* at night. While avoiding the trauma of their actions, they are not escaping it as these memories work their way into their dreams and affect their functioning:

My time at the front of the front line taught me just one new thing about war- the worst is when it is over. As the battle falls silent, only the screams of the injured, when the guns stop firing and the smell of smoke fades away, the stench of blood fills the air. *Jenajesh* were always the ones who screamed a lot. (144)

The trauma of the battlefield seems to visit these soldiers at night and affects their ability to sleep or indeed function well. By writing the memoir, therefore, Jal is not only documenting his experiences but also revisiting his traumatising moments, re-experiencing the trauma and thus using writing as a form of therapy.

Memory is, however, not as simple. Kurtz (2021) terms human memory as being unreliable, owing to the complicated and devastating nature of trauma. The memory of a traumatic event is not always linear. Some victims remember in dreams what they cannot remember awake. This fight between the conscious and the subconscious can be

traumatising. Kaoma (2018) quotes an interview where Jal explains how his narrations of experiences culminate in other physical and mental symptoms including “nosebleeds and nightmares when he first began telling his story” (200). Going through the same traumatic experience over again is here illustrated as being traumatic in itself and affects the author in various ways but it is only in going over them that one can get past them. However, the uncovering of these experiences is important in the healing process.

The two authors also use their writing to explain their struggle with healing after their removal from violence. Both Jal and Gaby make it out of the traumatic situation, however, making it out of traumatic situations alive cannot be mistaken for escape from trauma or as translating to healing. Trauma, not only impairs “emotional or cognitive responses” (Vickroy, 2002, ix) but also has lasting psychological effects. Removal from traumatic situations is therefore not enough. For healing to begin, one must acknowledge their trauma and mourn. For Jal, in *War Child* being yanked out of combat does not help him much, and neither does taking Gaby in *Small Country* to France. Without the necessary rehabilitation measures being put in place to help these characters, they still experience trauma. There has been contention on what constitutes rehabilitation and whether rehabilitation necessitates healing. As defined in the previous chapter, rehabilitation involves “removal of the child from the battlefield, treatment of their numerous traumas, adoption by a Westerner, and finally resettlement” (Kyulanova 2010, 49). However, removing these children from violent conditions does not construe healing. Jal in *War Child* is taken out of combat by McCune but even out of the battlefield, Jal is still a soldier. This is evident when actions that seem to hurt others do not seem to affect Jal at all. As Ogbazi and Emelone put it, Jal lacks remorse for his actions when he shaves Sally’s cat’s hair, when he pulls the alarm for no reason or even when he leaves without letting Emma know. These actions can be interpreted

as rebellion but in essence, Jal is still in survival mode. While removal from violent conditions is a necessary therapeutic measure, it is only the first step in the healing process. For healing to take place, Jal has to face the traumas of his past and work through them.

In *Small Country*, Gaby is taken out of Burundi but is still haunted by the ghosts of his mother and his country. “I am haunted by the idea of returning. Not a day goes by without the country calling to me” (2016, 3). The two authors use their memoirs to explain the difficulties they face even after escaping from violence. Their struggle is seen from the rhetorical questions they pause: “Nothing ignites my passion. There is no fire in my belly...Is that guy in the mirror really me? Is that guy forcing a laugh by the coffee machine? I don’t recognise him” (Faye, 5). Jal, on the other hand, questions Emma’s intentions: “But questions filled my mind as I looked at Emma. Why was she so nice to me? Was she going to sell me, which I’d heard about some white people who took children did?” (Jal 2009, 181). The questions here become the critical riddles that the authors have to grapple with but also probe the reader into contemplation on the circumstances of these authors.

Jal is removed from the battlefield but he still thinks of war and dreams of his time at war. Jal uses explains his struggles with being the small boy Emma wants him to be:

“You are a young boy,” Emma would say as she put me back.

It made me angry when she said such things. I wasn’t a boy. I was a soldier, and at night my dreams haunted me more than they ever had... I missed my AK-47 and wanted a pistol to keep me safe” (2009, 182).

The problem is that those who wish to rehabilitate Jal imagine that by physically removing him from the war situations, they are providing him with a safe environment and as such he should reciprocate and be grateful by behaving like a ‘normal’ boy. The

struggle for Jal, however, comes from the inability to process what is considered normal from what is not. After being in constant survival mode, he does not know of any other way to act or behave, therefore, expecting that he would go from being a soldier to a child again is not only presumptuous but impossible. For one reason, there has to be rehabilitative structures put in place to aid this process and also for the mere fact that when he comes out of the war, he is no longer a child but a young adult. The liminal space he finds himself in breeds frustration that always has him acting out. The suspended childhood that he can never return to, acquired manhood that he is not allowed to remain in, puts him in another liminal state that results in a whole other form of trauma.

Jal juxtaposes Emma's treatment and perception of him and that of Mrs Mumo. While Emma wants Jal to simply forget about his past and become "normal", Mrs Mumo does not only become a mother figure like Emma but also a counsellor. Her kindness and understanding are what get through to him:

By now she knew a little about my life as a *jenajesh*, and sometimes I wondered if she could see shadows inside me. But it seemed as if nothing I told her could shock Mrs Mumo. To repay her kindness, I had started going to her church, the Kileleshwa Community Church, because I knew it would make Mrs Mumo happy (209-210).

She also helps him channel his frustrations and memories of his time on the battlefield into music. Music thus becomes a safe space for Jal where he can document his past and even interrogate it and also one where he can use his talent. Making music not only helps in dealing with his own trauma but also creating a community of lost boys and finally creating something they can call their own. As such talent becomes therapy, doing what they enjoy and not what others tell them to do is therapeutic. Of course, it

is not an easy process and sometimes they find themselves so frustrated by the failures and rejection but a caring motherly Mrs Mumo makes things easier.

The memoirs, therefore, do not just become an important platform within which these authors can understand and re-experience their trauma and heal but they also help their readers to understand their circumstances and interrogate the various post-war strategies of dealing with trauma.

5.3.2. The Role of the Fictional Narrative in Individual and Communal Healing

While narrated memory can help victims of trauma heal from it, this might only be helpful in situations where the victims are narrating their own stories. The question, therefore, is how does fiction help? In this section, I examine the five fictional texts under study *Afterlives*, *Kinjeketile*, *A Sunday at the Pool in Kigali*, *The Last Villains of Molo*, and *Shreds of Tenderness*. I view these texts as trauma narratives that not only present the experiences of the characters but also represent communal experiences of the societies within which they are set. For that reason, in writing these narratives, the authors here not only present the characters' experiences but also allow the readers to acquaint themselves with these experiences and thus experience them too. I situate my argument within Vickroy's (2002) ideas that trauma narratives "are personalised responses to this century's emerging awareness of the catastrophic effects of wars, poverty, colonization and domestic abuse on the physical psyche" (x). Vickroy believes that trauma narratives are "fictional narratives that help readers access traumatic experience" (x). The narratives, elaborate trauma to the audiences by inviting them into the narrations of painful uncertainty that is characteristic of traumatic memory, while warning these same audiences that trauma reproduces itself. Through the narratives, the

readers can follow characters through their inner and outward struggles while at the same time allowing these readers to meditate the characters' struggles.

This reconstruction of traumatic situations through memory in a way that provokes contemplation is useful in agitating for "collective responsibilities and communal healing" (2002, 3). Literature, apart from provoking individual memory, also provokes communal memory. This is essential for both individual and communal healing. Over the years, communities have gone through devastating effects of war and violence. However, no one is willing to talk about these harrowing and instead, communal silence has prevailed. Bayer (2018) explains that communities force themselves to forget past acts of violence and "the very legacy of war and conflict" (223) as an act of repression that is aimed at achieving some kind of peace, and if the past is resurrected through memory, it is going to disturb this peace. This silence is also an act of denial, as communities have convinced themselves that if they do not talk about the past, it will simply go away. The silence, according to Kurtz (2021), could also be attributed to the fact that "group trauma unlike individual trauma resists expression" (44). For groups, trauma only exists if it is expressed and so their denial and silence is an attempt to resist giving events a chance to be traumatic. It is resistance to remembrance as memory is traumatising.

However, the only way for the individual and the community to heal is through remembering. Kurtz (2021) explains that like traumatised individuals, traumatised communities need to remember traumatic pasts, mourn them, and atone for their wrongs, as trauma tends to reproduce itself. Like personal and individual wounds, communal wounds fester and make it difficult for the community to function. The trauma narrative, therefore, has the responsibility to re-enact trauma with the hope of provoking communal memory for communal healing. The role of the narrative is to

bring out these communal experiences in an intimate story that allows readers to identify with the audience and enables them to follow their stories and struggles.

Gurnah in *Afterlives* and Hussein in *Kinjeketile* present the ills of colonialism and how the native Swahili people are tortured by German colonisers. Colonialism is an experience that is common to all the people of Tanganyika (now Tanzania) and is only recorded in history as a demonstration of the Germans' power over the weakness and lack of unity of the natives which only solidified the German domination. Gurnah's *Afterlives*, for example, presents situations of the First World War in which the lives of the two protagonists, Hamza and Ilyas, are juxtaposed. These two characters are both soldiers in the German army and while one is afraid of the German and does what he has to do to survive, the other worships the German. People like Ilyas are awed by the might of the Germans while at the same time fooled by their "compassion" and for this, are ready to go to war. Ilyas says:

The Germans are gifted and clever people. They know how to organize, they know how to fight. They think of everything...and on top of that they are much kinder than the British (2020, 41).

Hamza, on the other hand, is forced to become a soldier and though he is forced to fight for the German cause, he is still made to feel less than; "the other". He is portrayed as being afraid of the Germans and his choice of roles does not signal his desire for safety but his desire to please the Germans to survive. "He did not know if being a signalman was any safer than being an askari, but it was not the moment to quibble" (2020, 64). Even in moments that Hamza seems to receive the slightest compassion from the German, he learns that this compassion does not in any way signify kindness as the same German can use him to vent out his own frustrations in a violent way or even to just simply exercise his power.

The officer stepped forward and slapped Hamza on the left cheek then slapped him with the back of his hand on the right cheek. Hamza gasped in pain from the shock and after a moment felt his flesh tingling in pain” (86).

Hamza’s first reaction here is not shown to be emanating from the pain of the slap but from the reason behind it. He does not understand what he has done wrong, but the reason seems simple, he is a subordinate native, and the powerful settler can use him however he wants, even if it means relieving his own pressure and frustration. The native at this moment is thus portrayed as an object available for the settler's use as he may please. Ilyas, the sycophant who sings the German praises and does his bidding without question or reservation, is not given much space because he does not seem to represent the true spirit of an African native that is proud of their roots. In fact, Ilyas becomes some sort of cautionary tale of what an African is not supposed to be. Mostly, Ilyas' memories are of his family and friends who remind us of who he was before the war. The Ilyas before the war and in memory are likeable in native Tanganyika. The one during and after war feels like a sell-out.

Hamza’s story, however, is one that the Tanganyikan community can relate to. It is filled with the pains of colonialism, though laced with fleeting moments of contentment and slight happiness. It is Hamza’s story that the readers, especially those who emerge from a colonial history, can relate to. The narrative here draws its readers to a different perspective and thus helps them re-examine history. It draws the readers into the lives of their perpetrators allowing them to “reconsider a traumatic past and adopt new consciousness of history even if fragmented” (Vickroy 2002, 33). The perspective of the perpetrator (soldier) and the victim (native) are re-examined in this narrative thus allowing the entire community not to just re-evaluate their view of perpetratorship and victimhood but also to assess the struggles of those whom they perceived to have done

them wrong. It is in understanding Hamza's experiences, motivations, and actions that the people can process the reason behind the betrayal of their own to commit atrocities against them. Of course, in hindsight, the narrative provides both the reader and the character with a common enemy allowing them to bond in their 'sameness'. However, it is also important to note that finding a common enemy to blame is not exactly the function of trauma narratives. The aim is to provide a safe space within which one can re-experience one's trauma and confront it. The narrative does not apportion blame but helps those who experience trauma not only to remember but to find a safe space to feel and mourn.

Hamza's silence after war is typical of a traumatised community's resolve to repress their past through silence and though Gurnah is not exactly offering a direct path to healing, he is simply highlighting the importance of connecting with the community. Hamza does not reconnect with his old community because that does not exist any longer not only in spatial terms but in temporal as well. Nonetheless, he can form his community from what he can find at the moment. This somehow emphasises the transformative nature of healing. Healing does not promise a return to the old self but rather finding a new self amid new circumstances. The community is not as welcoming as the old community and Hamza is not as trusting as he was before, but they have a shared history that recognises the experiences and the fears of both groups and how they struggle to accommodate each other. It is in this shared lack of trust and the need for a reason to trust that provides the commonality and, therefore, a path not necessarily to healing but in the least to coexistence.

Kinjeketile, on the other hand, fosters African unity as a communal strength. The play according to Mwaiyaga (2014) uses the memory of what is not only a historic or heroic but also a tragic event in Tanganyika to reconstruct the past. Although the text projects

the conflict between the Tanganyikans and the Germans, it is also portrayed as a memory of this past. The text, *Mwaifuge* continues to explain, reconstructs the past tragic and heroic events as a tool for resistance weaved through a virtually realistic presentation of a past that is experienced by both the individual and the collective. It is presented as a situation where the natives attempt to challenge the Germans but because of their lack of weaponry and unity emanating from ethnic division, culminates in the genocide. The story is, however, not just that of Kinjeketile and how he is inspired to fight German domination but also of the suffering of the Tanganyikans. Though it is a historical tale, it is also a personal and communal one. It follows the lives of individual characters and focuses on their suffering.

History may present the Maji Maji rebellion as a failed attempt by the powerless natives to challenge the all-powerful Germans, but Hussein dramatises the collective encounter and the personal psychological processes of the individuals enduring the trauma of colonisation. On the verge of giving up, the myth of Maji (magical water) seems to be the reason for the awakening of the natives' resolve to fight. The fight might have been a failure but the *nywinywila* (the word) is a success. The *nywinywila* strikes fear in the German that is presented in the text which is uncharacteristic of an all-powerful dominant. Even after killing thousands of natives on the battlefield, they still learn what "the word" means for the natives. As such, although the German intends to hang the native hero, he first needs to kill the *nywinywila*, the one thing that cannot be killed with bullets.

German officer: Listen, if you agree to tell the people that the water didn't have medicine, we will let all these people go free. (51)

Kinjeketile, the African hero, holds onto this power, one that he refuses to relinquish because of what it means to his people.

Kinjeketile: The moment I say that people in the north, south, east and west will stop fighting. They will fall into hopeless despair-they will give up. I will not say that! A word has been born.

The Tanganyikan community through this narrative are not only able to assess the characters' experiences but also its own individual and communal experience of colonialism. The text offers a space for remembrance, one that is important in working through trauma and healing. By following the physical and psychological processes of the characters, the audiences go through their own and process them. The "word" is a symbol of unity and strength, and the narrative becomes a testimony that not only bears witness to the native's suffering but also their collective strength. As such, the narrative becomes a therapeutic space that provides the safety to re-experience and work through trauma.

The texts also present similar experiences in different ways. The authors offer a variety of modes of interpretation of experience. The narratives provide a space within which various perspectives and voices can counter each other. The experiences differ and as such, representations of these experiences also differ. Vickroy (2002) believes that trauma narratives use the "dialogical approach that involves the intermingling of many voices, emotions and experiences" (207). Though Vickroy here refers to the various voices of the various characters in one text, the same may also be said to be true in separate texts. Situations of exile are presented both in *Small Country* and *Shreds of Tenderness*, but there is a difference between the two. Though the protagonists Gaby and Wak respectively are running away from war, the former is immigrating to France where he is also a citizen while Wak is leaving his country as a refugee. In Gaby's new residence, he is a French citizen while in Wak's new residence, he is a refugee. The privileges and the treatments differ and so do the paths they take to return home. All Gaby needs to do is buy a plane ticket, while Wak has to go to the bush and fight first.

The nostalgia of home and the eventual return, though, are the same, the processes that both characters go through to get home differ according to their status. The migrant can return at their own volition, and no one can question it but the refugee has a different problem. The “stayees” as presented in *Shreds of Tenderness* do not only question the refugees’ reason for leaving, but they also question their return:

WAK: If you, my brother, are suspicious, God knows what the ordinary man in the street thinks and feels about us. The hatred he harbours in his heart must be incredible! The bitterness insurmountable! Have people suddenly become so woolly-headed? You are a perfect specimen, to use your own expression. (2001,75)

As such, the migrant can return with no problem while the refugee, first has to assess the implications of his return and whether it is safe to do so, then prove himself once he is home. Not to say that the former just needs to return as we see Gaby’s healing being tied to his ability to find and take care of the mother he once wished would go away,

“I wanted Maman gone, for her to leave us in peace, to spare us from the horrors she had experienced so that we could still dream and hold out hope in life. I didn’t understand why we had to suffer with her” (2016, 158).

The mother that is presented in his childhood is scary and traumatic for a child of his age. The adult Gaby now understands the implications of trauma and is more sympathetic to the experiences of the victims while at the same time, ashamed of their own cowardice. Gaby rights his wrongs by moving back to Burundi and caring for his mother. Wak’s, situation in *Shreds of Tenderness* is more complicated. Not only is he supposed to prove his suffering through acting out his trauma, but he also has to bring his brother to the realisation that his actions set motion a chain of suffering. As such,

leading his brother to the path of “restorative justice” (Wesonga, 2020) is a perfect way to help Odie to atone for his actions. The healing of the individual and the nation is pegged on the ability not just to engage in active remembrance but also the ability for perpetrators to realise the role they play in the suffering of others and take responsibility for it.

In *The Last Villains of Molo* the fact that the victims of trauma never talk about their past reinforces what in Vickroy's (2002) opinion is typical of perpetrators. Perpetrators according to Vickroy “promote forgetting and defend themselves through secrecy, silence, denial, rationalizing and undermining victim’s accusations” (19). By maintaining this silence, the hope is that the truth about their past and the part they played in the perpetration of violence will not come to light. As such, they evade the consequences that come with public knowledge. Narratives, however, not only reveal the characters actions but also help their readers follow the psychological process of these perpetrators in the post-war world to demonstrate that they are not devoid of trauma. The secrecy of the five stems from the fear of what will happen to them if people find out the role they played in the clashes. As a coping mechanism, the five friends change their names and never discuss their past. Their reckless behaviour which can only be interpreted as self-destructive, is associated with the failure to work out traumatic situations further illustrating the effects of negative coping mechanisms.

The deployment of Nancy in the text is not only a strategic move by the author to help the five face their past but it also helps the readers to realise the failure of revenge as a coping mechanism. It is not only a moment for the perpetrator to face his past but also helps the victims move forward by understanding the reasons behind the perpetrators' actions and how these actions have affected them. Bone, one of the Slaughterhouse Five who is responsible for the death of Nancy’s father pleads, “If this is all about my past,

let me say that all I did was unintended. My actions were meant to protect my family, my village and myself,” he offered. “(185). The aim here is to portray perpetrators of violence not as the cold-blooded killers they are often depicted to be but as humans who are sometimes forced by circumstances to be who they are. The narrative here also becomes important in demonstrating to the victims how perpetrators’ actions affect them, “He paused once more. “But you are not exterminating villains. You are killing people. Go ahead,” he told her again, “kill me and experience the sweetness of killing a human being” (196). As such, Nancy not only understands the traumas Bone and his friends are experiencing because of their actions but is also able to stop the cycle of violence.

The perpetrator's silence here is depicted as not stemming from the perpetrator’s desire to avoid taking responsibility but from personal trauma from their actions. When Bone and Nancy fall in love, we finally watch the two characters bring down the walls around them and be able to move on with their lives. Though there are more obstacles to deal with, self-healing is of priority, but then personal safety also becomes an issue because an alliance with the enemy is seen as a betrayal of the entire community. Their trauma and their healing processes are juxtaposed with that of the entire community. The trauma of the individual corresponds to that of the entire community. Healing, therefore, is not complete until the community can realise the error of their ways and atone. Working out their issues and moving home is, therefore, a necessary step for communal healing.

Literature also challenges the point of view of the representation of trauma. As much as the presentation of trauma and memory is important, the point of view from which the said trauma is represented is also important. The questions of accuracy and the role of representation are again tied to the point of view. The readers can only identify with

the characters in the text if their experiences are similar. Valcourt in *A Sunday at the Pool in Kigali* is not Rwandan and cannot be said to fully understand the problems facing the Rwandans. Courtemanche rightly writes from an outsider's and an observer's point of view thus playing the role of the bystander. Keren (2009) asserts that the bystander is not related to the specific conditions of that event. The genocide conditions presented in the text do not affect Valcourt directly since he does not have to fear for his life. He is not the target: Gentile and other locals are. As such, he cannot fully understand the fears of the locals. Many times, he is warned about the imminent danger that is looming around Gentile's life:

Valcourt, your Gentile is Tutsi, even if you swear she isn't. Her death's already written in the sky. So if you love her, you'll pack your bags, you'll forget the film and television station that'll never make any television because we're too poor, you'll forget Rwanda and tomorrow you'll take the plane' (88-89)

He does not, however, appreciate the gravity of the danger Gentile's life is in and is adamant about staying. Valcourt has a romanticised perception of Rwanda looking at it only from the lens of beautiful hills and lovely weather. He is, therefore, twice removed from the reality of the moment no matter how much Gentile nudges:

If you asked me to leave, I'd do it reluctantly, knowing that one grey autumn we'd miss the sweet, warm breath of the eucalyptus so much that each of us would be blaming the other for the choice. Gentile, we are not leaving here unless you really want to go, or unless they throw us out (183).

Valcourt's naivety and alienation from the actual fears of those who are the target of the genocide is an important representation of how hard it is for those who have not experienced trauma themselves to understand the victims' experiences. Even though Valcourt is present in Rwanda pre-genocide, and knows what is coming, he lacks the ethnographic grounding to understand the people's fears. Just like Valcourt, the narrator

in the text, the author is not present in Rwanda during the genocide itself. When he (Valcourt) comes back after the genocide to look for Gentile, he seems detached from the victims' experiences. He also seems untrustworthy and therefore cannot provide a space that is safe enough to tell their stories. The victims have a solidarity in experience and can relate to their sameness which Valcourt does not share, not just because he is an outsider but also because he did not go through these experiences. He is, therefore, not a member of the inner circle of victimhood and cannot be let into the experience:

Their gaze was not empty but chillingly absent, turned inward, or quite simply dead. Like people who can see but will not. Only a few women would speak, in hushed voices, their eyes fixed on the ground where they kept them long after they finished their clinical descriptions (for they had only concrete words) of the murders of their husbands and sons. (231)

The dissociation is of course a typical result of trauma. However, their detachment can also be interpreted as an expulsion of Valcourt from the inner circle and his inability to understand what they have gone through because he is not one of them. While the survivors can verbalise their trauma, their bodies remain silent. The lack of emotion attached to their narrations is not only a survival strategy but also a coping mechanism. Burnet (2012) terms silence as a “culturally appropriate coping mechanism” (166) that not only protects the victims from the memories of trauma but also expels the outsider from their experience. Burnet explains the lack of emotion as also a way in which the survivors take back the control that violence has robbed them. By not openly displaying the psychological wounds they bear, they are thus detaching from trauma. Courtemanche documents the events of the Rwandan genocide well, its motivations, its formations and even its effects. The problem, however, is there is no clear path towards healing. As the outsider, it can be interpreted that no one trusted him enough to show their trauma or maybe he is too removed from the realities of the victims.

The texts under study present various types of traumas and as such offer different perspectives on how trauma may affect individuals. The approach each of the authors chooses in taking its readers through these experiences is dependent on the type of trauma being presented. These texts unmask both individual and communal trauma that has been repressed and offer various paths of dealing with the trauma. While these narratives make use of fictional characters to highlight these painful experiences, the characters also direct the gaze of the reader inwards in the hope that by the end of the narrative, the reader will meditate about the collective trauma and hope both the characters in the text and the reader can be directed to the path of healing.

5.4. Conclusion.

The literary text performs various functions: while it is a space within which authors can present trauma and various ways in which those affected can deal with their trauma, it is also a space within which readers can work through their individual and communal traumas. The text provides the language to verbalise traumatic experiences and allow them to be processed and also offers space within which trauma can be remembered. Memoirs are written from memory and thus helps the authors of these works reconstruct the fragmented accounts of their experiences to form a complete narrative. The construction of a comprehensive narrative is synonymous with the ordering of traumatic experiences to come up with a complete memory of the past. The narrative also offers a space to reconstruct the past the past to process healing. Fiction is not created from a vacuum but from actual experiences that individuals and societies experience. Though different from the memoirs in terms of details and characterisation, the fictional text provides the author with more freedom to hush out trauma and provide a different perspective. The texts allow their readers to follow the lives of the characters

as they struggle with their own experiences. They also enable their readers to turn their gaze inward and process their trauma. The various perspectives offered by the texts, present different forms of trauma and the effects of this trauma. While ordering the experiences of the various characters into a narrative, the text activates communal memory, which aids in the healing process of both the characters and their readers.

CHAPTER SIX

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

6.1. Summary

This study set out to examine the constructions of marginalised identities through the creation of clichés and stereotypes with the aim of excluding one group from social, political and economic resources. The objective was to examine the forms of marginalisation that dominant groups subject to the subordinate groups and how this marginalisation can result in violence as a way of exerting dominance or fight marginalisation which then results in trauma. The study based its analysis on seven texts set in East Africa, namely: *Kinjeketile* (1969) *Afterlives* (2020), *War Child* (2009), *Small Country* (2016), *The Last Villains of Molo* (2004), *A Sunday at the Pool in Kigali* (2000) and *Shreds of Tenderness* (2001). These texts were selected purposively as they cover the different kinds of violence that have been experienced in the region, including colonial violence, civil war, political violence and genocide. The texts also encompass different genres of literary writing namely: plays, novels and memoirs. The study, while examining the various forms of violence and traumas that are (re)presented in these texts, also conducts a comparative analysis of the representation of this trauma.

The study relied on Edward Said's concept of the stereotyping of "the other" by the superior groups made so by their vast numbers or by narratives that are constructed with the sole purpose of domination. The study used Said's ideas as documented in his book *Orientalism* and operationalised them to suit the situations presented in the texts. As such, the study does not necessarily compare the conditions of marginalisation in East Africa to those of the West and the East as presented by Said, but rather, it borrows the concept of othering through narratives, myths and stereotypes which in both cases

serve the same purpose; that of acquiring and maintaining power. Though the difference between groups and the notions of “us” versus “them” are not inherently evil, these differences can be manipulated for subjugation. In this study, therefore, I analysed the representation of the differences between “the self” and “the other” in the texts and how these differences are exploited and used to marginalise groups. Since marginalisation is an act of violence, it can also result in active conflict, which in turn precipitates trauma. I found Freud’s concept of the *Uncanny* useful in analysing how trauma affects those who have been subjected to violence and how this trauma is manifested in both victims and perpetrators. Freud advances that the uncanny is the return of something familiar in a way that “arouses dread and creeping horror” (1). In this study, I examined the qualities of “the other” that initially were a source of warmth and safety, which have now been turned by “the self” into a cause for marginalisation and violence. The study also examined trauma as the end product of this violence and how it manifests in the characters in the texts.

The study is divided into four analytical chapters. The analysis begins with an examination of marginalisation and violence against natives during colonialism, then it moves on to scrutinise the effects of civil wars on children as presented in memoirs. It then delves into the traumas of genocide, civil war, and political violence with a specific focus on the body as a site for trauma and testimony. Lastly, it explores the various ways in which authors of the seven texts explore the subjects of healing, coping and agency.

In chapter two, I set out to examine the marginalisation of the natives by the German colonial regime through the use of language and violence to subjugate “the subordinate”. The chapter is rooted in the idea that for the dominant to maintain control, they must make the subordinate appear lesser than they truly are. In this context, Said’s

theory of the creation of the other proves useful. The “Oriental” must feel the power of the “Occident” to conform. The chapter explores how the German colonial government employed language and violence to establish dominance. In *Afterlives*, the study found that the dominant Germans used language to subjugate the natives. By describing the natives' language as backwards, barbaric, savage, and childish, the Germans (the Occident) not only view the language as inferior but also the speakers of that language. This characterisation of language not only subjugates its speakers but also grants the German colonisers power over the natives. Language is further utilised to perform power, as natives are demeaned and insulted to embed a sense of inferiority. The natives are expected to embody this inferiority and are therefore unable to respond or defend themselves. Although they may develop coping mechanisms to lessen the impact, they cannot truly protect themselves because the Germans hold all the power and can carry out their actions as they see fit.

In *Kinjeketile*, the German coloniser uses violence as a form of marginalisation. Consistent acts of violence are performed on the bodies of the natives through overworking them in the fields, starvation and administering corporal punishments for little or no mistakes at all. Violence is enacted on the body of the natives to terrorise and humiliate them, thus ensuring that they remain in a subordinate position. Violence here is used as an instrument of control and also as a privilege of rank. As mentioned before, colonisation itself was built on the stereotype that the natives are backwards, savage and barbaric and can neither govern themselves nor survive without the help of the West. For this reason, the colonial is superior and can emphasise his power through all the means he deems fit. The native's body thus becomes the site within which the German can exercise his power and keep the native in a subordinate position. Control over the body translates to control over the mind as the fear of what will happen to the

body if the native fails to conform is enough to tame any kind of rebellion and thus remain in a subordinate position.

Chapter three explored the effect of marginalisation and violence on children. More specifically, this chapter inspected how violence shatters the child protective frames placed by parents to protect them from this violence and places these children in liminal spaces. In violence and war situations, children find themselves in one of two situations: either shielded from active violence or immersed in it. The chapter analysed two texts, Gael Faye's *Small Country* and Emmanuel Jal's *War Child*. In *Small Country*, the protagonist Gaby and his sister are shielded from active conflict because of privilege, while Jal in *War Child* is plunged into the frontline of violence as a child soldier. I discovered, however, that even those who seem protected from violence cannot escape its effects since war permeates the child protective frames put in place by the parents to shield their children from violence and its effects. Parents, as depicted in *Small Country*, may work hard to remove children from public spaces or conversations that they cannot comprehend as a way of shielding them from the horrors of war. Despite this, children are inherently curious and find ways to access what they are being protected from, thus effectively shattering these protective frames on their own. Violence also comes with loss, fear, trauma and Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder. While the children may be spatially protected from experiencing violence first-hand, their parents are not. The death of parents in this war presents them with situations where they have to miss out on parental love and protection. Some lose their parents to PTSD and have to watch as parents are left as shells of their former selves, or turn them into raging monsters who sometimes turn on their children. In some cases, these children are forced to take a stand, mostly because of hate and a desire for vengeance. Either

way, the innocence that is associated with childhood is lost as war leaves no one unscathed.

War Child examines the complexities of trauma experienced by child soldiers. Children in this context often find themselves in active conflict, either by volunteering or being forcibly conscripted. The term 'child soldier' implies a state between childhood and adulthood. After losing their parents to war, these children seek the love and protection they have missed, along with a desire for vengeance against those they blame. Being a soldier compels children to adopt adult behaviours they may be physically or mentally unprepared for. Recruitment involves training, a process designed to suspend or entirely suppress childhood, effectively turning children into soldiers. During this intense training, the trainees are neither fully children nor fully soldiers; they inhabit a liminal space between two states. Conditions in the camp place them in ambiguous zones between safety and danger, protection and brutality, war and peace. Even after completing training and becoming soldiers, their physical disadvantages persist, hindering them. The only way to gain respect is by transforming into killing machines and demonstrating a level of fearlessness that is not expected from older, more physically capable soldiers. While this may earn them rank and some respect, it also leads to trauma. The soldiers find themselves navigating the boundaries of consciousness and unconsciousness, with their traumas and actions crossing these boundaries so often that they struggle to distinguish between the two.

War Child is a memoir that, being written from memory of the past, sees the author crossing the boundary between past and present, thus remaining in a liminal space. Since these memoirs are based on memory, it is essential to note that memory is selective; therefore, the memoir is not a minute-by-minute retelling of the authors' lives. Instead, it is a careful curation of experiences, involving silence, exaggeration, and the

creation of a larger-than-life persona. Primarily, it serves as a means of processing trauma, while occasionally appealing to humanitarian organisations.

Chapter Four examines trauma resulting from violence and marginalisation. In this chapter, the body is likened to a mural or canvas where violence can be expressed; however, since the body is connected to the mind and soul of trauma victims, it also serves as a testament to both physical and psychological wounds. The chapter utilises three texts for illustration: Gil Courtemanche's *A Sunday at the Pool in Kigali*, John Ruganda's *Shreds of Tenderness*, and Kinyanjui Kombani's *The Last Villains of Molo*. The study investigates three key aspects: first, the trauma inflicted on marginalized individuals due to their ethnic background and how their bodies are used to signify this identity; second, the trauma experienced by those who flee to another country in search of refuge from persecution; and finally, revenge as a response to past traumas, illustrating how victims may enact their trauma upon the perpetrators who have also become victims.

The chapter explored the trauma experienced by those who are unfortunate enough to stay and those who are 'fortunate' enough to leave. It contrasts the traumas of the stayees and the exiles, one suffering at the hands of their countrymen and the other at the hands of their hosts in the country they flee to. Whether in their home country or in exile, these two groups of victims endure trauma, albeit in different forms. While the first two texts in the chapter focus on the victims' trauma, helplessness, and their tendency to turn the other cheek, the last text examines the victims' responses to their trauma and the politics involved in the perpetrators' actions. The victims in the first two texts either simply accept their circumstances, as in the case of Gentile in *A Sunday at the Pool in Kigali*, or choose to forgive and reconcile with their perpetrators, as in Wak in *Shreds of Tenderness*. The third text, however, raises questions about what happens

when victims cannot easily let go or choose not to forgive. To explore this, the chapter analyses Kinyanjui Kombani's *The Last Villains of Molo*, with a particular focus on revenge as a response to trauma.

The study found that systemic marginalisation was propagated by the colonial community, which created a hierarchy of superiority between groups. The need for self-preservation and the desire to take back control from the subjugated community led to an elaborate plan to eliminate their 'privileged' counterparts. The body, as was used by the colonial government as a measure of intelligence and temperament, is now used to map out those to be maimed and eliminated. The scars that are inflicted on the body as a result of the genocide leave tangible imprints on the body that tell the story of their experiences. The genocide leaves behind masses of mutilated bodies which remember the trauma they witnessed and can not only testify to this trauma but also its effects. The study also ascertained that refugees are viewed in exile as faceless bodies and mouths to feed. As they are dependent on their hosts, they lose their right to speak up or act on their own accord. These refugees are also caged in camps meant to keep them within the boundaries of the camp. The caging of these bodies also translates to the caging of the mind; so, while the boundaries are meant to cage the body, the mind, too, feels trapped within it. The refugee's body also becomes the site within which the host can perform their superiority because the refugee's dignity and identity are linked to the shame of dependence and are thus subordinate. Lastly, the chapter determined that the decision to enact revenge on perpetrators of violent and traumatic acts emanates from the feeling of helplessness and loss of power that accompanies traumatic experiences. As such, victims of trauma fantasise and enact revenge in an attempt to take back control and power that they lost. Revenge, though aimed at getting even and might give back this control, is also a double-edged sword that not only affects those

who are being avenged, but also the trauma that is presented in the three texts under study in this chapter is targeted at the body.

Chapter Five conducted a comparative analysis of how the authors of these texts explore the subject of healing. While the study recognised that not all of these texts necessarily present a path to healing, they demonstrate how the various characters deal with the traumatic situations that they are presented with, not necessarily to heal but sometimes just to assuage the effects of this trauma or to provide themselves with temporary relief. This chapter, therefore, grappled with four concepts: healing, coping, agency and therapeutic measures. I assert that the characters in the texts may not heal from trauma as trauma leaves a permanent mark on those who experience it but these characters can adopt other ways of surviving by either creating self-agency, devising ways to cope with the trauma or simply coming up with therapeutic measures that can create a safe space for them however temporary it is. The different texts present various strategies adopted by characters to assuage their trauma depending on the kind of trauma they have experienced. *Small Country* and *War Child* offer situations in which the children adopt therapeutic measures to lessen the trauma. The two characters in the texts Gaby and Jal respectively adopt humour, poetry, and music and develop friendships to take them away from the grim realities of war and t also create alliances which prove valuable for their survival at this time. The two characters in the texts also utilise memory in writing their narratives and thus reliving their past. Memory here is demonstrated as important in the process of healing.

The other five texts present various ways characters cope, create self-agency or attempt to heal from the trauma. The texts offer the space within which the characters in the texts not only struggle with their healing but also a chance for the community to remember. While authors at times use texts to rehearse various ways of dealing with

trauma and thus essentially providing a path to healing. The texts also offer a space within which readers can experience repressed communal trauma.

6.2. Conclusion

For dominant groups to sustain their power, they must subjugate subordinate groups by establishing hierarchies that enable their dominance. This subjugation can occur through privileging certain languages over others and assigning inferiority to specific languages; speakers of marginalised languages are also marginalised. According to this logic, if the language a particular group speaks is deemed inferior, then its speakers are also considered inferior. This process thus suppresses speakers of the subjugated language and confers power to those who speak the so-called “superior” language.

Violence is a crucial tool in the exercise of power and the subjugation of groups. Dominant groups use it to affirm their dominance and enforce conformity on subjugated groups. Conversely, the same violence can be employed by subjugated groups to challenge their oppression. When this occurs, children often find themselves caught in the midst of violence. Despite protective barriers that parents may establish to shield children from violence, war permeates these protective layers and reaches the children. War also places children in liminal spaces, especially when they are compelled to participate in active conflict as child soldiers. Training and participation in warfare suspend and sometimes forcibly halt childhood, positioning children between childhood and adulthood, safety and danger, victims and perpetrators. This process suspends their childhood and forces them to assume adult roles, yet their undeveloped mental faculties and physical vulnerabilities still define them as children, creating ambivalence. Even after children are removed from active conflict, their transition into young adulthood remains difficult, leaving them in a liminal space as they struggle. Marginalisation is inherently violent and also generates violence, which subsequently results in trauma. Civil war, land conflicts, political strife, and genocide inflict profound trauma on those who endure them.

Violence is mainly performed on the body during the war, the body is connected to the mind and soul, and therefore physical trauma affects the mind, turning traumatic. While being the cover of the soul and mind, the body is also the content and thus witnesses

these atrocities and can testify to them through the physical scars that violent acts leave on the body. Those who go through trauma may choose revenge as a way of taking back the power that they lost, but revenge is a double-edged sword which cuts the avenged and the avenger, resulting in more trauma.

The literary text plays a role not only in presenting trauma but also in suggesting various ways in which both the characters in the texts and the readers can heal from trauma by verbalising their experiences, thus enabling them to process these traumas. The narrative also provides space within which readers and communities can remember past atrocities; as such, authors promote both individual and communal healing. For example, the memoir offers a space where authors can reconstruct their fragmented traumatic pasts and remember them, which in turn gives the characters opportunities for healing. Meanwhile, the fictional text creates space for both communal and individual healing by revealing historical traumas and enabling both authors and readers to confront their own traumas, with the hope of healing.

Although the study established a direct link between marginalisation, violence, and trauma, it recommends further study on whether there is a possibility for the marginalised to negotiate for space without resorting to violence. In my view, this could minimise trauma, as while trauma resulting from marginalisation might be unavoidable, trauma caused by violence could be reduced. The role of children in violent situations also warrants further investigation.

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APPENDICES

Appendix I: Plagiarism



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THESIS WRITING COURSE

PLAGIARISM AWARENESS CERTIFICATE

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Prof. Anne Syomwene Kisilu

CERM-ESA Project Leader Date: 08/07/2025