



Call for Chapter Proposals

Multiple DeColonialities

Insidious Trauma in the Production of Eastern African Literatures and Cultures

Edited by

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Introduction

While people of postcolonial eastern Africa have been creatively developing capacities for social, cultural, and political well being, the region has had its fair share of challenges. These range from economic depression, political violence, war and genocide, governmental opportunism, as well as viral diseases such as Ebola, HIV, and, lately, Covid. Alongside of these historical events and processes, the postcolonial period involves a shift in literary, cultural, and scholarly production. Beside the prevailing theme of European arrogance, transpiring through cultural reservoirs of imperialism, literary and cultural production in eastern Africa endeavours to explore contemporary socio-political conditions and sensibilities. Literature, auto/biography, film, and other cultural practices, strive to creatively trace the livelihoods of human subjects aspiring to make sense of their worlds in circumstances of violence, social disintegration, and trauma.

In general terms, scholarship on the theme of trauma falls into two identifiable, if not altogether streamlined, patterns. One of these is a European/North American repertoire of representing trauma according to an event-based framework of reference. Such scholarship remains in awe of a classical psychoanalytic approach that enlists literature as a demonstration of the experience of trauma. The work of Cathy Caruth, while important for the development of trauma as a thematic concern for the humanities, has otherwise handed down an all-too deconstructionist, textcentric analytic that underestimates the phenomenological, circumstantial proportions of trauma as a relational field of livelihood—of human subjects, of cultural artefacts, of contextually bound practices of social production.

The second pattern of scholarship foregrounds this relational field, and can be described as a still emerging preoccupation with the everyday, with trauma as an insidious temperament of social life and related practices of literary and cultural production. This more nuanced interest in perceptions and representations of trauma questions the parcelling of history into circumscribed events—such as the Nazi Holocaust, the Partition of India and Pakistan, the Palestinian Nakba, the Rwanda genocide, or indeed the Isaaq genocide of Hargeisa in Somalia. Attuned more to the lingering, enduring livelihoods of subjects of violent events, as well as the forms of social and cultural practices by which such events and livelihoods gain significance, contemporary scholarship on trauma channels insights into a notion of multiple decolonialities.

Multiple decolonialities draws attention to variations across and between spatial and temporal boundaries, and applies comparative models for the study of trauma. Contemporary research, such as the work of Michela Borzaga, Irene Visser, Kai Erikson, and Veena Das, encourage a transdisciplinary approach between the humanities and social sciences. For example, in their edited volume of 2011, *The Splintered Glass: Facets of Trauma in the Post-Colony and Beyond*, Delores Herrero and Sonia Baelo-Allué write that in the study of postcolonial trauma

fiction it is important to maintain “an ‘ethical’ attitude towards the specific cultural and political contexts out.

of which these texts emerged.” Building on the work of these researchers, we understand multiple decolonialities as an attentiveness to the “worldly” (to borrow an important term for Edward Said) modalities by which subjects of trauma (whether human or artifactual) inhabit, actively engage, their circumstances. Keeping in mind the phenomenological contours of Said’s notion, what are the methodological implications of what we can call “literary anthropology,” “cultural archaeology,” or else “cultural ecology.”

While providing relevant criteria by which decolonising modes of literary and cultural production can be studied, contemporary scholarship on trauma in eastern Africa foregrounds certain problematics. These include the difficult question of representation, when we consider that literature embodies tense relationships to historical processes and subjective dispositions that cannot be assumed to mirror each other. This problematic is all the more vexing in respect to representations of trauma, which do not easily lend themselves to generic styles of narration. What methodological applications, we can well ask, are required to gauge how trauma lingers and endures as affective economies of personal disposition and social exchange, in relation to the representation and/or symptomatic, insidious pulse beats of trauma in literary and cultural production, in eastern Africa? Towards exploring such thematics, this volume promotes a notion of multiple decolonialities that directs attention to the modalities, the medialities, by which the cultural production of trauma engages capacities for livelihood.

Objective

This edited book project proposes a multidirectional approach to insidious trauma in contemporary eastern African literature and cultural production, though extends to other forms of art, ranging from film, music, painting/drawing, as well as archival and archaeological materials. Contributions are invited to consider how emerging cultural practices offer varying modes of narrating, representing, thematising insidious trauma. Applications should consider how “multiple decolonialities” involve varying tangents. These include the different circumstances and experiences across and between the eastern African region; different forms and practices of cultural production; transdisciplinary research; and, not least, a critical engagement with Eurocentric cultural reservoirs. The volume encourages a dynamic approach to context in term of livelihood, considering how human subjects and cultural artefacts circulate through modalities of social, cultural, and political ecologies. The volume is concerned with the contemporary period since the turn of the new millennium. It is designed to make a valuable contribution to decolonising scholarship in eastern Africa. While the volume is in English, we welcome

contributions addressing cultural production and processes in Kiswahili, French, Arabic, Somali, and other local language and graphic practices.

Target Audience

Researchers, academics, graduate students, policymakers, and the public would find the book a good reference for the study of literature, auto/biography, culture, and the arts in the eastern Africa region.

Topics

Contributions are invited on the following themes, as well as other related topics:

- 1) Technological mediation of trauma, for example social media such as Facebook, Youtube, Twitter, WhatsApp, Instagram.
- 2) Precarity and trauma (including children, women, refugees, etc.).
- 3) Narrating trauma.
- 4) Memory and trauma.
- 5) Culture/religion and trauma.
- 6) Indigenous knowledge and trauma.
- 7) Perpetrator/victim representation and trauma.
- 8) The implicated subject and trauma.
- 9) History and trauma.
- 10) The language of trauma.
- 11) Traumatic entanglements of migration and globalisation.
- 12) Silence and trauma
- 13) Trauma and reparation
- 14) The politics of trauma

Guidelines for authors

Submit an abstract of up to 300 words inclusive of the title.

Publisher

Routledge

Target dates/deadlines (*these are tentative deadlines*)

- Abstract (200-300 words) submission deadline **31/5/2022**
- Notification of acceptance **31/6/2022**
- Full chapter submission **30/9/2022**

Further inquiries:

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