Postcolonial Witnessing

Trauma Out of Bounds

Stef Craps

Ghent University, Belgium
Contents

Acknowledgements ix

Introduction 1

1 The Trauma of Empire 9
   Broadening the focus 9
   The perils of appropriation 14

2 The Empire of Trauma 20
   A product of history 20
   Trauma and the everyday 24
   Pioneering postcolonial trauma theory 28
   Sticking to the event-based model 31
   Tainted origins 33

3 Beyond Trauma Aesthetics 38
   Modernist attachments 39
   Positioning the reader 41

4 Ordinary Trauma in Sindiwe Magona's Mother to Mother 44
   The TRC and the persistence of the past 45
   Mother to Mother as a literary response to the TRC 48

5 Mid-Mourning in David Dabydeen's "Turner" and Fred D'Aguiar's Feeding the Ghosts 60
   Hauntology and mid-mourning 61
   "Turner" and the oppressive weight of history 64
   Feeding the Ghosts and the unending voyage of the Zong 67

6 Cross-Traumatic Affiliation 72
   Memory beyond the nation-state 73
   Bridging the gap between Jewish and postcolonial studies 80
7 Jewish/Postcolonial Diasporas in the Work of Caryl Phillips

Caryl Phillips and the Jewish experience 89
Parallel histories in Higher Ground and The Nature of Blood 91
Difference and distance in Higher Ground 94
Complex relations in The Nature of Blood 96
Trauma, diaspora, and incomparability 99

8 Entangled Memories in Anita Desai's Baumgartner's Bombay

Circular movements 107
Cross-cultural incomprehension 115

Conclusion 124

Notes 128

Bibliography 141

Index 156