

The copyright of this thesis vests in the author. No quotation from it or information derived from it is to be published without full acknowledgement of the source. The thesis is to be used for private study or non-commercial research purposes only.

Published by the University of Cape Town (UCT) in terms of the non-exclusive license granted to UCT by the author.

**Madness in African Literature:
Ambivalence, Fluidity, and Play**

Natasha Himmelman

HMMNAT002

A minor dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the
degree of Masters of Philosophy in African Studies

Faculty of the Humanities

University of Cape Town

2006

COMPULSORY DECLARATION

This work has not been previously submitted in whole, or in part, for the award of any degree. It is my own work. Each significant contribution to, and quotation in, this dissertation from the work, or works, of other people has been attributed, and has been cited and referenced.

Signature

Signed by candidate

Date

7/19/06

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

So many people have contributed to the production of this dissertation. Although words cannot fully convey my gratitude and thanks, I would like to thank you for all of your support.

First and foremost, many thanks to my advisor, Professor Brenda Cooper, whose patience transformed many “sandwich” versions of this dissertation into a soufflé. Thank you so very much for your patience and perseverance.

I would also like to thank the Centre for African Studies for their commitment to the multi-disciplinary study of Africa. Perhaps more importantly, thank you for being my home away from home.

Additionally, I would like to acknowledge UCT’s Interlibrary Loan and African Studies Library. What would I do without you?

Moreover, I would like to extend a special thank you to Carrol, Devon, Harry, Kim, Lauren, Lindsay, Monique, Robyn, Sarah, and Sariska.
Thank you! Thank you! Thank you!

Finally, to my entire family, who have shown amazing patience and resilience during the dissertation process. It is your unconditional support that remains constant and provides me with strength. Recuerde que nadie es loco. ¡Es el mundo que es loco!

TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | |
|---|-----|
| Acknowledgements | i |
| Abstract | ii |
| Introduction <i>Contextualizing Madness, Africa, and Literature</i> | 1 |
| Chapter 1 <i>Ambivalence: Searching for a Discursive Space</i> | 14 |
| Chapter 2 <i>Fluidity: Imagining a New Paradigm</i> | 53 |
| Chapter 3 <i>Play: Creating a New Regime of Truth</i> | 88 |
| Conclusion <i>(re)Conceptualizing Discursive Change</i> | 120 |
| Works Cited | 129 |



ABSTRACT

Madness in African Literature: Ambivalence, Fluidity, and Play examines how representations of madness in six literary pieces are used to reflect upon discourse. In Chapter 1, "Ambivalence: Searching for a Discursive Space," Achebe's *Arrow of God* (1964) and Gordimer's *July's People* (1981) present madness in response to discursive shifts, which cause ambivalence to surface. While Achebe's Ezeulu teeters between traditional Ibo society and the infringing colonial regime, Gordimer's Maureen is thrust into a post-apartheid interregnum. However, without a discourse to accommodate their newfound knowledges, Ezeulu and Maureen are abruptly compelled to madness. Chapter 2, "Fluidity: Imagining a New Paradigm," analyzes how the protagonists of Head's *A Question of Power* (1974) and Marechera's "House of Hunger" (1978) experience madness as a result of discursive fragmentation. Head and Marechera imagine a new paradigm within nondiscursive madness, a reality in which signifiers are undefined and subjectivities are fluid. Finally, Chapter 3, "Play: Creating a New Regime of Truth," demonstrates how El Saadawi's *The Innocence of the Devil* (1994) and Bandele's *The Street* (1999) use madness as a space that is hospitable to play, enabling discursive discontinuities to be staged in order to collapse the distance between discursive absolutes. This collapse signals a new regime of truth that does not divide good from evil, life from death, but upholds them as part of a continuum. Together, these six literary pieces invoke madness in order to creatively reflect upon the ongoing struggle for discursive spaces and subjectivities.

Throughout history madness has occupied many spaces within vastly different discourses. In *Madness and Civilization* (1964¹) Michel Foucault documents changing perceptions of madness in Europe, specifically its movement from integration within society towards its systematic ostracism. Through this study of madness, Foucault is able to examine the construction of discourse(s) and its relationship(s) with power. As Colin Gordon explains in the introduction to *Power/Knowledge* (Foucault, 1980:viii), Foucault's analysis demonstrates "that the invention of madness as a disease is in fact nothing less than a peculiar disease of our civilization." In other words, madness is discursively constructed. Drawing from "[r]ecent psychiatric – or perhaps anti-psychiatric – research," Gordon reinforces Foucault's analysis stating, "[P]eople do not in fact go mad, but are driven mad by others who are driven into the position of driving them mad by a peculiar convergence of social pressures" (Foucault, 1980:viii). The authenticity of Foucault's conclusions is also reinforced by the dialog he constructs with "the voice of insane people" (Loomba, 2001:38). But as Ania Loomba (2001:38) questions in *Colonialism/Postcolonialism*, "[H]ow might one recover voices that have been deemed not worthy of social circulation?" According to Loomba (2001:38), "Foucault found that literary texts were one of the rare places where they might be heard." Literary texts enable Foucault to capture these supposedly mute voices. Hence, I too look to the realm of literary studies – African Literature – in order to interrogate the construction of discursive power in Africa through the lens of madness.

Literature offers a particularly poignant perspective. Although literature does maintain a specific discursive space, which, at times, reinforces hegemony by creating hierarchical value systems (i.e. "the Canon"), the discipline embraces a wider range of

¹ This date refers to the English translation published in 1964 by Union générale d'éditions. *Folie et déraison: Histoire de la folie à l'âge classique* was first published by Librairie Plon in 1961.

2 /

discursive possibilities. Moreover, mental illness plays a significant role in the lives of many prominent writers, theorists, and critics, who contribute to literary discourse. Most importantly, however, is the relationship between psychological wellbeing and narrative. Many forms of mental illness result from a “crisis of meaning” (Roberts, 2000:435), a psychological state in which individuals are unable to create a cohesive life narrative. Such narrative fragmentation resonates with many of the traumatic issues addressed in African Literature. Fiction, in particular, enables individuals to imagine a reality outside of hegemonic discourse. Within the discursive space in which fiction exists, there is more room to bend the seemingly ironclad walls of one’s discursive reality. There is space to create and invent. Madness also enhances such a space.

Examining society “through the looking glass” of madness was popularized by Foucault’s *Madness and Civilization*. According to David Cooper who introduces Foucault’s work, “Madness [...] is a way of seizing in *extremis* the racinating groundwork of the truth that underlies our more specific realizations of what we are about” (Foucault, 2004a:vii; emphasis in original). Indeed, madness enables us to gain a unique perspective of our discursive circumstances. I believe that contextualizing madness within colonial, postcolonial, and “migrant” discursive spaces enables a more diverse and extensive perspective on “the order of things,”² and the ways in which it is undermined and/or transformed.

Studying madness is one way that researchers have sought to examine and interrogate “the order of things.” In the introduction to *Imperial Bedlam* (1999) Jonathan Sadowsky (1999:10-11) provides his own reasoning for studying madness:

² “The order of things” refers to an overarching hegemonic taxonomy, which is structured by mainstream discourse. See Foucault, Michel. 2004. *The Order of Things*. London: Routledge Classics.

The decision to study insanity is predicated on the idea that its history uncovers a wider social history; this idea follows not from the fallacy that the mad are exemplars of a social context (such as colonialism) but precisely from their anomalous status. The mad are people whose perception of reality is deemed faulty. Their stories can therefore illuminate perceptions of reality and, when their cases are ambiguous, show ways in which perceptions are challenged.

Sadowsky's study of insanity enables him to gain a more comprehensive understanding of discourse. Using the same logic, a study on representations of madness in African Literature provides insight into the ways in which discourse is understood or being deconstructed or reimagined. Sadowsky's motivation is indeed significant to our analysis, but seeking a de-centralized understanding of reality tends to hark back to a Foucauldian center,³ which is indeed faulted.

Although Foucault's ingenious work on both madness and discourse challenges hegemony, it also relies on, and in some ways confirms, the Western *ratio*. "Even Foucault's call for a pure discourse criticism, for a discourse unconstrained by social appropriations, leaves unsaid the repression of non-Westerners by Western discourse" (Diawara, 1997:462). Edward Said (2003:196), who drew heavily on Foucault's genius, further reinforces the theorist's faults: "[H]is Eurocentrism was almost total, as if 'history' itself took place only among a group of French and German thinkers." On a certain level, Sadowsky's work is inevitably implicated in Foucault's analysis, but in spite of his focus on the colonial margins, Sadowsky retains the colonial center. His project reflects his own ambivalence between revealing untold or hidden stories and reinforcing the center through his subsequent discursive analysis. However, Sadowsky's failure is not uncommon, for as Manthia Diawara (1997:462) states, "The pure discourse criticism, which is part of a particular culture, enables non-Westerners to denounce the domineering presence of the West in

³ "Center" refers to "a point of presence, a fixed origin," which "orient[s], balance[s], and organize[s]" discourse (Derrida, 2005:352).

their texts but paradoxically does not allow them to move forward and create a discourse outside of the Foucauldian system.” Nonetheless, Sadowsky does deviate from the Foucauldian system in his extensive case study of Isaac O., an African man diagnosed with “acute mania” in colonial Nigeria. Sadowsky’s case study tends to move away from a colonial center and into the narrative of Isaac O., which, through its narrative power, implicates both Sadowsky and the reader in an archeology of madness. In this way it moves away from Foucault’s focus on power and towards what Lynette Aria Jackson (2004:3) calls “a story about the agents and performers of surfacing acts.”

Fiction also works in this way, imperceptibly implicating its reader in the realit(ies) of its characters. A reader relies on the narrator in order to experience narrative, and in this way, the reader enters the reality being presented. Reading literature is an experience – a presence; this presence is not fictional. Hence, the moment the reader extends his/her trust to the narrator, he/she is implicated in that “fictional” reality. Nonetheless, while the reality may be fiction, the reader’s implication is not. Therefore, once trust has been extended, the narrator, drawing power from this inter/intra-subjective trust, can virtually deconstruct the reader’s entire reality. Within this relationship, the narrator can never go “too far,” because of the tension between the fiction and reality, which proves to be productive for both the reader and the narrator, maintaining their mutual implication.

Although this relationship of tension can be extended to literature, in general, African Literature proves to be a particularly productive space for revealing tensions within hegemony. African Literature encompasses a spectrum of worldviews, belief systems, politics, and societal issues, which serve simultaneously to unite and divide the continent. In addition, while language inherently implicates literature in

discourse, the use and choice of language in African Literature actively implicates the writer, narrator, book, and reader into a specific paradigm. Language is undeniably significant to African historicity, for it has been used to uphold and undermine varying discourses and therefore cannot be neglected.

Similarly, although diverse understandings and constructions of madness exist, madness does possess a distinct space within hegemonic discourse(s). Like language, madness retains the worldviews, belief systems, politics, and societal issues within itself. However, unlike language, it retains a quality that is wholly unknown, and therefore, unstructured. This anomaly is evident in the many deliberations of those who study madness. In "The Confinements of Isaac O.: A Case of 'Acute Mania' in Colonial Nigeria," Sadowsky (1996:92) writes, "Despite the development of psychiatry as a scientific discipline over the past 100 years, the fundamental question of what mental illness is, still haunts the profession." Moreover, research in "madness" has exhibited a cultural contingency. "There is no agreement throughout the world as to what types of problems should be included as psychiatric illnesses and traditional societies in Africa are no exception" (Swift and Asuni, 1975:35). "[W]hat is crazy or deviant in one society may be tolerated, normal, or divine in another" (Sadowsky, 1996:108). These testaments place doubt as to whether or not madness exists at all. "[C]onnections between psychiatry and politics" (Keller, 2001:295) enhance this doubt.

Science is consistently implicated in the production of knowledge(s), which enters society as discursive truth(s), at times seeming even more "factual" than the ruling hegemonic discourse(s). Science has the capacity to exceed discourse, because, to a certain extent, it defines the range of discursive possibilities. In this way, science challenges discursive hierarchies. However, its position of authority is ambiguous,

for science is also interpellated by the ruling hegemonic discourse(s). Hence, within the context of a given discourse, the same evidence or scientific “facts” may produce a variety of truths. In “Meanings of Madness: A Literature Review,” Briege Casey and Anne Long (2003:94) assert, “Psychiatric diagnoses are not objective, scientific renderings of truth, but constructions of life experiences inextricably linked to the social and political context.” This assertion demonstrates a distinction between “madness” and “psychiatric diagnoses.” There is a slippage between the two that inevitably determines the fate of mentally ill patients.

This slippage is particularly evident in the different ways that madness is perceived and treated in a colonial and postcolonial context. Referring to the Shona and Ndebele people of Zimbabwe in her essay, “The Place of Psychiatry in Colonial and Early Postcolonial Zimbabwe,” Jackson (1999:43) stipulates, “Although *kupenga*⁴ and *ukuhlanya*⁵ predated the arrival of the British South African Company (BSAC) police and Pioneer Column in 1890, the practice and logic of confining the afflicted in asylums did not.” Hence, while madness undoubtedly exists, and is found across the globe, how it is treated and received by people varies widely. Nonetheless, the discursive violence inflicted by colonialism forcibly consolidated these divergences. Thus, “[t]he Abbasiieh asylum near Cairo opened at the turn of the twentieth century, [and] the first British institutions in sub-Saharan Africa appeared in the 1910s” (Keller, 2001:305), re-mapping the discursive terrain.

Within this context, science was mediated by colonial discourse, which sought to assert Western superiority through the Othering of “natives.” Richard Keller (2001:297) describes this relationship, stating, “Colonial psychiatry allied itself closely to civilizing missions as it assembled knowledge about ‘indigenous

⁴ The Shona term for mental or emotional disorders (Jackson, 2005:103).

⁵ The Ndebele term for mental or emotional disorders (Jackson, 2005:103).

psychologies' that facilitated rule." However, Keller (2001:306) also notes, "[M]edical knowledge emphasized the definition of 'normal' rather than pathological Africans." The "native" body was re-mapped in order to fit the confines of colonialism's Manichean allegory: "The old racism was concerned with measuring the native's body: the literature from the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries is filled with attempts to discover a key to the African's backwardness in the size or structure of his brain" (McCulloch, 1995:5). Initially, the "natives" existed in a space quite similar to those defined as "mad." Such theories were evident in the work of Sigmund Freud. The "native" was incapable of "objectivity as Freud defined it [...] and lack of objectivity constituted another link between primitives and neurotics" (McCulloch, 1995:11). Nevertheless, once ethnography became more securely interpellated by colonial governmentality, an essential distance between the European and the "native" barred such connections from being made.

If the "native" was inherently less than the European, even an insane European, then why were mental health institutions constructed in order to serve the "native" population? In *Curing Their Ills* (1992) Megan Vaughn poses a similar question. Colonialism staged an entire enterprise based on a "mission" to "save" the "native" from his heathen and backward existence. However, this goal inherently contradicts imperialism's economic ambitions. As McCulloch (1995:140) states, "The doctrine of African inferiority not only described the limits to change, it contained the wish that change be impossible." Despite the fact that colonialism did not seek to help the "natives," colonial occupation created a narrative, known as the "civilizing mission," which supported imperial objectives. Moreover, the logic of the civilizing mission interpellated both Western citizens and "natives," creating

discursive subjects who governed themselves and/or one another. Referring to McCulloch, Keller (2001:307-308) explains this governmentality:

First, like their metropolitan counterparts, colonial asylums empowered physicians by giving medicine free and exclusive reign over madness. Second, these institutions provided settler communities with a location for “dumping” their own insane relatives as well as for “disposing of dangerous African employees.” Finally, they offered “evidence of the civic virtue of settler societies,” proving the ultimately philanthropic nature of colonialism through their symbolic value.

Institutions, which included asylums and prisons, re-mapped the discursive terrain “so as to enable – indeed, so as to *oblige* – new forms of life to come into being” (Scott, 1995:193; emphasis in original).

As a result of this ideology, asylums were necessary in reinforcing colonialism’s civilizing mission both at home and in Africa, for as McCulloch (1995:43) states:

In colonial Africa asylums were established for much the same reasons but with one notable difference: when the question of what to do with lunatics was raised, there was already the precedent of European experience. Liberal ideology and the myth of colonialism as a civilizing mission demanded that some form of care be provided for Africans suffering from mental illness.

However, the civilizing myth could not be simply upheld by building an asylum here and there. More than the landscape needed to be re-mapped. Hence, ethnopsychiatry emerged with full force, stipulating that “African forms of mental illness were singular and at best a poor imitation of European disorders” (McCulloch, 1995:46).

The new psychiatric order extensively categorized the colonial population. For instance, Europeans had the capacity to go mad, as did African men. The different forms of madness demonstrated a difference between “white” madness and “black” (read: male) madness. African women were absent from this structure, because their minds were so inferior that were “either too simple to go insane or too unintelligible for any European to notice” (Jackson, 2004:2). Moreover, in order to

explain why “natives” went mad and how the “mad native” differed from the “mad colonist,” ethnopsychiatrists used social Darwinist logic to create fiction. In “‘Work of Mercy and Necessity’ British Rule and Psychiatric Practice in the Cape Colony, 1891-1910,” Sally Swartz (1999:84) describes the scientific “truths” that enabled this ideology:

Movement up the [evolutionary] scale involved an increase in the complexity and sensitivity of the nervous system. Civilization was seen as a product of highly developed nervous systems, which were also seen as more vulnerable to stress than less highly developed nervous systems. Thus, whites were more likely than blacks to succumb to insanity under stress, and melancholy was the prototypical illness of the sensitive nervous system.

The discursive discontinuities are glaringly evident, requiring a cursory review of colonial logic in order to reveal huge cracks. After all, how can the “native” mind be mapped in a way that locates continuities between its psychological makeup and that of the mentally ill, only to be re-mapped years later in order to “prove” the superiority of the European/white mind?

This contradiction reveals the discursive power that science held, and continues to hold today, as well as its role in structuring societal order. J.C. Carothers’s 1972 publication, *The Mind of Man in Africa*, offers an extensive range of ethnopsychiatric insights, which problematize the discipline’s complicity in the establishment of colonial hegemony:

[A]ttendance at a mental hospital in the circumstances of life in Africa is governed [...] by the question of what is regarded as normal or abnormal behavior in each society, and what degree of deviance from the orthodox standards is accepted by the society concerned [...] Thus, a person with a facility for dissociation, who in England would be regarded as “suffering” from an hysterical personality, would in Africa often be regarded with veneration and as qualified thereby to become a practitioner of medicine. (Carothers, 1972:136)

Carothers accepts the cultural differences and seems willing to reconstruct alternate definitions of normal and abnormal. “As had Gordon before him, Carothers

commented on the absence in Kenya of any adequate standards of normality for judging Africans' behavior" (McCulloch, 1995:51). Thus, obtaining an applicable standard of normalcy is a consistent preoccupation in ethnopsychiatry. In fact, Carothers laments Western science practitioners' inability to deviate from their own discursive "truths." Carothers explains that European doctors who came to Africa where they learned to become psychiatrists "suffer[ed] from the medical urge to classify cases under familiar titles. Failure to do so is apt to be seen as a failure in oneself rather than as an intractability in the material. The classifications are often only too complete and make little or, occasionally, no allowance for this intractability" (Carothers, 1972:139). Once again we are presented with an instance in which discursive discontinuities are revealed. The hyper-structurality of science becomes a disability that bars practitioners from providing appropriate medical services. With this disability in mind, we must ask how discourse was structured if no one was able to define or categorize "adequate standards of normality" (McCulloch, 1995:51)

Standards of normality were constructed vis-à-vis a discursive mapping of the colonial landscape. Spaces that were more urban were governed by colonial order, while those that remained hidden from Westernization retained their own discourse(s). With this mapping scheme, discursive power was highly inconsistent. Although the survival of many Africans (read: black people) depended upon their acknowledgement of the Western *ratio*, as well as their ability to identify the ways in which this paradigm was mapped onto the landscape, many Europeans (read: white people) assumed "that there was a single public order" (Swartz, 1999:78). Referring to Cape Town, Swartz (1999:78) writes, "[T]here was one order for the white population, and another for the black one, in the sense that black people were

expected to conform to the rules of white society and simultaneously to live in ways unalterably alien to it." As a result, Africans who emerged into spaces governed by colonial discourse were strictly policed.

Within this context, the inability to define madness structurally was manipulated in such a way that virtually anyone could be accused of being mad.⁶ Referring to Allan Horwitz's sociological theory of mental illness,⁷ Sadowsky (1996:108) writes, "Horwitz urges a conceptual shift from seeing mental illness as a 'disease' towards an emphasis on its manifestation as unsanctioned behavior." However, as Jackson (2004:3) demonstrates in her analysis of "surfacing" in Zimbabwe, in order for "unsanctioned behavior" to be labeled as a symptom of "mental illness," an individual needed to "surface up" into colonial space(s). Such territorial policing was not only believed to be necessary in governing Africans, but also Europeans. Jackson (1999:47) uncovers the medical records of a European male who was "suspected of mental abnormality after having 'arrived in Bulawayo hatless.'"⁸ This authoritative surveillance served as a means through which gestures and etiquette, signifying white prestige, could be enforced. Furthermore, this surveillance demonstrates a constant discursive anxiety, which inevitably undermines the discursive continuity it seeks to uphold.

Indeed, rather than maintaining discursive continuity, emergent regimes of truths often enabled discontinuities to surface. For as Keller (2001:319) notes, "The knowledge produced in the psychiatric encounter with the colonized often reinforced the mandates of the civilizing mission, but in other ways it called European superiority into question." Similarly, with regards to "surfacing," Jackson (2004:3)

⁶ "With the passage of the Mental Disorders Act, also in 1936, it was no longer necessary to certify a person as insane before admitting them to the asylum" (Jackson, 2004:2).

⁷ See Horwitz, Allen. 1982. *The Social Control of Mental Illness*. New York: Academic Press.

⁸ Jackson cites NAZRC 21/8/9, Box 22276. Thomas M., patient no. 13. Admitted 1908.

states, "One could say that they were rebelling against the surface and that emergence is a resistance act." With Keller and Jackson in mind, we must acknowledge the significance of madness and the role it played in the resistance of colonialism. The contingent and ambivalent nature of madness – in essence, its discursivity – compelled the highly ordered, intractable colonial discourse(s) to mobility. Each time madness surfaced, representing discursive discontinuities, the center of colonial discourse had to be supplemented with a new sign-signification. The proceeding pages investigate the ways in which madness contributes to this mobility.

* * *

By comparing the writings of these six authors, I have tried to bridge the gap between the broad general surveys of African fiction and the quite specific examinations of individual authors. In so doing my aim has been to define the outlines of the emerging *tradition* of African fiction. (JanMohamed, 1983:10)

The analysis that follows this introduction appropriates Abdul Jan Mohamed's methodology described above. The pages that follow also compare the work of six different authors – Chinua Achebe, Nadine Gordimer, Bessie Head, Dambudzo Marechera, Nawal El Saadawi, and Biyi Bandele. Additionally, I too have attempted "to bridge the gap between the broad general surveys of African fiction and the quite specific examinations of individual authors." My choice of authors and specific texts was based on my wish to include a wide range of African literature, literature that represented the multiple dimensions of Africa and the diverse forms emanating from the continent. Moreover, each chapter is "balanced" by both a male and female author, multiple ethnic and racial groups are represented, and issues of autobiography, translation, and migrancy are discussed. However, most significantly, each of these authors presents a compelling literary piece which invokes madness in very specific ways, and for this reason, above any other, they were chosen.

Each chapter pairs two narratives together because of the way in which they invoke madness. In Chapter 1, "Ambivalence: Searching for a Discursive Space," Achebe's *Arrow of God* (1964) and Gordimer's *July's People* (1981) present madness in response to discursive shifts, which cause ambivalence to surface. While Achebe's Ezeulu teeters between traditional Ibo society and the infringing colonial regime, Gordimer's Maureen is thrust into a post-apartheid interregnum. However, without a discourse to accommodate their newfound knowledges, Ezeulu and Maureen are abruptly compelled to madness. Chapter 2, "Fluidity: Imagining a New Paradigm," analyzes how the protagonists of Head's *A Question of Power* (1974) and Marechera's "House of Hunger" (1978) experience madness as a result of discursive fragmentation. Head and Marechera imagine a new paradigm within nondiscursive madness, a reality in which signifiers are undefined and subjectivities are fluid. Finally, Chapter 3, "Play: Creating a New Regime of Truth," demonstrates how El Saadawi's *The Innocence of the Devil* (1994) and Bandele's *The Street* (1999) use madness as a space that is hospitable to play, enabling discursive discontinuities to be staged in order to collapse the distance between discursive absolutes. This collapse signals a new regime of truth that does not divide good from evil, life from death, but upholds them as part of a continuum. Together, these six literary pieces invoke madness in order to reflect creatively upon the ongoing struggle for discursive spaces and subjectivities.

CHAPTER ONE

AMBIVALENCE: Searching for a Discursive Space

This chapter analyzes the discursive significance of representations of madness in Chinua Achebe's *Arrow of God* and Nadine Gordimer's *July's People*. These novels vary dramatically in terms of the imagined spaces that the authors create. On the one hand, *Arrow of God* represents a primarily black, patriarchal perspective of the colonial encounter in what would become Nigeria. Conversely, *July's People* represents the imminent end of apartheid capitalism through the perspective of a white, liberal woman. Nonetheless, through the portrayal of madness, both *Arrow of God* and *July's People* interrogate discursive truths, exposing their cracks while demonstrating hegemony's seemingly all-pervasive grip. Achebe and Gordimer's protagonists – Ezeulu and Maureen, respectively – experience madness in response to the discursive shifts occurring within the terrains in which they reside. While Ezeulu teeters between traditional Ibo society and the infringing colonial regime, Maureen is thrust into a post-apartheid interregnum. Both characters confront their new, but incompletely mapped spaces. However, without a discourse to accommodate their newfound knowledges, Ezeulu and Maureen are abruptly compelled to madness. I wish to interrogate the discursive ambivalence(s) that bars these knowledges, contributing to their respective madnesses.

Ambivalence is central to the discursive setting of *Arrow of God* and *July's People*, for the protagonists exist in an interregnal space in which one discourse is ending and another is still emerging. The discursive setting is uncertain, because of this indeterminacy. This indeterminacy is strongly juxtaposed against colonial discourse(s),¹ specifically its modernist foundation(s), which police the ambivalences, or uncertainties,

¹ "Although the 'Republic' of South Africa is technically an independent country, it is, for all practical purposes, a European colony to the extent that its fundamental socio-political-economic structure is still the same as was that of other colonies: a large indigenous population is dominated, in the final analysis through military force, by a small number of European immigrants" (JanMohammed, 1983:79). The distinction between colonization and apartheid will be contextualized later in this chapter.

that contribute to discursive discontinuities. Modernity's focus is that of structure and order. Hence, as Zygmunt Bauman (1993:24) stipulates in *Modernity and Ambivalence*, "First and foremost...it [modernity] means purging *ambivalence*" (emphasis in original). Colonial discourse, birthed from such ideology, also sought out to "purg[e] ambivalence."

Although colonial discourse differs from modernity, it is quite clear that colonialism derives from a mentality of structure and order whose purpose is to reinforce modernity's overarching objectives. In *Formations of Modernity* (1992) Stuart Hall (1992:314) explains how modernity was translated into colonial discourse:

Without the Rest...the West would not have been able to recognize and represent itself as the summit of human history. The figure of 'the Other,' banished to the edge of the conceptual world and constructed as the absolute opposite, the negation, of everything which the West stood for, reappeared at the very centre of the discourse of civilization, refinement, modernity and development in the West.

The construction of the Other in colonial discourse was founded upon a Manichean logic in which everything was defined against what it was not. Referring to Manichaeism in Frantz Fanon's *The Wretched of the Earth* (1963:93), JanMohamed (1983:4) writes, "[T]he colonial mentality is dominated by a manichean allegory of white and black, good and evil, salvation and damnation, civilization and savagery, superiority and inferiority, intelligence and emotion, self and other, subject and object." In other words, within this discursive structure, the West could not be "good" without the Other occupying the space of "evil." The West depended upon the Other(s) in order to define itself.

In spite of colonialism's determination to polarize the West's relationship with the "native," ambivalences surfaced, undermining the monolithic identities projected by the West. For instance, as discussed in the Introduction, colonialism's "mad natives" created

inconsistencies in the West's dichotomous relationship with the Other. However, although the Western *ratio* that governed colonialism required the eradication of ambivalence, the imperial mission depended upon ambivalence in order to achieve its goals. In spite of colonialism's determination to pervade *terra incognita* through a more extensive discursive mapping of these previously unknown spaces, colonialism depended upon an order and structure in which "native" spaces retained a level of both enchanting and fearful mystery. After all, if the "native" became too structured, the original fear of the unknown would be forfeited. Colonialism thrived on this fear, which evoked strong ambivalences in the West. The "native" could not lose its mystique through an absolute dichotomy. Rather, he/she must continue to be both noble and savage, so that an Other could be retained through the guise of a "sympathetic" civilizing mission. Western discursive power required that the "native" be both feared and pitied.

Ethnopsychiatry created a "mad native" who reinforced this discursive ambivalence, which exceeded the ambivalences held toward the Western madman. Like the insane of the West, the "mad native" needed to be removed from society in order to eliminate the danger he/she posed to others, as well as to undergo rehabilitation. However, the "insane native" also resided within a more extensive sphere of the unknown, particularly evident in the temporal space assigned to him/her. In *Time and the Other: How Anthropology Makes Its Object*, Johannes Fabian (1983:27) investigates how the "emergent discipline of Anthropology" created spatial distance between Western and non-Western people. He writes, "What makes the savage significant to the evolutionist's Time is that he lives in another Time" (Fabian, 1983:27). In other words, anthropology provided the necessary "scientific proof" for placing the colonized Other in a static space,

a space which Western civilization had surpassed years ago. Placed within the discursive terrain of the civilizing mission, ethnopsychiatry is confronted with the task of “curing” the “native” mind so that it may become psychologically capable of embracing “civilization.” Essentially, the ethnopsychiatrist must discover a means by which the “native” mind can be evolved to Western standards. Such evolution was unnecessary for Western mental patients, because they resided within the spectrum of Western standards. A temporal distance did not exist between a Western patient and his/her doctor, but did exist between the “native” and the ethnopsychiatrist. This temporal distance preserved the ambivalence of the unknown, evoking both fear and pity.

Such ambivalence also needed to be spatially represented. Thus, the colonial state needed to maintain both centers of Western civilization, represented by institutions and urban spaces, and *terra incognita*. As a result, mental institutions were constructed in order to carve out Western spaces which served to reinforce the dominance of Western power. As Harry Garuba writes in “Mapping the Land/Body/Subject: Colonial and Postcolonial Geographies in African Narrative” (2002:87), “[C]olonialism as a regime of power was largely organized through spatiality and subjectivity: spaces to capture, subjects to control.” Once mental institutions captured spaces, the development of ethnopsychiatry provided a means through which subjects could be controlled.

Thus, although colonial discourse built superstructures that ordered society in absolute terms – binary terms – the colonial endeavor itself required a constant ambivalence. The unknown needed to be upheld. The “native” must be both noble and savage, feared and pitied. Moreover, like “developed” (Western) peoples, the “native” could experience madness, but only because of his/her inability to become “civilized.”

Furthermore, spaces needed to be mapped, but also left to their own devices. These necessary ambivalences inevitably created potential emergences in colonial discourse, enabling space for subversion.

At times subversion was unintended, lacking political motivation, but a lack of intention did not eliminate the space itself – a space which inspired questioning, mobility, and action. The colonial paradox of ambivalence prevented the colonial administration from denying the “native” his/her humanity. Perhaps within the context of colonial discourse, the “native” served as a specimen of sub-humanity, but he/she could not be completely denied of his/her humanity. The colonizing mission was needed in order to legitimize the colonial endeavor. Without the premise that the “native” could be “civilized” (and therefore, would have to be human), the entire enterprise would be deemed unacceptable to Western citizens. Thus, according to colonial discourse, time (in terms of evolution) was the only object that barred the “native” from “developing.” The civilizing mission both asserted and denied the “native’s” humanity.

Madness also reinforced this ambivalent humanity. While colonial discourse asserted that the “native” suffered from a particular kind of madness, distinct from the mental afflictions experienced by Western people, the discourse also believed that the “native” could be “cured.” If both “native” and colonial could experience madness and be cured of that madness, certainly the two populations shared several similarities. Such shared experiences provoked discursive emergences, inspiring more questions. Moreover, “native” patients, whose symptoms did not seem to result from colonial civilization, challenged colonial discourse. Reinforcing patient experience as evidence, Jackson (2005:73) writes, “[A]ll represent and destabilize the colonizer’s explanatory

framework for African madness: colonial civilization.” Jackson captures the ambivalence of the “mad native,” stipulating that his/her narrative simultaneously “represent[ed]” and “destabilize[ed]” discursive truths invented by ethnopsychiatry and upheld by the political economy of colonialism. Thus, the same patient narrative could be used to reinforce *and* subvert colonial discourse.

This duality of reinforcement and subversion is also evident in the mapping of colonial spaces. Colonial discourse was founded on modernist hyper-structures that ordered society in an attempt to rid it from ambivalence. However, this same discourse depended on ambivalence. The need to preserve the unknown in order to promote enchantment and fear, fetishism and enslavement, also enabled spaces to remain unmapped for all intensive purposes. The title *terra incognita* remained, but this label did not affect populations as profoundly as urbanization. Analyzing colonial mapping, Garuba (2002:92-93) writes, “[M]any African villages chose to resist ‘visual capture’ or ‘discovery’ by explorers and colonial administrators by retreating further in to the forests, and that constant and continual mobility was one of the strategies of colonial resistance.” These populations resided in *terra incognita*. As a result, they possessed colonial subjectivities distinct from colonial subjects in more urban villages.

Achebe’s *Arrow of God* represents both colonial and Ibo subjectivities and their subsequent convergence. According to multiple sources (Nnolim, 1989; Innes, 1992; Ogede, 2001) Achebe’s *Arrow of God* is based on, or, at the very least, influenced by “the anthropological text of Simon Alagboga Nnolim” (Ogede, 2001:35). “[I]n *The History of Umuchu* [...] a priest called Ezeagu rejected a chieftaincy in 1913, was imprisoned and refused to roast the sacred yams for the months missed” (Innes, 1992:68). This summary

of events serves as a working outline of Achebe's novel, but inevitably fails to capture the complexities in character and plot present in *Arrow of God*. Achebe's novel focuses on the story of Ezeulu, the chief priest of Ulu, who must negotiate his authority amidst the present, but not-yet pervasive authority of the "white man." As C.L. Innes (1992:73) states in *Chinua Achebe*, "*Arrow of God* is 'about' the problem of authority and the related questions of whom or what to believe and follow." Although Ezeulu's authority remains unchallenged at the beginning of the novel, the chief priest questions the source and extent of his power, but quickly pushes these thoughts out of his mind. The chief priest of Ulu *must* name the feast of the Pumpkin Leaves and the New Yam Feast, enabling his people to thrive.

As the novel advances, however, Ezeulu's perspective changes. Undoubtedly, this change is influenced by more frequent experiences with colonial authorities. In *The Novels of Chinua Achebe*, G.D. Killam (1969:59) writes, "[T]he forces of colonialism – church, government and trade – precipitate the crisis and tragic resolution in the novel which alters the quality of tribal life." However, despite having witnessed against his peers on a land issue, which gained him the attention of the colonial administration, specifically Captain Winterbottom, who invites Ezeulu to educate his son at the missionary school, Ezeulu's tribal life has remained relatively constant. Nonetheless, problems soon emerge. For instance, although Ezeulu sends his son Oduche to learn how to access the knowledge(s) and skills of the "white man," so that he may reveal them to his father, Oduche is taught to reject Ibo religion and culture as heathen. In spite of these and other negative experiences, it is Ezeulu's invitation to Government Hill that causes the most tangible disruption.

Upon receipt of Winterbottom's "invitation," Ezeulu seeks out the advice of his fellow elders, who tell him to visit Winterbottom. Upon his arrival, Ezeulu is imprisoned and therefore, unable to consume the sacred yams, which must be eaten before the Feast of the Yam can be announced. Killam (1969:72-73) explains the layers of these circumstances:

Before going to Government Hill Ezeulu was seen by his enemies at home as being in league with the white man. His enemies had made much of this. His rejection of the offer made by Clarke is at first greeted with suspicion by them [...] The fact that he remains in jail for so long a time convinces them of his sincerity and his reputation rises. Now Ezeulu determines to have his revenge on his people for the distrust of him and their failure to heed his counsel...

The chief priest's absence means that the sacred yams have not been eaten. Although he is aware of the danger of hunger and starvation, Ezeulu refuses to announce the Feast of the New Yam. "[T]wo months pass, the ground hardens and the new harvest is lost. Ezeulu, his family and the villagers suffer. Ezeulu does not act out of personal spite or the desire to redress insult to himself" (Killam, 1969:77). While the community suffers in hunger, Ezeulu's son Obika suddenly dies, sending Ezeulu into the depths of madness, the focal point of this analysis.

Numerous essays and books about *Arrow of God* have been published, but most fail to interrogate the significance of the novel's end (Killam, 1969; Wren, 1980; Gikandi, 1991; Innes, 1992; Gagliano, 2000; Ogede, 2001). Why does the hero go mad? What is the contextualized significance of his madness? *Arrow of God* was published in 1964, merely four years after Nigeria proclaimed its independence from Great Britain. While the novel does not address this momentous event in Nigerian history, it does mark a significant movement away from colonial mentality. With the dawning of

independence, Achebe is able to offer his readers a new knowledge to replace the knowledge(s) upheld by both Ibo and colonial discourses, a perspective Achebe gained through his ambivalent position as a black, mission-educated, Ibo male. In "Novelist as Teacher" Achebe (1989:45) writes:

I would be quite satisfied if my novels (especially the ones I set in the past) did no more than teach my readers that their past – with all its imperfections – was not one long night of savagery from which the first Europeans acting on God's behalf delivered them.

Although his assertion includes *Things Fall Apart* (1958), this novel continues to be (mis)interpreted by critics who regard Achebe's portrayal of Ibo culture as static² and misogynist.³ While Achebe's female characters remain un- or underdeveloped in *Arrow of God*,⁴ Ibo culture has been re-written as dynamic and open to change. As Robert Wren (1980:75) states in *Achebe's World*:

The world of Umuaro is a world long in process of change. It had been six clans once; the foremost god Idemili had been displaced by Ulu; *ichi* marks were no longer carved on men's faces; once, it was said (perhaps only as a cautionary irony), there had been a fifth title in Umuaro – king. These are specific changes. More important is the dynamic sense of the complexity of change. It is this that gives the novel its extraordinary texture.

This dynamism reflects Achebe's determination to re-write a Nigerian history that confronts the discursive truths upheld by colonialism, and in this way, *Arrow of God* serves as the author's gesture towards decolonization.

² See Wren, Robert. M. 1980. *Achebe's World: The Historical and Cultural Context of the Novels of Chinua Achebe*. Essex: Longman, p. 75.

³ Many critiques problematize these interpretations. For instance, see Osei-Nyame, Kwadwo. 1999. "Chinua Achebe Writing Culture: Representations of Gender and Tradition in *Things Fall Apart*." *Research in African Literatures*. 30.2, pp. 148-164; *Challenging Hierarchies: Issues and Themes in Colonial and Postcolonial African Literature*. Ed. Leonard A. Podis and Yakubu Saaka. New York: Peter Lang, 1998, pp. 109-160.

⁴ Achebe addresses his problematic portrayal, or lack thereof, in his short story collections and, most prominently, in his novel *Anthills of the Savannah* (1987).

This gesture is especially significant amidst the violence erupting in Nigeria shortly after independence. As Fanon prophesizes in *The Wretched of the Earth* (1963:52), "The colonized man will first manifest this aggressiveness which has been deposited in his bones against his own people." Achebe's novel demonstrates how the colonized man [sic] Fanon describes was created, and offers a space in which he/she can confront colonial mythologies. After all, decolonization requires more than an identification of discursive truths; it necessitates an innovative restructuring of power relations. As Foucault (1980:133) theorizes, "It's not a matter of emancipating truth from every system of power [...] but of detaching the power of truth from the forms of hegemony, social, economic and cultural, within which it operates at the present time." *Arrow of God* interrogates "the psychology of power" (Carroll, 1980:5; Ogede, 2001:42) ("truth") in colonial Iboland in an effort to address similar questions of discursive truth(s) in post-independence Nigeria. The novel demonstrates how truths are ordained with power and the ways in which these truths are inserted into society through force and happenstance.

Achebe's use of both force and happenstance in *Arrow of God* reinforces the ambivalence experienced during the colonial encounter. While both Ibo and European had heard of one another – the Ibo through prophesy and the European through hearsay – a level of unknown existed, uniting and dividing the populations through imaginative fantasy and horror. In this unknown, discursive truths failed to produce absolutes. The Ibo and the European needed to see to believe. The colonial encounter transformed seeing into believing, disappointing and surpassing imagination and discursive truth. As a result of the encounter, "truths" began to shift, imposing structure onto previously

unknown “truths.” Although unknowns persisted, colonial experiences, mediated by Ibo or colonial discourses, structured residual unknowns, reading them through the lens of established “truths.” Each discourse maintained its own logic of interpretation and thus, at times the same unknowns were read very differently from one discourse to the next.

Rather than one overpowering discourse, colonial Africa was subjected to two distinctly contrasting discursive powers, each upholding their own “truths.” In *Imperial Leather*, McClintock (1995:6) reinforces this conflict stating, “European imperialism was, from the outset, a violent encounter with preexisting hierarchies of power that took shape not as the unfolding of its own inner destiny but as untidy, opportunistic interference with other regimes of power.” A study of madness in colonial Africa exhibits such “opportunistic interference.” After all, there is evidence from both European and African regimes of power which prove the “untid[iness]” and “opportuni[sm]” to which McClintock refers. Although European power enabled an overarching discourse that subjugated the “mad native,” mapping his/her body and mind through discursive interpellation, colonial trauma, and human rights abuses, African power was not absent from this violent encounter. Chiefs, elders, and family members brought members of their communities to asylums in order to rid themselves of the inconveniences a mentally unstable person may incur. Members of the community who were believed to have committed a taboo or brought bad luck to the society⁵ were also eliminated from the village and placed in colonial care. While the degree of opportunism is undeniably unbalanced toward European power, “opportunistic interference[s]” inevitably resulted in the entanglement of African and European powers.

⁵ Such treatment is particularly evident in the case of epileptics. See Swartz, Sally. 1998. *Culture and Mental Health: A Southern African View*. Cape Town: Oxford University Press, p. 17.

Within the context of *Arrow of God*, colonial (European) power becomes entangled with Ibo power. Referring to traditional Ibo societies, Achebe (1997:79) states, “Our life was never compartmentalized in the way that it has become today. We talk about politics, economics, religion. But in the traditional society all these things were linked together...” This logic is particularly evident in the ways in which varying problems were addressed in Ibo society. If a community member was experiencing personal problems, he/she would see a healer, or “medicine man” (Mbiti, 1991:77, 170-173). Similarly, if another community member were suffering from mental affliction, he/she would also seek out the assistance of the healer. Moreover, all problems, personal or health-related, were believed to result from “magic, sorcery, witchcraft, broken taboos or the work of spirits” (Mbiti, 1991:155). Thus, unlike Western doctors who treat physical or psychological symptoms, African healers seek out religious causes (Mbiti, 1991:155). It is precisely in this way that “things were linked together” (Achebe, 1997:79) in traditional Ibo societies. This worldview is inclusive of the insane whose presence was integrated into Ibo societies, because in most cases the insane were viewed as victims of outside evil(s).

This perspective contrasts with the physical and social ostracism experienced by the insane in Western societies. As McCulloch (1995:125) states, “To Western eyes the insane were not innocent.” Referring to “the traditional cultures of Botswana,” Paul Sidandi, et al (1999:32) write:

[M]entally ill people were cared for by their families and by healers, who treated them for bewitchment. Belief in witchcraft per se was not regarded as an illness since such beliefs were widely held. Patients often believed that nothing happens to people unless something evil has been done to them by their enemies through divine intervention.

The Ibo integrated madness into their discursive norms, creating truths,⁶ in which the insane were supposedly blameless. Admittedly, the insane were not completely innocent, for as Achebe demonstrates in his short story “The Madman” (*Girls at War and Other Stories* (1972)) a negative stigma is at times associated with the insane. Achebe (1991:11) writes, “Even so it remains true that madness may indeed sometimes depart but never with all his clamorous train. Some of these always remain – the trailers of madness you might call them – to haunt the doorway of the eyes [...] Such a man is marked forever.” Indeed, Achebe’s story demonstrates the ways in which Ibo society may have reacted to madness, but it is important to note a significant temporal and situational distinction.

Arrow of God was published in 1964 and “The Madman” was published in 1972. While writing *Arrow of God* Achebe was enmeshed in Nigeria’s fervent nationalism. During this time the treatment of the mentally ill was revolutionized by Dr. Adeoye Lambo, who spearheaded the creation of the Aro Hospital village system, which combined Western and African methods of treatment and healing in order to address the needs of the mentally ill (Lambo, 1964:513; Asuni, 1967:72). In “Community Development and Public Health,” Tolani Asuni (1964:151) commends the village system, writing, “[T]he villagers [...] have developed increased understanding and tolerance of mental illness.” This positive attitude suggests a previously negative stigma associated with the mentally ill. Asuni refers to such perceptions in “Aro Hospital in Perspective.” Referring to Dr. F. B. Home, he writes, “He was not called a ‘psychiatrist’ but rather an ‘alienist.’ This title reflects the climate of opinion toward mentally ill patients who were

⁶ i.e. Insanity results from “the transgression of a taboo or from the casting of a spell” (McCulloch, 1995:31).

considered to be alienated from the rest of the community” (Asuni, 1967:71). Seemingly, perceptions of mental illness had transformed with the rise of nationalism in the 1950s, precisely when Lambo’s endeavor was conceived and executed.

However, it is important also to note that Asuni’s assertion refers to *Nigerians* who did not exist until the emergence of a strong nationalist vision. While Aro and the surrounding areas were sufficiently mixed, in terms of ethnic groups, throughout the 1950s and onwards, in “The Village of Aro,” Lambo (1964:513) notes the advantage of being well versed in Yoruba culture. Aro, and its surrounding areas, were primarily *Yoruba* areas, but the colonial Africa Achebe imagines is *Ibo*. Although similarities between Yoruba and Ibo cultures do exist, it would be unwise to collapse their perspectives on madness because of the ways in which affliction is related to traditional religious beliefs. Nonetheless, we can assert that while writing *Arrow of God* Achebe was undoubtedly affected by a nationalist agenda which embraced a concern for the mentally ill by including the population in its nationalist vision. By the 1972 publication of “The Madman,” the village system and concern for the mentally ill was indeed marginalized by two consecutive military coups occurring in 1966 and the Biafran War (1967-1970). Thus, while *Arrow of God* was written during a climate of Nigerian nationalism, “The Madman” was written during Achebe’s involvement in Ibo nationalism. Perhaps we can deduce that within Ibo society, a mentally ill individual was included in society, but the ways in which he/she was able to be involved in the community was limited by his/her illness.

The West also maintains varying forms of treatment for the mentally ill. However, within the context of colonial discourse, treatment was relatively homogenous.

In developing confinement discourse, the West constructed truths in which madness became a sign for societal transgressions, requiring discipline and punishment. Although Africans also adopted forms of discipline and punishment, such methods were viewed as forms of treatment. In other words, the mentally unstable individual would not be beaten, but the spirit or evil which had overtaken his/her body would be beaten out of him/her. Therefore, while Ibo societies possessed the power to punish, an economy of this power was virtually absent. Conversely, this “economy of the power to punish” (Foucault, 1995:80) was a central component of colonial discourse(s), especially in relation to the institutionalization of the mentally ill.

This absence of “economy” in Ibo societies is further reinforced by the fact that during “therapy” the insane person would not be removed from society. The integration of the mentally ill into village life, rather than their extrication, was one of Lambo’s major contributions to Nigerian psychiatry practices. This view is not extended to colonial discourse, which sought to individualize the patient through institutionalization (Foucault, 1995:236). Foucault’s definition of the Other reinforces this intention: “[T]hat which, for a given culture, is at once interior and foreign, therefore to be excluded (so as to exorcize the interior danger) but by being shut away...” (Foucault, 2004b:xxvi). Colonial discourse sought to “shut away” those it labeled as insane, mapping spaces in which these individuals could or could not exist. While Ibo societies struggled to help community members who were psychologically disturbed, it did not spatially or discursively exclude them.

This treatment strongly contrasted with Western confinement, which sought “to eliminate from the social order a figure which did not find its place within it” (Foucault,

2004a:109). Foucault (2004a:109) writes, "Confinement merely manifested what madness, in its essence, was: a manifestation of non-being; and by providing this manifestation, confinement thereby suppressed it, since it restored it to its truth as nothingness." While "manifestation[s] of non-being," in the Western sense, was condemned to "nothingness," such interactions with "unreason" were viewed as crucial components of African discourse. Carothers, a leader in the colonial discipline of ethnopsychiatry, "believed that traditional societies were [mentally] undemanding and therefore the mentally ill, along with the sub-normal, could more easily pass muster" (McCulloch, 1995:106). While Carothers's assertion is obviously stained with the racist logic of his time, his observation is indeed significant. Altered states of consciousness were valued in traditional African societies. Hence, while Western truths may deem an individual mad, that same person may be considered quite sane by African standards.⁷ This question of standards is evident in Carothers' observation, specifically in his usage of the term "sub-normal" in relation to "the mentally ill." McCulloch (1995:106) counters Carothers' colonial belief with a post-Foucauldian stance: "It is also possible to view the role of the patient as an artifact of a mental health system: like any form of behavior, being mentally ill is shaped by social expectations." This assertion reinforces Foucault's findings in *Madness and Civilization*, for as Swartz (1998:55) states, "psychiatric diagnoses can become instruments of social control," subject to the discursive terrain in which they reside.

Achebe's *Arrow of God* portrays Ezeulu's madness as a social construct, but places this altered state alongside the protagonist's complex and ever-evolving

⁷ "What is true [...] is that some experiences, which Western psychiatrists have, in the past, incorrectly labeled as mental illness, are acceptable forms of experience in those cultures" (Swartz, 1998:64).

subjectivity. The novel begins amidst an already changing Ibo society, which has experienced varying methods of colonial governmentality through the re-mapping of their village space(s). Western schools have already been created; new chiefs have been appointed by the colonial government, and through Captain Winterbottom's intervention, the community has experienced the judicial system. Nonetheless, very little has changed for Ezeulu, for "[w]hen we meet him first Ezeulu's power is supreme" (Killam, 1969:61). In spite of Winterbottom's intervention, Ezeulu has gained the colonial administrator's attention and respect, enabling him to send his son to a mission school. As Chief Priest, Ezeulu's position of privilege and authority has been reinforced by the colonial administration.

With regards to these seemingly innocuous tactics, Foucault's theorization of governmentality provides insight: "[T]he object [is] in the hands of the government, aware, *vis-à-vis* the government, of what it wants, but ignorant of what is being done to it" (Foucault, 1991:100). In other words, the colonial subject does not realize his/her position of subjectivity. Rather, he/she focuses on obtaining his/her needs and wants as dictated by the very discourse that makes him/her its subject. For instance, Ezeulu believes that he can gain access to "white" knowledge and skill through his son, Oduche. However, the reality is quite different, for Oduche commits a great taboo when he imprisons the python, an act of betrayal inspired by his missionary education. Thus, Ezeulu is made aware of his desire to gain "white" knowledge and skill, but fails to realize what the fulfillment of this desire means for his own subjectivity and that of his son.

Moreover, Achebe reinforces this interpellation in his characterization of colonial administrators who are unconscious of the truths they enforce. As Foucault (1991:91) asserts, “[I]n the art of government the task is to establish continuity, in both an upwards and downwards direction.” Therefore, like Ezeulu, the colonial administrators, specifically Captain Winterbottom, are unaware of how their respective subjectivities are being molded by colonial discourse. For instance, although Captain Winterbottom is against the creation of paramount chiefs (Achebe, 1986:36), he is enraged when Ezeulu declines his offer to become a paramount chief (Achebe, 1986:149). Hence, colonial discourse succeeds in creating an overarching continuity that encompasses all subjects.

However, despite the fact that Ezeulu and Winterbottom share a mutual lack of awareness as to how they are being constituted as colonial subjects, the two maintain distinct discursive subjectivities. Both men have access to two different discursive spaces, but while Ezeulu chooses to investigate the “white man’s” knowledge through his son and varying interactions with Winterbottom, the Captain only pretends to access Ibo discourse – “Captain Winterbottom enjoyed mystifying other Europeans with words from the Ibo language which he claimed to speak fluently” (Achebe, 1986:149). As a result, Winterbottom is unable to access significant knowledges with which colonial discourse can be interrogated. Ezeulu, on the other hand, struggles to negotiate between two discursive subjectivities – Ibo and colonial. Although this dualistic position has the potential to provide Ezeulu with a more extensive discursive objectivity, his multiple subjectivities also inspire significant ambivalences in the ways he interprets himself and the world around him.

There are numerous scenes and gestures which demonstrate Ezeulu's ambivalence towards his implication in Western discourse. However, the most significant experience is his "visit" to Government Hill. It is during this experience that Ezeulu begins to question his own discursive space in Umuaro. Upon arrival, Ezeulu is "locked up" in a guardroom refashioned by Tony Clarke's fearful messenger who sends people "to sweep the guardroom and spread a new mat on it so that it might be taken for a guest-room" (Achebe, 1986:156). This imprisonment signifies change in Ezeulu's life. After all, "it is against custom for the priest of Ulu to travel far from his hut" (Achebe, 1986:144). Hence, not only does Ezeulu experience an institutionalized, discursive space away from Umuaro, but also the act of traveling which inevitably presents Ezeulu with new knowledge(s). Achebe (1997:81) is conscious of this experience of the crossroad, which he views as a "zone of power." It is in this space that Ezeulu is confronted with conflicting truths.

Initially, Ezeulu's perspective corresponds with his spatial location. His questions remain the same, but his perspective alters. For instance, when Ezeulu is in Umuaro he wonders about his power as Chief Priest, but concludes, "No Chief Priest had ever refused [to name feast of the Pumpkin Leaves and the New Yam Feast]. So it could not be done. He would not dare" (Achebe, 1986:3). Within the context of traditional society, Ezeulu cannot refuse his duties as Chief Priest. However, this perspective changes when he is imprisoned, for as Achebe (1986:160) writes, "It gave him a feeling of loss which was both painful and pleasant. He had temporarily lost his status as Chief Priest which was painful; but after eighteen years it was a relief to be without it for a while." Residing

within a different discursive space, such thoughts are made possible because the network of power is different. Upon his return to Umuaro, Ezeulu says:

“When I was in Okperi I saw a young white man who was able to write his book with the left hand. From his actions I could see he had very little sense. But he had power; he could shout in my face; he could do what he liked. Why? Because he could write with his left hand.” (Achebe, 1986:189)

Ezeulu perceives a new regime of power and seeks to access that power in the same manner he earned Winterbottom’s respect at the beginning of the novel. However, not only does Ezeulu mis-recognize the incoming written society with the “young white man[’s]” ability to write with his left hand, he also fails to identify that power is networked differently in Umuaro, an oral society. As Odege (2001:35) reinforces, “It is [...] a story [...] of the conquest of an oral society by the written word.” Nonetheless, if Ezeulu can neither recognize the supremacy of “the written word” in colonial discourse, nor identify where Umuaro discourse spatially begins and ends, how can he access any discursive power?

Ezeulu’s inability to locate discursive power is evident in the title of Achebe’s novel; Ezeulu is merely an “arrow of god.” Referencing Akuebue, Killam (1969:78) confirms this point, stating:

[T]his evaluation is confirmed by Akuebue, ‘the only man in Umuaro who knew that Ezeulu was not deliberately punishing the six villages as some people thought. He knew that the Chief Priest was helpless: that a greater thing than *nté* was caught in *nté*’s trap’ (p. 275). He sees, as does Ezeulu, that the priest is no more than an ‘arrow in the bow of his god.’

However, is Ezeulu “helpless”? Ogede (2001:47) offers further insight:

If *Arrow of God* gives as close a view as a novel can capture of the total chemistry of colonialism, it is not only because it proves the duplicity of colonialism’s claims to order, but also because it reveals with resounding success the Igbos as playthings in the hands of their gods.

Arrow of God creates a space in which Ezeulu's accountability remains simultaneously significant and insignificant in determining the future of Umuaro, because the novel takes place in several discursive spaces. What is significant to colonial discourse is, at times, insignificant to Ibo discourse. Achebe plays upon this duality, creating a unique perspective which is enmeshed in ambivalence. After all, is Ezeulu's downfall the result of Ulu's intervention, or his own selfish pride?

A cursory review of literary criticism reflects a similar ambivalence. For instance, although Killam acknowledges Ezeulu's helplessness in the face of Ulu's plans, he also faults the chief priest, stating that Ezeulu is a man "with a tragic flaw, arrogance and pride, which causes him to commit an error in judgment when he lets his personal feelings interfere with his usually keen assessment of circumstances" (Killam, 1969:82). Can Ezeulu be held accountable, or is he merely an "arrow of god"? As Achebe demonstrates in his novel, the "answer" to such questions depends upon the discursive space in which one resides. Ogede (2001:39) reinforces this point, stating, "[I]mperialist interests defied native logic." This discursive ambivalence is the greatest ambivalence of all. It, above all other things, results in Ezeulu's demise.

At the conclusion of *Arrow of God* Ezeulu loses his mind. Achebe (1986:229) describes Ezeulu's mental demise following the death of his son, Obika:

At any other time Ezeulu would have been more than a match to his grief [...] But why, he asked himself again and again, had Ulu chosen to deal thus with him, to strike him down and then cover him with mud? What was his offense? [...] Perhaps it was the constant, futile throbbing of these thoughts that finally left a crack in Ezeulu's mind.

It is Ezeulu's lack of understanding that ultimately leads to his insanity. No matter where he stands, he simply cannot gain a satisfactory explanation for the present circumstances.

Colonial and Ibo discourses ultimately retain a level of autonomy that bars other discursive perspectives from their respectively individual logic. Both discursive fields fail him because they cannot be reconciled with one another. Thus, without a sustainable discourse, Ezeulu is forced into insanity. Although colonial and Ibo discourses possess very culture-specific perspectives on madness, in both contexts madness is considered as a state of lack – a lack of mental capacity, luck, health, etc. At the conclusion of *Arrow of God* Ezeulu's madness represents such a lack – an absence of a discursive space in which he can successfully exist.

As a madman, Ezeulu represents an embodied absence that must be filled through the creation of new discursive spaces. A new regime of truth must emerge in order to seal the discursive cracks that Ezeulu embodies. However, this new regime of truth also signals the demise of previous truths, and it is in this way that Ezeulu's madness represents an end. This end is reinforced by the community's eventual religious conversion: "[The Christians] were offering sanctuary to those who wished to escape the vengeance of Ulu" (Achebe, 1986:220). Eventually, "[M]any a man sent his son with a yam or two to offer to the new religion and to bring back the promised immunity" (Achebe, 1986:230). Regarding the inevitable colonization of Umuaro, Achebe (1997:138) states, "These were the sacrifices which Africa was called upon to make, not in the sense of throwing out an excess baggage. In fact the sacrifices may have been the best things in the tradition, and yet Africa was called upon to make them." Ezeulu's madness does represent an end to a certain kind of lifestyle, one that Achebe's protagonist is unable to concede. In "Colonial Governmentality" David Scott (1995:200) states, "[I]t is important to speak of the modern as forming a *break* with what went

before, a break beyond which there is no return, and in which what comes after can only be read in, a break beyond which read through, and read against the categories of the modern” (emphasis in original). This “break beyond which there is no return” is expressed at the conclusion of *Arrow of God*: “But for Ezeulu there was no next time” (Achebe, 1986:228). Obika’s death forces Ezeulu to recognize his ambivalent position between two discursive terrains – a position that does not possess a space in traditional or colonial discourses. Without a space, Ezeulu descends into madness.

Once again, we must ask what this madness signifies within the context of the colonial encounter and as a conclusion to the novel. Achebe (1997:50) explains, “[T]he end of a story is only an end in one sense. It is a beginning in another sense because it is an open-ended kind of end. At the end of a page, another page is projected, like an echo or the pebbles you throw in a pond, and it goes on and on.” Ezeulu’s madness is the result of these questions and his inability to comprehend any logical explanations to his questions. Thus, the protagonist’s madness represents a continuing need to question and seek out answers to those questions, but also a need to recognize the contingency of the answers we seek.

Arrow of God is indeed open-ended in spite of its protagonist’s mental demise. The novel concludes stating, “Thereafter any yam harvested in his fields was harvested in the name of the son” (Achebe, 1986:230). These words mark “a new dispensation in which youth and inexperience earn a new legitimacy” (Achebe, 1997:50). Hence, while the protagonist’s madness represents a lack, the youth will build a space in which Ezeulu could have existed, a space where multiple discourses overlap with one another. Therefore, “*Arrow of God* is a novel of African Being and of African Becoming as well.

There is no dichotomy in this, but rather a unitive principle of viewing two as one, many as one, instead of one as two, or one as many” (Achebe, 1997:90). Indeed, Ezeulu’s madness signifies a discursive break, but this break represents change. A new discourse needs to be constructed – one that is hospitable to multiple discourses. Ezeulu’s madness prefaces this hybrid space.

Like *Arrow of God*, Gordimer’s *July’s People* prefaces a new discourse. “[S]et at the future moment of revolution itself” (Gordimer, 1988:261), the novel commences amidst the fall of one discursive power and the rise of another that has yet to be determined. Drawing from Antonio Gramsci’s *Prison Notebooks* (1947), Gordimer terms this space the “interregnum.” The novel begins with a quote from Gramsci, stating, “The old is dying and the new cannot be born; in this interregnum there arises a great diversity of morbid symptoms” (Gordimer, 1982:epigraph). Gordimer (1988:269) explains “the state of interregnum” as “a state of Hegel’s disintegrated consciousness, of contradictions” – a space of ambivalence towards what was and what is yet to come, for with hope also comes fear of the unknown.

The main characters that are subjected to this state of hopeful fear are the Smales family, specifically Bamford (Bam) and Maureen, and July. The Smales are a white, English-speaking, South African family that, in spite of their liberalism, has enjoyed the pleasures of the apartheid regime. Temple-Thurston (1999:78) reinforces this point, stating, “The Smales are a typical bourgeois white family with vague liberal pretensions who find themselves uncomprehending and unprepared when revolution [...] erupts.” Nonetheless, in spite of their unpreparedness, July, their black manservant, rescues the

Smales when revolution strikes, hiding them in his home. Fearing for their lives, the Smales family moves to July's village where they are forced to adapt to life in the bush.

This space in the bush is of particular significance because it strongly contrasts with the opulence of the Smales's urban, capitalist reality. As Bodenheimer (1993:108) elucidates, "*July's People* is largely a materialist fable in which political consciousness and identity are predicated less on race and power than on the fundamental economic facts of ownership and dispossession." The major sources of tension between the Smales and July are centered on asserting material ownership, specifically of the bakkie and the shot-gun. It is within this context that Bam, Maureen, and July are forced to negotiate between multiple discourses – what was, what is, and what might be.

Such negotiation requires a new sense of self that Bam, Maureen, and July are not yet able to discover. Clingman (1992:199) offers insight, stating, "As servant is thrust overnight into authority, and as master and mistress have to learn their new parts of dependence, each figure is shown, suddenly deprived of the social supports of a previous identity, struggling desperately for a new frame of reference." As Head points out, Bam and Maureen also fail to grasp this "new frame of reference," "Maureen and Bamford Smales have no meaningful sense of their own identity" (Head, 1994:123). Without a discourse to define themselves, Bam, Maureen, and July experience their own identity crisis.

It is through Gordimer's protagonist, Maureen, that we are able to gain a firmer grasp of this identity crisis. As a white woman, Maureen's story is entangled in issues of socio-political economy. However, it seems as though Maureen has never been forced to face the imbalances that she discovers while living in the bush. It is in this space that

40
||

Gordimer's protagonist is forced to define herself without relying on connections with material wealth. While *July's People* does portray the ways in which Maureen becomes aware of her own dependencies on the socio-political economy upheld by the apartheid regime, the novel's ambiguous conclusion, which represents Maureen's descent into madness, challenges this new consciousness.

In order to challenge perceptions of madness and reason, Gordimer does not label Maureen's arrival into madness in the same way that Achebe describes the "crack in Ezeulu's mind" (Achebe, 1986:229). Maureen struggles between these discursive constructions of reality within the confines of delirium. Gordimer (1982:3) marks the beginning of Maureen's interregal experience, stating, "People in delirium rise and sink, rise and sink, in and out of lucidity." *July's People* narrates Maureen's delirium, which invokes past, present, and future spaces. By moving away from her suburban reality, Maureen leaves Reason, and immediately acquires a symptom of madness – delirium.

The instability of her delirious state is reinforced by her inability to negotiate within the discursive terrain that reigns in July's village: "No fiction could compete with what she was finding she did not know, could not have imagined or discovered through imagination" (Gordimer, 1982:29). This departure from imagination further reinforces Maureen's descent into madness, for as Foucault (2004a:93) explains, "There is an original innocence of the imagination: 'The imagination itself does not err, since it neither denies nor affirms' [...] only the mind can turn what is given in the image into abusive truth." In other words, it is the mind that must transform images into discursive truths. Fiction cannot compete with Maureen's new reality, because it resides within the discourse of the fictional, and thus, limits are placed on the "truths" it can create.

Conversely, Maureen's new life in the bush requires an understanding of a discourse – one that strongly contrasts with the apartheid reality she knows.

This internal, discursive conflict thrusts Maureen into a state of delirium that culminates into her maddening run at the conclusion of the novel. Gordimer (1982:46) prefaces this run earlier in her novel when Maureen asks Bam, ““Why don't you admit we were mad to run?”” In this scene, Maureen refers to her family's decision to flee from their suburban lives to July's village as mad, but her inquiry also frames her run at the novel's conclusion. Although the family's decision to flee does exist outside of apartheid's discursive reasoning, the desire and need to survive is entirely reasonable within the extreme circumstances in which they find themselves. In contrast, Maureen's run at the novel's conclusion exists outside of Reason precisely because it refuses to be bound by any discursive structures. Within the context of her past (apartheid discourse), present (village discourse), and future (survival), Maureen's decision to run is an embodiment of her insanity. Gordimer's employment of “delirium” further reinforces this reading, for as Foucault (2004:98-99) states, “The simplest and most general definition we can give of classical madness is indeed delirium: ‘This word is derived from lira, a furrow; so that deliro actually means to move out of the furrow, away from the proper path of reason.’” Maureen's run demonstrates her rejection of all discursive boundaries and her embrace of a delirious discourse.

Unlike *Arrow of God*, the conclusion of *July's People* has been widely discussed and analyzed. Some critics have chosen to focus on the significance of Maureen's running, comparing it to dancing (Cooke, 1985:18; Newman, 1988:85), while others have chosen to read the scene as an experience “registered in sexual terms” (Newman,

1988:91). Still others have chosen to analyze the relationship between Maureen's act of running and "her desire to be rid of her children" (Cooke, 1993:26). These varying readings and analyses reflect how the scene's ambiguity encourages numerous perspectives, but none seems to identify Maureen's actions as evidence of her madness. Nonetheless, despite critical differences, all readings seem to agree that Gordimer's conclusion is indeed ambiguous (Bodenheimer, 1993:117; Clingman, 1992:203; Cooke, 1993:26; Head, 1994:134; Temple-Thurston, 1999:102; Wagner, 1994:111-113).

However, ambiguity aside, most critics have focused on the extent of Maureen's "new consciousness" (Bodenheimer, 1993:117). Bodenheimer (1993:119) stipulates that Maureen's run "is a flight toward the only source of power that has manifested itself in the bush, as desperate run for 'civilization' in its undisguised aggressive and technological form." Contradicting this reading, Head (1994:134) states, "This is an apocalyptic moment for the bankrupt white identity: the white woman finally accepts that she has no inner resource and no residual power or control to deal with her situation. She runs to accept the inevitability that her fate lies in the hands of others." Considering the possibilities Bodenheimer and Head suggest, Wagner offers perhaps the most thorough analysis of Gordimer's conclusion.

Wagner problematizes the idea that Maureen is running towards civilization, writing:

[T]he helicopter (regardless of whether it contains friend or foe) may be understood as a symbol of modern technology and of the resources of an urban civilization Maureen is desperate to recover. To confuse matters further, the helicopter may at some level represent not only the unknown future but also some kind of redemption, a reading which is strongly suggested by the baptismal imagery which accompanies Maureen's improbable fording of the river. (1994:111-112)

Deconstructing Maureen's run "as an affirmative action, a gesture which represents an attempt to take control of both herself and her destiny," which ultimately "break[s] the cycle of fear and impotence by precipitating a confrontation with the feared, Wagner (1994:111-112) states, "We might read it as a 'suicide run' into the arms of an enemy, one which is ironically intended to 'liberate' her from the unbearable actual and emotional isolation which is the consequence of her alienation from family and society in the village." Wagner's analysis uses the word "ironically" to bridge the apparent gap between Maureen's "suicide run" and her "liberation." However, this scene is hardly ironic and its relationship with the rest of the novel is also not ironic. Nonetheless, although Wagner's reading is indeed problematic and ultimately leads to a rather undeservedly scathing criticism of Gordimer's conclusion, we should not discard the connection she attempts to make between Maureen's "suicide run" and "liberation" (Wagner, 1994:113). Furthermore, unlike most readings, Wagner focuses on the conclusion and the seemingly irreconcilable distance between different interpretations.

While many critics concede the ambiguity of the final scene, few choose to interrogate the scene's ambivalence. Perhaps a close reading of the novel's conclusion will add some insight: "She runs. She can hear the labored muttering putter very clearly in the attentive silence of the bush around and ahead: the engine not switched off but idling, there" (Gordimer, 1982:160). The author's description is charged with ambivalence – "labored muttering," "attentive silence," "around and ahead...there," "not switched off but idling." These words describe liminalities – experiences that fail to fit the discursively ascribed "order of things." Thus, Maureen's inexplicable running toward an unknown embodies extreme ambivalence. She does not fit into any existing discursive

order, and therefore, cannot exist. She can only run. In this regard, Maureen's running is a "suicide run," which evades any logic of liberation. This non-logic, or unreason, represents madness, a madness similar to that experienced by Achebe's Ezeulu.

Released nearly twenty years after *Arrow of God*, Gordimer's *July's People* demonstrates the stronghold colonial discourses retained on the African continent. Gordimer (1988:262) reinforces this legacy when describing the setting of her novel: "[T]he country [is] South Africa, and the time [is] the last years of the colonial era in Africa." Unlike Achebe's Nigeria, which, like many African nations, gained independence from colonial, minority rule in the 1960s, South Africa remained in the grips of minority rule – in the form of apartheid – until 1994. Thus, while the majority of the continent was celebrating independence, the apartheid regime continued to tighten its grip on the South African majority, implementing more extensive forms of oppression.

Within this socio-political context, Achebe and Gordimer are positioned in distinct discursive spaces. Achebe's *Arrow of God* is inspired by post-independence Nigeria and the nationalist vision that accompanied the country's independence. Gordimer, on the other hand, is neither writing in a post-independent nation nor attempting to inculcate a nationalist vision. Moreover, although both Achebe and Gordimer are successful African writers, their separate experiences in colonial Africa are indeed significant. Gordimer (1988:271) shines some light on the racial difference, stating, "[F]or most of us [whites], including myself, struggle is still something that has a place. But for blacks it is everywhere or nowhere." Within the context of colonial Africa, black people were systematically oppressed by an imperial enterprise that exalted whiteness. As a result of this racist logic, which translated very clearly in colonialism's

socio-political economy, black people struggled to survive in ways that white people did not need to struggle. This distinction is evident in decisions Achebe and Gordimer have confronted throughout their lives. Achebe has risked his life to “struggle,” while Gordimer admits, “I have never taken any direct political action. Someone like myself takes calculated risks” (Bazin and Seymour, 1990:205). *July's People* is one such calculated risk.

Published in 1981, *July's People* is inspired by the Black Conscious Movement and the subsequent rejuvenation of the African National Congress (ANC). The late 1970s marked the realization “that non-violent, open, public methods of bringing about change were impossible” (CIIR, 1982:29), as well as the response to this realization – *Umkhonto we Sizwe*.⁸ Overall, the decline of the apartheid regime seemed evident. As *South African in the 1980s*, a Catholic Institute for International Relations (CIIR) publication, states:

The South African government's attempts to maintain and remodel their apartheid groundplan, advocated two decades ago by Afrikaner strategists, will inevitably have unforeseen consequences...In the final analysis the South African government is faced with two alternatives: a rapid movement to majority rule under genuine black leaders like Nelson Mandela, with all that this implies for government and society, or an unprecedented level of repression. (CIIR, 1982:38)

It is amidst these seeming inevitabilities that Gordimer imagines an interregnum.

Like Achebe's *Arrow of God*, Gordimer's novel serves as a gesture towards the future, providing knowledge(s) that the current (or recent), mainstream discourse lacks. In 1980 Gordimer wrote two essays – “The Unkillable Word” and “Censors and Unconfessed History” – which proclaim the motives behind censorship in South Africa.

⁸ *Umkhonto we Sizwe*, also known as “MK,” was the military wing of the African National Congress (ANC) during the anti-apartheid liberation movement.


These essays reveal the cracks in apartheid discourse – “Censorship is the weapon of information control, thought-control, idea-control, above all, the control of healthy doubt and questioning...” (Gordimer, 1988:204). *July's People* is an imaginary space which lifts this censorship, enabling its protagonist to experience doubt and questioning during the imminent fall of apartheid.

Centered on a white, female protagonist and her relationship with her black manservant, July, Gordimer's novel specifically interrogates the psychology of power in liberal South Africa. While Achebe advocates the decolonization of the “native” mind, Gordimer addresses the possibility of, and indeed the requisite for, decolonizing the “white” mind. In *July's People* Maureen is forced to confront apartheid “truths.” In other words, while Ezeulu realizes his ambivalence through his implication in colonial governmentality, Maureen experiences ambivalence as she is spatially extricated from apartheid discourse.

This process of extrication begins when Maureen is compelled to leave the center of apartheid, literally and figuratively relocating to its discursive margins. Apartheid spaces fail to hold their significance during this interregnum, because they do not provide the luxuriant security which masked apartheid's discursive discontinuities. Rather, these spaces have been converted into death and destruction. Nonetheless, although Maureen is able to recognize the change in her physical surroundings and the transformation of apartheid spaces, extrication requires Maureen to identify consciously the ways in which she has been implicated by apartheid discourse. In “Masters and Servants: Nadine Gordimer's *July's People* and the Themes of Her Fiction,” Rowland Smith (1990:151) writes, “It is not white power that the author describes as crumbling in *July's People*, but

the final illusion of white innocence.” However, although *July’s People* frequently includes references to Maureen’s “back there,” the significance of this phrase gradually changes. After all, Maureen only becomes aware of her implication in apartheid discourse when she is physically enmeshed in another discursive space. “Back there” is transformed by the new knowledges and truths she experiences in July’s village, revealing the pervasiveness of apartheid’s system of governmentality. Moreover, the privileged, consumerist space, in which Maureen once resided, no longer exists.

Maureen gradually gains a more critical perspective of her suburban existence when she is forced out of the grip of capitalist materialism. When the Smales relocate to July’s village, attempts to preserve “boundaries of class, gender and race” are represented in the struggle to assert ownership of the bakkie and the shot-gun. What is particularly interesting about these objects is the fact that they belong to Bam, Maureen’s husband. As Gordimer (1982:5) writes, “Bam Smales treated himself to [the yellow bakkie] on his fortieth birthday, to use as a shooting-brake.” The bakkie and the shot-gun, stereotypically male symbols of power, do not belong to Maureen. Yet, in order to assert her suburban identity, she relies on her indirect relationship with these objects. However, Maureen discovers that her claim to these “male” objects is just as legitimate as July’s claim, or otherwise. In “Nadine Gordimer: The Politicization of Women,” Dorothy Driver (1990:187) analyzes Gordimer’s ability “to set up a reverberating metaphorical relation between sexism and racism.” Both Maureen and July occupy spaces of relative disempowerment. It is the white man who possesses authority. Nonetheless, this discursive truth is reformulated in July’s village, for it is the black man who rules this



space. While July is well aware of these discursive truths, Maureen gradually comes to realize her marginalized status through failed attempts to recuperate her suburban power.

Within the context of capitalist discourse, women “are figured not as historic agents but as frames for the commodity, valued for *exhibition* alone” (McClintock, 1995:223; emphasis in original). In a relatively commodity-free environment, Maureen loses her value as “frame for the commodity.” She does not have access to material fetishes, inevitably resulting in a devaluation of her discursive value. Bam’s gestures and mannerisms gauge her devaluation. The first and only time the couple makes love while staying with July is “in the presence of their children breathing close around them and the nightly intimacy of the cockroaches, crickets and mice feeling-out the darkness of the hut [...] of the bush” (Gordimer, 1982:80). Bam is unconcerned about this setting, but experiences “a moment of hallucinatory horror” when he sees Maureen’s menstrual blood on his penis. This scene is particularly telling because it demonstrates Bam’s patriarchal role. He is horrified by Maureen’s blood and immediately connects it to “the blood of the pig” (Gordimer, 1982:80), an animal that is traditionally associated with impurities. Maureen’s vanishing material cleanliness represents a loss of identity – “She was already not what she was” (Gordimer, 1982:29). As a result, Bam eventually is unable to recognize his wife – “Her. Not ‘Maureen.’ Not ‘his wife’” (Gordimer, 1982:105). The break in her relationship with “the commodity” requires Maureen to forge a new identity.

Maureen attempts to re-map several different spaces in an effort to recreate herself. She becomes the defender of suburban life, monitoring the usage of the bakkie and shot-gun. Additionally, she tries to learn from the women in the village, following them around in the veld to look for food and herbs. In spite of her many attempts,

Maureen is unable to find a discursive space in which to reside. Her privileged position as white, English-speaking woman will not grant her access to village life. Moreover, because of her previous status as employer, Maureen cannot submit to the rules and laws of July's patriarchy. Unable to discover a discursive space in which to exist, Maureen enters the ambivalent realm of madness.

As we have established, Gordimer's closing scene is indeed ambiguous in terms of revealing a pragmatic meaning. The reader does not know Maureen's desired destination or her motivation for running. However, the reader is privy to a textual description of her experience of running, which includes how she runs and what she senses as she runs. This description captures her "in-between-ness," for she is neither here nor there. In this scene, Gordimer (1982:160) reinforces this interregnum space, fusing "the real fantasies of the bush" with "the romantic forests of Grimm and Disney," "[t]he smell of boiled potatoes (from a vine indistinguishable to her from others)" with "a kitchen, a house," and "airy knob-thorn trees" with "the artful nature of a public park." These relationships signal a liminality between Maureen's suburban reality and her village reality, demonstrating her existence between the two discursive spaces.

These relationships also undermine the social code upheld in suburbia and the bush, reflecting Maureen's madness. In *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, Deleuze and Guattari (2000:15) analyze the significance of maintaining social codes and how this determines madness:

The schizo has his [sic] own system of co-ordinates for situating himself at his disposal, because, first of all, he has at his disposal his very own recording code, which does not coincide with the social code [...] It might be said that the schizophrenic passes from one code to the other, that he deliberately *scrambles all the codes*, by quickly shifting from one to another... (emphasis in original)

Indeed, while Maureen runs, she “*scrambles all the codes*” (emphasis in original) by residing within a space that is hospitable to both the past and the present, the city and the village. Maureen’s liminal space defies “the closed equation of representation, $x = x = \text{not } y$ ” (Deleuze and Guattari, 2003:xiii), order *vis-à-vis* negation. The reason this closing scene is so ambiguous, and to some extent, “almost unreadable” (Bodenheimer, 1993:119), is because Maureen’s actions exist outside of the reader’s discursive order. In *Mental Illness and Psychology* (1987:84), Foucault discusses the paradox of the schizophrenic, stating, “The contemporary world makes schizophrenia possible, not because its events render it inhuman and abstract, but because our culture reads the world in such a way that man himself cannot recognize himself in it.” Gordimer’s conclusion captures this inability to recognize ourselves, demonstrating our dependency on discourse. Maureen, as madwoman, does not depend on the discourse with which we, as readers, use to read our reality, for hers is a delirious discourse.

Gordimer employment of delirium throughout *July’s People* and her representation of Maureen’s madness at the conclusion of the novel call the reader to interrogate discursive constructions of madness and reason. After all, it would seem that although Gordimer labels Maureen’s departure from her suburban, apartheid reality as delirious, the family’s decision to survive is quite sane. Moreover, Maureen’s gradual, but still incomplete decolonization in the bush portrays apartheid reason as quite mad. Such an inversion of madness and reason provides Gordimer’s reader with a space to question the logic of hegemonic discourses. Written before the end of apartheid South Africa, *July’s People* directly confronts the madness of apartheid. The novel’s

conclusion advocates a rejection of apartheid reason and the undertaking of a new discourse that would seem delirious and mad when read through the lens of apartheid.

Gordimer challenges her reader to think beyond the pages of her novel. There is hope of Maureen's survival, but like Ezeulu, her discursive existence has reached an end. It is thus up to the reader to imagine the delirious discourse which compels Maureen to run. Like *Arrow of God*, *July's People* continues beyond its pages, working in the imagination of its readers. Gordimer invokes liminalities as a way of inspiring the reader to imagine a new discourse through which the world can be read. Its closing scene reinforces a continuation, one that serves as "an optimistic ending" (Bazin and Seymour, 1990:294). Maureen's running does not serve as a metaphor for *her* becoming, but the becoming of a new discursive subjectivity. Deleuze and Guattari (2003:293) provide some insight into this experience of becoming, writing, "[A] line of becoming has neither beginning nor end, departure nor arrival, origin nor destination [...] A becoming is neither one nor two, nor the relation of the two; it is the in-between..." The emergence of a new subjectivity does not begin or end with Maureen, but was begun before *July's People* and will continue beyond its pages. We certainly do not know where Maureen's running will take her, but becoming is not the destination; it is the liminal, which inspires a new "order of things." Although Maureen is an essential figure in the emergence of a new subjectivity, she is overcome by madness. Therefore, it is up to the reader to bring Maureen's delirious discourse into being, enabling Maureen, and those like her, to inhabit a subjectivity that is hospitable to newfound knowledges.

* * *

Achebe's *Arrow of God* and Gordimer's *July's People* interrogate "the psychology of power" in order to decolonize the African mind. However, while Achebe's novel demonstrates how the colonized was created, offering a space in which he/she can confront colonial mythologies, *July's People* attempts to decolonize the "white" mind by interrogating the madness of apartheid. Moreover, in both novels, the protagonists inevitably fail to discover a discursive terrain within the context of their respective interregal spaces. Without a discursive space in which to exist, Ezeulu and Maureen descend into madness. Rather than representing an end, madness represents the unknown that is yet to come. Thus, both *Arrow of God* and *July's People* remain open-ended, anticipating the emergence of a discursive space hospitable to their protagonists' newfound knowledges. Nonetheless, while Achebe's novel rewrites a colonial past, *July's People* imagines a South African future. As a result, readers read Ezeulu's and Maureen's madnnesses differently. Ezeulu's mental demise is foreclosed, because we know that colonialism ultimately pervades Ibo society. Maureen's madness, on the other hand, is ambiguous precisely because the reader does not know what the future will bring.

CHAPTER TWO

FLUIDITY: Imagining a New Paradigm

This chapter demonstrates a significant departure from the ambivalence-inspired madness represented in Achebe's *Arrow of God* and Gordimer's *July's People*. While Ezeulu and Maureen descend into madness because of the discursive interregnum in which they are situated, the protagonists of Bessie Head's novel, *A Question of Power*, and Dambudzo Marechera's novella, "House of Hunger," experience madness as a result of discursive fragmentation. Head's Elizabeth and Marechera's nameless protagonist/narrator must negotiate with colonial and national discourses, performing the "authentic" identities that each discourse prescribes for them. Inevitably, these identities conflict and ultimately lead to the protagonists' fragmentation of self. Like Ezeulu and Maureen, whose subjectivities have yet to be discursively constructed, Elizabeth and Marechera's narrator descend into madness. However, although the madnnesses represented in *Arrow of God* and *July's People* enable the novels to remain open-ended, the fate of their characters lies in a debilitating madness. There is no hope for Ezeulu's recovery, for he remains locked both within the confines of madness and a colonial past. On the other hand, although there is hope for Maureen's survival, as well as a future discourse that is hospitable to her subjectivity, her discursive existence is foreclosed until a future space is created. Within the context of their respective discourses, Ezeulu and Maureen are essentially dead – locked into the historical moments in which they reside. On the other hand, Head's and Marechera's characters live beyond the moment of their respective breakdowns, inscribing madness with new meanings, as well as enabling the reality of madness to be explored. Thus, while Ezeulu's and Maureen's madnnesses signal the end of their discursive existences, a sort of living death, the madnnesses that Head and Marechera represent in *A Question of Power* and "House of Hunger," respectively, serve

as an alternative to Ezeulu's and Maureen's fates. Rather than a living death, Head's and Marechera's protagonists enter a nondiscursive madness.

For Head's and Marechera's protagonists, madness is reality. Overwhelmed by the fragmenting nature of this discursive reality, the characters enter another kind of madness. In other words, what their respective discourses label as fragmentation drives both protagonists to their respective breaking points. However, unlike Ezeulu and Maureen, Head's and Marechera's characters do not succumb to a madness that forecloses options. Rather, Head and Marechera choose to explore a nondiscursive madness. This madness is nondiscursive for it does not uphold or fulfill any of the laws of discourse. Collapsing discursive perceptions of madness and sanity, this nondiscursive madness does not "place constraints on the manner of delivering a discourse," keep "discourse from multiplying and losing authenticity," create "discursive norms that [...] lin[k] the speakers to [...] spaces and [...] distribut[e] them into specialized groups," or engage in the "social appropriation of discourse that binds discursive statements with such nondiscursive spaces as institutions, class interest, and political events" (Diawara, 1990:81). This madness does not partake in any of the structuring objectives that are inherent in discourse, and therefore, it does not create a regime of truth.

Nondiscursive madness is a fictional reality that is experienced by Head's and Marechera's fictional characters. Such a reality is virtually impossible for the reader to comprehend and thus, he/she must negotiate between his/her discursive reality and the nondiscursive realities in which the characters exist. This negotiation between realities enables the reader to see fragmentation when looking through the lens of discourse, but also to envision that same fragmentation as fluidity when imagining a nondiscursive

reality. In response to this negotiation, we must examine the significance of this new madness in relation to the hegemonic discourses that inspire its emergence, namely colonialism and nationalism. Both of these discourses were born from the Western *ratio*, which as Diawara (1990:85-86) states, "can address other societies and cultures only in reference to itself, and never to the specific systems that cannot be reduced to it." Nondiscursive madness cannot be reduced to the Western *ratio*, for it is not discourse, and as such, it signals the emergence of a new paradigm. Focusing on the nondiscursive madresses represented in Head's *A Question of Power* and Marechera's "House of Hunger," this chapter seeks to analyze how Head and Marechera imagine this new paradigm.

In order to understand how Head and Marechera imagine a new paradigm, we must first examine the colonial and national discourses that thrust the protagonists into nondiscursive madness. The Introduction and Chapter 1 extensively engage with colonialism and apartheid, most significantly, their Manichean structures and vilifications of the "native." Nationalism, on the other hand, has not been thoroughly discussed. Although this discourse possesses many forms, varying according to context, the overarching similarity is nationalism's desire to create a united nation. Within the context of African Nationalism, the humanity of African people (read: black) was aggressively affirmed, contesting colonial constructions of the inherently inferior "native." However, by valorizing that which was defined as African, nationalism created a discourse that retained a social hierarchy centered on race. Like colonialism, nationalism created a reality governed by racial essentialisms. Thus, "nationalist

interpretations reproduced the violence and exclusions of colonialist writing” (Lewis, 2004:137).

In spite of its re-creation of a racial hierarchy, African Nationalism marked a significant departure from colonialism. Although colonialism created and reinforced a national identity, the enterprise was centered on capitalist motivations. Conversely, African Nationalism sought, first and foremost, to create an African identity, which celebrated a specifically black consciousness. Both discourses, however, failed to create subjectivities that did not center on an essentialized authenticity. Within this scheme, Elizabeth, a colored,¹ South African woman living in Botswana, must negotiate between several different discourses. Within the context of South Africa, Elizabeth possesses two subjectivities – that of tainted white and stained black.² Both colonial and national discourses reject her as a contamination of their “pure” ideologies. Elizabeth’s subjectivity is further complicated by her immediate need to write herself into the context of Botswana, where she is labeled as a foreigner.

While Marechera’s protagonist is not a foreigner in the way that Elizabeth is in Botswana, he is estranged from his community. As a Western educated, black man, Marechera’s narrator has been implicated in both European and Zimbabwean discourses. Both discourses have contributed to his identity, but colonialism and nationalism place Europe and Africa in opposition. Thus, he must negotiate between both discourses, making himself “white enough” and “black enough” to satisfy the limited subjectivities

¹ “Colored” is one of the categories created by apartheid racial profiling, which included South Indians, Southeast Asians, and individuals who were of mixed (black and white) origin. A more comprehensive textualization of this social class will be discussed later.

² Colored people were seen as showing “all the worst characteristics of both races” (Greenlees, 1895:71).

available to him. This constant shift between discursive subjectivities, though necessary for obtaining discursive agency,³ fragments his identity.

The fragmentation that is required in order to survive within antagonistic discourses has been widely theorized. For instance, Wulf Sachs (1996:235), a “liberal,” South African psychoanalyst, noted the trauma of “the clash of [the African’s] two worlds [which] constantly caused inner division.” Such “double consciousness” is explained in W.E.B. DuBois’s *The Souls of Black Folk* (1903): “It is a peculiar sensation, this double-consciousness, this sense of always looking at one’s self through the eyes of others [...] One ever feels his two-ness – an American, a Negro; two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings; two warring ideals in one dark body” (DuBois, 2005:10). As an African American, DuBois is split by two discursive subjectivities which are strongly opposed – “American” and “Negro.”⁴ Each discursive space – that of American and African – calls him to embrace a subjectivity that he cannot fully inhabit. Thus, his consciousness is doubled, for he knows both discourses and therefore can see his African self with American eyes and vice versa. For DuBois (2005:11), “The history of the American Negro is the history of this strife, – this longing to attain self-conscious manhood, to merge his double self into a better and truer self.” Thus, while DuBois recognizes the burden of possessing a double-conscious identity, he also identifies the potential of multiplicity – of being able to live as both “American” and Negro” “without

³ In *Relocating Agency: Modernity and African Letters* Olakunle George (2003:83) reinforces the pervasiveness of discourse stating, “The subject is, only by being in ideology.” George interrogates conceptions of agency, stipulating that agency as well as resistance never exists outside of discourse. Hence, agency can only exist as “discursive agency” and resistance as “discursive resistance” (George, 2003:74).

⁴ “For DuBois, [...] double-consciousness is indeed a universal phenomenon among blacks. The resistance to pressures to submerge the essence of black identity varies across personality types and individual circumstances, but all face the problem of ‘warring ideals’” (Stewart, 1983:102).

being cursed and spit upon by his fellows, without having the doors of Opportunity closed roughly in his face” (DuBois, 2005:11).

Multiplicity tends to be an earnestly celebrated attribute because of the way it demonstrates the subversive power of oppressed groups. Homi Bhabha’s theorization of multiplicity, encapsulated in terms such as “hybridity,” “Third Space,” and “mimicry,” focuses on the subversive potential of such an “ambivalent” identity. Bhabha’s work demonstrates how the mere existence of the discursive “Other,” undermines colonial discourse, “unsettl[ing] the mimetic or narcissistic demands of colonial power” (Bhabha, 1994:112). By successfully existing and manipulating discourse, the black man demonstrates that he is not invisible. Rather, his presence serves as a constant threat to hegemony.


However, the black man’s multiplicity is rarely chosen, for he remains mobile in order to survive within the confines of discourse(s). Indeed, multiplicity is “compelled rather than chosen” (Fink, 1999:249). In “Palimpsestic Aesthetics,” Robert Stam (1999:61) emphasizes the complexity of such identities, stating it is “not a game but a painful negotiation, an exercise [...] both of ‘resistance’ and ‘surrender.’” Bhabha’s theorization tends to oversimplify this tension, failing to identify the fact that subjectivities are “hierarchically constructed” (Sanga, 2001:82). DuBois’ “American” and “Negro” subjectivities do not “exist in neutral equality” (Sanga, 2001:82). In “Representing the Colonized,” Edward Said (2003:295) reinforces this point, stating, “[T]o be one of the colonized is potentially to be a great many different, but *inferior*, things, in many different places, at many different times” (my emphasis). Multiplicity is “never [...] a peaceful encounter, a tension-free theme park; it [is] always [...] deeply

entangled with colonial violence” (Stam, 1999:60). Thus, multiplicity is more accurately read as an act of fragmentation.

Both “multiplicity” and “fragmentation” enable one to access numerous avenues for self-expression and agency. However, while “multiplicity” focuses on a positive acquisition, a sort of hoarding of selves, “fragmentation” emphasizes the negative, the loss of cohesiveness. Discourse depends upon continuity and, thus, works to eliminate discontinuities. Fragmentation serves as evidence of an eruption, or crack, in such discursive continuity, but as we have demonstrated in Chapter 1, individuals can only exist within the confines of discourse. Once Ezeulu and Maureen possess subjectivities outside of their respective discourses, they are compelled to madness. The fragmentation that Head’s and Marechera’s protagonists experience also compels them to madness, for their respective subjectivities lack the continuity necessary for existing within both colonial and national discourses. Thus, discursive fragmentation compels, but also enables, the protagonists to break away from their mad realities in order to experience nondiscursive madness(es) that embraces a fluid existence that is impossible within their respective discursive realities.

Nondiscursive madness enables Head’s and Marechera’s protagonists to disengage from the Western discursive paradigm in a manner that invokes those silent, hidden, and, at times, seemingly schizophrenic, spaces that undermine the supremacy of hegemony. In *L’odeur de père*, V.Y. Mudimbe (1982:44; translation from Diawara, 1997:462) speaks of the overwhelming task of disengaging from Western discourse:

[T]o escape the supremacy of Western thought presupposes an exact appreciation of what it means to rid ourselves of it. It presupposes a knowledge of how far the West, perhaps cunningly, has re-created itself in



us. It presupposes also a knowledge of the Western in what has enabled us to denounce the West.

In other words, Western discourse pervades reality in such a way that it is virtually unavoidable. Even the subversion of Western discourse depends upon one's engagement with Western thought. Head and Marechera create texts in which highly charged, "Western" signifiers are undefined by the madness in which the protagonists exist, disrupting the Western *ratio*'s network of power.

This exclusion of Western discourse is precisely what the West fears. In "Reading Africa through Foucault: V.Y. Mudimbe's Reaffirmation of the Subject," Manthia Diawara (1997:462) offers insight:

[W]hat is feared most in the West is [...] the emergence of (an)other discourse, one that excludes the Western *ratio*. This means the breakdown of hierarchies between the West and the other; the end of conquest and the removal of the self from the other's space; the breakdown of the security and comfort to which one was accustomed when one was able to predict the other's actions in one's discourse. In essence, the West fears the fear of the unknown. (emphasis in original)

The consequence of Western *ratio*'s exclusion is its loss of power, authority, and control. Without the ability to create or uphold regimes of truth, the West must confront an unknown reality without knowing or understanding the tools necessary for manipulation or negotiation. Madness is indeed an unknown, and thus, for Head and Marechera it is a productive space for imagining a new reality that is not fragmented. Moreover, as a universal unknown madness also excludes and undermines many other semiological meanings and discursive spaces, including those defined as "African." This gesture signifies a need to construct a new discursive reality that acknowledges Western paradigms, but does not depend upon them.

Imagining a discourse that does not depend upon a Western center is a challenging, if not impossible, task, to say the least. However, in *Anti-Oedipus* (1977⁵) and *A Thousand Plateaus* (1987⁶), Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari attempt to overthrow a capitalist, Western-centric worldview. Their theorization is based on “schizoanalysis,” which seeks to create an acentered reality that is “rhizomatic” (Deleuze and Guattari, 2003). In her essay, “Deleuze’s Nietzsche,” Petra Perry (1993:174-175) offers insight into the rhizome metaphor that Deleuze and Guattari construct:

[The rhizome is] a subterranean clump of bulbs or tubers, constantly proliferating and, although invisible from aboveground, always changing direction and form as a pell-mell assemblage of parts [...] In this pairing, the rhizome stands apart from the arborescent: It is not an opposition...

The rhizome lacks the hierarchy that the tree (*arbor*) represents, encouraging a more playful and random distribution of power and order. Unlike the tree’s rooted structure, the rhizome does not limit multiplicity, but encourages an endless variety of connections through constant mobility and change.

Despite the fact that Deleuze and Guattari are Western theorists, engaging with Western philosophies, the rhizomatic reality they seek to create does not depend on Western paradigms. Within this reality, Oedipus does not exist; “the schizo was not oedipalizable, because he is beyond territoriality, because he has carried his flows right into the desert” (Deleuze and Guattari, 2000:67). For the black man, this means that “the Law of the Father or the paternal metaphor” (Fanon, 1967:xix), which the Master embodies (Fanon, 1967:145), is also rendered nonexistent. The “native” is no longer plagued by a desire to become the colonizer, and in this way, he is decolonized. Such

⁵ This date refers to the English translation published in 1977 by Viking Penguin. *L’Ante-Oedipe* was first published by Les Editions de Minuit in 1972.

⁶ This date refers to the English translation published in 1987 by the University of Minnesota Press. *Mille Plateaux* was first published by Les Editions de Minuit in 1980.

logic does not seek to erase history, but the master narrative that is History. Schizoanalysis is a space in which histories roam free, without discursive limitations that depend upon a centered, hierarchical structure.

A Question of Power is exemplary of the schizoanalysis Deleuze and Guattari seek. A textualized representation of the “nightmare soul-journey” as experienced by the protagonist, Elizabeth, and a fictionalization of Head’s own psychological struggle, the novel retains an autobiographical dimension, which contributes to the undefining of discursively constructed subjectivities. Indeed, Head’s narrative is highly fragmented, inspiring criticisms which deem the novel “formidably ‘difficult’” (Gagiano, 2000:152) at best, and inscrutable (Hancock, 2000:49) at worst. Such difficulty (or inscrutability) has produced a multitude of interpretations. However, just as Gordimer consciously creates an ambiguous conclusion to *July’s People* – one that can only be determined in the future – so does Head craft a reality outside of the accepted order. Head’s novel temporally and spatially mixes history, autobiography, myth, and fiction, which converge in a narrative about Elizabeth, a woman living with her son, Shorty, in the Botswana village of Motabeng. Elizabeth has obviously been subject to a spectrum of abuses and traumas deriving from her experiences in apartheid South Africa. The novel begins retrospectively, with varying scenes resembling flashbacks. The “directors” of Elizabeth’s “nightmare soul-journey” are mentioned, but in a context that is bewildering to the reader. For instance, the first page introduces Sello, stating, “The man’s name was Sello. A woman in the village of Motabeng paralleled his inner development” (Head, 1974:11). Head’s narrative style is indeed abstract, but with purpose. As Hugh W. Hancock (2000:49) writes, “[T]he narration embodies madness, keeping the reader

16
✓
16 ✓

spellbound, the narration powerfully twisting and turning back on itself..." Head overwhelms her reader in order to instigate discomfort and confusion, so that he/she experiences Elizabeth's insanity and oppression.

Sello, Dan, and Medusa are the major figures in Elizabeth's "nightmare soul-journey." These characters, as well as Elizabeth, take on multiple personas. For instance, Sello doubles as himself, as Sello the monk, and as Sello in the brown suit, but also as a man living in Motabeng, Buddha, and Osiris. In "Engaging Dreams," Maggi Phillips (1994:98) offers an additional perspective:

Sello and Dan are village headmen – one known for his goodness, the other for his wealth [...] Sello changes from humble priest to masculine Elizabeth who disappears into Father Time. Something of him returns as the Hindu/Buddha apparition, is eclipsed by David and Goliath, and is then feminized and passed out as the monstrous mother.

As Phillips demonstrates, there are many ways of contextualizing Sello, Dan, Medusa, and sometimes Elizabeth. For the sake of plot, Head uses these three names most frequently, enabling the reader to make the necessary connections. Basically, Elizabeth relates best to Sello, with whom she shares history(ies); Medusa embodies female power and manipulation, which she uses to subjugate Sello, who is her husband; and Dan is perversion to the extreme, but also Elizabeth's greatest teacher. The presence of these characters signals Elizabeth's breakdown, but these "directors" of her "nightmare soul-journey" also plague Elizabeth's mind.

At one point, Elizabeth becomes so overwhelmed by her "nightmare soul-journey" that she decides to kill Shorty and then commit suicide. However, Shorty's child innocence intervenes, revealing that her "silent soliloquies" (Head, 1974:174) of her "nightmare soul-journey" actually had been spoken out loud. Shorty had been there with

Elizabeth throughout her journey into madness. Head (1974:174) writes, “The trust he showed, the way he quietly walked back to his own bed, feverishly swerved her mind away from killing him, then herself.” Following this realization, Elizabeth decides to kill Sello (Head, 1974:174), a plot that publicly reveals her mental state. As a consequence to her public actions, Elizabeth is sent to an asylum.

Although Elizabeth does not receive proper treatment in the asylum, it is her refusal to engage with the discourse that labels her as “mad” that delays her eventual release. Nonetheless, Elizabeth soon realizes the consequences of her refusal, and therefore manipulates “the system” in order to return to her son. Upon her return, Elizabeth is not better, per se, but with the help of the directors of her “nightmare soul-journey” and the continued support from community members, such as Tom and Kenosi, she begins to create a reality that is hospitable to both her nondiscursive madness and life in Motabeng. Her initial fragmentation is transformed into an expansive fluidity, for her “nightmare soul-journey” allows her to imagine what is discursively impossible. Moreover, community members do not shun these impossibilities, but engage Elizabeth in productive dialogs. For instance, when Elizabeth asks Tom, “a young Peace-Corps volunteer from America” (Head, 1974:24), ““What would you do if you were both God and Satan at the same time?”” (Head, 1974:161), he is receptive to her inquiry, stating, “I hope I’d have the courage to admit it to myself” (Head, 1974:161). The acceptance Elizabeth receives from her community demonstrates how realities and subjectivities deemed impossible by hegemonic discourses are indeed possible. Nonetheless, it is important to recognize that the “impossible” occurs within a very specific space.

Elizabeth resides in a marginalized space. Motabeng is a small village community located in the so-called "Third World." A significant percentage of the community participates in a cooperative in order to sustain the community as a whole. While colonial and national discourses do exist and affect the people of Motabeng, the Western *ratio* is not as pervasive. Published in 1974, Head's *A Question of Power* undoubtedly responds to Botswana's entry into the Western *ratio* on nationalist terms. Botswana's independence in 1966 transformed the colony into a nation, an invention of the Western imagination. Although Botswana's independence had been negotiated peacefully, the nation's neighbors, specifically South Africa and southern Rhodesia (Zimbabwe), continued to struggle against white, minority rule. Inspired by the South African refugees of the 1960s, Tswana nationalism surged through the nation, further reinforcing the Western *ratio*.

Under President Seretse Khama, Botswana emerged from poverty and destitution,⁷ but these were accomplished by competing within the standards upheld by the Western *ratio*, namely capitalism. The discovery of natural resources facilitated Botswana's ability to compete. In 1967, the "discovery of diamonds [was] announced;" in 1970, the "first diamond mine opened at Orapa," and in 1974, the "production of copper beg[an] at Selebi Phikwe" (Ramsay, Morton, and Morton, 1996:xxi). Moreover, the 1970s also marked the birth of Botswana's tourist industry (Stevens, 1975:234). Head recognized the ways in which Botswana was being transformed and voiced her preference for a way of life that divorced itself from the Western *ratio*. Perhaps Head's

⁷ "When independence arrived in 1966 amidst a serious draught, president Seretse Khama led a nation that ranked among the very poorest in the world" (Ramsay, Morton, and Morton, 1996:7).

preference was influenced by the fact that, like Elizabeth, she was not given a space in which to exist within the confines of the discourses available at the time.

On July 6, 1937, Bessie Head was born “in the Fort Napier Mental Institution in Pietermaritzburg, South Africa” (Sample, 2003:2), where her mother, Bessie Amelia Birch (“Toby”), was undergoing psychological treatment. The circumstances surrounding Head’s birth were surprising to her mother’s family, for as Eilersen (1996:7) writes, “In late April 1937 [more than six months into Birch’s pregnancy, Birch’s] sister suddenly realized that Toby was pregnant.” Additionally, only after her birth did Birch’s family realize that Head “was of mixed blood” (Eilersen, 1996:8). Prior to this discovery, the Birch family, specifically Head’s grandmother, Alice Birch, had little choice but to put the illegitimate child up for adoption. However, after Head’s racial identity surfaced, adoption was imperative, for a “decade before Head’s birth, the South African government had outlawed extramarital sexual intercourse between blacks and whites. Thus, Head’s very existence was the product of a ‘criminal’ activity” (Sample, 2003:2). Indeed, Head’s entrance into the world challenged many discursive boundaries, and she would continue to live life in this fashion. After all, discourse had yet to construct a subjectivity that encompassed her reality, and thus, Head was compelled to write herself into the very discursive space(s) that rejected her.

Head wrote herself into the Western *ratio*, first by choosing to write in English and second, by drawing extensively from her unique biography. A marginalized, so-called “Third World” woman, Head engaged the Western *ratio* partly out of necessity, but also in order to critique the system that prevented her from obtaining discursive subjectivity. Instead of making her subjectivity hospitable to the discourses that labeled

her as a "Third World, colored woman," Head attempted to change the Western *ratio* in a way that made it hospitable to her subjectivity. She needed to transform colonial and national discourses in order to bring her subjectivity into existence.

One must question whether or not she succeeded. After all, since her death in 1986, Head has been written, rewritten, translated, and transcribed into the very hegemony that fiercely rejected her. However, Head's place in the African literary canon is problematic. For instance, although Botswana and South Africa claim her as one of *their* writers, during her life, Head suffered from the trauma of her exile from South Africa, but also from years of being denied citizenship in Botswana. The very nationalisms that ostracized her now proudly exalt her literary genius, citing her work as exemplary of "Motswana" and "South African" cultures. Indeed, this outcome is ironic, for during her life, Head voiced her disdain for nationalism, a stance that is glaringly obvious in her writing. Moreover, Head rejected the prevailing belief that her work represented *the* "African experience" (Eilersen, 1996:142). It would seem that somehow the subjectivity that Head so ardently sought to write into discourse has been neglected. In "The Problematic Relationship of Western Canonicity and African Literature," Huma Ibrahim (2004:204) reinforces this issue, calling Head scholars to "account for the agency in the production of Bessie Head scholarship and research."

One of the most problematic issues evident in Head scholarship is the way in which Head's biography and fictional works are collapsed. This problem contributes to Head's neglected agency, for "a system has been mobilized to discredit [Head's] understanding of her own biography" (Ibrahim, 2004:208). Many Head scholars are guilty of collapsing Head's work and life (Fielding, 2003; Kapstein, 2003; Stec, 2003),

using Head's biography in order to inform their analysis of her work. Such connections are not appropriately problematized and therefore, they are largely counter-productive to the study of Head's work. Ballseiro (2004), Elder (2004), Ibrahim (2004), Lewis (2004), as well as other Head scholars, have problematized this tendency to collapse Head's life and work. For instance, Elder (2004:10) points out how "the biographical interest in [Head] that has provoked the popular interpretations of Elizabeth's madness as being almost a case study of Head's own breakdown." There is no doubt that Head's life and work exist within distinct discursive disciplines. However, Head sought to challenge discursive structures, and consciously included biographical information in her fiction in order to collapse the divisions created by discourse. Nevertheless, her challenge has proved difficult, if not impossible,⁸ for scholars who are not only located within the Western *ratio*, but also uphold it.

A Question of Power, arguably Head's masterpiece, creates a reality in which the impossible flourishes. Within this reality, discourse is disengaged, which undoubtedly explains why the novel has been called "intractable" or "bordering 'on the meaningless'" (Eilersen, 1996:150-151). The reader traverses a nondiscursive reality in which madness and sanity are collapsed, but not unproblematically. The initial fragmentation that thrusts Elizabeth into this reality persists, for her discursive experiences cannot be erased. Moreover, continued interactions with her mad reality accentuate Elizabeth's fragmentation even as she moves through her "nightmare soul-journey." Nonetheless, as

⁸ See Beard, Linda Susan. 1991. "Bessie Head's Syncretic Fictions: The Reconceptualization of Power and the Rediscovery of the Ordinary." *Modern Fiction Studies*, 37.3. Beard (1991:582) states that Head's work "resists homogenizing trends in criticism and problematizes the unitary political reading, the feminist analysis, the anthropological critique and so forth."

her rhizomatic experience progresses and signifiers and master narratives are undefined, Elizabeth begins to embrace a more fluid existence.

In *A Question of Power*, signifiers and master narratives are undefined, releasing them from their historicity. Lewis (2004:140) identifies Head's strategy:

In much of her writing, [Head] searches restlessly for ways of redefining existing signifiers, releasing meanings from their moorings in oppressive discourses, and developing narrative strategies and fictions that allow socially marginal subjects to speak against silence or subordination.

Lewis' description is indeed insightful and applicable to most of Head's literary works. However, set in an imagined realm of the unknown, *A Question of Power* encompasses a more extensive spectrum of possibilities. Thus, the novel does not "redefin[e] existing signifiers" (my emphasis), but *undefines* them. Nothing and no one is defined or redefined in *A Question of Power*. Undefining is accomplished through a ceaseless network of rhizomatic connections; multiplicity reigns, preventing definition. Nonetheless, the nondiscursive madness that enables such a pervasive undefining of signifiers, does not exist in a vacuum.

Signifiers are invoked, but within the context of nondiscursive madness, their corresponding signifieds are so multiple and, at times, contradictory, that semiology as an ordering system is rendered irrelevant. Of course this undefining is not and cannot be extended to the reader, for he/she remains within a specific discursive space. However, the participatory experience of *A Question of Power* cannot be neglected. After all, "[*A Question of Power*] is an experience [...] Normal phrases, adjectives don't work" (Cullinan, 2005:135). Head's novel forces the reader into a reality in which logic and reason are, in many cases, rendered useless. This is not to say that Head does not employ logic/reason; *A Question of Power* draws from an amalgam of worldviews and

consciousnesses, inclusive of logic/reason. Within the context of Elizabeth's "nightmare soul-journey," this multiplicity produces a realm of random signs that are in constant motion. For the reader, however, the experience of nondiscursive madness forces him/her to question the role of signifiers in upholding discourse.

A Question of Power, as novel, is overwrought with many powerfully charged signifiers, such as 1910, black bodies, Buddha, God, evil, and the Red House. Each and every signifier included in Head's novel is indeed significant to the reader's experience of *A Question of Power*. However, for the purpose of explicating Head's strategy, we will focus on one – Medusa. Within the novel's narrative context, Medusa is one of the directors of Elizabeth's "nightmare soul-journey" – the only female director. Also, while Sello's and Dan's names and respective identities in the Motabeng community free them from preconceived assumptions or stereotypes, Medusa's name and corresponding mythological identity seems to limit her subjectivity. Thus, it seems that while Sello and Dan can be anyone, Medusa can only be Medusa. Of course, within the context of nondiscursive madness, subjectivities are unlimited, for the impossible is indeed possible.

The myth of Medusa spans centuries of knowledge and history. Therefore, by using the name "Medusa," Head invokes the very core of the Western *ratio*. Barbara G. Walker (2000:619) unfolds a piece of Medusa's history in *The Woman's Encyclopedia of Myths and Secrets*:

Classic myth made Medusa the terrible Gorgon whose look turned men to stone. The Argives said Medusa was a Libyan queen beheaded by their ancestral hero Perseus, who brought her head (or ceremonial mask) back to Athens. Actually, Medusa was the serpent-goddess of the Libyan Amazons, representing "female wisdom" (Sanskrit *medha*, Greek *metis*, Egyptian *met* or *Maat*).

This excerpt from Walker demonstrates the many different ways in which Medusa has been appropriated in order to support numerous regimes of truth. Within the context of the Western discourse, Medusa is “the terrible Gorgon.” In “The Madwoman in the Attic,” Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar (2000:608) provide some insight into how this subjectivity reinforces a particular regime of truth:

[M]ale dread of women, and specifically the infantile dread of maternal autonomy, has historically objectified itself in the vilification of women, while male ambivalence about female “charms” underlies the traditional images of such terrible sorceress-goddesses as [...] Medusa [...] [who] possess duplicitous arts that allow them to seduce and to steal male generative energy.

As Gilbert and Gubar demonstrate in their essay, patriarchy features as a hegemonic discourse essential to the Western *ratio*, which requires the representation of Medusa as “female wisdom” to be rewritten in order to support its regime of truth. *A Question of Power* undefines this “truth” by creating rhizomatic subjectivities, which, rather than ignoring discursively constructed subjectivities, engages with them on its own nondiscursive terms.

Medusa is introduced to the reader and Elizabeth as Sello’s wife, and the first words she utters, addressing Elizabeth, are, “I am greater than you in goodness” (Head, 1974:37). Medusa’s words are ambiguous, for unlike Sello and Dan, her fate and role in Elizabeth’s “nightmare soul-journey” experience are not revealed clearly. At the conclusion of Head’s novel, Elizabeth identifies the ways in which Sello and Dan contribute to her newfound consciousness; Medusa is not credited, but “emerg[es] from Elizabeth’s person” (Head, 1974:201). Thus, the woman introduced as Sello’s wife is Buddha’s wife, for Sello is Buddha. However, this woman is also Medusa. Through the course of her “nightmare soul-journey,” Elizabeth internalizes (both literally and

figuratively) Medusa's subjectivity, but since Medusa is also Buddha's wife – "a queen of heaven who was a housekeeper" (Head, 1974:201) – Elizabeth is able to emerge from her "nightmare soul-journey" embracing multiple subjectivities.

The characters' multiple identities demonstrate how a nondiscursive reality is forged. After all, Medusa is Sello's wife, who is Buddha's wife, who is Elizabeth. Nonetheless, Medusa undoubtedly is guilty of stealing what Gilbert and Gubar (2000:609) call "male generative energy," for her power over Sello is overwhelming. Medusa does represent the "paradigm of the self-tormenting assertive woman" (Gilbert and Gubar, 2000:609). After all, Sello says, "She broke free and unleashed centuries of suffering and darkness" (Head, 1974:199). *A Question of Power* writes Medusa's terrible story and in doing so refuses to participate in silencing her. As Medusa, Head's multiplicitous female character is indeed evil and fiercely abuses Elizabeth, but she is also Elizabeth's "self-tormenting assertive" self. Thus, Elizabeth's experience is also Medusa's experience, providing Medusa with a space to exist beyond the confines of any discursively constructed subjectivity. "Medusa," as signifier, proves to be irrelevant within the context of Elizabeth's nondiscursive madness; Medusa is undefined and, as such, is able to embrace subjectivities that the Western *ratio* deems impossible.

Because of Medusa's essential role as Woman, once she is undefined, the entire Western *ratio* becomes overwrought by discursive discontinuities. After all, if Medusa is both "the terrible Gorgon" and "female wisdom," the authority of countless mythologies and histories is destroyed. The center must be revised and new regimes of truth created in order to seal the cracks that Medusa's multiplicity has brought to the surface. Additionally, the linear, and at times teleological, Time, crucial to upholding the Western

ratio, is also challenged, for logic/reason uses Time to reinforce its regime of truth. Within this context, Medusa as “the terrible Gorgon” serves as evidence of a narrative of patriarchal progression, in which Medusa, as “female wisdom,” represents a previous, but now “false,” subjectivity that has been evolved. However, if “the terrible Gorgon” simultaneously can be the “mother of all the gods” (Walker, 2000:619), the linear time that enables an allochronic regime of truth is disrupted. Once again, discourse must be revised in order to address these discontinuities.

Within the context of *A Question of Power's* nondiscursive madness, discontinuities are not addressed, because in this reality multiplicity does not fragment. Indeed, Elizabeth experiences fragmentation en route to realizing the fluid existence of nondiscursivity, but her fragmentation originates from the discursive space from which she has been interpellated and not the nondiscursive reality that she enters. Thus, Elizabeth no longer inhabits a subjectivity that is both colonized and *de*-colonized (i.e. DuBois's double-consciousness), for these categories are undefined and no longer possess the powers of discursive signification.

Although this nondiscursive madness is discursively impossible for the reader to achieve or fully comprehend, by writing herself into her fiction, Head challenges the reader to consider what could be referred to as Deleuze's and Guattari's schizoanalysis. Head purposely includes autobiographical information, or what can be deemed as “fact,” in her fiction in order to challenge what discourse renders impossible. After all, if Medusa is Elizabeth and Elizabeth is Head, surely, schizoanalysis is indeed possible. Lewis (2004:125) offers insight into the significance of Head's autobiographical gesture:

Whatever she did with what is conventionally considered reality, then, was part of her effort to make a diagnostic appraisal of personal positions in

worlds of power. For Head, fictionalizing her life became a matter of inserting a dissenting voice into fields of oppressive cultural stories of selfhood.

As we have discussed, Head did not fit within the confines of the discursively constructed subjectivities that colonialism and nationalism offered. Thus, her life served as evidence of discursive discontinuities – cracks in the Western *ratio*. However, by placing “fact” into her fiction, Head collapses their discursive meanings, demonstrating the tension that exists between the two categories. To what extent is “fact” really “true,” and, in the same vein, to what extent is fiction “false”? After all, discourse is an imagined reality, and as such, perhaps no more or less “true” than Elizabeth’s nondiscursive madness.

Marechera’s “House of Hunger” also uses autobiography to challenge the Western *ratio* in a manner that gestures toward the schizoanalysis outlined by Deleuze and Guattari. However, while Head creates a nondiscursive reality that is separate from Elizabeth’s Motabeng reality, Machera’s nondiscursive madness is made evident to the reader through his/her textual and narrative experience. Marechera does not create a “nightmare soul-journey” reality, but creates a subtext that underlies the colonial and national discourses that pervade his characters’ maddening discursive reality. This subtext demonstrates the ways in which prevailing discourses fail to capture the characters’ realities and subjectivities. As a result, Marechera’s characters do not reflect multiplicity in the same way that Head’s characters fluidly inhabit numerous subjectivities. Rather, Marechera uses textual and narrative techniques, such as imagery and autobiography, to demonstrate the ways in which fluidity exists, but becomes fragmented within the confines of colonial and national discourses.

“House of Hunger” also differs from Head’s novel because conflict(s) remains unresolved. In *A Question of Power*, although Elizabeth never completely leaves her nondiscursive reality, her “nightmare soul-journey” does come to a close: “And from the degradation and destruction of her life had arisen a still, lofty serenity of soul nothing could shake” (Head, 1974:202). Indeed, *A Question of Power* and “House of Hunger” are hardly identical literary works; each portrays a unique nondiscursive madness. However, temporally and spatially mixing history, autobiography, myth, and fiction, both pieces create mad realities in which discursive fragmentation is transformed into an expansive fluidity, enabling characters to imagine what is discursively impossible.

Narrated by a nameless, male narrator/protagonist, “House of Hunger” explores the lives of the protagonist’s friends and family within the pre-independence reality of Zimbabwe. The narrative begins in the present, explaining the context for events through flashbacks. In this way, we travel through the protagonist’s life, his youth, his college years, and his post-collegiate reality, all of which are fragmented by the maddening effects of colonialism. Indeed, “House of Hunger” is a palimpsest of never-ending episodes of violence that defy logic/reason. Nonetheless, the colonial pathologies that pervade the reality Marechera creates in his novella are not ambiguous, for the language through which “House of Hunger” is crafted is fraught with pathos: “[T]he House of Hunger [is] where the acids of gut-rot had eaten into the base metal of my brains. The House has now become my mind” (Marechera, 1993:13).

The “House of Hunger” to which Marechera’s narrator refers is the soon-to-be independent Zimbabwe, which, for Marechera’s protagonist, is what Fanon (1963:39) describes as the “native town:” “The native town is a hungry town [...] a crouching

village, a town on its knees, a town wallowing in the mire.” Indeed, “House of Hunger” is drowning in “the mire” of “gut-rot,” “stenches,” and most importantly, “stains.” Stains, which are paired with the equally significant image of “stitches,” are a major feature of Marechera’s “House of Hunger” imagery. Within the context of the novella, imagery also features as an unspoken language through which Marechera’s characters communicate. Marechera consistently refers to stitches and stains in order to enable his reader to identify the traces of this unspoken language, which challenges the Western *ratio*. Moreover, the language of stitches and stains enables Marechera’s reader to identify the nondiscursive madness that underwrites the “native town” in which his characters are immersed.

Marechera disperses his autobiographical information among his characters, challenging discursive subjectivities that produce fragmented individuals. The author infuses Edmund, one of the protagonist’s classmates, with several of his own characteristics, for both author and character are slight of stature and enjoy Russian literature (Nicholls, 2005:3). As “an avid reader of the Heinemann African Writers Series” (Nicholls, 2005:3), Edmund’s antagonist, Stephen, also shares commonalities with Marechera. Additionally, Marechera’s nameless protagonist parallels the author to such a degree that he has been referred to as “the Marechera-type protagonist” (Hofmeyr, 1996:88). Harry, a classmate who serves as a colonial informant, spying on Marechera’s protagonist, is also infused with pieces of the author’s autobiography. At the end of the novella, Harry “is beaten up for being a police informer. Marechera himself faced the allegation that he was a police informer while he was a student at the University of Rhodesia” (Nicholls, 2005:4). Needless to say, like Edmund and Stephen, the protagonist

and Harry antagonize one another. In spite of this antagonism, these characters are united through stitches and stains. Although stitches and stains are parts of a whole, Marechera's subtext departs from the discursive fragmentation described in the narrative, for stitches and stains also refer to a corporeal fluidity. Stains are fluid and stitches are used to heal the fragmented body. Moreover, when paired with the autobiographical life they share, stains and stitches act as traces of a fluid subjectivity, demonstrating how subjectivities deemed impossible by colonialism and nationalism are indeed possible.

Similar to the interregal space in which Ezeulu and Maureen are situated, "House of Hunger" is set during a pre-independence period in which colonial and national discourses struggle to achieve supremacy over one another. Although, as we have discussed, nationalism fails to create a new paradigm divorced from the Western *ratio*, it does succeed in enabling the "native" to embrace an alternative subjectivity. Despite its essentialist core, this new, proudly African subjectivity, was an important step towards enabling colonial subjects to gain agency. Imperative to her argument against the applicability of Foucault to colonial madness, Vaughan (1992:11) explains how "native" subjectivity was inherently different from that of marginalized Europeans, whose discursive subjectivity was founded on individualism:

In contrast to developments described by Foucault, in colonial Africa group classification was a far more important construction than individualization. Indeed, there was a powerful strand in the theories of colonial psychologists which denied the possibility that Africans might be self-aware individual subjects, so bound were they supposed to be by collective identities.

Nationalism enabled the colonial "native" to embrace individualization, and therefore, the subjectivity of the Cartesian subject. When "House of Hunger" was published,

nationalism was still struggling against colonialism, and thus, the new subjectivity that it created had yet to be fulfilled.

In 1976, two years before the publication of *The House of Hunger*, this new nationalist subjectivity was emerging. The Zimbabwe African People's Union⁹ (ZAPU) "joined hands with ZANU¹⁰ under the Patriotic Front umbrella" (Sibanda, 2005:184) and consequently "engaged in a massive recruitment program of guerrilla trainees" (Sibanda, 2005:185). Africans had a newfound confidence, which ZAPU and ZANU sought to encourage in its paramilitarization. Amidst the movement's mobilizations, Ian Smith met with Kissinger and Vorster in Pretoria to discuss the fate of Zimbabwe. On September 24th, Ian Smith, "[t]he man who declared that black majority rule would not occur within a thousand years [,] announced that he was prepared to accept it two years after the establishment of an interim government subject to the conditions agreed with Kissinger" (Blake, 1978:407). Although the "Kissinger initiative [ultimately] failed" (Blake, 1978:409), Smith's declaration demonstrated the effectiveness of liberation forces during this time, and signified the West's evolving realization of the African as individual rather than "native." Over the next couple years, the morale of the liberation movement would continue to heighten.

In order to augment their effectiveness, ZAPU launched a major recruitment campaign in 1976 recruitment. The campaign proved to be successful, for Rhodesian forces became more desperate. Sibanda (2005:185) offers historical insight:

On January 30, 1977, ZIPRA¹¹ visited Manama, a Lutheran Evangelical Mission. After addressing students and staffers they led a group of about

⁹ "Formed on December 17, 1961, ZAPU became the first revolutionary, national, movement to explicitly call for majority rule on the basis of one-man one vote" (Blake, 1978:ix).

¹⁰ Zimbabwe African National Union

¹¹ Zimbabwe People's Revolutionary Army

500 mostly students to Botswana en route to Zambia [...] The Smith regime protested, asserting the Manama Mission residents were kidnapped.

In spite of Rhodesian interference, the Botswana government supported the liberation movement, stating that “the students, who were then in its country, left volitionally to escape oppression” (Sibanda, 2005:185). This official acknowledgement of the nationalist cause reinforced confidence in the liberation movement, and by 1978, the year Marechera’s book was released, ZIPRA had proved itself as a force with which to be reckoned (Sibanda, 2005:186).

Despite the liberation movement’s successes, Marechera remained acutely aware of its discursive deficiencies, and in spite of the national fight that was raging in his country, he wrote against the discursive space that enabled his countrymen to fight against colonial oppression. This is not say that Marechera advocated colonialism. Rather, he saw nationalism’s transparency – the ways in which it upheld and reinforced the Western *ratio*. Moreover, from his own experiences, Marechera was able to identify the fragmentation that nationalist subjectivities perpetuated. He experienced DuBois’ double-consciousness and imagined a discourse that would enable his two selves – colonized and decolonized – to merge “without losing the individuality of either” (Cosgrove, 1973:120). Thus, Marechera, like Head, set out to challenge the Western *ratio*, but in a very different way.

Stories and anecdotes about Marechera’s eclectic assertions of numerous identities are rampant in literary circles. On a day-to-day basis, the author would transform, costuming himself with a new part each day. During his life, Marechera vigorously worked towards challenging discursively constructed subjectivities. He was

notorious for undermining rules and boundaries that constricted one's subjectivity, bringing chaos to mainstream society. Perhaps his most renowned moment is his performance at the Guardian Fiction Prize Ceremony: "Marechera turned the prestigious award ceremony into a fiasco. In the splendid setting of the Theatre Royal he hurled china and chairs at chandeliers and London's literati, thereby establishing himself as an unpredictable *enfant terrible*" (Veit-Wild, 2004:188). As one of the winners of the Guardian Fiction Prize, Marechera was expected to show a certain degree of humble gratitude and professional decorum. Rather than embracing such expectations by winning the prize and playing the part of grateful artist, Marechera won the prize, but shunned the discursive space in which his work was praised.

Another instance marking Marechera's determination to challenge discursive subjectivities occurred on April 18, 1980. Marechera joined friends and acquaintances in celebrating Zimbabwe's independence at the Africa Centre in London. "Marechera appeared like an 'English lord about to go on a fox-hunt.' He was wearing a hunting outfit, complete with jodhpurs, black jacket, boots and a bowler hat. Thus he simultaneously mocked English aristocracy and his jubilant compatriots" (Veit-Wild, 2004:240). However, Marechera's comically offensive statement did not lack applicability. Nationalism had transformed the "native" subjectivity, but this transformation relied on the Western *ratio*. Thus, in some ways, Marechera's appearance captured the subjectivity that Zimbabwe's independence celebrated. Just as Marechera refused to play the part of grateful artist at the Guardian Fiction Prize Ceremony, he also refused to play the part of African nationalist. In this manner, Marechera revealed

discursive discontinuities, compelling hegemonic discourses to revise or create new regimes of truth.

The extent to which Marechera himself was successful in challenging hegemonic discourses is indeed questionable, for many people have and continue to dismiss his actions as crazy or eccentric. In fact, at times it seems that the identity Marechera created for himself may have overshadowed his literary work. Moreover, like Head scholars, researchers and academics consistently collapse Marechera's biography and work, using one to inform the other. However, while Head scholars have sought to problematize this issue, the conflation of Marechera's life and work continues almost as a given (Hofmeyr, 1996; Pattison, 2001; Taitz, 1999; Vincent, 1999).

Leading scholars seem to have rendered this issue irrelevant in the case of Marechera. For instance, Nicholls's (2005:1) recent work on the author, while insightful and largely productive, proposes "a very different model for reading the life and fiction of Dambudzo Marechera [...] something like a narcissistic relationship between Marechera and his work." Not only does Nicholls apply Freud to the author's fiction, but somehow believes he is qualified to conduct a Freudian analysis of Marechera. Indeed, it seems that when paired with a tragic life and an early death, Head's and Marechera's respective fictionalizations of their biographies have been interpreted as invitations for others to revise and rewrite their subjectivities. Both authors consciously included biographical information in their fictions in order to collapse discourses that restricted subjectivity. Outside the context of fiction, Head's and Marechera's subjectivities can only be revised and rewritten, for discourse, as far as we know, is always present. Nonetheless, neither Head nor Marechera sought to be discursively categorized. Both

writers fiercely rejected any label ascribed to them, and as responsible critics and scholars, we must respect their gestures, rising to the challenges that they present in their work.

“House of Hunger” undoubtedly challenges its reader, creating a subtext to the mad reality in which its characters exist. This subtext portrays the nondiscursive madness that underlies the colonial and national discourses that pervade the characters’ existence. Within this reality, madness and sanity are collapsed, but not unproblematically, for nondiscursive madness does not overcome the fragmentation that rages within “the house of hunger.” Rather, “House of Hunger” acknowledges the existence of an underlying fluidity and presents the potential of nondiscursive madness, specifically the significance of undefining signifiers by releasing them from their respective singularities.

The most obvious example of the way “House of Hunger” undefines signifiers is the novella’s nameless protagonist. As both protagonist and narrator, the character’s namelessness is indeed significant, for it is through the act of naming that one is defined, entering the world of semiology. The significance of naming has been discussed and theorized by many scholars. However, of particular interest to our analysis is the work of Jacques Derrida, which demonstrates how signifiers must be effaced in order to “make it readable, audible, intelligible *beyond the pure singularity* of which it speaks” (Derrida, 1991:382; emphasis in original). Because Marechera’s protagonist is nameless, he does not need to be renamed or rewritten in order to release himself from singularity, for he remains unnamed and, on a certain level, undefined.

Despite his lack of a name, through dialog, Marechera's novella reveals that the protagonist is a black male (Marechera, 1993:3, 9). Thus, the character that evades being inscribed with a name, cannot avoid being inscribed by the social signifiers that his body represents. Both colonial and national discourses have produced an ideology through which the protagonist's body has become a signifier. Within the mad reality of "the house of hunger," the black, male body¹² is overcome by its inscription, because discourses use the body, as signifier, to limit subjectivities. Such limitations enable discourses to uphold their respective regimes of truth, reinforcing discursive continuities. However, Marechera is conscious of the body as signifier and effaces the body's singularity through the scatological language that pervades "House of Hunger."

While the language Marechera employs in "House of Hunger" is indeed scatological, it is the relationship between scatology and corporeality that is most significant for our analysis. As Derrida suggests, the singular signifier must be effaced. Marechera uses scatological language in order to efface the singularity of the black, male body, for the author's language is rarely applied to the body itself. Rather, it is the protagonist's life that is described as a "foul turd" (Marechera, 1993:1), and "the house of hunger" the place "where the acids of gut-rot had eaten into the base metal of [his] brains" (Marechera, 1993:13). This latter description of "the house of hunger" demonstrates a consistent revision of the body as signifier.

Marechera frequently uses the corporeal in order to describe the mind. For instance, Marechera (1993:57) writes, "[A] foot kicking me tore through the faded cloth of my sanity and they took one hand each and they dragged the endless stone steps into

¹² Indeed, Marechera also invokes the black, female body. However, for the purpose of our discussion, we will focus on the black, *male* body that the protagonist inhabits.

the stains that had once been my raging brains.” In this scene, Marechera’s protagonist is being interrogated. His refusal to cooperate leads to his physical assault. Marechera’s description portrays a unity between mind and body – “kicking me tore through the faded cloth of my sanity.” Although the mind is part of the body, within the context of the Western *ratio* they are separate.¹³ The mind lacks as a physical signifier, for we cannot see it. The body, however, can and does have the capacity to signify, but by transforming a traditionally corporeal effect into a psychological effect, Marechera effaces the body’s singularity. Nonetheless, Marechera does not redefine the body, creating a sort of lineage of definitions, but undefines it, releasing it from its role as signifier.

The black, male body is no longer restricted by a signifying system, because through Marechera’s corporeal language, its defining qualities are extended to many different things – life, nation, and mind. Such multiplicity disrupts discursive continuity, for if the corporeal can be extended to life, nation, and mind, surely, the black, male body can embrace a more rhizomatic existence. As we have discussed, Marechera creates an underlying language, featuring stitches and stains. Stains are quite obviously part of Marechera’s scatology, but stitches mend the body, enabling bodily fluids to remain within its confines. Nonetheless, stitches soon become part of the corporeal, forming scars or discharging extraneous or infected fluids. It is through this language of stitches and stains that the reader is able to realize the rhizomaticism that disengages from discourse, creating nondiscursive madness.

Through the language of stitches and stains, we are able to identify the multiplicity in “the house of hunger.” Every character in the novella is connected to the

¹³ See Swartz, Sally. 1998. *Culture and Mental Health: A Southern African View*. Cape Town: Oxford University Press.

other through stitches and stains, which serve as traces of their interconnectedness, resulting from shared oppression in the “house of hunger.” Marechera does not homogenize his characters because of their mutual experience, but demonstrates how discursively constructed subjectivities inevitably lead to fragmentation. For instance, the protagonist and Harry share an antagonistic relationship. However, the language of stitches and stains demonstrates how it is discourse that forces the two men to choose one subjectivity over another.

This Manichean system is the source of their antagonistic relationship. Once discourse is removed, these men can embrace an infinite spectrum of subjectivities, rather than subscribing to one. The realm of stitches and stains in which nondiscursive madness exists demonstrates how the protagonist is not just a nationalist, seeking the black heroes, he also is a mission educated man, interpellated by Western knowledges. Likewise, Harry is not simply a colonial informant; he is also a black man living within the madness of township life. While they are indeed unique individuals, the protagonist and Harry possess traces of each other’s subjectivities. These traces – these stitches and stains – are the very discontinuities colonial and national discourses seek to eradicate.

Marechera further complicates his characters’ respective subjectivities by writing himself into their identities. Thus, the “House of Hunger” protagonist inhabits multiple subjectivities, which he shares with Harry and Marechera himself. Indeed, if a fictional character can possess a non-fictional subjectivity, certainly, a non-fictional individual can imagine a fictional subjectivity. Marechera brings the impossible to life by dispersing parts of his biography throughout the novella, producing a “dissenting voice” (Lewis, 2004:125) that extends into the reality of his reader. For Marechera, one experiences

nondiscursive madness through narrative – the poems his protagonist writes, the films his characters create, and the rambling stories the old man tells. It is through narrative that one can attempt to “live at the head of the stream where all of man’s questions begin” (Marechera, 1993:80), for it is a space where fluidity reigns.

* * *

Temporally and spatially mixing history, autobiography, myth, and fiction, Head’s *A Question of Power* and Marechera’s “House of Hunger” create mad nondiscursive realities in which discursive fragmentation is transformed into an expansive fluidity, enabling characters to imagine what is discursively impossible. The discursive fragmentation that Elizabeth and Marechera’s nameless protagonist experience compels them to madness, for their respective subjectivities lack the continuity necessary for existing within both colonial and national discourses. Although fragmentation compels, it also enables the protagonists to break away from their maddening discursive realities in order to experience nondiscursive madness, which embraces a fluid existence. Head and Marechera challenge the Western *ratio* by imagining a new paradigm in which signifiers and master narratives are undefined, creating rhizomatic subjectivities

As we have established thus far, Achebe's *Arrow of God* and Gordimer's *July's People* represent madness as a space of discursive ambivalence, which marks the world's end, but also anticipates its beginning. Overwhelmed by the fragmenting nature of their respective discursive realities, Head's Elizabeth and Marechera's nameless protagonist/narrator experience nondiscursive madness(es), a space that enables fluidity to flourish. The foci of this chapter, El Saadawi's *The Innocence of the Devil* and Bandele's *The Street*, recognize the discursive ambivalence that sends Ezeulu and Maureen into madness, but invoke "play"¹ in order to avoid surrendering to madness. These novels also acknowledge the potential of Head's and Marechera's respective nondiscursive madnnesses, but use play to bring this nondiscursivity into discourse. *The Innocence of the Devil* and *The Street* use madness as a space that is hospitable to play, enabling discursive discontinuities to be staged in order to collapse the distance between discursive absolutes (i.e. good and evil).

Additionally, while *Arrow of God* and *July's People* anticipate an emergent discourse, El Saadawi's and Bandele's novels do not anticipate, but move toward creating a new discourse. Likewise, although *A Question of Power* and "House of Hunger" imagine a new paradigm of nondiscursivity, whose traces are evident within the discursive realm, nondiscursive madness remains within the realms of madness and fiction and is strongly bound to its protagonists.² Inevitably, the new paradigms imagined in *The Innocence of the Devil* and *The Street* also remain within the realm of fiction, and to a lesser degree, madness. Additionally, El Saadawi's and Bandele's novels focus on numerous characters; thus, new paradigms do not depend upon any

¹ Also referred to as "freeplay." This term will be discussed extensively as the chapter progresses.

² This is particularly the case for *A Question of Power*, for Marechera distributes (albeit unevenly) autobiographical details among his characters.

single character. Nonetheless, unlike the literary pieces discussed in Chapters 1 and 2, at the conclusions of *The Innocence of the Devil* and *The Street* new regimes of truth are established, suggesting an alternative to the Western *ratio*.

The Innocence of the Devil and *The Street* create new regimes of truth that challenge the Western *ratio* by collapsing this paradigm's Manichean structure. Embracing play, the novels demonstrate the irrelevance of discursive absolutes in reality. Absolutes do not exist, but are engineered in order to structure discourse, eradicating discontinuities and ambivalence.³ Thus, within the context of El Saadawi's *The Innocence of the Devil*, Manichean constructions of good and evil are destroyed when God and the Devil both die. The eradication of these absolutes signals a new regime of truth that does not divide good from evil and vice versa, but upholds them as part of a continuum, in which one bleeds into the other which bleeds into the other, and so on and so forth. Similarly, Bandele's *The Street* creates a regime of truth in which altered states, specifically life and death, are also viewed as part of a continuum, rather than a beginning and an end. Thus, dream reality dovetails into death, which meshes into consciousness, *ad infinitum*. These new regimes of truth are brought into being through madness and play.

Play is "the constant breaking of both the structures and the vital dynamics, preventing the pigeonholing of man and of all means of expression" (Giordano, 1988:219). In other words, play bridges the gaps between discursive absolutes, making the divisions between objects and ideas ambiguous. For instance, play problematizes the Manichean relationships between black and white, colonized and decolonized, and Western and non-Western. Play makes room for DuBois' double consciousness by

³ See Chapter 1 for more information on discourse and ambivalence.

demonstrating the interrelationship between “American” and “Negro.” As Enrique A. Giordano (1988:217) explains, “The concept of play is extremely complex, and its connotations, numerous and oftentimes contradictory.” However, just as Head’s Elizabeth is fragmented within colonial and national contexts, so is play contradictory within the context of discourse. While discourse seeks to maintain the distance between absolutes, play bridges this gap, providing a space within discourse that acknowledges the ways they are implicated in one another.

As a result of play’s “contradictory” nature, few literary critics have sought to distinguish the different forms in which play has been represented in literature. Giordano is one of the few who makes the attempt, and his work reinforces the amorphous nature of play. His essay begins by harking to Johan Huizinga’s⁴ definition: “a well-defined action, different from everyday life [...] Play has autonomous laws and transcends the immediate reality (former, non-playful reality)” (Giordano, 1988:217). Play is “a second reality, differing from immediate reality” (Giordano, 1988:217). Giordano’s essay does not discount this “definition,” but also does not limit play to this representation. Rather, he continues to collect varying “definitions,” drawing from Susan Stewart⁵ and Jacques Derrida,⁶ among others. Stewart and Derrida contrast in how they frame play. For Stewart, “play implies a transgression of the interpretative processes of common sense, a process of *redemarcation* or *reframing*” (Giordano, 1988:218; my emphasis). Derrida’s play, on the other hand, “implies a *decodification*” (Giordano, 1988:218). This distinction between Stewart and Derrida demonstrates the slippery space in which play

⁴ See Huizinga, Johan. 1950. *Homo Ludens: A Study of the Play Element in Culture*. Boston: Beacon Press.

⁵ See Stewart, Susan. 1979. *Nonsense: Aspects of Intertextuality in Folklore and Literature*. Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press.

⁶ See Derrida, Jacques. 2005. “Structure, Sign, and Play in the Discourse of the Human Sciences.” *Writing and Difference*. Trans. Alan Bass. London: Routledge Classics.

resides. Nonetheless, for the purpose of our analysis, play both redemarcates, or reframes, and decodes.

Madness provides a hospitable space for play because as unknown, it suspends the nondiscursive moment by revealing discursive discontinuities. It is within this moment that play embraces Derrida's definition of play, decoding discursively constructed absolutes – taking them out of discourse altogether. However, discourse soon addresses discontinuities, or cracks, that madness presents, and re-establishes discursive continuity. Within this context, the play Stewart describes is invoked. Play redemarcates and reframes discourse, for the decoding that results from discontinuities forces discourse to reset boundaries and to restructure itself in order to restore its continuity. Play exceeds discourse because of its participation in the nondiscursive moment that reveals discursive discontinuities. However, play is almost immediately implicated within discourse, eliminating the possibility of decodification. Thus, what is decoded through play during that nondiscursive moment is then recoded into discourse through the creation or revision of regimes of truth, which fortify discursive continuity. Nonetheless, recoding must address the discursive discontinuities presented. Therefore, within the context of discourse, play redemarcates and reframes, compelling discourse to reset its limits and to restructure itself vis-à-vis emergent regimes of truth. In this way, play compels discourse to retain its mobility, constantly revising itself, but discourse simultaneously bars play from remaining within nondiscursivity, limiting its potential to the discursive realm.

Through their respective representations of madness, El Saadawi and Bandele invoke play in order to reframe the hegemonic discourses in which their characters are

enmeshed. However, through madness and fiction, the authors also are able to extend the moment of nondiscursivity, enabling the reader to experience play's decodification. Such decoding is particularly evident at the conclusion of both El Saadawi's and Bandede's novels, which presents a reality in which good/evil and life/death exist in a continuum. Hence, through madness, a new regime of truth emerges, signaling the emergence of a new paradigm – the beginning of the “end [of] the age of the sign” (Hans, 1979:817).

Indeed, such a world recalls the nondiscursive madresses Head and Marechera create in *A Question of Power* and “House of Hunger,” respectively. However, Head's and Marechera's narratives explore the potential of making the impossible possible, *The Innocence of the Devil* and *The Street* draw from nondiscursive madness in order to inform the ways in which play can enter discourse, influencing how discourse is redemarcated and new paradigms created. Thus, the novels also portray the constant struggle between play and discourse. *The Innocence of the Devil* and *The Street* represent the simultaneously interdependent and independent relationship that play and discourse, as well as discursively constructed absolutes, share with each other. Madness, as unknown, serves as a hospitable space through which discursive impossibilities can be represented.

Much like the novels discussed in Chapter 2, *The Innocence of the Devil* is an enigmatic narrative because of its determination to represent madness. The reader finds him/herself in a claustrophobic narrative space that is further oppressed by disjointed memories. On a certain level, *The Innocence of the Devil* resembles Head's *A Question of Power*, temporally and spatially mixing history, myth, and fiction in a manner that purposely overwhelms the reader. However, while Head's novel is fraught with imagery

intended to overwhelm the reader in a way that eludes logic/reason, the symbolism in El Saadawi's novel remains within the realm of discourse. Indeed, *The Innocence of the Devil* does shift discursive meaning, but rather than undefining signifiers like Head's *A Question of Power* (i.e. "Medusa"), El Saadawi's novel redemarcates signifiers. Thus, although El Saadawi does venture into the nondiscursive, such moments are brief and serve to involve the reader in the struggle between play and discourse.

From the reader's perspective, perhaps the most alienating component of El Saadawi's novel is the absence of a central character with whom the reader can empathize or trust. Told from the perspective of an unknown, third-person narrator, *The Innocence of the Devil* does not allow its reader an intimate relationship with its characters. Rather, the narrator "remains cautiously outside the story" (Malti-Douglas, 1995:119). Thus, the reader spends a good portion of his/her energy attempting to comprehend the significance of the plot, the extensive interrelationships between characters, and the chronology of events. These narrative "basics" are further confused by the fact that the novel is set in an insane asylum. "The events of the novel move in a dizzying fashion between past and present, fantasy and reality" (Malti-Douglas, 1995:119). In spite of the level of complexity at which El Saadawi writes, however, *The Innocence of the Devil* does possess moments of lucidity, enabling the reader to gain a modicum of awareness.

The novel begins with Ganat's entrance into the asylum, where God and Ebilis⁷ are patients. The reader is not prepared for this event, but a brief introduction to the various characters frames Ganat's arrival. *The Innocence of the Devil* subsequently delves into the histories of its characters, providing insight as to how they came to arrive

⁷ "Satan or the Devil" (El Saadawi, 1998:2; translator's note).

in the asylum. Through the course of the novel, certain threads enable the reader to make basic, although at times quite vague, connections between characters and the varying social experiences that are etched in their respective memories. It is in this manner that the novel progresses – through surfacing memories that significantly inform the present, or soon-to-be present.

Memories affect each character in individual-specific ways; some are finally freed from the oppressive order upheld by society while others crumble under its weight. Through her characters' struggles to free themselves, El Saadawi demonstrates the tension between discourse and play. For instance, although Narguiss is not a patient in the Yellow Palace, she is imprisoned by the patriarchal discourses that determine her subjectivity. Prior to her marriage, Narguiss fails to bleed when her virginity is tested, resulting in family shame and her father's suicide (El Saadawi, 1998:44). Attempting to overcome her shame, Narguiss devotes herself to her work as Head Nurse in the Yellow Palace. Nonetheless, in the asylum the male Director manipulates her shame in order to control her as both employee and woman (El Saadawi, 1998:50). Eventually, however, Narguiss recognizes her oppression and leaves the asylum, declaring her lesbianism (El Saadawi, 1998:172).

This moment of liberation is further reinforced when Narguiss transforms into a butterfly (El Saadawi, 1998:175). Soon, another butterfly (Ganat) joins Narguiss and the two fly freely, but this freedom comes an abrupt end when the two butterflies are shot, transforming into two dots of blood (El Saadawi, 1998:175). In spite of their deaths, the mark that these two dots of blood make recalls the two dots that transform the Arabic word for God from male to female. El Saadawi explores the discursive discontinuities

that these two dots embody and the ways in which they deny the regime of truth that ties patriarchy to the power of Islamic discourse. As this narrative suggests, El Saadawi's novel portrays the constant struggle against discursive oppression by textualizing the tension between discourse and play.

The Innocence of the Devil does not seem to reflect any level of playfulness, but play is undoubtedly present, emerging in spite of oppression and even death. El Saadawi's play is political, undertaking serious discursive issues. Perhaps most significant to *The Innocence of the Devil* is the demise of good and evil. In attempting to free himself from the confines of the asylum, Ebilis dies. God realizes that his counterpart has died and, without him, he cannot exist. His death ends the novel; the mythological embodiments of good and evil cease to exist. Indeed, reality has been redemarcated. However, before beginning to understand the significance of El Saadawi's gesture, we must contextualize the novel itself. We must gain an understanding of the reality in which the novel emerged, as well as the significance of madness as a space through which the world, as we know it, ends. What are the discourses that *The Innocence of the Devil* decodes and reframes?

Like all El Saadawi's published pieces, *The Innocence of the Devil* (1992) was written in Arabic. An English translation was not made available until 1994. In spite of this brief⁸ delay, the novel reached its English-speaking audience, specifically those located in the West, as this population was experiencing a significant discursive shift. El Saadawi originally wrote the book on the heels of the Gulf War (1990-1991) and settling animosity between the Western (read: Christian) and Arab (read: Islamic) worlds.

⁸ In the publishing world, two years is very brief.

Among other things, *The Innocence of the Devil* collapses the opposition between Islam and Christianity, an important gesture in 1992. Although 1992 experienced its share of “terrorism”⁹ on behalf of Islamic fundamentalists, American hostilities against those identified as “Arab” or “Middle Eastern” were significantly diminished. After all, although the war was supposed to be between Iraq and Kuwait, the West (spearheaded by the United States on behalf of Saudi Arabia) had “won” the war.

By 1994, the West, specifically the United States, where El Saadawi’s translation was being released through the University of California Press, the climate had sufficiently returned to its Gulf War/anti-Arab mindset. On March 4th, a US Federal jury convicted “all four of the men on trial in the [1993] bomb attack that killed six people at the World Trade Center” (Bernstein, 1994:1). In addition, 1994 brought a significant refocus on the Iraq disarmament crisis. In June, UN weapon inspectors discovered, through Israeli intelligence reports, that Iraq was hiding illegal weapons. During September and October of the same year, “Iraq moved more than 80,000 troops within a few miles of Kuwait [...] The United States, hoping to head off more fighting, sent thousands of soldiers to Kuwait” (Shrum, 1994:C3). On October 15th, in accordance with requests from the UN, Iraq retracted from Kuwaiti borders. Americans were certainly

⁹ “Egypt suffered a marked increase in terrorism in 1992, although there were no terrorist attacks against Americans or US interests. In May, Islamic extremists added foreign tourists to their other targets--Egyptian officials, Egyptian Coptic Christians, and secularist Egyptian Muslims--in a campaign of attacks against the Mubarak government [...] Among the most serious incidents were the 21 October shooting attack on a tourist bus near Dayrut, which killed one British tourist and wounded two others; the 2 November shooting attack on a bus carrying 55 Egyptian Coptic Christians near Al Minya, which wounded 10 people; and the 12 November attack on another tourist bus near Qena, which wounded five German tourists and one Egyptian [...] Most of the attacks in 1992 were perpetrated by the al-Gama'a al-Islamiyya extremist group...” (“Middle East Overview,” 30 April 1993).

unwilling to hear what El Saadawi had to say, unless, of course, she reinforced their Orientalist worldview.¹⁰

But in 1994, Americans were not alone in their anti-Islamic sentiments. After the Cold War, Islamic fundamentalism re-emerged as *the* antagonist to Western civilization. As Daniel Pipes (1990:28) explains, “Muslimphobia took off in 1989, a by-product of the orgy of speculation that accompanied the liberation of Central Europe.” Pipes assertion hardly comes as a surprise since European history documents numerous struggles between Europeans and Muslims (Pipes, 1990:28). For Europe, the Islamic threat reflects “a conflict going back six and a half centuries,” lasting from 1354-1683 (Pipes, 1990:28). In 1994, Islamic fundamentalist organizations further reinforced “Muslimphobia” by staging numerous attacks. In Egypt alone – El Saadawi’s home country – Gama’a al-Islamiya (Islamic Group) claimed responsibility for numerous acts of violence. On February 19th, gunmen attacked an Egyptian train in Assiut, injuring a “Polish woman, a Thai woman, and two Egyptians” (“Egypt’s Suspected,” 1994:1). Months later, “a Spanish tourist bus was shot at 20 miles down river from Dandara. A 13-year-old boy died” (Cordahi, 1994:1). On October 23rd, a British tourist “died in a hail of gunfire as [his] party’s unescorted minibus traveled to an ancient temple site” (Marshall and Harvey, 1994:1). The deaths of tourists inevitably resulted in a fervent fear of the Arab world, and it is in this antagonistic context that El Saadawi’s translation was released.

In the introduction to the novel, subtitled as “From Theology to Rape,” Multi-Douglas describes the issues El Saadawi addresses in this 1994 publication as “such

¹⁰ See Amireh, Amal. 2000. “Framing Nawal El Saadawi: Arab Feminism in a Transnational World.” *Signs*. 26.1, pp. 215-249.

diverse subjects as religion, sexuality, the body, and violation of the female by a male deity” (Malti-Douglas, 1998:vii). El Saadawi’s novel “addresses such diverse subjects” from within the confines of a mental institution, invoking an entire history of social beliefs, stereotypes, and perceptions of those deemed “mad.” In “Egyptian Contribution to the Concept of Mental Health,” Ahmed Okasha (2001:378) describes ancient treatment used around 2900 BC by Pharaoh Zoser’s physician vizier, Imhotep:

Suggestion played an important part in all forms of treatment. One of the psychotherapeutic methods used in Ancient Egypt was “incubation” or “temple sleep” [...] When sleeping in the temple, the Egyptian could try and make contact with the gods by means of magic formulae and interrogate them [...] seeking a cure for his [sic] ailments.

This form of treatment proves to be exceedingly pertinent to El Saadawi’s novel in which patients experience “incubation” in the Yellow Palace. It is in this temple/institution that present-day deities are found – God and the Devil (Eblis). In addition, characters consistently experience reminiscences of their lives while sleeping. This is particularly evident in Ganat, who receives both electroconvulsive therapy (ECT) and chemical treatment that induces a form of sleep or coma in which she relives episodes of her life. Furthermore, El Saadawi’s God character wakes Eblis every night, directing him to “[g]o and whisper in people’s ears” (El Saadawi, 1998:65) while they sleep.

Taking this traditional form of treatment into consideration, the reader can gain a better understanding of play in *The Innocence of the Devil*. The Yellow Palace, ECT, and chemical treatments replace a cosmic consciousness, and gods are replaced by the Devil. Such an inversion of discursive absolutes – material vs. cosmic, god vs. devil – acknowledges how regimes of truth are determined by discourse. After all, what occurred in ancient Egypt and within the Yellow Palace could very well be the same

thing, but they are governed by different discourses, each possessing its own regimes of truth. As we discussed in the Introduction, this logic is evident in Foucault's (1980:viii) analysis of madness: "[T]he invention of madness as a disease is in fact nothing less than a peculiar disease of our civilization." Discourse constructs, deconstructs, and reconstructs our reality. Nonetheless, El Saadawi's inversion also portrays discursive mobility – how discourse has changed and continues to do so. This mobility serves as evidence of how through redemarcating and reframing, play can achieve what seems to be discursively impossible. Certainly, ancient Egypt would not have believed that their gods had been replaced with Eblis.

El Saadawi's play also extends to the Islamic belief system, which uses the word "majnoon" to refer to insane or psychotic individuals. Extensively used in the Koran, this term retains a degree of ambivalence. As Okasha (2001:378) states, "The word is originally derived from the word *jinn* [...] In Islam, a *jinn* is not necessarily a demon, i.e. an evil spirit. It is a supernatural spirit, lower than the angels, that can be either good or bad." El Saadawi undoubtedly draws from this ambivalence in order to destabilize the discursive absolutes of good and evil, which God and Eblis supposedly embody. However, as the novel's title suggests, Eblis is innocent, as are the many other patients receiving "treatment" at the asylum. Once again, El Saadawi demonstrates the crucial role that a regime of truth has in structuring discourse.

Each patient is labeled "mad," because the hegemonic discourses that govern their lives are unjust. As Foucault (2004:109) elucidates, "Ultimately, confinement did seek to suppress madness, to eliminate from the social order a figure which did not find its place within it." In other words, if hegemonic discourses fail to create a subjectivity that is

hospitable to a particular individual or group, it is because these reigning discourses want to keep these people at the margins of society, or outside of the social order. Thus, if one did not conform to the discursive subjectivities available, he/she could be deemed mad.

This logic resonates within Islamic society for although some individuals are perceived as possessed, others include those who “dar[e] to be innovative, original or creative, or attempt[t] to find alternatives to a static and stagnant mode of living” (Okasha, 2001:378). Gestures of innovations and creativity are viewed as evidence of an individual’s fraying devotion to Islam, constraining the individual’s agency to the boundaries of Islamic discourses (Okasha, 2001:378). Indeed, the patients residing in the Yellow Palace are guilty of living, if only momentarily, on the margins of Islamic discourse. They all fail to uphold discursive continuity, and in order to counter the discontinuities that their subjectivities and/or actions have created, a regime of truth is created, rendering them mad. However, *The Innocence of the Devil* also imagines how play can be more productively infused into the creation of new regimes of truth, erasing discursive absolutes such as sanity and insanity.

In this way, El Saadawi’s novel parallels the play present in Gabriel García Márquez’s *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, which re-writes myth, history, and fable, challenging hegemonic narratives that constrain agency by limiting subjectivities. Thus, while Márquez’s novel focuses on Macondo, *The Innocence of the Devil* is set in the Yellow Palace. Both Macondo and the Yellow Palace collapse discursive absolutes, for as Giordano (1988:220) writes:

The truth is that Macondo, while it may embody the Spanish-American history, is never set as sole center of the universe. Throughout the text the existence of an outside world to which Macondo has no access and from which it is excluded is stressed.

Márquez's Macondo is both center and margin, inevitably creating discursive discontinuities that uphold the singularity of the center. Within the context of Saadawian discourse, the Yellow Palace also represents the Garden of Eden, a very charged mythological center. However, by making the Garden of Eden synonymous with the Yellow Palace, El Saadawi creates a crack, disrupting the discursive network from which the Biblical creation myth draws its power.

Indeed, the Yellow Palace is a provocative space because of the ways in which it contrasts with the Garden of Eden, for in addition to being a manmade structure, the building also fails to represent the beginning, or origin, of life. Rather, the Yellow Palace possesses a history that reflects change rather than an essentialized stasis:

It had been an old palace built in the days of the Pharaohs. A King had lived in it. He thought that the heavens and the earth, that men and women were his property, that he owned them. Then he died, just as horses die [...] After that all that remained of him was a small piece of iron in the shape of a U [...] They kept it in a glass cubicle in the city museum so that tourists could visit it. (El Saadawi, 1998:3)

A greedy King, who believed he possessed the world, comes to be represented by an iron horseshoe, a piece of public property, shared with the world. Play demonstrates discursive mobility and how regimes of truth can dramatically change over time. Once again, this mobility shows how through redemarcating and reframing, play can achieve what seems to be discursively impossible. The King who owned the world would surely not believe that his greatness could be represented by his horse's shoe. More jarring, however, is how this history redemarcates the Garden of Eden, for the Yellow Palace hardly resembles Paradise. Nonetheless, the history of the Yellow Palace does not end

with a horseshoe, but with the building's rezoning as an insane asylum, where the Devil is believed to reside, preventing the building's collapse (El Saadawi, 1998:4).

As a founding myth for three monotheistic religions, the Garden of Eden is heavily implicated in the production of discourse(s). This Paradise represents a perfect mythological origin, an essentialism that requires the constant eradication of discursive discontinuities. Although distinct from the Garden of Eden, the Yellow Palace, as State institution, also works toward eradicating discursive discontinuities, for as Foucault (2006:3) states, "[The] authority within the asylum is [...] endowed with unlimited power, which nothing must or can resist." The Yellow Palace has been transformed into a disciplinary institution, reinforcing hegemonic power. However, the Garden of Eden has also been inscribed by political discourses, transforming its religious and cultural power into disciplinary power. El Saadawi plays on this history by sending those individuals who are deemed insane by society – those who create discursive cracks – to the Garden of Eden.

We can see how the relationship between the Garden of Eden and the Yellow Palace serves as evidence of El Saadawi's play, which redemarcates discursive absolutes, expanding discursive boundaries in a way that bridges the distance between Paradise and punishment, discursive cohesiveness and subversion. El Saadawi's novel demonstrates how the Garden of Eden both represents and fails to represent Paradise. On the one hand, the Garden of Eden encourages imagination and creativity, but as discursive origin, Paradise is essentialized and translated into patriarchal discourse in order to uphold subjugation. As discourse, it confines members of society much like the Yellow Palace physically confines those deemed mad, restricting agency through the creation of limited

subjectivities. *The Innocence of the Devil* invokes play, specifically between the Garden of Eden and the Yellow Palace, in order to redemarcate the discursive space(s) in which the Garden of Eden exists, but also to depict the constant struggle that exists within the very “definition” of the Garden of Eden.

This semiological struggle is particularly evident in El Saadawi’s language play, which enables the author’s (Arabic-speaking) reader to experience nondiscursive moments that decode signifiers. For instance, El Saadawi (1998:31) writes, “She [Ganat’s grandmother] was calling her grandfather *Abdil Illat*,¹¹ changing the *h* into *t*. Her grandfather almost jumped out of his high-backed chair.” Raised as a Copt¹² (El Saadawi, 1998:34), Ganat’s grandmother is unaware of the significance of her error, which transforms the gender of Islam’s patriarchal God from male to female, innocently revealing a discursive discontinuity that thrusts reality into the nondiscursive realm. However, Ganat’s grandfather’s almost immediate reaction abruptly returns reality to its discursive terrain. Nonetheless, Ganat’s grandfather is unable to concoct or draw from a regime of truth that erases the two dots which transform the *h* into *t*. Ganat’s grandmother recognizes this discontinuity and slanders her husband’s inflexibility, invoking her Christian God.

During this scene of discursive play between Ganat’s grandparents, the internal tension that exists within language is externalized, demonstrating how discourse is redemarcated through struggle. Ganat associates her grandfather’s reaction with that of Sheikh Bassiouni. When two ink drops transform the *h* into a *t*, “his eyes saw two dots

¹¹ “*Illat* in the Arab peninsula was a female goddess before Islam. Her name was written in the same way as *Illah*, the monotheistic god, but two dots are added to the last letter” (Saadawi, 1998:200; translator’s note).

¹² An Orthodox Christian.

his body shook, and his teeth chattered as though he were seeing Eblis in person, and not two dots of ink” (El Saadawi, 1998:203). Sheikh Bassiouni’s reaction contextualizes the two drops of blood that remain after the two butterflies (Narguiss and Ganat) are shot. Through her characters’ gendered reactions, El Saadawi represents the internal tension within the signifier. The Manichean nature of gendered language bars the signified – God – from inhabiting both male and female spaces. However, El Saadawi demonstrates how such discursive rules are imagined; language has the potential to be fluid, but discourse bars it from participating in such an act of decoding. Like her grandmother, Ganat’s “error” is reprehensible in spite of its innocence, because it abruptly undermines the center of patriarchal order. More significant, however, is the way in which changing the *h* to a *t* denies the regime of truth that ties patriarchy to the power of Islamic discourse.

These moments reveal discursive discontinuities, enabling play to redemarcate and reframe the signified. When Eblis’ unfaithfulness is made evident, his wife says, “You’ve fallen. Low” (El Saadawi, 1998:58). In the Arabic language, “fallen” is only a feminine term. Hence, a man cannot be “fallen.” As El Saadawi (1998:116-117) explains, the implications of this gendered reality is evident in Islamic discourse:

God had listened to what Adam had to say and had forgiven him alone [...] The verse which came down from God used the singular, not the dual.¹³ In the verse concerning the *disobedience*, however, God used the dual form in place of the singular. God had a deep knowledge of language and its rules. He would never use the singular or the dual except in the right context. (emphasis in original)

There is nothing that can change the use of the singular in the Holy Book, but, as Eblis’ wife demonstrates, language can be rewritten, or, to use Stewart’s term “reframed.” As

¹³ “In Arabic words can indicate not only the singular and the plural but also the dual (two)” (El Saadawi, 1998:117; translator’s note).

Derrida (2005:358), asserts, “[L]anguage bears within itself the necessity of its own critique.” This internal critique recalls the internal tension that El Saadawi externalizes in her novel. However, El Saadawi also invokes another language – a silent language of traces, resembling Marechera’s stitches and stains.

El Saadawi’s fiction consistently relies on body language, specifically that of the eyes and mouth, acting as a means through which the “lack” in language may be fulfilled (Derrida, 2005:367). Within Islamic culture, a woman’s value is equated to her humility. She is not permitted to speak unless asked to do so, and she is not allowed to confront men with her eyes, but should always divert her vision downwards. However, the expressiveness of the eyes and mouth are more difficult to police. They are not as tactile as words, and to some degree, remain undefined. Hence, like Marechera’s stitches and stains, these muted¹⁴ expressions possess traces of nondiscursivity, which enable play, if only momentarily, to decode discursive discontinuities.

When Ganat arrives at the Yellow Palace, her body language exudes pride and confidence that is contagious. Ganat’s physical presence inspires the female patients to open their eyes and stretch their necks “with a movement which carried a hint of pride” (El Saadawi, 1998:6). One woman even “unfold[s] her arms from over her chest and st[ands] up,” opening her mouth wide and letting “a laugh escap[e] through her lips” (El Saadawi, 1998:6). This scene strongly contrasts with the women’s “normal” body language – half-closed eyes, folded arms, and tightly closed lips. Moreover, while the woman’s laugh serves as material evidence of the discursive discontinuities spoken through the body, specifically open eyes and mouth, it is revealing and immediately signals the need to re-establish discursive continuity. Body language, on the other hand,

¹⁴ Muted in comparison to speech.

specifically, that of a madwoman, suspends the nondiscursive moment of play, because, like madness, the silent language emanating from the madwoman, represents an unknown. Thus, through the body language of the madwomen, El Saadawi portrays the fear of the signified as unknown. It is the fear of the unknown, and not the t or the two dots, that enrages Ganat's grandfather and Sheikh Bassiouni and compels them to cling to discursive absolutes.

With this fear of the unknown in mind, the obsessive need to define God becomes clearer. Without a signified, "God" is merely a random sign. Thus, in order to write "God" into discourse, other signs are created, such as the Devil. While "God" is hesitantly depicted, Devil, as sign, possesses multiple forms, such as the serpent. By constructing an antagonistic relationship between an unsignified "God" and an extensively signified Devil, God is defined. However, what God signifies depends upon the existence of the overly signified Devil. *The Innocence of the Devil* explores this relationship, for when Eblis dies attempting to free himself from the Garden of Eden/Yellow Palace, God experiences anonymity. Without Eblis, he is no one – "No one recognized his face, no one paid any attention to him" (El Saadawi, 1998:225). He wanders the streets asking if anyone knows who he is, but to no avail (El Saadawi, 1994:226).

Upon returning to the male ward of the asylum he is comforted momentarily by the order of the State institution signified by rows of men sleeping, "lay[ing] prostrate before him" (El Saadawi, 1998:227). However, he soon realizes that Eblis is dead. Whispering he says, "You made the world so rich for me, Eblis" (El Saadawi, 1994:229). Indeed, *The Innocence of the Devil* reveals a different relationship between

God and the Devil. The Devil is not inherently evil, seeking to tempt and corrupt peoples' minds; rather, he is forced "to go round whispering in people's ears" (El Saadawi, 1998:230), so that God may gain discursive power and authority. The more distinct the gap between good and evil is, the more dramatic the vilification of the Devil seems, augmenting the discursive power God possesses. El Saadawi's novel bridges the gap between good and evil by proclaiming the Devil's innocence. He is not the antithesis of God, but his slave in establishing the order of things. Indeed, when lamenting Eblis' death, God calls out for his "son" (El Saadawi, 1998:229), reinforcing the intimacy of their relationship. However, it is God's death that demonstrates the uncompromising interdependency between God and the Devil. Once God declares the innocence of the Devil (El Saadawi, 1998:231), he can no longer exist as God. Rather, "God" remains a random sign that cannot be signified without the Devil. Without a discursive identity, God, as sign, is forced into inexistence.

The Innocence of the Devil collapses the discursive absolutes of good and evil by demonstrating the danger of existing within such a systematic structure. After all, the death of evil, also means the death of good. However, the novel creates a new regime of truth in which good and evil exist within a continuum shorn of absolutes – a regime of truth that enables the fluidity of play to gain a more significant influence in how discourse is structured. Within this context, "God" does not need a signified, because this continuum structure accounts for ambiguities and ambivalences – the unknown. One soon realizes how this new regime of truth suggests a new paradigm, one that seeks to overcome fear of the unknown. It is thus very significant that El Saadawi sets her novel within the realm of madness. After all, while madness is an empowering space because,

like God, it is unknown, madness is also marginalized because the unknown is feared. The power of the unknown is indeed significant and El Saadawi uses it in order to stage discursive discontinuities that enable play to gain influence, eventually creating a new regime of truth.

Bandeles's *The Street* also draws from the power of the unknown by invoking madness, but rather than focusing on good and evil, the novel seeks to collapse life and death. Like El Saadawi's *The Innocence of the Devil*, Bandele's *The Street* is a complex novel, not easily summarized. Indeed, *The Street* is more reader-friendly than El Saadawi's novel, but is set within multiple realities, all of which possess numerous layers. For instance, the novel opens with an unusual dream (Bandeles, 2000:6):

'No starters for me,' Dada told the waiter. 'I'll just have the main course.'
'I'm sorry, sir, but we've run out of starters.'
'Afters. Any afters?'
'Ah, desserts,' enthused the waiter. 'As you can see, we do have a rich selection of desserts, sir.'
'In that case, I'll have the starter, no main course, and no desserts.'

Dada's dream continues in this vein until his dream world impinges on his waking reality: "Dada over-indulged on the wine. He woke up from the dream with a piercing hangover" (Bandeles, 2000:6). The reality Bandele creates is quite porous, inviting dream worlds into everyday reality and vice versa.

Dream realities, however, are quite tame when compared with the numerous realities which they inform. As we have asserted, *The Street* invokes play in order to bridge the gap between life and death. Of *The Street*'s four interrelated main characters – Dada, The Heckler, Ossie, and Nehushta – three have experienced the death of a loved one, a tragedy that completely de-stabilizes their personal reality. The Heckler, previously known as 'Biodun, mourns the death of Andre, the love of his life, as well as

his own HIV positive status, by becoming a professional heckler: “When he wasn’t busy keeping himself in shape (which he did through a rigorous regimen of heavy drinking and chain-smoking) he was to be found wherever there was a soapbox, matching wits and trading insults with the wise men and women on a mission of mercy” (Bandeled, 2000:12). Similarly, Ossie, Nehushta’s father, mourns the death of his wife, Kate, by drinking himself into an oblivion. Finally, Nehushta, who seems to handle death in the least self-destructive manner, mourns her father’s death by devoting her time to painting the “used, abused and contused” (Bandeled, 2000:174) of Brixton.

It is this population of “mentally postnormal” (Bandeled, 2000:131) individuals, which includes Prinze ‘The’ Big Mac, Mr. Pepler, Mr. Bill, Ras Joseph (Delroy), and Mr. Meletus (Mark), that seems to hold some sort of key to unlocking the mystery of death. After all, as a writer for *Cathy*, a magazine for “kooks, nuts, schizoids and Meshuggenahs” (Bandeled, 2000:131), Dada also regularly interacts with this population, which he calls the “Undead.” Although someone close to Dada does not die, he does admit that his “intimate love affair [...] with the bottle” began when the Heckler became aware of his HIV positive status (Bandeled, 2000:274). Nonetheless, we meet Dada when his alcohol usage is more than social, but less than dependent. Nehushta’s obsession with the “mad” people of Brixton is also paired with her frequent usage of marijuana. However, unlike Biodun and Ossie, Dada and Nehushta do not let their substance usage take control of their personalities and lives. Thus, it would seem that the “mad” people of Brixton provide some sort of insight that inspires Dada and Nehushta to live within Brixton reality rather than some chemically induced haze.

Through the course of Bandele's novel interactions with altered realities provide insights that thrust characters in and out of various realms of consciousness. The Heckler gets his life together after his "first big *pow* by the Fearsome 'A' on his immune system" (Bandele, 2000:273; emphasis in original), and Ossie emerges from "the land of dreams" (Bandele, 2000:117) after fifteen years and embraces his role as father with sobriety before moving onto the realm of the unliving. Altered realities inform life in the "real" world by enabling characters to embrace new possibilities and subjectivities in which what is deemed impossible becomes possible. Ultimately, the nondiscursive realms become so confused with the characters' discursive reality that life and death become irrelevant. For instance, the novel's conclusion states that Dada "soar[s] into the night, like a scream rising, and up to the stars" (Bandele, 2000:292), but prior to his flight, the reader is told that five years after he "soar[s] into the night," Dada meets his wife, Lola (Bandele, 2000:143). Where he travels is entirely unknown, but also insignificant, for after returning from his flight, rather than continuing his monotonous status quo, Dada finally *lives* the last seven years of his life – writing his book of verse, but also another book about Brixton (Bandele, 2000:286). Indeed, the fear of the unknown, which prevents Dada from writing his book becomes empowering, because it allows him to embrace a broader spectrum of possibilities.

Brixton's High Street proves to be a particularly productive space for Bandele's project. In the 1990s – when *The Street* was undoubtedly inspired and written – Brixton was host to an amalgam of events. As a December 13, 1995 BBC News Report states, "Brixton was once again at the center of national attention for the wrong reasons" ("1995"). This report refers to the "rioting" by Brixton youth, ignited by the death of

Wayne Douglas, who was in police custody at the time of his death (Moreton, 1995:9). In spite of Brixton's tendency to draw attention "for the wrong reasons," the suburb consistently hosts peaceful demonstrations. For instance, on June 6, 1998 the London suburb hosted a "Reclaim the Streets"¹⁵ protest, which evolved into a community street party, complete with food and music. Indeed, whether it is a riot or a protest, Brixton continuously challenges hegemonic discourses, attempting to carve out a space for its eclectic citizenry.

While Brixton has been "upgraded" with the addition of posh bars and restaurants (Malik, 1995:8), the suburb continues to be plagued by drugs, poverty, and strained race relations.¹⁶ Evidence of its marginalized status is obvious enough, but in April 1999, the diverse Brixton community was subject to a series of direct assaults. On April 17th, "[a] nail bomb explode[d] in Electric Avenue, Brixton, injuring 39 [people]" ("Timetable," 1999:9). This explosion was followed by another, which occurred approximately two weeks later, killing a pregnant woman and two men (Hopkins, 2000:1). The bombing campaign, which targeted minority groups, was the work of David Copeland, "a self-confessed fascist" (Breslin, 2000). The events forced the country to confront the oppressive conditions of the Brixton residents, who themselves experienced a renewed sense of community. In the end, the State validated the Brixton community, condemning Copeland to six consecutive life sentences (Moulson, 2000). It is amidst this social climate that Bandle's novel emerged in 1999.

¹⁵ Reclaim the Streets is a "direct action network for global and local social-ecological revolution(s) to transcend hierarchical and authoritarian society, (capitalism included)" (www.reclaimthestreets.net). See Daoust, Phil. 1998. "Wheels: Traffic Gets the Bum's Rush." *The Guardian* (London). 15 June 1998, p. 14. and Wilson, Jamie. 1998. "Song and Dance as Protesters Take the High Roads to Keep Ahead of Police." *The Guardian* (London). 08 June 1998, p. 11.

¹⁶ Brixton is an immigrant suburb. "The largest minority ethnic groups are the Black Caribbean and Black African communities" ("Lambeth," 2004:6).

In *The Street*, Bandele varies the point of view of the narrator, moving from the perspective of one character to the next, enabling the reader to experience the many sides of Brixton, including several Nigerian perspectives. This point of view is especially evident in the ways Bandele incorporates African oral and literary traditions and worldviews into his work. However, while *The Street* portrays aspects of African culture, the novel simultaneously deconstructs the division between culture-specific worldviews. For instance, presumably Bandele's African audience would read Bandele's chapter "The Dream," as evidence of the African oral tradition, drawing inspiration from the work of Amos Tutuola and Ben Okri. Conversely, Bandele's Western audience would read the same chapter as an instance of postmodernism. This cultural convergence is especially significant in Bandele's focus on the "mad" people of Brixton.

Although interpretations of madness vary across Nigerian religious cultures, the symptoms of madness remain consistent. For the Yoruba, "[p]eople will be said to be *wèrè*¹⁷ when they have disordered speech, suffer from hallucinations, or are vagrant and inattentive to dress" (Sadowsky, 1999:4). Indeed, these symptoms describe the characters of Bandele's *The Street*, who speak their own language, traverse multiple realities, and, at times, aimlessly wander through Brixton. In this way, madness reframes and, at times, even decodes Bandele's Brixton reality. After all, "real" life is quite mad, and as the founder of *Cathy* magazine states, quite lucidly, "'it's all right to be mad, most people are'" (Bandele, 2000:131). Although madness does not offer logical explanations for life's anomalies, such as death, it embraces a reality with a more extensive range of possibilities. Within the reality of madness, as well as other realities, life and death are

¹⁷ "The main Yoruba word translated as 'madness' or 'madman' is *were*; it is synonymous with 'foolish or silly person' and appears in Crowther's Yoruba-English dictionary from the nineteenth century" (Sadowski, 1999:12).

not placed in binary opposition. Rather, life and death engage in a field of play that is always moving and shifting. Life always informs death and vice versa; they do not exist as absolutes.

Although the continuum that El Saadawi and Bandele create in their respective novels collapses the distance upheld by discursive absolutes, this alternative is indeed discursive, for it creates a regime of truth through which the world can be viewed and interpreted. However, both El Saadawi and Bandele draw from nondiscursivity in order to ascertain how play can gain more influence within discourse. During one of Dada's interviews for *Cathy*, he meets Ras Joseph, previously known as Delroy. Ras Joseph enlightens Dada with his version of reality, a particularly nondiscursive reality, stating:

Dey tell me 'bout de Virgin Mary, otherwise known as Elizabeth de Cathalic, a queen dat once was crowned in dis country who dey murder while she on de t'rone. But because she is the Blessed Virgin Mary, Jesus Christ sorta reincarnate her back from de dead [...] She have de power now to change herself to a black woman or a white woman – ya'understan me? (Bandele, 2000:199-200)

For Ras Joseph nationality, class, and race are porous classifications. The Virgin Mary, a Jewish peasant, can also exist as a British queen. Moreover, and in addition to having the ability to move through life and death and back to life, she can change her race, sometimes appearing white and at other times appearing as a black woman. This play uses madness as a space in which the impossible becomes possible, rendering a regime of truth irrelevant, for anything and everything is possible. In an increasingly globalized and migrant community, Bandele's characters require a new paradigm that more accurately reflects their realities.

This new paradigm requires a new language, capable of conveying reality and expanding discursive subjectivities, which is precisely what Bandele's language

accomplishes. The language employed in the *The Street* is disordered and random. Indeed, like Marechera's stitches and stains and the body language of El Saadawi's madwoman, it retains traces of nondiscursivity. As Brenda Cooper (2006:2) writes, "Bandeled draws up bizarre and lengthy lists, returns the figurative into the literal, indulges in rhymes, songs and ditties, invents weird and wonderful portmanteau words and delights in the randomness of contiguity." Words are misplaced and displaced throughout the novel, making language, as we know it, dissonant. Unlike the silent disorder created by Derrida's *différance*, Bandele's language is not silent, but cacophonous. Nonetheless, just as we cannot "avoid the order of the disorder" (Derrida, 1984:4) produced by Derrida's "a," Marechera's stitches and stains, and the body language of El Saadawi's madwoman, we also cannot "avoid the order of the disorder" that Bandele's language creates, a language that "sound[s] rather than signif[ies]" (Cooper, 2006:20). Language, as *the* means of communication, is meant to clarify, explain, and describe. Bandele's language communicates, but on a different level, one in which language spills over into other realms of sensibility.

Bandeled personifies language itself through Mr. Bill, one of the "mad" people of Brixton (Bandeled, 2000:181). Just as Eshu, the Yoruba deity, is master of all languages of all times, so is Mr. Bill. For him, language enjoys a cosmological existence:

He stammered the bloodied words [...] and gifted them with wings, and sent them flying into the great void beyond sound or silence, where all words uttered in the universe, and in all languages on the planet, are stored for all time, or forgotten forever. (Bandeled, 2000:182)

Mr. Bill's words have been transformed into matter; they are physical beings, capable of flying when given wings. The words travel "beyond sound or silence," a space beyond language itself, where "sound" and "silence" have yet to be divided. Through Mr. Bill's

“madness,” Bandele is able to bring words to life, literally, in order to demonstrate the flexibility of language. Mr. Bill enables Bandele to invoke a reality that acknowledges that although words, as signifiers, are used to uphold hegemonic discourse(s), they are also abused by the very discourses that create and rely on them to eradicate discursive discontinuities. Mr. Bill’s passion for words provides a space in which the fragileness of words can be made tangible: “One of the words had a broken wrist, which had healed into a fist unable to open” (Bandele, 2000:183). Bandele demonstrates how words are also injured through usage; they suffer from a broken wrist from time to time. However, as discursively constructed signifiers, words can also injure by being closed and uncompromising; they can cause damage with their fists. Nonetheless, once “Mr. Bill nurse[s] it back to health: it sh[akes] hands and open[s] doors and warm[s] itself before a fire and wave[s] at friends going by” (Bandele, 2000:183). In the end, through Mr. Bill’s mad reality, Bandele demonstrates how language is capable of being flexible and playful. Nevertheless, this flexibility is only accomplished within the confines of madness.

As Bandele’s chapter progresses, a brief, but crucial account of Dada’s future death is revealed: “In seven years time, she [Dada’s half-sister, Sade,] would come to Dada’s funeral, after he’d been stabbed by a gang of muggers (median age thirteen) who thought, but were wrong, that he’d dissed them under his breath” (Bandele, 2000:143). Within the context of Dada’s reality, words serve as absolutes, structuring reality in a manner that seeks to eliminate ambiguity and ambivalence. This harsh discursive reality informs upon the actions of this gang of teenagers. After all, Dada dies because the inflexibility of *words* garners new meaning when paired with the brutalized existence of Brixton’s gangs. Within this context, a supposed “dis” gains discursive power because it

derives from a survivalist mentality. Thus, within certain discursive spaces, words do have the power to kill. Nevertheless, *The Street* does not conclude with Dada's death, but his flight to the moon.

The narrative in *The Street* begins at the end, ends in the middle, and “middles” at the end. The novel's ending remains open-ended and ambiguous, contesting closure and finality and encouraging the continuous decoding and reframing that exist beyond the pages of the novel:

As Dada stepped out the front [...] an alien thought began to take shape in his mind [...] He decided, on a whim, to flee from his mind. He soared into the night, like a scream rising, and up to the stars. Then he changed his mind – into a pair of eyes. They stared dimly at him, as he walked along the street. (Bandeled, 1999:292)

In this final scene, there is a complete collapse of Manichean absolutes, for nothing retains a specific form. Dada becomes capable of leaving his earthly reality to fly to the stars. In addition, Dada does not fly body and mind, but leaves his mind on earth, while his body soars to the sky. Moreover, his mind transforms into a corporeal form – “a pair of eyes,” which stare at some remaining part of him that walks along the street. Within this context, anything is possible. This sudden fluid reality informs upon the altered states Bandele invokes throughout his novel.

Although *The Street* acts as a hospitable space for altered realities, these realities remain outside of the accepted, mainstream reality. Ossie experiences “the land of dreams” when he is in a coma, but once he returns to the realm of the living, he is not “so sure [...] that what he thought had happened had actually happened” (Bandeled, 1999:117). What seems real and normal in “the land of dreams,” exists outside of the spectrum of possibilities in the land of the living to such a degree that a psychologist is

required, presumably to re-interpellate Ossie into the discursive reality of the living. Similarly, the “mad” people of Brixton exist at the margins of society. Nehushta’s and Dada’s interest in this population demonstrates their desire to interact with altered realities, but the distance between the “sane” and the “mad” is maintained. Even Mr. Bill, the novel’s main narrator, is set apart as “a peripatetic idiot savant” (Bandeled, 1999:181). However, when Dada, who throughout the novel, firmly lives within the realm of the living, soars to the moon, new boundaries are established. It is in this moment that “the land of dreams,” the land of the living, the land of the unliving, and the “mad” realities of Brixton’s “Undead” are collapsed into a continuum of reality. This continuum is further reinforced by the fact that Dada does return from his flight to the stars, and upon return he does not become one of the “mad” people of Brixton, but achieves the goals he has always imagined – writing and publishing books and finding a partner. Thus, what is discursively impossible becomes redemarcated in such a way that it emerges as a regime of truth.

This regime of truth is further reinforced through Mr. Bill. As narrator, events and realities are expressed through Mr. Bill, a member of Brixton’s “mad” population. The reader does not gain this knowledge until the end of Bandele’s novel and thus, we are unaware that a “madman” is narrating the story. Our lack of awareness allows us to trust the narrator, whose perspective we may have otherwise discounted. Thus, it is through the eyes of a “madman” that we experience Brixton’s multiple realities. Nehushta’s and Dada’s desire to interact with the “mad” becomes clearer, for the “Undead” are perhaps not mad. Rather, they refuse to accept a discursive reality that bars them from experiencing multiple realities. The stories of the people of Brixton could not

be narrated by one who remained restricted by discourse. Hence, it is through madness that play is able to reframe reality, establishing a regime of truth that challenges the Western *ratio*.

* * *

El Saadawi's *The Innocence of the Devil* and Bandele's *The Street* use madness as a space that is hospitable to play, enabling discursive discontinuities to be staged in order to collapse the distance between discursive absolutes. While El Saadawi's novel focuses on bridging the gap between good and evil, *The Street* collapses the distance between altered realities, specifically life and death. The novels create a new regime of truth in which good/evil and life/death exist within a continuum – a regime of truth that enables the fluidity of play to gain a more significant influence on how discourse is structured. This new regime of truth suggests a new paradigm, one that serves as an alternative to the Western *ratio*.

CONCLUSION

(re)Conceptualizing Discursive Change

Achebe, Gordimer, Head, Marechera, El Saadawi, and Bandele invoke and create madness(es) in order to (re)imagine impossibilities, but also to critique the limitations that Discourse imposes on its subjects. The six literary pieces discussed in this project interrogate the Manichean relationship between madness and reason. *Arrow of God* and *July's People* demonstrate how colonial and apartheid discourses lack spaces that include their respective realities, compelling Ezeulu and Maureen to descend into madness. Similarly, *A Question of Power* and "House of Hunger" create a realm of nondiscursive madness in order to address the absence of subjectivities that reflects the protagonists' identities. Finally, El Saadawi and Bandele set their respective novels within spaces of madness in order to enable discursive change through play. Thus, madness is used to signal mobility because of the ways in which madness contests Reason.

Madness proves to be a particularly poignant discursive space because of its presence (or absence) in the Western *ratio*. As discussed in the Introduction, madness was used to define the "native's" inferiority, a discursive tactic employed to reinforce Western superiority. However, the emergence of the "mad native" challenged this "truth" that linked "primitives and neurotics" (McCulloch, 1995:11), for if the "native" was already mad, what constituted a "mad native"? In spite of these glaring discrepancies, new "truths" were formulated, renewing discursive continuity. Nonetheless, such discontinuities reveal the power of the discursively oppressed. After all, "[f]or power to be deployed with all this cunning [...] which falsify and distort this universe, then it is highly likely that at the very heart of this space there is a threatening power to be mastered or defeated" (Foucault, 2006:6). Throughout histories, madness has garnered the power to reveal discursive cracks and discontinuities. Within the

context of Western colonial and postcolonial histories, madness inhabits a particular space, one that is antagonistic to the center of Western hegemony, namely, Reason.

Western modernity, as we have come to know it, is centered on reason, logic, and rationality. It has thus been defined against madness, positioning the two spaces in binary opposition. As a result of this Manichean relationship, madness comes to include virtually everything that is excluded from Reason. The “native” comes to inhabit this space because he/she supposedly is incapable of what Freud termed “objectivity.” Rather, the “native” lives within the confines of unreason and illogic. Even after the “native” achieved independence from his/her colonial “masters,” he/she remained locked into this binary, barring him/her from Reason. African nationalisms, *Négritude*, in particular, attempted to appropriate and redefine this space of what the West defined as unreason and illogic in order to celebrate an African authenticity that could interact dialectically and dialogically with Western Reason. Today, in our neocolonial, postmodern, globalizing reality, this legacy persists, for Africa and all that it represents continues to be defined in opposition to the Western *ratio* – “First World” vs. Third World,” “Western” vs. “non-Western,” and “developed” vs. “developing.” This antagonistic relationship is dismissive of any African *ratios* that may exist, rendering Africa “mad” once again.

By re-writing the colonial encounter, Achebe complicates colonial discourse by centering his novel on Ezeulu in such a way that it becomes impossible to deny his agency. Additionally, Achebe creates a poignant narrative that refuses to be complicit in inscribing Ezeulu as a “mad native.” The protagonist does not descend into madness because of some innate inferiority, resulting from his “native-ness.” Moreover, Ezeulu’s

madness does not seal the fate of *the* future, but serves to advocate constant discursive change. As we established in Chapter 1, “[M]any African villages chose to resist ‘visual capture’ or ‘discovery’ by explorers and colonial administrators by further retreating in to the forests” (Garuba, 2002:93). Such movements enabled the “native” to avoid “surfacing,” to use Jackson’s term. Thus, it is through constant movement that individuals were able to resist discursive mapping and interpellation. However, within the context of *Arrow of God*, Ezeulu does become a subject of colonial governmentality. As an Ibo chief priest and a colonial subject, who lacks a discursive space in which these two subjectivities can be reconciled, Ezeulu’s mobility is impeded. Discourse, or the lack thereof, prevents mobility, imprisoning Ezeulu within the confines of his own mind.

The constant motion and change in *July’s People* reinforces this trope of mobility. Gordimer juxtaposes the banality of day-to-day life, in both suburbia and July’s village, against the chaos of a national emergency. Although abrupt and dramatic movement almost immediately replaces the predictability of suburban life, once the Smales arrive in the village they are confined to its parameters. This juxtaposition enables the reader to identify a space that is hospitable for change. During this moment of mobility, the stasis of apartheid’s patriarchal, consumerist reality is transformed. This is signaled in the leadership roles that Maureen and July undertake in order to ensure the Smales’s safety and survival. Their actions defy the “laws” of the hegemonic discourses in which they exist(ed) and mark Maureen’s entrance into delirium. After this upheaval, Maureen fails to find a discourse to accommodate her subjectivity and thus, embraces a delirious discourse, which she embodies at the novel’s conclusion. Maureen’s run undoubtedly is a symptom of her madness, but also illustrates her need for change. She literally and

figuratively embraces this need for discursive mobility by running towards a helicopter. This is particularly evident in the liminal imagery described during her run, for movement is “in-between-ness.”

Liminalities run rampant throughout Elizabeth’s “nightmare soul-journey.” Once again, mobility signals changes occurring within the liminal. Elizabeth’s nondiscursive madness is a journey towards self-knowledge and awareness. It is a space where discourse is suspended, so that signifiers can be undefined and subjectivities made fluid. Indeed, Elizabeth’s nondiscursive madness is compelled by the fragmenting discourses in which she is enmeshed, but rather than being locked into the madneses that Ezeulu and Maureen experience, Elizabeth travels through an alternate reality – one that ultimately preserves her sanity. Head’s creation of an alternate reality is productive in the many ways it contests discourse. The reader is given a space in which he/she can imagine a reality in which Elizabeth is Medusa, who is Buddha’s wife, who is Head. Rather than being static and predetermined, relationships and subjectivities are rhizomatic and improvisational. Head’s purposeful infusion of autobiography into fiction reinforces such kinetic relationships and subjectivities, and also creates an important link to the reader’s discursive reality. It is in this way that Head challenges her reader to think beyond discursive boundaries.

Like Head, Marechera also infuses his novella, “House of Hunger,” with autobiography in order to challenge discursive boundaries. The way Marechera disperses autobiographical information amongst his characters also acts as a form of mobility, signaling the fluidity that exists within the narrative’s underlying nondiscursive madness. Like Gordimer, Marechera creates a juxtaposition through which the significance of

mobility becomes more apparent. The autobiography that unites the “House of Hunger” characters strongly contrasts with their strictly defined, discursive subjectivities. Moreover, while stitches and stains seem to illustrate the violence of township life, this imagery also serves as an unspoken, shared language that portrays a fluid interconnectedness. Marechera is the protagonist, as well as Harry and Stephen and Edmund, who are all connected through stitches and stains. The protagonist’s namelessness further reinforces this underlying, nondiscursive fluidity. By remaining unnamed and thus, to a certain extent, undefined, Marechera’s protagonist inhabits a more fluid subjectivity that is open to change. However, within the context of the protagonist’s day-to-day reality, such mobility seems virtually impossible. Marechera problematizes this tension between the protagonist’s discursive reality and underlying nondiscursive madness, demonstrating how discourses create an unnecessarily fragmenting reality.

The Innocence of the Devil uses play to redemarcate and decode this fragmenting reality that Marechera contests in “House of Hunger.” El Saadawi creates complex struggles between histories, mythologies, and religions in order to contest Manichean absolutes. Rather than taxonomic categories, El Saadawi’s novel advocates a continuum that enables discursive subjects to embrace a broader spectrum of possibilities. Once again, mobility plays a crucial role in El Saadawi’s narrative of this struggle towards the creation of a continuum. Perhaps the most incisive example is Narguiss’s narrative of resistance. Mobility plays an essential role in narrating Narguiss’s liberation, for not only does she physically leave the Yellow Palace, she also achieves a corporeal fluidity that enables her to transform into a butterfly. Undoubtedly, El Saadawi invokes the butterfly

in order to reinforce Narguiss's metamorphosis. In spite of this play, discourse quickly intervenes, resulting in Narguiss's (as butterfly) death. Narguiss's struggle continues after her death, for she is then transformed into a dot of blood. With Ganat (as dot of blood), Narguiss evokes the two dots that linguistically transform "God" from male to female. Again, mobility is invoked through this transformation of gender. Narguiss's struggle for mobility informs *The Innocence of the Devil* as a whole. Set within the confines of an insane asylum, each character seeks liberation through various forms of mobility. Within the context of El Saadawi's novel, liberation is achieved when God proclaims "the innocence of the devil," for it is in this moment that Manichean absolutes cease to exist. The novel creates a new regime of truth in which good and evil exist within a continuum shorn of absolutes.

Bandele's *The Street* also creates a new regime of truth in which Manichean absolutes, specifically life and death, exist within a continuum. Invoking Brixton's "Undead," Bandele creates a space in which discursive discontinuities are consistently staged. These cracks provide spaces through which play can potentially bring the nondiscursive into the discursive. This transference of the nondiscursive into the discursive realm is enabled through Bandele's creation of many porous realities. For instance, within the context of Ras Joseph's reality, the Virgin Mary can be reincarnated as Elizabeth the Catholic and is capable of transforming from a black woman to a white woman and vice versa. This worldview embodies mobility, for it reflects how people are capable of constant and dramatic change. *The Street* demonstrates the importance of imagining what discourse deems impossible. In particular, the conclusion of Bandele's novel portrays Dada's eventual embrace of the impossible, which is expressed through a

trope of mobility. Dada flies to the moon, and upon his return, he writes books and meets his wife. Thus, by embracing “madness” (as opposed to reason), Dada achieves what previously seemed impossible.

What is believed to be impossible is that which is unknown or unreasonable within a particular discursive context. Within the context of the Manichean absolutes of madness and reason, that which is impossible resides within the jurisdiction of Madness. Achebe, Gordimer, Head, Marechera, El Saadawi, and Bandele use madness in order to challenge, contest, and deny the Western *ratio* as Reality *par excellence*. *Arrow of God*, *July's People*, *A Question of Power*, “House of Hunger,” *The Innocence of the Devil*, and *The Street* challenge, contest, and deny the absence of Africa in discursive practices that uphold Reason. The authors' narratives demonstrate the incompleteness of available discourses, as well as their static, hyper-structured “order of things.” Like the madman/woman, Africa cannot be erased and will not disappear simply by being written out of discursive norms. Ezeulu, Maureen, Elizabeth, Marechera's nameless protagonist, and El Saadawi's and Bandele's numerous characters must be accounted for through the acknowledgement and subsequent production of multiple, rhizomatic discourses, subjectivities, and *ratios*. In addition, these six authors invoke and create madneses that reveal discursive discontinuities. They use the silent, hidden, dismissed, and marginalized spaces that madness has come to inhabit in order to undermine discursive continuity. Furthermore, although Achebe, Gordimer, Head, Marechera, El Saadawi, and Bandele uniquely represent madness(es) in his/her novel/novella, in each representation, madness serves as a means through which varying forms of mobility are creatively presented. In order to imagine a new *ratio*, we must think creatively around forms of

change. *Arrow of God, July's People, A Question of Power, "House of Hunger," The Innocence of the Devil, and The Street* craft madneses that offer new ways of conceptualizing discursive change.

WORKS CITED

- “1995: Riots Break Out in Brixton.” *On This Day: 13 December*. BBC.
- Achebe, Chinua. 1986. *Arrow of God*. Johannesburg: Heinemann.
- . 1989. *Hopes and Impediments*. New York: Doubleday.
- . 1991. “The Madman.” *Girls at War and Other Stories*. New York: Anchor Books.
- . 1997. *Conversations with Chinua Achebe*. Ed. Bernth Lindfors. Jackson: University Press of Mississippi.
- Asuni, Tolani. 1964. “Community Development and Public Health By-product of Social Psychiatry in Nigeria.” *West African Medical Journal*. 13.4, pp. 151-154.
- . 1967. “Aro Hospital in Perspective.” *American Journal of Psychiatry*. 124.6, pp. 71-78.
- Ballseiro, Isabel. 2004. “Between Amnesia and Memory: Bessie Head and Her Critics.” *Emerging Perspectives on Bessie Head*. Ed. Huma Ibrahim. Trenton: Africa World Press, pp. 17-24.
- Bandebe, Biyi. 2000. *The Street*. London: Picador.
- Bauman, Zygmunt. 1993. *Modernity and Ambivalence*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Bazin, Nancy Topping and Marilyn Dallman Seymour. Eds. 1990. *Conversations with Nadine Gordimer*. Jackson: University Press of Mississippi.
- Beard, Linda Susan. 1991. “Bessie Head’s Syncretic Fictions: The Reconceptualization of Power and the Rediscovery of the Ordinary.” *Modern Fiction Studies*, 37.3.
- Bernstein, Richard. 1994. “Explosion at the Twin Towers: 4 are convicted in the bombing at the World Trade Center that killed 6, stunned U.S.” *The New York Times*. New York: The New York Times Company. 05 March 1994, p. 1.
- Bhabha, Homi. 2004. *The Location of Culture*. New York: Routledge Classics.
- Blake, Robert. 1978. *A History of Rhodesia*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf.
- Bodenheimer, Rosemarie. 1993. “The Interregnum of Ownership in *July’s People*.” *The Later Fiction of Nadine Gordimer*. Ed. Bruce King. New York: St. Martin’s Press.

- Breslin, Maria. 2000. "Soho Bomb Victim's Father Seeks Repeal of Section 28." *Press Association*. The Press Association Limited. 15 July 2000.
- Carothers, J.C. 1972. *The Mind of Man in Africa*. London: Tom Stacey.
- Carroll, David. 1980. *Chinua Achebe*. Second Edition. New York: St. Martin's Press.
- Casey, Briega and Anne Long. 2003. "Meanings of Madness: A Literature Review." *Journal of Psychiatric and Mental Health Nursing*. 10, pp. 89-99.
- Catholic Institute for International Relations (CIIR). 1982?. *South African in the 1980s*. London: CIIR.
- Clingman, Stephen. 1992. *The Novels of Nadine Gordimer: History from the Inside*. Second Edition. Amherst: University of Amherst Press.
- Cooke, John. 1985. *The Novels of Nadine Gordimer: Private Lives/Public Landscapes*. London: Louisiana State University Press.
- . 1993. "'Nobody's Children': Families in Gordimer's Later Novels." *The Later Fiction of Nadine Gordimer*. Ed. Bruce King. New York: St. Martin's Press.
- Cooper, Brenda. 2006. Draft chapter in unpublished manuscript. *New African Fiction: Migration, Material Culture and Language*. Cape Town.
- Cordahi, Cherif. 1994. "Briton Killed by Egyptian Militants." *The Guardian*. London: Guardian Newspapers Limited. 24 October 1994, p. 1.
- Cosgrove, William. 1973. "Modern Black Writers: The Divided Self." *Negro American Literature Forum*. 7.4, pp. 120-122.
- Cullinan, Patrick. 2005. *Imaginative Trespasser: Letters Between Bessie Head, Patrick and Wendy Cullinan 1963-1977*. Johannesburg: Wits University Press.
- Deleuze, Gilles and Guattari, Félix. 2000. *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*. Preface by Michel Foucault. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- . 2003. *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*. Trans. and Foreword by Brian Massumi. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

- Derrida, Jacques. 1984. "Différance." *Margins of Philosophy*. Trans. Alan Bass. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, pp. 1-27.
- . 1991. "From Shibboleth." *Acts of Literature*. Ed. Derek Attridge. New York: Routledge. pp. 370-413.
- . 2005. *Writing and Difference*. London: Routledge Classics.
- Diawara, Manthia. 1991. "Reading Africa Through Foucault: V.Y. Mudimbe's Reaffirmation of the Subject." *October*. 55, pp. 79-92.
- . 1997. "Reading Africa through Foucault: V.Y. Mudimbe's Reaffirmation of the Subject." *Dangerous Liaisons: Gender, Nation, & Postcolonial Perspectives*. Ed. McClintock, et al. Minneapolis: University of Minneapolis Press, pp. 456-467.
- Driver, Dorothy. 1990. "Nadine Gordimer: The Politicization of Women." *Critical Essays on Nadine Gordimer*. Ed. Rowland Smith. Boston: G.K. Hall & Co., pp. 180-204.
- DuBois, W.E.B. 2005. *The Souls of Black Folk*. Boston: Paperview.
- "Egypt's Suspected Militants Launch Another Attack on Tourists." 1994. *United Press International*. U.P.I. 19 February 1994.
- Eilersen, Gillian Stead. 1996. *Bessie Head: Thunder Behind Her Ears*. Portsmouth: Heinemann.
- Elder, Arlene A. 2004. "Bessie Head: The Inappropriate Appropriation of 'Autobiography.'" *Emerging Perspectives on Bessie Head*. Ed. Huma Ibrahim. Trenton: Africa World Press, pp. 1-16.
- El Saadawi, Nawal. 1998. *The Innocence of the Devil*. Trans. Sherif Hetata. Los Angeles: University of California Press.
- Fabian, Johannes. 1983. *Time and the Other: How Anthropology Makes Its Object*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Fanon, Frantz. 1963. *The Wretched of the Earth*. New York: Grove Press.
- . 1967. *Black Skin, White Masks*. New York: Grove Press.
- Fielding, Maureen. 2003. "Agriculture and Healing: Transforming Space, Transforming Trauma in Bessie Head's *When Rain Clouds Gather*." *Critical Essays on Bessie Head*. Ed. Maxine Sample. Westport, Connecticut: Praeger Publishers, pp. 11-24.

- Fink, Jennifer Natalya. 1999. "Conclusion. Pushing through the Surface: Notes on Hybridity and Writing." *Performing Hybridity*. Ed. May Joseph and Jennifer Natalya Fink. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Foucault, Michel. 1980. *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings 1972-1977*. Ed. Colin Gordon. New York: Pantheon Books.
- . 1987. *Mental Illness and Psychology*. Foreword by Hubert Dreyfus. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- . 1991. "Governmentality." *The Foucault Effect: Studies in Governmentality*. Ed. Burchell, Gordon, and Miller. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- . 1995. *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*. Trans. Alan Sheridan. New York: Vintage Books.
- . 2004a. *Madness and Civilization: A History of Insanity in the Age of Reason*. Trans. Richard Howard. Intro. by David Cooper. London: Routledge Classics.
- . 2004b. *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences*. London: Routledge Classics.
- . 2006. *Psychiatric Power: Lectures at the College de France, 1973-74*. Ed. Jacques Lagrange. New York: Palgram Macmillan.
- Gagiano, Annie. 2000. *Achebe, Head, Marechera: On Power and Change in Africa*. Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, Inc.
- Garuba, Harry. 2002. "Mapping the Land/Body/Subject: Colonial and Postcolonial Geographies in African Narrative." *AlterNation*. 9.1, pp. 87-116.
- George, Olakunle, 2003. *Relocating Agency: Modernity and African Letters*. Albany: State University of New York Press.
- Gikandi, Simon. 1991. "Nation Formation and the Novel." *Reading Chinua Achebe*. London: James Currey, pp.1-23.
- Gilbert, Sandra and Susan Gubar. 2000. "The Madwoman in the Attic." *Literary Theory: An Anthology*. Ed. Julie Rivkin and Michael Ryan. Massachusetts: Blackwell Publishers Inc.
- Giordano, Enrique. 1988. "Play and Playfulness in Garcia Marquez' *One Hundred Years of Solitude*." *Rocky Mountain Review of Language and Literature*. 42.4, pp. 217-229.

- Gordimer, Nadine. 1982. *July's People*. London: Penguin Books.
- . 1988. *The Essential Gesture: Writing, Politics and Places*. Ed. Stephen Clingman. Cape Town: David Phillip.
- Greenlees, T.D. 1895. "Insanity among the Natives of South Africa." *The Journal of Mental Science*. 41, p. 71.
- Hall, Stuart. 1992. *Formations of Modernity*. Eds. Stuart Hall and Bram Gieben. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Hancock, Hugh. 2000. "Head's *A Question of Power*." *Explicator*. 59.1, pp. 49-50.
- Hans, James. 1979. "Derrida and Freeplay." *MLN*. 94.4, pp. 809-926.
- Head, Bessie. 1974. *A Question of Power*. Portsmouth: Heinemann.
- Head, Dominic. 1994. *Nadine Gordimer*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Hofmeyr, Isabel. 1996. "Not the Magic Talisman: Rethinking Oral Literature in South Africa." *World Literature Today*. 70.1, pp. 88-92.
- Hopkins, Nick. 2000. "Bomber Gets Six Life Terms: Copeland driven by virulent hatred and pitiless contempt, says judge." *The Guardian*. London: Guardian Newspapers Limited. 01 July 2000, p. 1.
- Ibrahim, Huma. 2004. "The Problematic Relationship of Western Canonicity and African Literature: The Not-So-Singular Case of Bessie Head." *Emerging Perspectives on Bessie Head*. Ed. Huma Ibrahim. Trenton: Africa World Press, pp. 199-215.
- Innes, C.L. 1992. *Chinua Achebe*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Jackson, Lynette A. 1999. "The Place of Psychiatry in Colonial and Early Postcolonial Zimbabwe." *International Journal of Mental Health*. 28.2, pp. 38-71.
- . 2004. "Surfaces and Surfacing: Colonial Constructions of 'Madness' in African Women, Southern Rhodesia 1908-1953." *2004 African Literature Association Conference*. Madison: University of Wisconsin. 14-18 April 2004.
- . 2005. *Surfacing Up: Psychiatry and Social Order in Colonial Zimbabwe, 1908-1968*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

- JanMohamed, Abdul R. 1983. *Manichean Aesthetics: The Politics of Literature in Colonial Africa*. Amherst: The University of Massachusetts Press.
- Kapstein, Helen. 2003. "A Peculiar Shuttling Movement: Madness, Passing, and Trespassing in Bessie Head's *A Question of Power*." *Critical Essays on Bessie Head*. Ed. Maxine Sample. Westport, Connecticut: Praeger Publishers, pp. 71-98.
- Keller, Richard. 2001. "Madness and Colonialism: Psychiatry in the British and French Empires, 1800-1962." *Journal of Social History*. 35.2, pp. 295-326.
- Killam, G. D. 1969. *The Novels of Chinua Achebe*. New York: Africana Publishing Corporation.
- "Lambeth." 2004. "Lambeth Community Strategy: Consultation Draft." February 2004.
- Lambo, Adeoye. 1964. "The Village of Aro." *The Lancet*. 2, pp. 513-514.
- Lewis, Desiree. 2004. "Power, Representation and the Textual Politics of Bessie Head." *Emerging Perspectives on Bessie Head*. Ed. Huma Ibrahim. Trenton: Africa World Press, pp. 121-142.
- Loomba, Ania. 2001. *Colonialism/Postcolonialism*. New York: Routledge.
- Malik, Kenan. 1995. "Brixton Opts for a Kind of Apartheid..." *The Independent*. London: Newspaper Publishing PLC. 17 December 1995, p. 8.
- Multi-Douglas, Fedwa. 1995. *Men, Women, and God(s): Nawal El Saadawi and Arab Feminist Poetics*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- . 1998. "Introduction to *The Innocence of the Devil: From Theology to Rape*." *The Innocence of the Devil*. Los Angeles: University of California Press. pp. vii-xiv.
- Marechera, Dambudzo. 1993. "House of Hunger." *The House of Hunger*. Johannesburg: Heinemann Publishers, pp. 1-82.
- Marshall, Finlay and Michael Harvey. 1994. "Murdered Tourist's Party 'Ignored Travel Warning.'" *Press Association*. The Press Association Limited. 24 October 1994.
- Mbiti, John S. 1991. *Introduction to African Religion*. Second Edition. Johannesburg: Heinemann Educational Publishers.

- McClintock, Anne. 1995. *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender and Sexuality in the Colonial Contest*. New York: Routledge.
- McCulloch, Jock. 1995. *Colonial Psychiatry and 'the African Mind'*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- "Middle East Overview." 1993. *Patterns of Global Terrorism: 1992*. United States Office of the Secretary of State: Office of the Coordinator for Counterterrorism.
- Moreton, Cole. 1995. "As 'Lightning Conductor' Fails to Work." *The Independent*. London: Newspaper Publishing PLC. 17 December 1995, p. 9.
- Moulson, Geir. 2000. "Britain Defends Racism Record at U.N. Committee." *The Associated Press*. Associated Press. 14 August 2000.
- Mudimbe, V.Y. 1982. *L'Odeur du Père: Essai sur des limites de la science et de la vie en Afrique noire*. Paris: Présence Africaine.
- Newman, Judie. 1988. *Nadine Gordimer*. New York: Routledge.
- Nicholls, Brendon. 2005. "Dambudzo Marechera: A Reflection or Two." *15th International Conference of The English Academy of Southern Africa in association with SAWA, AUETSA, SAVAL and SAACLALS*. 13 July 2005.
- Nnolim, Charles E. 1989. "Trends in the Nigerian Novel." *Calabar Studies in African Literature 4: Literature and National Consciousness*. Ibadan: Heinemann Educational Books, pp. 53-65.
- Ogede, Ode. 2001. *Achebe and the Politics of Representation*. Trenton: Africa World Press, Inc.
- Okasha, Ahmed. 2001. "Egyptian Contribution to the Concept of Mental Health." *Eastern Mediterranean Health Journal*. 7.3, pp. 377-380.
- Pattison, David. 2001. *No Room For Cowardice: A View of the Life and Times of Dambudzo Marechera*. Trenton: Africa World Press, Inc.
- Perry, Petra. 1993. "Deleuze's Nietzsche." *boundary*. 20.1, pp. 174-191.
- Phillips, Maggi. 1994. "Engaging Dreams: Alternative Perspectives on Flora Nwapa, Buchi Emecheta, Ama Ata Aidoo, Bessie Head, and Tsitsi Dangarembga's Writing." *Research in African Literatures* 25.4, p. 89-103.
- Pipes, Daniel. 1990. "The Muslims are Coming! The Muslims are Coming!" *National Review*. 19 November 1990, pp. 28-31.

- Ramsay, Jeff, Barry Morton, and Fred Morton. 1996. *Historical Dictionary of Botswana*. Third Edition. Lanham: The Scarecrow Press, Inc.
- Roberts, Glenn. 2000. "Narratives and Severe Mental Illness: What Place Do Stories Have in an Evidence-Based World?" *Advances in Psychiatric Treatment*. 6, pp. 432-441.
- Sachs, Wulf. 1996. *Black Hamlet*. Johannesburg: Witwatersrand University Press.
- Sadowsky, Jonathan. 1996. "The Confinements of Isaac O.: A Case of 'Acute Mania' in Colonial Nigeria." *History of Psychiatry*. 7, pp. 91-112.
- . 1999. *Imperial Bedlam: Institutions of Madness in Colonial Southwest Nigeria*. London: University of California Press.
- Said, Edward W. 2003. *Reflections on Exile and Other Essays*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Sample, Maxine. 2003. "Artist in Exile: The Life of Bessie Head." *Critical Essays on Bessie Head*. Ed. Maxine Sample. Westport, Connecticut: Praeger Publishers, pp. 1-9.
- Sanga, Jaina C. 2001. *Salman Rushdie's Postcolonial Metaphors: Migration, Translation, Hybridity, Blasphemy, and Globalization*. London: Greenwood Press.
- Scott, David. 1995. "Colonial Governmentality." *Social Text*. 0.43, pp. 191-220.
- Shrum, Rick. 1994. "A Second Gulf War is Narrowly Averted." *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*. Pennsylvania: P.G. Publishing Co. 24 October 1994, p. C3.
- Sibanda, Eliakim M. 2005. *The Zimbabwe African People's Union 1961-87: A Political History of Insurgency in Southern Rhodesia*. Trenton: Africa World Press, Inc.
- Sidandi, Paul, Charles Mambwe, Zoran Zoric, Suresh Vanvaria, Nirmala Vanvaria, and Emmanuel Laryea. 1999. "Psychiatric Rehabilitation: The Perspective from Botswana." *International Journal of Mental Health*. 28.3, pp. 31-37.
- Smith, Rowland. 1990. "Masters and Servants: Nadine Gordimer's *July's People* and the Themes of Her Fiction." *Critical Essays on Nadine Gordimer*. Ed. Rowland Smith. Boston: G.K. Hall & Co., pp. 140-152.

- Stam, Robert. 1999. "Palimpsestic Aesthetics: A Meditation on Hybridity and Garbage." *Performing Hybridity*. Ed. May Joseph and Jennifer Natalya Fink. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Stec, Loretta. 2003. "The Didactic Judgment of a Woman Writer: Bessie Head's *The Collector of Treasures*." *Critical Essays on Bessie Head*. Ed. Maxine Sample. Westport: Praeger Publishers, pp. 121-130.
- Stevens, Richard P. 1975. *Historical Dictionary of the Republic of Botswana*. Metuchen: The Scarecrow Press.
- Stewart, James B. 1983. "Psychic Duality of Afro-Americans in the Novels of W.E.B. DuBois." *Phylon*. 44.2, pp. 93-107.
- Swartz, Sally. 1998. *Culture and Mental Health: A Southern African View*. Cape Town: Oxford University Press.
- . 1999. "'Work of Mercy and Necessity' British Rule and Psychiatric Practice in the Cape Colony, 1891-1910." *International Journal of Mental Health*. 28.2, pp. 72-90.
- Swift, Charles R. and Tolani Asuni. 1975. *Mental Health and Disease in Africa: With Special Reference to Africa South of the Sahara*. London: Longman Group Limited.
- Taitz, Laurice. 1999. "Knocking on the Door of the House of Hunger: Fracturing Narratives and Disordering Identity." *Emerging Perspectives on Dambudzo Marechera*. Ed. Anthony Chennells and Flora Viet-Wild. Trenton: Africa World Press, pp. 23-42.
- Temple-Thurston, Barbara. 1999. *Nadine Gordimer Revisited*. New York: Twayne Publishers.
- "Timetable of Terror." 1999. *Manchester Guardian Weekly*. Guardian Publication, Ltd. 09 May 1999, p. 9.
- Vaughan, Megan. 1992. *Curing Their Ills: Colonial Power and African Illness*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Veit-Wild, Flora. 2004. *Dambudzo Marechera: A Source Book on his Life and Work*. Trenton: Africa World Press, Inc.
- Vincent, Kerry. 1999. "Liminal Positions: Dambudzo Marechera's *The House of Hunger* and *Black Sunlight*." *English Studies in Africa*. 42.2, pp. 49-65.

Wagner, Kathrin. 1994. *Rereading Nadine Gordimer*. Indianapolis: Indiana University Press.

Walker, Barbara G. 2000. *Restoring the Goddess: Equal Rites for Modern Women*. New York: Prometheus Books.

Wren, Robert. M. 1980. *Achebe's World: The Historical and Cultural Context of the Novels of Chinua Achebe*. Essex: Longman.