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Coloniality of memory: violence-trauma-repentance-revenge in postdependence narratives

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Abstract

The article focuses on the phenomenon of coloniality of memory and a possibility of getting free from the post-traumatic syndrome, the way they are manifested in the victims of the sexual-political violence in societies marked by various forms of un-freedom, such as apartheid, dictatorship, totalitarianism, ethno-genocide. The author accentuates how the coloniality of memory is reflected in fiction, drama, cinema created in the post-dependence period which not necessarily leads to any repentance. Based on the analysis of the works of writers, playwrights, film directors from different regions, the article demonstrates that the male variants of the interpretation of this problematic seldom go beyond the eternally reproduced circle of violence, remaining in the grip of the androcentric stereotypes and victims' dehumanization. The female interpretation of this problem gives hope for the possibility of eventually overcoming violence which is linked with the specificity of the embodied memory accentuating the non-verbal and non-rational forms and ways of healing and re-existence.

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Introduction

One of the deeper intersections uniting postcolonial, post-totalitarian, post-apartheid, post-dictatorship and other dimensions of post-dependence in fiction, art, cinema, and theater emerges in the leitmotif of trauma, violence, repentance and revenge in all the richness of its semantic overtones and poetic representations. In decolonial terms this corresponds to coloniality (and hence, decolonization) of memory. In its basis lies a self-legitimizing violence of a certain repressive dehumanizing system disciplining people into absolute submission to the bio-politics. Societies are offered certain sanctioned forms of constructed collective memory which does not conserve but rather erases the past which is still full of restless ghosts. The collective memory and even the bodily memory of the victims themselves are then censored. The victims are forced to forgive and forget, they are force-fed with a convenient version of the past and an equally comfortable way into the future. This in effect is one more betrayal of the victims, as it fixes the rapture in the texture of memory connected with violence, trauma, and humiliation, as the darker side of colonization of memory. What is crucial here is the corporeal affective embodiment of such memory and its non-verbal and non-rational nature and hence, the impossibility of indoctrinating the victim with the official colonial version because the victim's body stubbornly remembers differently and does not allow the mind to accept the imposed point of view. This conflict often leads to psychological and mental disorders.

The anatomy of violence and the coloniality of memory

Coloniality of memory and decolonizing from its trauma are closely connected with the complexity and contradictoriness of violence as a destructive yet also cathartic Fanonian force. The Fanonian interpretation of violence was aimed at liberating the human being and creating of a new individual free from the duality of colonialism [Fanon, 1963]. Violence then was an act of restoring the downtrodden human dignity.

The dynamics of violence in the Fanonian interpretation holds that the system does not allow the "wretched" to be considered people. The assertion of one's human nature as a fundamentally unlawful act within this system, is inevitably translated into violence. Fanon interpreted violence both in the instrumental political sense of gripping and holding the power, and in the sense of a peculiar energy or an internal purifying force, leading to the creation of a new and wonderful world, coming to life through a certain exorcism or liberating from violence by means of a reciprocal violence against its original source [ibid.]. In the words of the Afro-Caribbean phenomenologist Lewis Gordon, revolutionary violence in Fanon's rendering, may be interpreted as a "tragedy – a dramatic resource and a human signifier" [Gordon, 1996, 298]. The main tragic trope will be catharsis conceptualized through violence, and leading to a more positive and conscious political praxis. Therefore *The Wretched of the Earth* may be called a "tragic text about a tragic world" and about a tragic humankind refusing to grow up and take responsibility [ibid., 307].

The instrumental understanding of violence is rather traditional and repeatedly criticized, because history does not really give us any successful examples of the realization of this tendency. The other cathartic understanding of violence is more interesting as it refers to the ontological and existential spheres or, in other words, becomes an effort to escape the long being-in-violence through a short and justified practice of violence and its further channeling with constructive goals in mind. However in the last chapter Fanon gives numerous examples of psychoses and neuroses of both victims and torturers, who went to him as a doctor during and after the Algerian war for independence. He demonstrates that people remain in the grip of violence forever, and "their future is mortgaged" [Fanon, 1963, 22]. In South

Africa from apartheid era there circulates a similar expression – "to live on borrowed time" [Dangor, 2001, 195], that is to be doomed from the start. But is it possible at all to break a link between any politics and violence and isn't violence, on the other hand, at times the only way to justice?

The characters of the works I will address below are trying to answer this question each in her/his own way. Moreover there is a peculiar gender difference here. The male view of the political rape, trauma, repentance and revenge is presented in a post-dictatorship play authored by a Chilean-American playwright Ariel Dorfman *Death and the Maiden* (1990), adopted for the famous movie by Roman Polansky (1994), where the main character Paulina is not openly dehumanized for racial or gender reasons, but her violent rape by Dr. Miranda equates the punishment for political resistance (a way of stripping the resister to merely biological state of an Agambenian Homo Sacer [Agamben, 1998], not a citizen), with the presumable female viciousness, as a sick justification of the torturer. A similar position is to be found in a post-apartheid novel written by a South-African writer of Indian origin Achmat Dangor *Bitter Fruit* (2001), where we encounter an unwanted fruit of inter-racial political rape – the son of the main character Michael. A brilliant, revealing and disturbing Alexei German's film *Khrustalyov, My Car* (1998) stands slightly apart, for here the accent is on the bio-political violence of the Soviet system which does not recognize gender or social status, and rapes and destroys everyone including the yesterday torturers. In all of these cases, accurately detecting the problem, male characters as well as the authors remain within the grip of coloniality of memory, unable to overcome it or offer a way out of the circle of violence. The women's version is presented in a number of interesting works, however the article limits allow me to dwell on only one powerful example – *Grbavica* (2006), a film made by a Bosnian director Jasmila Žbanić. Due to her freedom of the patriarchal norms and stereotypes in the rendering of the political violence and also due to her attention to the bodily-political grounds in the interpretation of sexual violence, Žbanić is able to overcome coloniality of memory and construct certain positive models of the future.

The post-dependence society of any kind – from post-Socialism to post-dictatorship and post-apartheid – often continues to stagnate in its sick and violent complexes after the former emancipation is over and democracy seems to be es-

established. Too often trauma and memory remain repressed and under-analyzed by the majority and hence repentance or responsibility never even come in sight. In all post-dependence societies the emancipation from colonialism, apartheid, totalitarianism or dictatorship is into the system of Western neo-liberalism or its local semblances which correcting some superfluous ideological imbalances retain all the major injustices and inequities of modernity. In post-Pinochet Chile and post-apartheid South Africa alike after the initial liberation drives the more conservative and often counter-revolutionary impulses take over, marginalizing and ousting former revolutionaries and underground fighters and retaining social inequity and poverty with a clearly racialized face. In case of Dangor sexual violence is always interconnected with the purity of blood and the stigma or racial mixing. In contrast with his earlier novel *Kafka's Curse* (1999) the forbidden interracial eroticism is presented largely in the form of violence and its bitter fruit. The author himself is a mild example of such sensibility incapable of making a final choice between his Indo-Muslim and Dutch protestant origins. The former fighter with apartheid Silas believes that in the new South Africa there should not be any such dusky and restless characters. This painful motif is expressed even in the recurrent strange hybrid names of many Dangor's characters – the first name and the surname are often linguistically and religiously discordant (Amina Mandelstam, Silas Ali, etc.) and in the sinister and morbid beauty of the pale-skinned Michael who "has no color of his own" [Dangor, 2001, 71], in the evil, in Silas's view, charm of his son's mulatta friend Vinu, and in the intersection of power, class and race in genderly inverted forms of interracial eroticism (in Dangor's works it is often the White women acting in male aggressive sexual roles in relation to non-White passive male objects of desire).

In Chili and South Africa, as well as in Eastern European postsocialist case (to a lesser degree) the so-called "truth and reconciliation commissions" which were aimed not only at discovering and sentencing the criminals, but more importantly at forgiving, not forgetting, did their jobs half-heartedly and with many compromises that were not morally justified for the victims who longed for repentance, even if crude as in a Georgian director Tengiz Abuladze's rather early film of the same name (1984) with its central paralyzing event of the grandson repeatedly throwing his monster grandfather out of his grave.

Contemporary Russia reinstates the rhetoric and practice of the Soviet state violence going hand in hand with the most unjust capitalist and neocolonialist methods targeted at the entire population regardless of race or class. This paradoxical situation is well conveyed in German's film. In Yuri Kazakov's idea, the postsoviet Russia has never become a country of the mass repentance and the majority of the people have shifted the responsibility to the elites, which resulted in an explosive mixture of the social dystrophy and all-penetrating total sense of injustice [Kazakov, 2004, 144]. Stanley Cohen reflects on the same problem pointing out that the Russian society goes through a process of a certain psychoanalytic repression (2005) [Cohen, 2005], which is different from both amnesia and negation. It is expressed in today's neglect of the previous crimes by the society as a whole. This system does not need remembering or repentance and replaces it with the slightly updated (with Orthodox Christianity and overt Chauvinism) but still recognizably expansionist providential mythology. Postsoviet fiction and especially cinema have addressed this problematic in a most persuasive and aesthetically innovative way, which played a negative part in their reception – these works have not been made available for the wider audience and have been accused of unpatriotic stance and erased from the public space with the help of commercial and censoring mechanisms.

Sexual violence as a form of genocide

Sexual violence has been used as a tool of national humiliation and particularly of humiliating the men-enemies for a long time. This erases women's humanity, regarding them merely as receptacles of the alien semen. American scholar David Luban states that "all political torture aims to teach its victims, men as well as women, that they are nothing but passive bodies in pain, not the active shapers of destiny they had fancied themselves. That is how torture works as an instrument of state. But when the victim is a woman and the torture is rape, her humiliation becomes triply political. Like a male victim, she is passive rather than active and subjugated rather than victorious. But, in addition, her rapists expel her from the recent and still-fragile world of women's political emancipation into a history-nightmare-a nightmare of traditionalist society in which, or so the rapists want to teach her, she was never

anything more than cunt... The same cultural habits that make chastity valuable and rape shameful to its victims obligate men to protect their women's honor. The man who fails stands exposed and impotent" [Luban, 1998, 133].

One of the case studies in Fanon's *The Wretched of the Earth* narrates a story of a young patient, intersecting violence, trauma and post-dependence syndrome. The patient is a twenty-six-year-old Algerian taxi driver and underground anti-colonial fighter. After his escape his unloved wife was raped by the French soldiers but similarly to Paulina, did not betray her husband and later offered to divorce him since she was dishonored. The Algerian's somatic and psychic disorders in Fanon's interpretation are a manifestation of his guilt and at the same time, of his shame. He even develops a repressed repulsion for his two year old daughter who might be similarly to Michael, the bitter fruit of rape and carries the stigma of her mother's shame.

At first the patient demonstrates the standard male reaction of jealousy, interpreting the rape of his wife as an infringement on his property rights and predictably reinstating the paradigmatic narrative of women's eternal promiscuity. Yet this patient unexpectedly demonstrates the awakening of previously unknown to him moral qualities – he refuses to divorce the wife and expresses responsibility, guilt and compassion. The story ends with a disturbing but not a hopeless note. The patient decided to go back to his family and try to start again [Fanon, 1963, 254-259]. In Dorfman's play, Dangor's novel and Žbanić's film we see what could happen with the victims, their relatives and the bitter fruit of violence afterwards.

All of these works are marked by the Fanonian syndrome of the apathy and inertia of the raped slave. Alexei German expressed this idea even more poignantly: "we are a raped, a prison-bitched country and we forgave and forgot our humiliation and did not repent, did not ask for any retribution" [German, 2008]. The director bares the essence of the Soviet and postsoviet predicament in his story of the general of medical service, a luminary neurosurgeon arrested in the frame of the infamous doctor's plot, gang-raped with the consent and on behalf of NKVD by a group of criminals in the proverbial van adorned by a cheerful *Soviet Campaign* add, and later miraculously pardoned and hastily brought – insides torn but the general's overcoat returned intact – to the dying Stalin, just to witness the inevitable and unsightly death of this monster and gasp with awe.

In Dorfman's play this anxiety and a sinister realization that it is impossible to build a healthy society in a raped country is expressed in the play on the word "irreparable", which is first used in the official judicial discourse (Paulina's husband Gerardo is a successful lawyer who avoids the word "murder" claiming that the truth and reconciliation commission should investigate only the truly "irreparable cases"), and then is ironically picked up by Paulina herself claiming that rape is as irreparable for the victim as death. This motif is repeated again and again in Dangor's novel, where Lydia reflects on the impossibility of undoing rape, which is an irrevocable act like murder, and tells her husband that neither he nor the archbishop Tutu presiding the reconciliation commission, would never understand her because they were not raped themselves.

This novel also has a direct allusion to Dorfman's play *Death and the Maiden* with its central metaphor of Shubert's D Minor string quartet, opening the possibility of problematizing the so called humanist democratic culture or "civilization", in the words of the doctor-torturer in Dorfman's play. In the hospital Lydia listens to the records brought by her husband and finds out that all of them are joyless, including Shubert's *Death and the Maiden*. Is it by chance that this musical piece appears in Dangor's novel? Certainly not. Why then would Lydia think looking at Shubert's disk brought to her ward that "her husband is sinister without knowing it" [Dangor, 2001, 122]. This destabilizing of the habitual meanings is linked to the accent on the darker and repressive sides of the normative Western model, which invariably dehumanizes the rape victims, turning them into merely biological dispensable lives.

The leitmotif of all narratives of political sexual violence and succeeding traumas is the suicide or its symbolic reenactment. The raped woman automatically traverses the boundary between the human and the subhuman. Besides she becomes a being dreaming of death. And the bitter fruit conceived at this moment, paradoxically saves her from the suicide because the maternal instinct turns out to be stronger than her humiliation and shame. Deprived of even such a fruit Paulina is doomed.

In this sense it is interesting to analyze the scene of Lydia and Silas quarrel after his accidental meeting with Dubois. It ends with Lydia's hospitalization as a result of her masked suicide attempt. The corporeal memory of violence and the typical Dangorian juggling of gender roles comes forward. Here it is not expressed

as an erotic subtext but rather through the fact that the woman is trying to explain her trauma and tragedy to her husband using the language of predictable stereotypes which is the only parole he is able to understand. For this purpose she sips flat beer from his bottle (that is literally takes in hops – the bitter fruit that beer is made of), somehow appropriating through this bitter taste a male role in order to speak to Silas like a man. Doing this Lydia in fact humiliates and objectifies herself as a woman and blames her husband not for his lack of feeling (this she would do only in her personal diary not meant for someone's eyes) but for his lack of manliness: "If you were a real man, you would have killed him on the spot <...> He took your woman, he fucked your wife <...> I became his property"[ibid., 17]. The succeeding dance of the barefoot Lydia on the deliberately broken beer glass is a complex form of transference from the failed murder of Dubois and the mental picture of his streaming blood to Lydia's own quite real bleeding feet.

Meg Samuelson even accused Dangor in not giving Lydia a voice, not being able to take her position, claiming that he wrote a story not about the victim's suffering, but about male honor and revenge whereas women remain totally dehumanized [Samuelson]. Therefore there is an epigraph from the novel by another South African writer Nadine Gordimer *My Son's Story* (2012), in which the main character Aila resembles Lydia in many ways yet ultimately makes a different choice – she asserts herself in the form of participation in the underground political activism.

Decolonizing "Death and the Maiden"

Death and the maiden motif is obviously linked with sexist stereotypes of sexually insatiable women and with typical for androcentric civilization misogyny and repressed sexuality combined with devout religiosity and purism, projecting all violent and perverse forms of behavior onto women, announcing them to be the real causes of violence and even accusing women in being able to experience pleasure while being raped. This motif is repeated many times, offending the victim many years after the rape. The daughter of the main character in *Grbavica* is a female version of the bitter fruit who accuses her mother in promiscuity before she learns the real story of her birth. Doctor Miranda accuses the tortured Paulina in awakening a

beast in him, justifying his atrocity by the fact that women in his view can experience sexual pleasure when they are raped. The White rapist Du Bois in Dangor's novel would add racist stereotypes to the patriarchal ones calling Lydia a black cunt, enjoying the rape, whereas her husband Silas would be afraid of her cries, unable to differentiate between the unhuman sounds of post-verbal humiliation and the carnal pleasure.

Death and the maiden narrative clearly demonstrates one of the main defects of modernity – the dehumanizing of the enemy/victim and avoiding the responsibility for the enemy's death or torture by means of various rhetorical figures and empty shells such as human rights, patriotism and spirituality. Franz Hinkelammert called this a mechanism of inversion of human rights and proved that the very idea of human rights carried the possibility of the judicial asymmetry – the rights of one group of people were asserted at the expense of another group and the spilled blood tarnished the victim and not the murderer [Hinkelammert, 2004].

David Luban calls this principle a fascist one and points out that "ideologically fascism glorifies violence and cruelty <...> projecting onto its victims the fascist's own reservoir of repressed vileness. In that way, it morally justifies the unthinkable. The more brutal the desires, the more their objects deserve brutality < ...> And the proof is that they arouse uncivilized desires in civilized men" [Luban, 1998, 130]. The logic described here is a realization of coloniality of being and gender, whereas fascism – according to the famous Aime Cesaire's saying, is merely a colonialism brought into Europe – a local manifestation of this dehumanizing tendency, which is manifested in its utmost form in relation to racialized and colonized people. Nelson Maldonado-Torres expressed this idea in a vivid form: "While in war there is murder and rape, in the hell of the colonial world murder and rape become day to day occurrences and menaces. "Killability" and "rapeability" are inscribed into the images of the colonial bodies<...>The Black man is depicted as an aggressive sexual beast who desires to rape women, particularly White. The Black woman, in turn, is seen as always already sexually available to the raping gaze of the White and as fundamentally promiscuous" [Maldonado-Torrez, 2007, 255].

Death and the maiden archetype carries an encrypted form of the Eve's myth of the temptress who had given humanity both shame and mortality. This motif is

transformed in the Northern European visual arts from the 16th century on, into an almost obscene narrative of the maiden seducing Death. That is why in Dorfman's play Shubert's string quartet acquires an additional highly problematic meaning. For Paulina this music is associated with civilization, culture, enlightenment, and beauty, whereas the playing of Shubert's quartet during her rape and humiliation deprives the heroine of any pleasure from listening to this music in the future. But in Luban's idea, this civilization itself is highly problematic as it continues to uphold such narratives as death and the maiden. This is a civilization grounded in fact in a justification of violence. Hence the image of the swamp – a shaky and unstable ground, a primordial abyss, a Freudain "Id", a reminder of the womb. Dr. Miranda feels that he is plunging into this swamp, as his humanistic principles are replaced with a cold "scientific" interest and a sexual arousal as he starts to rape Paulina [Dorfman, 1994, 59].

To forget and forgive, or a multilayered betrayal

The main dilemma of all works in question is the opposition between the inadequate official justice and the tramped interests and dignity of the victims of political rape whose possible revenge remains outside of law. Forgive and forget is the recipe of Paulina's and Lydia's husbands Gerardo and Silas working in truth and reconciliation commissions in Chile and South Africa respectively, the two optimists or maybe conformists, working on "reconciling the irreconcilable" [Dangor, 2001, 29] and ready to make unsavory compromises under the guise of moderation and impartiality, exchanging democracy for the amnesty of apartheid criminals. Dangor sarcastically points out that his character instead of the black-and-white moral oppositions was an adherent of a "gray shadowy morality" [ibid., 165]. But this forgetting and forgiving, and later rehabilitation of the torturers, who are manipulating Eichmann's style arguments from Hannah Arendt's *Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil* (1963), in order to justify their cruelty – is not only a compromise necessary for pushing the society forward, but also a betrayal of concrete people – in this case, both heroines who refuse to forget and forgive and for whom the rape is not an abstract infringement upon the honor and property, but a totally real hell, pain and humiliation, including its very corporeal forms.

Yet, the theme of betrayal is enfolded at several levels including the most intimate level of spouses' relations. Male characters in Dorfman's play and Dangor's novel are not simply cowards and flyweights, but also manipulative egotists. They are interested only in their own hurt feelings and not in what the rape victims had to go through. Both distance themselves from this trauma, persuading everyone around that it is better that way for their wives. Gerardo did not even ask Paulina what kind of torture was performed on her until the critical moment when she captured doctor Miranda. Silas who had almost witnessed Lydia's rape, even tried to drown out her screams with his own cries and later avoided touching her in disgust which in the end acted as the main boundary forever cutting her from her husband and allowing her to make a choice in favor of the bitter fruit of rape – her future son Michael. The spouses' mutual deafness and the lack of any communication between them are largely a result of this betrayal and the subsequent complete loneliness of the rape victims. In Dangor's novel this motif is expressed through the diary as the only space where one can confide his/her most intimate trials (Lydia's diary, Ali Ali's diary, *Kafka's Diaries*). The main theme of Lydia's diary is the appropriation of her pain by other people [ibid., 127] and the accusation of the victims in being sinful.

In Žbanić's film the main character Esma cannot become a part of the community of rape victims – at the group therapy she is sitting separately and avoids any bodily contact with others, she is silent and stares directly into the camera when others close their eyes and give themselves up to the musical catharsis. Her everyday speech is phony in the sense that she never discusses anything that she really cares about. And as all rape victims, Esma longs to tell about her tragedy, but her painful muteness dominates for a long time, she is waiting for the empathy yet at the same time curls up into a ball and sticks her spines out refusing to be pitied. Only her confrontation with Sara, the physical "victory" over her daughter and the finally blurted out words that Sara is not a daughter of the Muslim martyr but rather a Chetnik's bastard, set free Esma's ability to speak of the past.

Finally the theme of betrayal is expressed literally in the fact that both Silas and Gerardo are not faithful to their wives. The rape victims also become the victims of infidelity on the part of those who initially were the reason of violence. So the identification of husbands and rapists, along with corporeal-physiological reasons

of projecting the image of the torturer onto all men and the ineradicable embodied memory of the violent penetration, is accompanied by the quite rational argument intensifying the victim's moral right to revenge and reciprocal violence. The brilliant lawyer Gerardo, so ardently advocating equality in considering the interests of all parties involved, knows that his girlfriend Paulina is being tortured, and cheats on her at the same time. In Dangor's book Silas's affair with his companion in arms not only jeopardizes the unsuspecting Lydia and Michael, but happens at the moment when his lover's husband is in prison, which in Lydia's moral system only aggravates the lovers' guilt.

The monster's visit

Anna Akhmatova predicted the emergence of the post-dependence syndrome in her 1956 words about the two Russias which would soon look into each other's eyes – the Russia which imprisoned and the Russia which was put into prison [Chukovskaya, 2007]. In the analyzed works we see what can come out of such an encounter "when victim and perpetrator inhabit a shared place as fellow citizens, coequals in the eyes of the law" [Günne, 2010, 171]. In the end of the play Dorfman does not destroy the fabric of reconciliation necessary to move forward and his Paulina does not kill her torturer only to see him later at a chamber concert. In *Bitter Fruit* it is literally the bitter fruit of interracial rape – Lydia's son Michael – who becomes the instrument of the murderous revenge – hinting at the impossibility of any reconciliation and testifying to the "mortgaged future" of South Africa as a nation violated by history.

In the case of *Grbavica* this dilemma is expressed in the efforts to build a national or religious identity and a sincere local patriotism at least in the younger generation of Bosnians in spite of all unrepressed traumas, open wounds and unresolved everyday problems. The aggressive and negatively charged Sara attempts a symbolic suicide similarly to Lydia (she shaves her hair which, as her mother said, she inherited from her father), yet at the same time she resurrects herself through this act hesitantly learning to love her mother with a new understanding of her own and her mother's condition, attempting to join the kids' community in the bus, singing

together a patriotic song about Sarajevo. In contrast with Sara who is looking for her identity in her native Sarajevo, Lydia's son Michael carries an alien forcefully imposed identity and therefore chooses an absolutely rational and cold way of an independent construction of his new self grounded in a consciously selected Sufi basis which the author mistakenly associates with terrorism. Having killed Du Bois and having been born anew, Michael chooses a new Muslim name for himself – Nur, meaning light. It is not a chance that he is heading back to India tracing the steps of Silas's father Ali Ali (Hamed Chothia), who is not even his blood relative, thus denouncing both Lydia and Silas, apartheid and its communist opposition.

The totalitarian system requires and receives the absolute fidelity and paradoxical solidarity of victims and torturers. Those raped by the system easily collaborate with it for a rare breath of fresh air and a rare illusion of power over those who are even weaker – women, children, politically repressed. In Dangor's case we find a deadly sick society which got rid of the apartheid but retained a strange aftertaste expressed in the logic: "We are not well, but it is fine as long as the Whites are also suffering". In the perverse logic of German's film a similar rationale is used by the criminals raping the general in the wagon: let him suffer and then we will be happy. One of them finishes the scene of the atrocious torture with the words "How nice, f**k!" This is not merely an expression of his sexual satisfaction but also a joy from the humiliation of the representative of the elite.

The opposite side of these metastases of violence is a dehumanizing fear making people erase their identities and invent new ones to survive the Soviet/colonial system. This sick power often acquires sexually violent forms and resonates with (post)colonial psychic deviations analyzed by Fanon. There is no way out of this system except into a non-systematic exteriority abundantly represented in Soviet and post-soviet fiction and cinema in many lumpenized characters – the generation of cleaners, homeless, drunks, stockers or train conductors as in the case of German's general who refuses to come back to his 'successful' life and opts for eternal transit, in-between-ness, rootlessness in his huge and enigmatic country resembling an endless empty field where everyone is alien to each other.

Structurally almost all of the analyzed works use one and the same element pushing the narrative forward. It is the visit of the monster from the past which turns

on the work of memory and revenge. Because "history has a remembering process of its own, one that gives life to its imaginary monsters" [Dangor, 2001, 32]. This device is particularly dramatic in Dorfman's play, where Gerardo literally brings monster home with him. But in Dangor's narrative as well Silas's reminding of Du Bois for Lydia becomes a reiteration of violence: "I can't rest peacefully with both of you around, your bodies, your smells, even your sounds have become all mixed up. It's like he raped me on your behalf, so that one day I would live with him through you...He made you his instrument" [ibid., 123].

The monsters themselves are usually presented as disgusting and pitiful beings desperately claiming their innocence to save their lives and the remaining semblance of "honor", and never repenting. All of the analyzed authors reflect on this sad result even if they attempt to find more illusory variants of exodus for their characters. Thus, Lydia has gradually reacquired her sense of dignity but has continued to feel the double dictate of the humiliation and dehumanization both on the part of the rapist and on the part of her husband. Moreover they are merging in her perception and sensibility, when she refuses to take part in the hearings and publically accuse Du Bois, thus depriving Silas from the opportunity to play a courageous and stoic husband in fact remaining quite insensitive to her trauma. Du Bois on the contrary, without hesitating files an appeal for the public hearings, claiming his innocence in all rape and torture cases including Lydia's [ibid., 161] and thus reinstating once again the situation of lawlessness and lack of choice for Lydia even after the end of apartheid. Doctor Miranda up to the very end keeps insisting on his innocence and Paulina's fatal mistake, using the fact that she was blindfolded during the ordeal and therefore cannot remember anything but the voice and the sound of the music and these are quite unreliable recollections. In Dorfman's play the question of Miranda's guilt remains open till the end whereas in Polansky's film the accents are more obvious and the audience understands that he indeed is guilty. The same is true of the Moscow "Other theater" performance (2009) based on this work.

In the *Bitter Fruit* the meeting with the monster is a mirror situation of the one described in a Saint-Petersburg poet Olga Berggoltz's poem. She was tortured by the NKVD while being pregnant and as a result she lost her child. Many years later after Stalin's death Berggoltz met her torturer at some meeting. In contrast with

Du Bois who is afraid of revenge the NKVD torturer is not afraid of anything and approaches the poet himself with the words: "Olga Fyodorovna, do you remember me?" Berggoltz silently turns and walks away [Berggoltz, 2011], something which Lydia probably would like to do as well. The reason is the difference between the way the situation is seen by the victim herself, as anyone who went through torture would be never again able to trust people in general, and a more detached and objective stance of the victim's relatives, such as Gerardo and Silas.

The authors draw the attention to the disgusting bodily expressions of the torturers' and rapists' nature, testifying to their internal decay. The boding Du Bois with dandruff and false teeth, not particularly well off, judging by the items in his supermarket basket, a man with a "faint stench of decaying metabolism" – a sickening smell, which for almost twenty years has been cautiously sniffed by Lydia in her son Michael, similarly to Esma watching the possible signs of the alien presence in the blue eyes of her daughter Sara, the color of which she probably inherited from one of her mother's rapists. Du Bois has skin cancer, which marks this torturer as some stigma, he is doomed yet attempts to plead non guilty, fitfully grabbing his semblance of life.

Roberto Miranda in *Death and the Maiden* is humiliated by Paulina in a demonstratively corporeal way in her act of reciprocal sexual cruelty and a problematic change of gender roles – in this case – the roles of the torturer and the victim. In Polansky's film this theme is presented more clearly, intersecting with a more general link of sexuality and violence. In the imitation of sexual humiliation Paulina publically takes off her underwear and stuffs it into the doctor's mouth as a gag, bites off the wires on his ankles with her teeth, straddles him and takes him to the toilet herself to humiliate the doctor even more, discussing with Gerardo nonchalantly if they should rape Miranda with a broomstick. But ultimately Paulina is doomed as she is locked with her husband in their own little hell and also in the civilization of violence – both in the form of rape or/and in the form of betrayal.

Something similar but with a racialized post-apartheid shade we find in Dangor's novel, although he certainly offers a more optimistic culmination – having gone through twenty years of associating her husband with the rapist and the impossibility of breaking free from the civilization which disciplines women, Lydia abruptly

ends her marriage to experience sexual pleasure from a contact with a man for the first time in many years, an encounter not grounded in the sick logic of humiliation, suppression and betrayal.

In German's film several characters act as monsters in turn – the general's son who reported on his father, the general himself on several occasions before the arrest, minor characters through whom the violence of the system speaks, as this system is capable of violating anyone at any time using anything as its instrument. Finally, the negative-corporeal manifestations of monstrosity are expressed in the image of the dying Stalin, lying in his own excrement and farting in the face of unsightly death.

In *Grbavica* we also find the sickening aura of fear and pain around the victim who is carrying her monster inside herself and with herself unable to get rid of the posttraumatic syndrome. Moreover, Grbavica itself is a realm of memory, almost in Pierre Nora's sense [Nora], a memory which is not lovingly cherished but rather artificially destroyed and driven into silence and nothingness. However, the mute walls of the cheap socialist buildings, in Žbanić's words, betray "the presence of something unspoken and invisible, the strange feeling that you have when you are in a place that was marked by a big human suffering" [Žbanić]. Esmā's stooping figure, her demonstratively unfeminine sideways walk, her whole constrained and awkward body – all of these visual details as well as the abundance of Esmā's silent close ups (she is not yet able to reacquire her voice and rational words to tell about her pain, but is just staring directly into the camera never even blinking), hint the clueless audience at some psychological complex, depression, fear.

The film also has a telling title – Grbavica is not only a real suburb of Sarajevo, which went through a siege and later became a sadly known site of the Bosnian war prisoners camp, where thousands of women were systematically raped, but also a word meaning a woman with a hunch. The main character recollects corporeally her humiliation and pain, as she cringes every time when she finds herself in a physical closeness to a man or in a situation of a physical restraint.

In German's case as in *Grbavica*, there is no actual meeting with the monster, but the voice of the narrator who turns out to be the general's grown up son reflecting on the past from the present, is in fact that monster who is telling the story. This makes us realize that nothing has really changed and there is no difference between

the past and the present, that the nightmare has never ended with a happy-end and our lives are as fragile and precarious as before. German's last work *Hard to be a God* (2013) becomes an almost Fanonian reflection on the tragic universe and a tragic humankind refusing to grow up and take responsibility and therefore doomed to perish [Fanon, 1963, 307]. This theme is repeated in Žbanić's film – "a film about truth, a cosmic power necessary to progress, and very much needed by society in Bosnia and Herzegovina who must strive to reach maturity" [Žbanić, www].

The composition of the analyzed works is directly linked with a specific interpretation of time and narrative view point. Practically all victims of violence live in the present and by the present, in fact, they can survive only rejecting their past and avoiding thinking of the future. According to Culberston [Culbertson 1995], the semblance of life in the present, hides the real presence of the unfinished past in every minute of the rape victims' existence. Here we deal with a memory-knowledge, which is not locatable in time or easily narrated. As a result the traditional narrative forms make the embodied memory of physical violence become silent, as it cannot be expressed in their usual language. Such is Lydia, whereas Silas is repeatedly associated with the past of which the character are trying to get rid and Michael – with a quite problematic future. Such is Esma, sucked by the tyranny of the mundane. Yet the film does not have any traditional flashbacks taking us back to the scenes of violence, rape or torture. In Dorfman's play they are presented quite sparingly and exclusively in the characters' conversations and not on stage.

Dangor's chorus narrative has a complex and spiral composition turning into the divergent circles model at times. It is built around several key events, about which we learn many times in different interpretations, and usually not directly from the characters themselves, but through the author's omniscient retelling and reinterpretation, accentuating the lack of understanding of this or that event on the part of various characters. Thus the details of the old rape acquire additional overtones from Silas's recollection to Lydia's diary, from Michael's reflections to the voices of secondary characters who also happened to be linked with this tragic story. Dangor links various events in his novel according to associative principle, reminiscent of Proust, but in his case the palpable recollections are usually traumatic and unpleasant. As a result the author creates an impression of the character's real internal monologue or

even a stream of consciousness although in reality it is a much more traditional third-person narrative. The novel's complex and thickening spiral is gradually saturated with more and more additional characters and mysteries: first they are introduced with just one lapidary phrase or a hint and many pages later the reader finally learns what was it all about, adding the missing details from various characters' accounts thus putting the narrative puzzle together. In Dorfman's play such an effect would be impossible due to the specificity of drama as such and the author has to choose a more linear and intimate narrative. This effect is preserved in Polansky's sparsely populated movie as well.

Family breakdown

In post-apartheid, post-dictatorship, post-totalitarian and post-ethno-conflict contexts presented in Dangor's, Dorfman's, German's and Žbanić's works, political violence destroys the institute of the family grounded in empathy and understanding, emotional closeness and love, replacing normal human relations with hatred, betrayal, a perverse pleasure from one's enemy's pain, and sometimes a sick incestuous tone, as in the case of Dangor whose novel is full of incestuous motifs linked with the sense of guilt and a rejection of the apartheid system of violence. Incest is present in the relationship of Michael and his aunt Mireille, in the incestuous kiss Lydia gave to her son, the kiss which is also "indelible, a gesture impossible to withdraw" [Dangor, 2001, 166], like a rape. Finally, incest is played out in the liaison of Michael's mulatta friend Vinu and her White father who also becomes later the victim of Michael's revenge. Here Dangor once again reflects on the South-African stereotype of the colored woman inviting the incestuous rape – the "double sin of the doubly damned" [ibid., 240].

Everywhere we meet disjoined and collapsing families with morally and spiritually handicapped children – the products of the repressive regimes and sick societies. In these families everyone listens to his/her own music in earphones, reads his/her own books and lives in his/her own room, taking sleeping pills to survive. The bitter fruit of rape Michael brings only murder and suffering to people around. Paulina is incapable of having children and remains frigid because of the electric tortures, hence her marriage brings only the metastases of guilt, repentance and ha-

tred. Lydia after the birth of her bitter fruit also "forbids" her body any subsequent pregnancies. The narrator in German's film is the son of the general who reports on his father to the secret police. This grim chain is interrupted somewhat by Esma's and Sara's story and the reason lies in the specific women's view on the political violence, trauma, and memory in Žbanić's film.

Women's view on the sexual political violence, or an enemy inside your own body

Rape and either forced pregnancy as the most ancient form of genocide (Dangor), or torture, deliberately meant to sterilize (Dorfman) – are not simply examples of human rights violation, and not only political crimes but something rooted in the fundamental sexual difference of the male and female, as theorized by Luce Irigaray [Irigaray, 2013]. The degree of intimacy in heterosexual act is always much higher for a woman than for a man who makes love outside of his body and not inside, while rape intensifies the always existing vulnerability of penetration a hundred times. In the women's interpretation of violence, even with additional political overtones, at a deeper level there is no male stereotypes dictate, associated with the transference of the accent from the victim to men: those of shame, abstract male or national pride, the necessity of revenge. Instead of that in the center of attention is the suffering woman herself, a being with an unerasable bodily memory "of them [penises] being there [up our fannies]. Even the ones we never invited in" [Dangor, 2001, 16].

To understand and feel this body-politics of being and of perception is possible in its entirety only for those who themselves went through the ordeal similar to the one experienced by the general in German's film, and most importantly, who were able to conceptualize this experience. It is not a chance that the director does not show us such a radical change. The viewer is forced to look at the raped general from above, led by the cold and objective camera eye, almost mingling with the NKVD officers' viewpoint. We seem to be looking from their perspective at the miserable man crawling on the frozen earth striving to cool off his aching ass in the dirty snowy pool. He is completely devoid of any human characteristics, which is precisely the goal of political rape.

The exaggerated affectivity of victims and the importance of the embodied memory and embodied knowledge, transcending the verbal world incapable of bringing catharsis any more, and hence, accentuating the non-verbal sensations – smells, sounds, tastes – is expressed most graphically in the leitmotif of the rape fruit (a permanent reminder of the rapist) and a contradictory mother's attitude to this child – a struggle of maternal instinct and rejection, a mixture of pain and guilt. In Dangor's novel Lydia cannot at first understand if she is ready to keep the child and for her everything is determined by the smell [Dangor, 2001, 128] – one of the most primordial if not animal instinctive feelings building a powerful connection between the mother and the son [ibid., 120]. Lydia keeps checking if Michael smells like illness and decay – that is, like Du Bois. She starts with reflecting on the possible murder of the unwanted baby (e.g. strangling it), but only up to a moment when she picks the baby for the first time. In the South-African repressive system race still dominates, so that the birth of the bitter fruit of violence first of all brings a negative connotation of the complicity of the raped woman with the Whites as a particular form of betrayal.

The main character of *Grbavica* also tried to get rid of the baby which was the fruit of violence but in her case the visual and auditory perception is more important in making her change her decision. Having heard her baby crying and having seen the little unwanted daughter for the first time, Esma realized that the girl was the most beautiful thing she had seen in months. Her subsequent relation to Sara is firmly grounded in a complete dedication and service. Later the sounds of the *Ilahija* – a traditional Bosnian religious song, with which the film starts and ends, give her back the ability to talk, be empathic, and sensitive to other people's pain. This ultimately life-asserting basis is what makes this film different from Dangor's, Dorfman's and German's views. In an interview Žbanić confessed that having given birth to a baby conceived in love, she could not imagine the situation of those women who lived next to her in *Grbavica* and who were raped, got pregnant and gave birth to the bitter fruit of this violence. The film's script was written in between breast-feeding her daughter and could emerge only out of love and never out of cold hatred or trampled honor.

The specific women's stance brings a relative lack of the reciprocal violence as a way of revenge. Neither Esma nor Sara would take vengeance on the rapists, as Michael or the going mad Paulina. Finally an important difference is the accentuating of the

unity grounded in sisterhood and mother-daughter close relations. Thus Sara and Esma, presenting an ideal, in Luce Irigaray's view, family model consisting of the mother and the daughter [Irigaray, 1993], rather than Dangor's Lydia and Michael with their psychoanalytic incestuous overtones, power games and obviously low level of empathy and understanding, are capable of transcending the trauma of violence, of healing and creating their world anew in spite of everything. It is not an ideal path as it starts with the gun pointed by the daughter to her mother but it is a path that is at least possible. In my view, this women's version of the interpretation of rape, trauma, embodied memory and transcending is able to lead beyond the vicious circle of violence to a state and a form of active self-identification that a Columbian intellectual and artist Adolfo Alban-Achinte called re-existence [Alban-Achinte, 2006]. But in this case the previously disenfranchised and mute subjects – through actively reworking the sounds, smells and tastes of this world – remake specific forms of interaction, of being, of perception, of building their re-existence anew and in spite of violence, making a step from the negative model of anger and revenge to a creation of something different, taking its own path and removing the contradictions of the world and its perception by the humans.

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Колониальность памяти: насилие-травма-покаяние-отмщение в нарративах постзависимости

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Аннотация

В статье анализируется феномен колониальности памяти и возможности освобождения от посттравматического синдрома, как они проявляются у жертв сексуально-политического насилия в обществах, отмеченных разными видами несвободы – апартеидом, диктатурой, тоталитаризмом, этно-геноцидом. Автор фокусируется на том, как колониальность памяти отражается в литературе, драме, кино, создаваемых уже в период постзависимости, которая совершенно не обязательно ведет к покаянию. На примере творчества писателей, драматургов и кинорежиссеров из различных регионов в статье доказывается, что мужские варианты решения данной проблематики редко выходят за рамки вечно воспроизводящегося

круга насилия, оставаясь в тисках андроцентрических стереотипов и дегуманизации жертв. Женское же видение этой проблемы дает надежду на возможность превосхождения насилия, что связано со спецификой телесной памяти, акцентирующей невербальные и нерациональные формы и пути исцеления и ре-экзистенции.

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Ключевые слова

Колониальность памяти, воплощенная память, политическое и сексуальное насилие, травма, состояние постзависимости, архетип смерти и девы, покаяние, забвение, отмщение.