Critical Melancholy: Women and the National I

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The two talks I'm going to be presenting to you are related to the theme of Critical Melancholia, and the term melancholia comes from psychoanalysis. In the first talk, I will explain to you what I mean by the term critical melancholia, and how it relates to, and contributes to an analysis of, women and the national. I'm separating out these two points--relates to, on the one hand; contributes to an analysis of, on the other. This is because I am not simply going to present on the one hand, a theory; and on the other, an application of it. I am going to explain how women and the national are constitutive of a form of psychoanalysis; and I'm then going to show how and why psychoanalysis is an important tool for analyzing the relationship between women and the national. The first of these talks will address the intellectual's melancholic disposition through psychoanalytic considerations of *Hamlet* in Northern Europe and in Southern Africa. The second will analyze largely visual representations of *women of algiers in their apartments* and the relationship between visual and literary representation (or designation) on the one hand; and political representation (or arbitration) on the other. How melancholia is manifested as a critical political tool for women and the national will be a topic that runs through both presentations. Implicit in both these talks is a theory of exemplarity and framing--the idea that any supplement, whether it be a framework (that apparently protects and anchors an argument) or an example (which apparently stands as a microcosm of the larger theory) functions more to damage, undo, or pose questions to any framework or theory under consideration. This is a melancholic understanding of the supplement.

I want to begin by explaining the term "melancholia." It is not a term used in psychological circles anymore, and may therefore appear somewhat elusive, but I will

briefly explain the concept in Freudian terms so you understand how it was developed, and how it does and does not resemble its contemporary equivalent: depression.

Freud developed the idea of melancholia in relation to mourning. In his 1917 essay, "Mourning and Melancholia," he presented a form of unsuccessful mourning as melancholia. The concept was associated with loss. In the early stages, the melancholic and the mourner seem quite similar. Both are withdrawn from the world, both feel incapable of love, both feel horribly dejected. These feelings extend over a long period--a couple of years of severe symptoms of this sort are not uncommon after a loss. The mourner gradually "succeeds" in mourning by slowly detaching herself from the lost object, assimilating, or introjecting, parts of it to her, and freeing herself to love something or someone else.

The melancholic, however does not mourn successfully. This is not least because unlike the mourner, the melancholic cannot identify the lost object as her loss is at least partly unconscious. I say at least partly, because it is possible that the melancholic knows, for example, that her lover has died and that she is therefore in mourning. But she may not know that she has feelings of hatred towards the lover that remain not only unresolved but unconscious. The loss may also be entirely unconscious with no conscious association at all with its cause.

Freud briefly descibes the symptoms of melancholia as feelings of worthlessness, characterized particularly by self-criticism. This may well lead the analyst to feel astonished at the patient's shrewd powers of self-perception, until it becomes clear that the patient is criticising characteristics of the loved one and not the self. Drawing on a theory of narcissism, in which the melancholic's lost object must be narcissistically conceived as constituting a part of the self (and not being someone or something conceiveable as an absolute other distinct from the self), he suggests that the self is at war with the lost object, now a part of the self. This civil war, as it were, occurs because it is too difficult to stop mourning and therefore release the lost object: this civil war is melancholia.

The "critical agency" identified as characteristic of the melancholic becomes very important for Freud. It constitutes the basis for his concept of the super-ego which he theorized in his 1923 essay, "The Ego and the Id." In that essay, he describes the way in which conflict becomes internalised. In fact, lost figures, like grandparents, are internalised in order to ward off conflict or absolute loss. Through this internalisation, the lost objects constitute a part of the self. They become, in fact, the controlling moral fiber of the self Freud theorized as the superego. The lost object, or person, has become assimilated to the extent that the principles associated with the grandparents or parents have been internalised. The child, once scolded by the grandparents, now censors her own behavior. This critical agency is not, however, melancholic, even though Freud has taken his idea of critical agency from his work on melancholia. The "lost object" has effectively been assimilated even as it often works in opposition to the subject's other desires.

Now I've explained the basics of the Freudian concept of melancholia, I want to turn to the idea of *colonial melancholy* which is something I see emerging in Europe's colonies as a critical resistance to imperial rule and to state nationalism.

Colonial melancholy is a term I adapt first from the work of the colonial psychiatrist, Antoine Porot, who worked in Algiers, and who determined that Algerian Muslim men suffered from what he called "pseudo-melancholy." Whereas melancholy theorized in European psychiatry usually led to introspection and moral growth, Porot considered the melancholy quite distinct from that found in Europeans, or indeed in Berbers. In his estimation, Algerian Muslims' melancholy gave rise to violent behavior. He attributed this to physical difference in the brain. He wrote the bulk of his work prior to the revolution in Algeria, and paved the way for other discussions about violence, brutality and what he would he would call "savagery." As the anti-colonial activist and psychiatrist Frantz Fanon noted, Porot's thesis was not so much evolutionarily (like Freud's anthropological work) as congenitally rationalized. Muslims, unlike Kabyles, he argued, were constitutionally violent, and prone to a

form unknown in Europe. This "pseudo-melancholy" caused them to kill rather than to turn to introspection and suicide more common among melancholic Westerners. Porot was subsequently responsible, during the revolution, for advising the French on how to deal with questions of justice and the penal code when such psychiatric conditions were concerned. In spite of the fact that he did not believe in evolutionary development (whether Lamarckian or Darwinian), he suggested nonetheless that penal sanctions could educate the North African Muslim by exposing him to the value of, and respect for human life. He could not imagine that rebellion and violence could be thought as political protest in which the "moral responsibility" generally associated with introspection could be directed outward into organized protest. Colonial psychiatry was clearly an instrument of oppression and control, and it demonstrated almost entire misunderstanding of native peoples. It also, however, documented the manner in which colonialism and nationalism molded selfhood, health and pathology as well as ideas about them.

I will try to understand the interruptive nature of pseudo-melancholy, and the violent behavior associated with mental illness among colonised peoples, as a form of political protest rather than simply as moral degeneracy. That is not to say that this political protest follows a teleology of its own unencumbered by the psychical processes of melancholia. On the contrary, I see this political revolutionary violence as a form of melancholia in response to the loss of an Ideal. The Ideal, in this context, is the right of subjecthood and the right not to be exploited; both of which lay in the rights of man that the French in Algeria ostensibly endorsed.

In his important essay, "The North African Syndrome," Fanon wrote about the "pseudo-pathology" and the "morbidity" of the Algerian Arab, to whom he refers as a "pseudo-invalid." He referred the imprecise symptoms of the Arab when he comes to hospital, and the reasons for the French doctors' responses to this. Patients, he wrote, often come to the hospital complaining of general pain, feeling ill, and commonly, the sense that they will soon die. Repeated encounters with the patients do not necessarily

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lead to further clarification of the symptoms, a factor that led Fanon, and some other doctors, to diagnose psychosomatic rather than physical lesion of some sort.   Fanon situated himself somewhat ambiguously in relation to colonial psychiatrists whoclaimed that the situational workplace is irrelevant because the North African does not work, his sex life is irrelevant because he is a violent rapist, and she is a prostitute, relations are irrelevant because he has no real relationships but only "bumps," and tension was irrelevant because he has no inner life or introspection. While criticizing colonial doctors who were plagued by the racist politics of the situation, he implicitly offered different explanations. One was that the North African faked illness in order, for example, to be treated to a warm hospital bed when it was cold. Another was doctors' failure to interact appropriately with their patients, patronizingly addressing them in the familiar and disrespectful second person singular (*tutoyer*) thus introducing a hierarchical relationship between doctor and patient. And a third was that illnesses were psychosomatic functions of colonial affect, because of expatriation, torture, or cultural confusion.

In the "North African Syndrome," it is not always clear with whom Fanon identifies.   Pseudo-illness could be understood equally as one that is deliberately faked by the "pseudo-patient," or one, like a pseudo-pregnancy, that is psychosomatically experienced as real in spite of there being no physical basis for the symptoms. It could also be understood as an illness as yet unrecognized by the medical profession in which generalized psychological pain is "demetaphorized," we could say, into metonymies of concretized locations.

Fanon associates the pseudo-illness of Arab morbidity with expatriation. If the Arab is a morbid figure, convinced (or claiming) that he is dying rather than visiting the doctor with a specific health complaint, Fanon diagnosed this generalized pain as a symptom more than a deliberately elusive medical complaint designed to confound doctors. He looks to psychoanalysis to understand this morbidity:

(T)hink of all those who lead a life without a future in their own country and

who refuse fine positions abroad. What is the good of a fine position if it does not culminate in a family, in something that can be called home.

Psychoanalytical science considers expatriation to be a morbid phenomenon.

In which it is perfectly right.

Because the Arab will settle happily neither in France, nor in Algeria, he is morbid. Having been "taught" to be French, Algerians are now resented for being in "'our' country." Addressing the Frenchman, he adds "(Y)ou know perfectly well you rob him of something, that something for which not so long ago you were ready to give up everything, even your life." If Fanon reminds the French that not so long ago, in World War II, it was they who were laying down their life for national sovereignty and freedom, now he places them in the position of an occupying power in an unconditional condemnation. Arab morbidity is thus linked to a loss of both the French ideal, and a sense of home.

Porot's pseudo-melancholy, understood through this mournful morbidity, suggests indeed a different form of colonial melancholy linked very closely to national belonging. Pseudo-melancholy, linked to morbidity implied a response that was moral and political, with the extroverted homicidal response, that was coupled with an unaccounted for introverted morbidity, linked to the political and psychical quandaries that were a consequence of expatriation.

In order to expand this point, Freud's theorization of morbidity, disavowal and expatriation linked morbidity to expatriation. His disturbance of memory on the Acropolis, reported some years after the initial experience in the "Open Letter to Romain Rolland," was clearly centered on filial piety and national affiliation, with concerns about passports, legitimacy of citizenship, cultural roots, national rape, and criticism of the power of the State all being analyzed. The disturbance of memory causes a disturbance also in a continuous sense of national history documented through the glories of the state or indeed the Empire.

Octave Mannoni reminds us that it is in the open letter that Freud formulates

the concept of disavowal, a concept that will later contribute to the concept of the splitting of the ego as a mechanism of defense that he theorizes in exile, expatriated from Nazi Vienna. If "The Disturbance of Memory" is a symptomatic and introverted response to increased insecurity for the Jewish Freud, "The Splitting of the Ego" is a more directly mournful, and morbid response to expatriation and impending death in the face of real dangers to himself, his children, and to the discipline of psychoanalysis he had created. Figures like Porot disavowed political rebellion, protest and indeed moral outrage at colonial oppression, formulating a contorted concept of pseudo-melancholy in its place.

We could suggest that this form of melancholy, similar to that of "Westerners" losing a person or an idea, or experiencing expatriation, works slightly differently from the blueprint with which we have been presented in the forms of psychoanalysis taken up by colonial psychiatry and psychology. We could say, in fact, that this was a deliberate and conscious escape from moral responsibility, "manifestly and abjectly disingenuous." This is effectively the accusation leveled against them by Fanon in "The North African Syndrome."

Morbidity replaces disavowal among the expatriated Arab population of Algeria, and the melancholic moral responsibility is played out in the political field of injustice. Different national status and possibilities of affiliation give form to a different sense of self. This is not simply an existential rebirth out of the Sartrian split, that is between a thesis and an antithesis experienced ontologically breaking way for a new man. Melancholic morbidity rather manifests itself through affect, and "self-" criticism, where that "self-" itself is uncertainly conceived out of an expatriated sense of home, origin, and source of birth.

Melancholy and melancholia are critical terms that I will refashion and endorse here as analytic tools for critiquing colonialism and its aftermath: the imperium of neo-colonial late capitalism. The "critical agency" theorized by Freud in relation to melancholia is my guide in this retheorization. But I extend the term

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through Nicolas Abraham and Maria Torok. Unlike Freud, Abraham and Torok, taking their lead from Sandor Ferenczi, drew an analytic distinction between "incorporation" and "introjection." Introjection refers to the full psychical assimilation of a lost object or abstraction. They see introjection (rather like Freud's "mourning") as an ongoing process that allows for the assimilation of events in one's life ("lost" through the passage of time) into a self-generating life-story, rather like a nourishing food that is assimilated to the body. Incorporation, on the other hand, refers to unsuccessful mourning, and is described as a kind of swallowing whole. It causes a breakdown of signification. This breakdown is a block to assimilation and manifests itself linguistically in terms of silence or *demetaphorization*. It can be carried through generations as a phantom that haunts speech, unbeknownst to its carrier, as if a thing that cannot be narcissistically assimilated exists within the person anyway. For Abraham and Torok, the work of psychoanalysis is to identify the phantom, and bring it back into unhindered signification through assimilation.

In my view, the latter part of the argument (that constitutes the aim of a curative psychoanalysis) is inadequate to the task of social analysis. Abraham and Torok's work in the clinic may be quite a different case, but for the analysis of social issues, it seems to me to be against the spirit of Freudian analysis to assume that phantoms can simply be discovered and then assimilated. Like Jacques Derrida, I find the analytic distinction between introjection and incorporation (and indeed between mourning, pathological mourning, and melancholia) of great importance, and yet the purported "success" of the work of mourning seems tenuous. What I mean by this is that there will always be some remainder of the lost object. Abraham and Torok's theorization, nonetheless, allows for a more extensive understanding of the work of mourning as a whole, and assimilation as a form of narcissism that I will link to the dominant fiction of nationalism. Their concept of *demetaphorization*, theorized as a symptom of melancholia, allows for an understanding of the material affect of loss as it manifests itself in language.

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In the following section of this paper, I will discuss how these ideas of melancholia relate to critical work of the modern intellectual, and how this psychoanalytic category helps us to understand women's relationship to the colonial and the national. But what is important to remember is that melancholia brings about a form of disorientation, and therefore a form of dislocation. Remember that I have called the state of melancholia a form of civil war that almost splits one from oneself. Freud's own melancholic response to the loss of national affiliation, and thus also of power, was eventually acted out in the form of a lament, that is, in a form of melancholia rather than one of disavowal. His melancholic response as he sat on the Acropolis clearly narrating his own fears about anti-semitic violence and the power of a passport emerged as affect in the theory of disavowal, and in "a whole series of more or less clearly pathological methods on the part of the ego," that are attributed to a dislocation. Contemporaries of Porot in the fields of colonial psychiatry and psychology, like Octave Mannoni working in Madagascar, or Frantz Fanon working in Algeria, experienced some of this dislocation first hand. Mannoni shuttled back and forth between Madagascar and France. Fanon went from Martinique to France and then on to Algeria from where he was exiled at the end of his life. What Albert Memmi called Fanon's "impossible life" was marked by an inability to come to terms with his home, Martinique. The process of sublimating the confusion into physical dislocation led to his very important political work in the decolonization of Africa. Albert Memmi's dislocation from the Jewish Tunisian ghetto to hard labor camps during WW2 and subsequently to France caused him to attribute great significance to the "portraits" of types and peoples, the complex lives and affiliations that emerge in the tonalities of representation. It is this question of dislocation that we will pursue here, considering the term in various senses: physical geographical dislocation, psychical dislocation, and political dislocation. These forms of dislocation are from the communal to the individual; from the tribe to detribilisation; and from melancholia to mourning.

The theme of dislocation has been central to psychoanalysis on the most basic level: that of questioning the centeredness of the ego, the various psychical planes that constitute mental life, and the splitting in subjectivity in Freud that was later emphasized by Lacan. Recently, some have suggested that the theme of dislocation makes psychoanalysis a particularly Jewish science, and the father of that science, Freud, a wandering Jew. If we are to take this assessment of psychoanalysis seriously, however, a related question arises immediately. I am concerned with historicizing psychoanalysis by displacing it from its institutional and political origin to its colonial outreach, and given this, have to examine why the narrative of the wandering Jew occurs at different historical junctures. Freud's exile was very definitely caused by Nazi violence against Jews. I see this, however, not simply as the exile of a Jew, but specifically in terms of modern exile that placed Nazi aggression in the context of Europe in the world. The messianic story of Jewish exile was brought into terms of modern nation-statehood. The particular moment of exile necessitates putting the idea of the wandering Jew into the context of European nation-state formation through the imperial enterprise.

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Some thirty years ago, Carl Schorske wrote that Freudian psychoanalysis exemplified political disempowerment. His analysis centered on the early text, "The Interpretation of Dreams," disclosing the political drama encrypted in the dreams Freud used as the bedrock of his study. Political disempowerment arose with the historical increase of anti-Semitism during Freud's lifetime. For Schorske, politics in "The Interpretation of Dreams" became "an epiphenomenal manifestation of psychic forces" that showed "the counterpolitical ingredient in the origins of psychoanalysis." Schorske noted another crisis in Freud's life at the time. Freud's father died in 1896, and as Schorske remarks, this loss was dramatized in dreams as professional failure and political guilt. Schorske, therefore, draws a parallel between Freud and Hamlet:

To lay his father's ghost to rest Freud had either, like Hamlet, to affirm the

primacy of politics by removing what was rotten in the state of Denmark (a civic task) or to neutralize politics by reducing it to psychological categories (an intellectual task).

In Schorske's estimation, Freud chose to reduce his own political past and present to that of the primal conflict between father and son. Freud "gave his fellow liberals an ahistorical theory of man and society that could make bearable a political world spun out of orbit and beyond control."

My argument is somewhat different from Schorske's, not least because he confines his account of the political and historical conditions of the growth of psychoanalysis to fin-de-siècle Vienna. In my estimation, the larger colonial discourses of archaeology and anthropology, that inform Freud's language, as well as affect his physical, emotional, and phantasmatic mobility, should be brought into the picture when analyzing the discipline and practice of psychoanalysis.

The language of psychoanalysis tells us the story of a Europe and her colonies in a process of transition (and I would say the same of Hamlet whom we find hovering in Schorske's analogy, and to whom we shall return shortly). It does not simply choose the intellectual at the expense of the political, but rather dramatizes the process of the disempowerment of the psychoanalytical subject coterminous with the expansion of the European nation-state. Freud does not, therefore, simply choose the epiphenomenal (or the secondary symptom) over the political. The political hovers over Freud's writings in a symmetrically opposed manner to that of King Hamlet's specter that tells of the conjugal pollution that infects the body politic. No more than Oedipus, who unwittingly caused the pollution of the city and the marriage bed, can Hamlet separate the political from the filial. Freud's writings, by inverting the structure he analyzes, carry the specter of politics with them.

The language of psychoanalysis not only gives us the story of the political transformations in Europe. It also shows us the psychical changes in both metropolitans and colonials that took place as a result of the transition from nationalist

discourse to the state's hegemonic appropriation of that discourse. Whereas Tom Nairn has suggested that "'nationalism' is the pathology of modern developmental history, as inescapable as 'neurosis' in the individual," I would suggest that the analogy normalizes a more contingent and dynamic relationship between the two, which Freud's work demonstrates. Psychoanalysis helps us understand how the state's reliance on the nation is all about representation, whether through print capitalism or representational politics. Psychoanalysis describes the processing of subjects into the larger groups that constitute nation-states. This processing moves the subject from reproduction to production, emotion to signification, and filiation to affiliation at the same time that it makes visible what haunts those representational teleologies.

Understanding psychoanalysis allows us to see how nation-statehood for the former colonies of Europe encrypts the violence of the nation in its colonial manifestations. The development of psychoanalysis itself constitutes an ethnography of nation-statehood, and reveals its colonial specters that are at once, I argue, the call of justice.

Hamlet, the most canonical work of British literature, ironically gives us a lesson on the function of the specter for the postcolonial intellectual. If Hamlet struggled with specters of political and conjugal violence, the Freudian reading of the play, concerning Hamlet's repressed admiration for Claudius, tells the story of the inevitable movement of history within which Hamlet finds himself. To avenge his father's murder leads him into the ethical quandary we witness in the first four cerebral acts of the play, before the genre of the time, revenge tragedy, takes over in the final act. Killing is not Prince Hamlet's business, but the time of the play runs toward its murderous conclusion. If the movement of modernity (or "civilization" in Freud's terms) is one in which increased repression reigns, then Hamlet is indeed left with an ethically impossible situation, one that continues to haunt us, thus disturbing the temporality of the play, setting it, indeed, out of joint. The ghost haunts us despite

the revenge, and revenge seems botched and inadequate, even if inevitable. If this *trauerspiel*, to employ Benjamin's term for <u>Hamlet</u>, gives us a spectral sense of the past that melancholically introduces a different temporality to Hamlet's ethical universe, so colonial melancholy and the specter of colonialism inform the work of seeking justice in the period after colonialism.

I have obliquely referenced the line from Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, "The time is out of joint." The reference is made through a reading of Derrida's *Specters of Marx: The State of the Debt, the Work of Mourning, and the New International*. In this text, Derrida, drawing on the work of Abraham and Torok, extends Hamlet's musing about a temporal notion of a political remainder. Hamlet refers to the political disarray in the state of Denmark to which the ghost of his father bears witness, and demands that justice be done. Derrida refers to how the figure of Marx is the remainder of the current political climate of late-capitalist globalization. Like Hamlet's ghost, absent and yet uncannily corporeal, Marx's ghost demands justice. This is both a commentary on the past and present exploitative techniques of global capital (literally, the remainder are those figures who are left out of receiving a slice of the pie), and also an ethical demand made on the future. As long as capitalist exploitation remains encrypted within the framework of capitalism, the ghost of Marx demands responsibility, and it is the function of the intellectual to try to understand how that demand manifests itself in supplements, challenges, interruptions, and hauntings.

In his 1953 essay "Notes on Hamlet," C. L. R. James identified Hamlet as an organic intellectual. This term, "organic intellectual," is now suffused for us with Gramscian connotations, especially as it has become one of the mainstays of postcolonial criticism from Edward Said's invocation of it in his introduction to <u>Orientalism</u> (1978) to the ongoing work of India's historians of the subaltern in the colonial archive. However, while James is clearly not making the Gramscian distinction between the traditional and the organic intellectual, he nonetheless places this unlikely figure, a Danish prince, at the heart of a Shakespearean

reconceptualization of government and politics. James identifies the split in Hamlet's mind as one that characterizes all intellectuals between "the communal change from the medieval world to the world of free individualisation." The communal world is represented in Hamlet's mind, of course, as a ghost. If the ghost is the remainder and the reminder of the communal, in the move from the feudal to free individualisation, or the feudal to the bourgeois, it has broader implications for social critique. Gramsci's focus on the identity of the organic as opposed to the traditional bourgeois intellectual moves in the opposite direction, from the traditional bourgeois to the communal nature of the organic popular. I want to address this double move, particularly in relation to colonialism, and to this end will discuss Wulf Sachs's study of John Chavafambira, Black Hamlet. Sachs considered Hamlet a sublimation of paternal trauma, and this raises the question of what conflict Sachs escaped by writing Black Hamlet. What is it that haunts Sachs? What "inner conflict" is he working through? With what form of mourning, or indeed, filial piety, does he contend as he scripts this "literary psychoanalytical biography"? For Hamlet not only reconfigures Oedipus in a repressive vein, as Freud had it. It also places a story of mourning, melancholia, and filial piety at the very heart of intellectual endeavor. In his extensive footnote on Hamlet in The Interpretation of Dreams, Freud claims that the inner conflict we see in Hamlet arises because he could not do as Claudius (his paternal uncle and now his stepfather) did, kill Hamlet's father and marry his mother. Freud explains that Shakespeare could not thematize this as overtly as did Sophocles, and that the increased repression of oedipal desires that took place with the advance of "civilization" is responsible.

Wulf Sachs was a Lithuanian Zionist who worked in South Africa and was responsible (with Perls) for establishing the South African branch of the International Association of Psychoanalysis. He had trained all over Europe, and this wandering Jew settled eventually in South Africa to escape an increasingly anti-Semitic Europe. He wrote both on "Hamletism" in his overview, Psychoanalysis: Its Meaning and

<u>Practical Application</u>, and in his "literary form of psychoanalytic biography" of a South African native doctor, John Chavafambira, the central figure of <u>Black Hamlet</u>. Sachs's initial study of Hamletism continues Ernest Jones' work by drawing on (not always very reliable) biographical information to which Freud also alludes: Shakespeare's son, Hamnet (whom Sachs calls Hamlet and whose name Freud reads as "identical to Hamlet") had died shortly before he wrote <u>Hamlet</u>, and, writes Sachs, incorrectly as it turns out, that Shakespeare's father passed away just a year before the first performance of the play. Reading the play as a necessary sublimation, Sachs sees Hamlet as "what Shakespeare might have been if he had not written the play. . . . Hamlet, if he had existed in reality, would have had to repeat the fate of Hamlet in the play, who killed people round him and then killed himself. Shakespeare escaped by writing the play."

Through a reading of <u>Black Hamlet</u>, I will consider here the role of the spectral in thinking about the postcolonial intellectual, and more specifically, the Gramscian question of whether we can understand a different psychical structure in the traditional and organic intellectuals in gendered postcoloniality, and through the violence that indeed engenders it. Can we draw a sharp distinction between the interests of a psychoanalyst, Wulf Sachs, a "traditional intellectual," and his analysand, Chavafambira, a black native doctor, an "organic intellectual"? Is there a structural psychical difference between the two that would mark a distinction between traditional and organic in the colonial context? If the traditional intellectual began with a sense of liberal disinterestedness, what would he become as a result of the structure of a dispersed hegemony in which his own political disempowerment had been the cause of his arrival in South Africa? The condensation of the black man and Hamlet together in a psychoanalytic framework, throws the "civilised" and "primitive" distinction into doubt. Perhaps Black Hamlet is who Sachs might have been had he not written the study.

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Black Hamlet is a first person narrative written by Wulf Sachs about his extended relationship with a native doctor, who is given the pseudonym John Chavafambira, from Rhodesia whom he encoutered in Johannesberg, South Africa. The two were introduced by the Malinowskian anthropologist Ellen Hellman. The narrative describes how Sachs met Chavafambira, the manner in which Sachs viewed the relationship as reciprocal, and the pseudo-psychoanalytic relationship they had. In the first part of the book, Sachs writes of how Chavafambira, on the couch, tells Sachs of his arrival in South Africa, and of his encounter with a witch. This witch haunts the remainder of Sachs' narrative. Chavafambira also tells of his childhood and the police violence he has encountered. The bulk of the narrative involves Sachs relating the sessions and the discussions that took place about events that occurred during the period of their friendship, and ends with the two returning for a short period to Chavafambira's family at a time when Chavafambira realized his own loss of relationship to his group. It also tells of the growth of Chavafambira's nationalist consciousness, and Sachs' own investment in this. (The journal of the International Psychoanalytic Association criticized Sachs for failing to understand the transference and countertransference between himself and John Chavafambira in Black Hamlet, and clearly Sachs' Zionism led him to desire for Chavafambira some degree of nationalist politics. This, indeed, was a phenomenon he had analyzed himself in Psychoanalysis: its Meaning and Practical Application: Jews "are fighters for someone else's national or racial rights.") The narrative also tells the story of Maggie, Chavafambira's wife, who, because of her vague illness, was the occasion for the meeting of Chavafambira and Sachs. Ellen Hellman thought Sachs may be able to treat her for pain in her lame leg. The "nagging Maggie," as she is referred to, while on the sidelines of the narrative, provided the initial mechanism of their interaction.

Black Hamlet also bears witness to detribalization, and urban modernization and the social upheaval these processes create. Sachs consistently rationalizes this colonial violence by depoliticizing it while reading it as symptomatic of a hamletism

without context. Not acknowledging it directly, Sachs nonetheless indicates the political tensions at work. He was treated with great suspicion by the inhabitants of Rooiyard. The illegal activity of beer-selling had been largely ignored by the police until the anthropologist Ellen Hellmann and Sachs began their investigations; now the inhabitants of Rooiyard were challenged not only for such things as the suspected ritual murder of twins, but also for their bootlegging activities. They suspected Sachs and Hellmann of allegiance with the police, and of informing them of activities in the slum-yard. And Chavafambira challenged their very method of questioning. So the apparently sympathetic work of psychoanalysis and anthropology appeared as part and parcel of state-sponsored police interrogation techniques. Sachs, however, responds by understanding Chavafambira's growing antipathy toward white people as an inner conflict rather than largely as a political response:

> While the internal conflict in him was unabated, his present situation became, without my help, impossible for him to comprehend. Doubts, uncertainties, conflicting thoughts and desires, were, like the nagging Maggie, continuously with him. I decided that I must interfere and break down his resistance.

Aggression toward white people is analyzed as psychoanalytical resistance, as a "nagging wife," and as the affect arising from internal conflict attributed to "hamletism" Sachs attributes the filial duty to Chavafambira's relationship to his father and uncle/step-father: "John's tragedy, at first glance, may seem far beneath Hamlet's, and one is justified in ridiculing at the start any comparison between John the witch-doctor and Hamlet the Danish prince." What does not occur to Sachs is another paternalistic relationship within which Chavafambira is imbricated, and another form of haunting that may cause him to be politically crippled; and we could think of this as the loss of tribe and the ambiguous desire for, and impossibility of, Westernization.

Detribalization, a thesis explored by the anthropologist Ellen Hellmann, is introduced into Sachs' narrative from the onset. Sachs begins by telling how

Chavafambira described how he left his kraal in Rhodesia for the Union of South Africa, at, as Sachs points out, an important turning point in his life. He had decided to leave because "he wished to cut himself adrift from his ancestors, and above all from Charlie, his uncle and present father, who was so greedy and selfish." Rather like Oedipus who attempts to leave potential conflict in the home, apparently observing filial piety, yet walking into its transgression, Chavafambira found himself on a hot, dusty road, with no shadow or guide to protect him, and found there a suffering man on the side of the road. The good Christian, the good Samaritan, and the son of a famous witch-doctor offered his services despite the fact that he had not been formally initiated. And then, Chavafambira was given the opportunity to stop this man's spirit from wandering forever. He was, of course, presented with a choice on these crossroads--to follow the path of Charlie, his step-father, and indeed of his own father, who had told him explicitly not to practice medicine until he was older, saying "for the young to learn; for the mature to practice"; or alternatively, to follow the path of the good Samaritan, the alien father. (For in religious terms, we could read Christianity as the stepfather who has dislodged the father, and now commands a new respect. In fact, John himself conjectures that the confusion of religion caused by the introduction of Christianity into tribal cultures may have been the cause of the man's suffering--"Perhaps they prayed to the wrong god, maybe they are Christians and they forgot their dead people.") Having initially chosen the latter, that is, the Christian path, he felt cheated by the old man; his recovery was so quick, and followed by such an astonishing demand--to save the people in his kraal from drought and the illnesses that accompanied it, and "to smell out the culprit" who had caused the drought to occur.

What concerns Chavafambira, and what will continue to concern him for the large part of Sachs' narrative, is that he will become "bewitched" by the same vague illness afflicting the kraal. The illness takes the shape of a woman from his own tribe, the Manyika. She claims, confidentially, responsibility for the sickness, and she also

warns John that he must go: "'The people here,' she whispered in Manyika, 'are the old witch-doctors. They have sworn to kill you. They are jealous of you.'" In a dream, the spirit of his father has come to him, telling him he is too young to perform the rituals, and too hot-blooded to avoid the attraction of women who may lead him onto a path that causes impurities in his treatment.

This situation could have occurred only in this moment of detribalization. What has been left behind is not simply the spirit of the tribe, as embodied in the father, but rather the tribe is displaced onto the figure of a *murowi*, a Manyika witch. And sure enough, as the spirit of his father warned, Chavafambira cannot resist her. This woman appears as if a phantom, the like of whom we do not meet again until almost the end of the book, when Chavafambira returns to his tribe with Sachs, and mistakenly becomes involved with someone of his own *mutupo*, or patronymic that amounts to incest:

> To marry her is to be guilty of incest. Yet he had never asked the *mutupo*, he realized, hardly crediting his own senses. And I remembered, as he related this to me, that he had also omitted to ask the *murowi* in the bewitched kraal the same question. (H)e knew . . . he could arrange matters by the sacrifice of oxen and goats. But he would remain the laughing stock: the *nganga* who went to towns and became so civilized that he had been intimate with a girl without asking her *mutupo*.

This story of incest that is not so much one of betrayal of the father, but one of detribalization, a betrayal of affiliation rather than of filiation that marks the distinction between the tribal and the secular modern. The structure of the book, suggests the centrality of this incest story, that is not a Frazerian betrayal of the father in any simple sense. It is not simply the father who appears as the internalized disciplinary phantom that he is for Western psychoanalyst, like the high priest at Nemi in the beginning of Frazer's The Golden Bough who is slain by this transgression. For Chavafambira, the "superego," in this case, the disciplinary resource of the

parents, is not internalized in the way that Sachs expected, and he imputes this to an infantile nature:

> In this direction he remained an infant throughout life. Usually, during the
> psychological development, an identification with the parents takes place: that
> is, a part of the parents becomes internalized in the mind of the individual, in
> the fashion of an unconscious moulding, with the result that the internalized
> characteristics become an integral part of the individual. People talk and act,
> like and dislike, in common with their parents' ideals and tastes without
> themselves being aware of it. In John's case it was different. Father and
> mother, though dead, remained accessible to him whenever he was in need of
> them. They were as omniscient as God, but in a concrete and tangible form.
> The *midzimu* even lived in their former huts in the kraal according to John's
> conception.

Clearly, this is a very different relationship to parents, dead or alive, than that we see with Hamlet, or indeed in Hamletism. For Hamlet, the appearance of the ghost itself is shocking, and, as Derrida has noted, an essentially blind submission to his secret is demanded, and an obedience that will result in justice, as the ghost claims. For Chavafambira, the appearance of the ghost of the father, and indeed the spirit of the mother (who is still alive) is comforting; their identities are not in doubt, and they do not perturb at all. They are not the superego, because they are not internalised. But clearly they serve a similar function. The distinction between the spirit and the specter is important here. The spirit visits, it does not haunt. The spirit is implicit, it does not interrupt. The figure who perturbs Chavafambira is elsewhere--not necessarily dead, and not necessarily parental. It exists, rather, in the shape of the woman. For Marie-Cécile and Edmund Ortigues, it is this difference concerning parental death that exposes the limits of therapeutic psychoanalysis developed in Europe. The attitude to ancestral spirits associated with cultural ritual in West Africa is clearly very different from individuated loss associated with the mythical Oedipus, or the lines of filiation

Freud associates with the Oedipus complex in the shape of parents and the superego. Following Dodds, the Ortigues speculate about a civilization of shame and that of guilt. Shame exists in front of others, and emerges in cultures in which collective myth becomes the standard to live by. By contrast, the guilty have internalized the superego and the individual phantasm associated with it. Given that relations between people within the familial context (mother/child, mother/father, father/child) are always mediated by a "juridical fiction" (*une fiction juridique*) the cultural and collective myths, whether they be of community relations to the dead or of individuated mourning, need to be figured into concepts of filiation. This juridical fiction, that they call the phallus following Jacques Lacan, inevitably changes the iterations of the participants, whether they are analysts or analysands. In the case of West Africa, they claim, laws manifested as collective myths thematize incest taboo, phallic symbols, and the omnipotence of the father. What may be encrypted within the language of Europe constitutes the very language of the group in West Africa. It is therefore not individuated repressed material, but collective myth, and therefore, the iterations of a "Black Oedipus" will be different from Oedipus. But the Ortigues, somewhat counter-intuitively, are struck by the commonality between what occurs in the European clinical setting and the one they improvised in West Africa. In both contexts, the foreclosure of the paternal Symbolic imposes itself on the individual. Parting explicitly from Malinowski's questioning of the universality of the Oedipus complex in, for example, matrilineal groups, they express a common understanding of the primary process, that is the rejection of the affect associated with the implementation of the Law of the Father. What is encrypted in this foreclosure is the relation to the mother, who becomes lost-as-mother only to be resurrected as what is desirable for Lacanianism: the phallus.

We could, however, read the primal foreclosure as something which begins to break down at the moment of assimilation, producing a phantom as a reminder of the failure to assimilate. We will understand this phantom as something that emerges in

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response to encrypted matter when the individual is unable to assimilate fully

something that shares the encrypted secret. "The term *hantise*, translated here as

"haunting," also has the common sense of an obsession, a constant fear, a fixed idea,

or a nagging memory. We will continue to translate it simply with the gerund

"haunting" so as to maintain a clearer link with the ghostly in general." So says

Derrida's translator. Sachs's claim that Chavafambira's internal conflict is ever-

present, rather like his wife, the "nagging Maggie," is borne out when Chavafambira's

phantoms keep manifesting themselves as women. Ellen Hellmann noted that

detribalization takes place amongst men much more rapidly than among women. The

inassimilable, or that which cannot be represented by the organic intellectual that

remains from the subaltern, is encrypted for men such as Chavafambira in the

language of civil society as that which cannot be expressed. Effectively, the

accelerated pace of detribalization and the ritual fear of incest that persists from that

older formation returns as a nagging presence of the feminine spectral.

But this is a somewhat reductive rationalization of a larger issue, one, perhaps,

that demonstrates a form of symptomatic demetaphorization itself.

"Demetaphorization" is a psychoanalytic concept elaborated by Nicolas Abraham and

Maria Torok that carries important insights for the literary critic and particularly for

postcolonial studies. For I am arguing here that the presence of the phantom, that is,

the existence of material secrets caused through incorporation rather than introjection

that can be carried through generations, has consequences for reading against the

grain, reading politically, and for reading for difference in the colonial archive.

But perhaps we are overstepping ourselves here, for this enigmatic notion of

the phantom currently seems to signify nothing distinct from its own mysteriousness,

indeed, its own lack of distinction or demarcation. This, in fact, is what has caused

the Derridean reading of the *specters of Marx* so much *angst* among Marxists. For

politically speaking, while the idea of a conspiracy, a secret, or a simple base structure

that can be identified that determines the superstructure is a rather crude and reductive

reading of the tenets of Marxism and indeed those of political literary criticism that finds its roots in that body of work), some possibility of demarcation of the specter, and indeed of the cause of the affect of a phantom, needs to be present. For the phantom, after all, is a symptom, and is the signifier of something, even, some of us would argue, in the world of global postmodern capital. While critics such as Slavoj Zizek, and differently, Fukuyama, have insisted, quite persuasively, that Marx's third volume of <u>Capital</u> speaks of the end of history as capital generating itself and its own meanings in a frenzy of baseless self-generation, some would like to intervene into this meaningless doomsday scenario with demarcation and signification.

In introducing <u>Black Hamlet</u> into a trajectory that seems to move from Oedipus/Black Oedipus☺Hamlet/Black Hamlet, I am not seeking to make <u>Black Hamlet</u> a test case of postcoloniality. What <u>Black Hamlet</u> does point to, however, is the distinction between filiation and affiliation, and the development of artificial groups in which Ego-Ideals on occasion replace fathers as liminal points of group characterization, and create their own set of psychical quandaries. If Chavafambira is torn between two fathers, they are not, after all, simply his biological father and his uncle/step-father. They are more relevantly understood as Tembu, his nationalist friend, and Sachs, his "analyst," both of whom are metonymies for an emerging Bantu national consciousness and European modernization respectively, even as their own relation to these historico-political movements is complicated. These "fathers" are set into an uncanny perspective by the figure of the woman who appears, in spectral form, to represent the effect that detribalization has on everyday life.

If we understand Hamlet as a text that continues to haunt "us," it is not simply because it is the literary text that has produced probably more criticism than any other in the English Language, and not simply because as a core component of the literary canon, it has been absorbed internationally through forms of colonial education. It has also gained a kind of mythical status, perhaps because of the way it haunts in areas irrevocably changed by modernity, and has, rather like Greek Tragedy, become

rewritten with local and particular stresses, linguistic contexts, and sexual politics. Ania Loomba has persuasively argued that it is an oversight to read any form of resistance as a further instrument of containment. She demonstrates how Mizo renditions of <u>Hamlet</u> constitute a radical reshaping of the play, a restructuring of it as indigenous, a making it anew. It is neither nostalgically looking back, nor slavishly aping an older and alien form.

Numerous "rewritings" of <u>Hamlet</u> demonstrate this whether in the various performances of "Hamlet" in India's state of Mizoram, some of which can be seen in Pankaj Buthalia's documentary <u>When Hamlet Goes to Mizoram</u>, or, in a film that deals directly with questions of beginnings, of hauntings, of exploitation, of sexual politics, of transnational capital and of temporality, Mrinal Sen's masterpiece, <u>Genesis</u>). The affect of haunting is to demonstrate the epistemic violence of the mechanisms through which the primary text "arrived," and therefore the incorporation of those texts that could never quite be assimilated, but also the refashioning of those texts in the very particular forms of haunting that emerged.

In the later edition of <u>Black Hamlet</u> entitled <u>Black Anger</u>, Sachs describes his analysis of the nagging Maggie at John's request to help him stop her nagging. Sachs tells us "I had long wanted to explore the inner workings of this simple woman's mind . . . ." We hear little of Maggie, however, and what we do here about is her distaste for sex, her antipathy towards men, her jealousy of Sachs relationship with her husband, and her fear of the reproach of the spirits if she describes her dreams to Sachs, spirits who have been displaced by their move out of the kraal, by, in other words, detribalization. Sachs is dismissive of her concerns, speaks of them as gossip, and ignores her message concerning the coded signs of ghosts:

> "Why do you want *me* to talk to *me?*" she asked, baffled. She refused to tell
> me her dreams, saying, "What I see in my sleep, I tell no one. My dead people
> will be cross."
>
> She went on to say, "I'm asleep, I'm like dead . . . and the *midzimu* come to

talk to you then. And if they are to busy to come, they send a message by a snake, a horse, or some other animal. Sometimes, they let you know they are with you through other signs. . . . Bad and silly people forget their dreams. And so they don't know what's going to happen to them; then they come to John and he, through his bones and horns, speaks for them with their *midzimu*. John can talk with dead people any time."

Drawing an implicit parallel between Sachs's and Chavafambira's work as a native doctor, Maggie also identifies a difference: the reading of spirits and their signs is contrasted to the professional reading of symptoms of repression. Either patients go to the analyst to come to terms with themselves, or to the native doctor, to read the messages from the spirits that they fail to interpret themselves. Failure to read signs from dreams leads to visits to the doctor who reads the spirits manifesting themselves in other things (when their busy schedules do not allow for visitations in dreams), not as bodily symptoms, but as external manifestations of messages unrecognized that could be read as much by the doctor as by oneself at an earlier stage. Here, of course, is a far more communal understanding of ghosts, and a conception of doctor-as-psychic that exists alongside the interpreter of the patient's words. But it is also a moment in the text of <u>Black Anger</u> that sheds light on <u>Black Hamlet</u>; that the function of the psychoanalyst was never very distinct from that of witch-doctor, and that the political circumstances that led to nation-state formation also lead to particular forms of neurosis. The change from the communal thus resulted in the change to the necessity for a psychoanalysis: where "individual freedom and social responsibility" seem to be in tension, the psychoanalyst, however, fails to understand the nature of his own anger, and the nature of aggression more generally, ascribing it to a general sense that anger must out. Chavafambira, on the other hand, is rather more like Hamlet, seeing both the dilemma of a choice between two fathers, and the dilemma of a choice between filiation and affiliation with all the narratives of belonging and ownership that can be found in those conceptualizations of the private and the public, the interior

and the exterior, and the individual and the group. And it is Maggie who draws our attention to the similarities and differences between the traditional and the organic in this regard. As in Jacqueline Rose's reading of the study, I do not wish to simply associate woman with truth here, so much as to try to listen to the signs that haunt this text, and therefore to evince the difficulties attendant in the humanist assumption that equality has to be argued in the name of sameness. For radical breaks have been created by colonialism as much as they have by nation-state formation, and in the colonial archive, both the symptom of and the cure for the erasure of the failure of representation can be read in terms of the ongoing failure of psychical assimilation of the ego-Ideal in the nation-state.

Before ending, I would like to say a brief word about Maggie's mother. When she recognises that her daughter is in danger of losing John, Maggie's mother intervenes and thereby organizes the possibility of her future nagging. The position of the lame and apparently unattractive Maggie is secured by her mother in a rather shocking manner--she arranges that John sleeps with Maggie's younger and more attractive sister. Her complicity with John's betrayal actually secures the relationship with Maggie, and allows all the women in the family to have a strong hold over him for as long as they wish. In fact, rather than functioning as the exchangeable goods in a masculinist tribe, the mother expresses a form of social organization that damages that form of sociality. (In Shakespeare's play, of course, not only does Ophelia end up mad and dead, but she also does not have a mother to counteract the masculine forms of exchange of Polonius, Laius, and indeed, Hamlet himself.)

Let me return briefly to Abraham and Torok and the concept of the phantom. In his "sixth act of *Hamlet*", Abraham writes, in verse, a healing act. Contending that King Hamlet's ghost is the protagonist of the play, and appears only when his secret is in danger of being revealed, he suggests that the ghost does not tell his son, Prince Hamlet, the whole truth. Abraham presents Horatio as the intellectual who listens to the encryptions within the play. He finally understands that the King had sold the

Danish Union to Norway, and that he had done this out of guilt because he had taken Norway unlawfully. It was true that Claudius and Gertrude had killed him, but it was because he was a traitor. What King Hamlet had not realised, however, was that Polonius had conspired to bring about these levels of betrayals between Fortinbras of Norway and Hamlet of Denmark. Polonius'action is attributed to the political situation in Poland rather than simply individual fault: he has responsibility, but the cause is much broader than individual malice. And Horatio's discovery purges Denmark of its pollution.

On one level, such an interpretation seems rather bizaare, because it puts the phantom to rest, mourned for what seems like rather spurious reasons. But Abraham's interpretation frees the psychoanalytic from character analysis to the political order governing the whole play. It shows, indeed, how melancholic supplements cause damage to the dominant framework, not just by offering a counter to it, but by interrupting in parergonal fashion. What is anecdotally and theoretically striking in the example of Maggie is her lack of exemplarity. Her generalized form of pseudo-illness and her nagging insistence on her own erasure in the movement from communal to individual; tribe to detribalization; and melancholia to mourning are constitutive of a haunting remainder that is at once the call for the undoing of injustice.

If Sachs read Shakespeare's <u>Hamlet</u> as a play about filial piety that paid "tribute to father and son," we could read Sachs' <u>Black Hamlet</u> as a book about the traditional intellectual's piety in the face of the native informant existing within an ideal of modern hegemony. The traditional intellectual's apparent *disinterestedness* is testimony to the hegemony of the ideal of liberal democracy--that the failures of the past can be mourned and assimilated. Interest, in the shape of resistance, hatred, or anger could thus be seen as a mark of melancholia, the failure to fully introject.

The ideal of Arnoldian disinterestedness is demonstrated in Eliot's "No! I am not Prince Hamlet . . . ." If Prufrock could be only a Polonius rather than the

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impassioned Hamlet (irrationally impassioned according to Eliot, for there is no objective correlative to mark the source of his anguish), he will, of course, potentially be killed by Hamlet, apparently for no reason. Though if we were to take Abraham's reading of the phantom seriously, we could understand the apparently harmless Polonius as a corrupt national politician, and a rapist. It is clearly ridiculous to conclude simply thus, that Polonius' lack of distinction is a metalepsis of the ideal of disinterestedness. But the introduction of Abraham's reading of Polonius allows us to consider how texts can be reread for what haunts them in a manner that allows for a critical response to them.

What marks Sachs' response to <u>Black Hamlet</u> is his liberal humanism and his insistence on sameness. While he begins his study of Chavafambira in this *purely academic* frame, by the time he writes <u>Black Anger</u>, a text he believes to be more overtly political than <u>Black Hamlet</u>, he clearly feels anger and frustration on Chavafambira's behalf, an anger shared by Hellmann that is evident in her criticism of the failure to assimilate "Natives" economically. Sachs's interestingly creates a chiasmic displacement in his title. His own growing anger is attributed to Chavafambira (who appears to have shared the same degree of anger when <u>Black Hamlet</u> was composed.) Sachs's anger concerning the treatment of Chavafambira by the authorities could thus be read rather in the manner that Sachs read <u>Hamlet</u> itself. He writes his own anger out through the form of literary biography, and begins to work it through; in that sense, it is rather like the sublimation he attributes to the grieving Shakespeare. What we see is a working through of the assault on liberal democracy sublimated into writing as moral outrage. But in another's writing, that is, in the gaps, silences and hauntings, we see that there is something that remains of a trauma that can be mourned by the traditional intellectual, but can be only lamented melancholically in the trace of inassimilability, that is, in the phantom, that we perceive in Chavafambira, and indeed, in Maggie and the other women in the text. The refusal to assimilate brings the affect of the subaltern into the archive, an affect

that can be recognized only psychoanalytically. If the archive appears by some to be a national monument and thus a collective memory, it can also be a home for the unhomely: the phantoms of the feminine spectral.

It is in the process of citations of *Hamlet* that her interruptions become most apparent, that is, with the lack of assimilability of one to the other because each functions as a supplement. In my talk at the end of the week, I will return to this notion of citation. Citationality demonstrates the ways in which memory is inflected with different strategies for forgetting--a process, I will argue, that is akin to that of mourning.   Mourning, in the Freudian sense, after all, involves the ingestion of a lost object or signifier only to reiterate that signifier, reciting it in a way which is inflected with narcissistic identification. Narcissistic identification needs to be achieved in order that what is mourned gets renegotiated, and thus assimilated, remembered as forgotten; it is this process of assimilation that is at the heart of the trauma of national identification.

ENDNOTES