

**CONTEMPORARY AFRICAN NOVELS AS NARRATIVES OF
THE WORLD RISK SOCIETY**

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Dedication

For my parents, Àbẹ̀kẹ̀ and Àrẹ̀mú.

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INTRODUCTION

The contemporary world, or late modernity, defined here as the period between the 1960s and the present, appears to be at *risk* as the certainties, clarity and categories of an earlier modernity are threatened by the successes of the said earlier modernity. The risks of late modernity differ from those of early modernity in how they are perceived and in how faults are derived and attributed. For example, up till the first half of the 20th century, many individuals perceived risks, dangers, and hazards as acts of God, external and within scientific and actuarial calculations. Today, these risks seem unknowable, and not adequately calculable. More so, they arise from human-made decisions and the effects of scientific, technological, political, and social progress. Furthermore, the scale and speed at which dangers and hazards spread differentiate the contemporary period from late modernity. In literature, African writers depict these uncertainties, risks, threats, existential conditions, and (dis)continuities of late modernity. While risks occupy the narrative frame of many African texts, the migration literature genre most pointedly depicts the characteristics of what Ulrich Beck calls the world risk society. In *World Risk Society*, the German sociologist Ulrich Beck argues that the successes of globalization and technological progress have undermined the certainties and assurances that early industrial modernity promised. According to him, the “collective patterns of life, progress, and controllability, full employment and exploitation of nature that were typical of this first modernity have now been undermined by five processes: globalization, individualization, gender revolution, underemployment and global risks (as an ecological crisis and the crash of global financial markets)” (2009, 2). These disruptions are not place-bound or limited to the Western world; they are global.

This study examines the representation of these disruptions, uncertainties, and risks in five selected African novels. It argues that contemporary African migration literatures are not only aware of the risks and uncertainties of late modernity that Beck discusses but that the endemic ambiguities of this late modernity occupy significant thematic fabrics in these novels. The study draws from the sociological writings of Ulrich Beck to demonstrate that contemporary African writers engage the unintended consequences of modernity and by doing this, they participate in what Beck has called reflexive modernization, that is the stage when the consequences of modernity become the subject of its discourse.

The study demonstrates that these texts fictionally recreate the ongoing social, cultural, political, ecological, and geographical process of risk as they manifest in the world. Their characters are aware of and react to their societies' uncertainties and risks, which Beck describes as the anticipation of catastrophe (Beck 2009, 4). Within this narrative frame, characters negotiate new ambiguous and complex existential and ontological conditions that once appeared to be specific, knowable, controllable, and calculable in early modernity.

The study analyzes Tendai Huchu's *The Maestro, The Magistrate & the Mathematician* (Zimbabwe/United Kingdom 2015); Sefi Atta's *A Bit of Difference* (Nigeria/United Kingdom 2012); Olumide Popoola's *When We Speak of Nothing* (Nigeria/United Kingdom 2017); Elnathan John's *Born on a Tuesday* (Nigeria 2015); and Imbolo Mbue's *Behold the Dreamers* (Cameroon/United States 2016). The study considers them as African novels because they represent African experiences and because their authors lay claim to their African origins. The category 'African Literature' is only a tentative classification, mainly because there is no generally agreed-upon definition of African literature. As Achebe questioned, is African literature, "produced in Africa or about Africa? Could African literature be on any subject, or must it have an African theme? Should it embrace the whole continent or South of the Sahara, or just Black Africa? And then the question of language. Should it be in indigenous African languages, or should it include Arabic, English, French, Portuguese, Afrikaans, etc.?" (Achebe 1965, 27).

While Achebe hedges his argument around linguistic and geographical factors, Taiye Selasi denounces the term, arguing that the category African literature disregards the "complexities of African cultures and the creativity of African authors" (Selasi 2005, n.p). Cyprian Ekwensi has argued that the term refers to authors who live on the continent. He maintains that "you are an African writer because you are a writer living in Africa. When you live in Europe, whatever you will be doing will no longer be African" (Arndt 2009, 114). My understanding of African literature goes beyond the author's geographical location. Instead, African literature expresses an ontological state of 'Africanness' that is complex to define and constantly in flux; this complexity is evident both within the narrative world and in the extra-textual world of the writer.

Thus, in this thesis, the African novel, a subset of African literature, is considered as works by writers who self-define in simple or compound ways as Africans and whose significant corpus focuses on African or African-diasporic themes and characters. This study provisionally

considers Cameroonian-American Imbolo Mbue and Nigerian-German Olumide Popoola as African writers because they focus on themes, tropes, and characters from Africa and because they espouse hyphenated African identities that contribute to diasporic African imaginations. They enable an awareness of other identities, modes of categorization, and ways of being African. Consequently, one of this thesis's tasks is to broaden the critical and analytical tools in understanding African novels within world literature and to show the aesthetic forms that separate the contemporary novel from those of the first and second waves of African literature¹. These works thus espouse transcontinental concerns, embrace place polygamy, and interrogate global hegemonies from the margins while they also rely on multiple voice constellations. As a result, it is argued that these writers' realist depictions are also tools of contesting European modernity as normative as they also complicate the forms and contents of African literature. Similarly, they have moved beyond the identity category of the nation and nationalistic schema to broader groups of belonging and identification. These depictions also highlight the treatment of gender roles and homosexuality in new normative and acceptable forms. These African writings signal a feature of late modernity where individuals elect their cultural and political affinities and challenge the social, economic, ecological, and cultural dictates of the first modernity.

The novels I analyze in this study all fall under the rubric of migration literature, defined by Frank Soren as "literary works that are written in an age of migration — or at least [...] reflect upon migration" (2008, 2). I adopt this definition to offer a stable category that encompasses all forms of place-to-place movements that may not be definable by immigration and diaspora studies. Migration literature, hence, describes the process and results of migration. It depicts local and regional movements, represents forms of movements, displacements, alienations, losses, and migrant introspections in different regions, countries, and continents. Migration literature also applies to the intra-national and intra-continental movements that the continent is presently experiencing, such as in Elnathan John's novel, *Born on a Tuesday*, which interrogates the human condition within "new sub- and supranational cultural structures" (Arndt 2009. 106). This type of literature does not assume a homogenous migrant condition. Instead, it considers the varying ontological experiences, colonial histories, places of origin, classes, and gendered lifestyles in discussing immigration. Migration literature concerns itself with the

¹ See Pius Adesanmi and Chris Dunton's historiographical analysis in "Nigeria's Third Generation Writing: Historiography and Preliminary Theoretical Consideration", 2005.

existential uncertainties of globalization and the breakdown of long-held social categories, which now are challenged by more open and globalized futures. I maintain that African and African diasporic literary productions that center migration experience open possibilities for interrogating and envisioning unknowable and uncertain global futures. Cajetan Iheka and Jack Taylor note that “the recent textual inscriptions on migration foreground instabilities and the kind of contamination that intercultural contacts make possible” (2018, 3). The instabilities and the network of cultural contacts they examine are the results of the modern ease of travel, pervasive global finance networks, and transnational political coalitions.

By presenting stories of movement, these writers explore themes and metaphors of belonging and exclusion to deconstruct linear configurations of history that center Euro-American epistemologies of progress. Migration literature can show the complexities of globalization and irregularities of the world risk society by presenting characters who suffer from the period's conditions and processes. In this way, they question nation-states' power asymmetries in the definitions and constructions of risk, the global financial system, social existence, and environmental misuse. Furthermore, through their depiction of a multicultural and transnational story-world, they put into context belonging, identity, and justice in ways that question and undermine preconceived notions of ethics and morals. The imaginative cultural productions may also produce a provincializing effect. Dipesh Chakrabarty claims this exposes the asymmetric relationships of histories and futures and decenters Europe as the nucleus of knowledge and science. According to him, “the task of exploring how this thought—which is now everybody's heritage and which affect us all—may be renewed from and for the margins (Chakrabarty 2000, 16). Euro-American centeredness of the world risk society needs to be deconstructed and interrogated with postcolonial tools in order to give it a truly global scope.

Indeed, due to their multi-place features, migration novels question the basis of the world risk and provide a planetary representation of the risks and uncertainties of late modernity. Essentially, migration literature “provides a context for studying literary texts and works in other media not simply as aesthetic objects but also as cultural objects caught up in complex systems of transnational and intercultural exchange, appropriation, and transformation” (Jay 2001, 44). This complexity makes it possible for migration literature to represent the global range of risks and uncertainties. And since risk is an essential element of analysis, African migration literature emphasizes the uncertainties of the world risk society and the challenges of solving it.

How do contemporary novels reflect on and make meaning of an uncertain and unequal future constructed on uneven epistemologies and ethics? In incorporating diverse voices and complex characterization, the novels generate tropes of anxieties and risk that put late modernity into context as a world risk society. Since late modernity is global and the concentration of risks has extended from risks associated with place to those associated with migrations; and since African migration literature deals with the global and local conditions regarding ecology, finance, individualization, gender, and terrorism, there is a need to interrogate this genre further. The five novels that will be analyzed in this study will provide readers with a panoply of character representations who demonstrate how migration novels provide means of re-imagining the world and of showing the paradoxes and ambiguities of hope and despair that result from such movements.

Three reasons underpin my focus on African migration literature. First, it testifies to the precarious conditions of (im)migrant lives in the world risk society. Second, because they usually involve at least two places, they create a transnational inquiry into the conditions of the world risk society; migration novels, therefore, attest to the fundamental challenges of the world risk society. This leads to the third point: our *modernities* (Chatterjee 1997) are reflexively brought together, and the unintended consequences that ensue from this constitute the thematic elements of the novels. These novels demonstrate how individuals in the world risk society perceive and confront risks and existential uncertainties, leading to disappointments, loss, self-affirmation, or validation. However, it remains that these characters' lifeworlds are built on uncertainties and risks that can be perceived and activated on three levels: the individual, interpersonal, and institutional levels. All three interpenetrate, each affecting the other. For example, through the staging of risk, the political institutions can alter the perception of risk such that individuals may perceive specific threats and hazards as more dangerous than others. Institutional changes and policies like those towards a welfarist or neoliberal economic state may contribute to how resources are used and how individuals are exposed to certain environmental risks. In this way, the political, social, individual, and cultural perceptions of risk interact and lead individuals to order their lives and subvert future anticipations in particular ways.

Broadly, these three levels imbricate the five processes that Beck argues have undermined early modernity. In Beck's position, globalization, individualization, gender revolution, underemployment, and global risks (these include global financial risk and ecological catastrophe) (Beck 1999, 2) result from early modernity successes. I will rework these

processes and adopt them in my dissertation. I will retain three of Beck's categories: individualization, gender revolution, underemployment (the new world of work) as processes that have produced uncertainties, anxieties, and risks in the world risk society. However, I will expand the global threats to include environmental threats and terrorism since these processes have taken up a globalized attention in recent times. To this end, this thesis shows that individualization, global environmental concerns, gender and intimate love revolution, global finance and fundamentalist terrorism are all processes that have undermined and altered the certainties and categories in early modernity. Negotiating these processes can on the one hand lead to risks and on the other liberate the individual to make sense of a life of their own as will be shown through the analysis of the characters and temporal context of these novels.

Despite Beck's crucial articulations of the world risk society, his arguments are primarily drawn from a Eurocentric and Western perspective. This explains why his views will be tempered with arguments from postcolonial African scholars in the chapter on theory. Notably, the study will engage the seeming erasure of social, racial, and national aspects of the dangers of world risk society by drawing from postcolonial studies scholars. Their theories and arguments are critical because they orient my study toward positioning Africa in the center of global politics rather than on the margins as an erratic place of inexplicable arbitrariness, intra-subaltern and international oppression, ecological hazards, and progress.

My study seeks to answer the following questions: how do these novels narrate risk in late modernity? How is risk perceived, who and which conditions define risk? How do character, agency, perception, and analysis of risk impact opportunities and outcomes? How do characters react to the future? Which paradigms and elements of the disruption between early modernity and late modernity did the writers choose to represent? Which character types are more on the precipice because of the risks of late modernity?

To answer these questions, I draw mostly from Beck's conceptualization of the world risk society to demonstrate how the characters perceive, engage, and avoid risks, threats and uncertainties in the five novels. Furthermore, the study considers the social and political contexts of late modernity as frames of reference which foreground the imaginative world of the novels. I adapt Beck's five interlinked processes of late modernity (globalization, individualization, gender revolution, underemployment, and global risks) to highlight the thematic and socio-economic, political and cultural concerns of the novels (1999, 2). However, globalization and global risk will be adjusted to reflect finance and terrorism as individual

processes. Inflected with arguments from Beck's works (1992, 1999, 2005), the analysis then will follow the categories of individualization, gender revolution, underemployment, global environmental risk and global terrorism risk. I deploy these processes because, to speak of globalization is to illustrate the global network of finance and human movements across the globe on less cumbersome levels; globalization consequently implies the ease of transferring and spreading risks and dangers of late modernity.

Beck's work on world risk society helps us to recognize that, in light of disrupted social certainties, international and subnational group bargaining, and institutional individualism, nations must choose to anticipate catastrophe with only a partial knowledge of the future. Therefore, he calls for a cosmopolitan outlook in tackling global risks and the recognition that the sociological categories of early modernity cannot respond to late modernity's risk and dangers. Given this sociological challenge, the task of the individual, institutions and nation-states in late modernity is one of continuous reflection and introspection because decisions have to be taken based on more or less continuous reflection on the conditions of one's action (Beck, Giddens Lash, 1994, 86). Since the results of present decisions and actions are in the future, risks in modernity thus denotes a level of unknowability intertwined with suspended temporality. In this sense of uncertainty, risk poses decisional dilemmas that occupy the policies of nations and individual subjectivities. It is thus comprehensible that Ulrich Beck links the ontology of risk to futurity, (failures of) insurance, politics and novel forms of social living like individualization. Importantly, for Beck, risk signifies the process through which the future is known and controlled; a "*systematic way of dealing with hazards and insecurities induced and introduced by modernization itself*. It denotes an 'anticipation of catastrophe,' a peculiar, intermediate state between security and destruction, where the *perception* of threatening risks determines thought and action" (Beck 2009, 135 italics added in original).

Literary works are significant in how they represent the social, cultural, and political. In fact, arguably, contemporary world literatures have been paying much attention to fictionalizing the conditions of late modernity. These works' fictional dimension allows readers to imagine and empathetically encounter alternative histories and experiences outside of dominant discourses that are reported in the media or staged by political actors. Crucially, literary works are vital in representing ongoing collective anxieties, individual precarious situations which make the anticipation of danger realizable or imaginable. For example, Helon Habila's *Oil on Water* (2011) and Yvonne Owuor's *Dust* (2014) demonstrate the dangers of environmental risk as

product of individual and national factors such that risk perception is both a subjective and collective experience.

To strengthen this investigation, I have adopted narratology as an analytical tool because it provides a framework through which the textual elements of the novels can be “evaluatable, discussable, arguable” (Bal 2009, 12). A narratological examination of the world risk society in the novels demonstrates the reflexivity that Beck argues are the unintended consequences of modernity’s victories and it likewise shows the schema through which the discourse of modernization, individualization, globalization, gender roles are textually constructed. The frame of reference of these novels are contemporary events, policies, relatable individuals, and politics; thus, they represent the contemporary conditions of the world risk society. The illusion of truth and representative accuracy that these novels adopt should encourage further interrogation on the precarity, hazards, uncertain conditions, and risks of the world risk society. For instance, as climatic conditions produce more eco-refugees and global uncertainties, ethical and moral considerations bring to light the precarious conditions of millions in the Global South. The novel form is well able to do this through its narrative templates; one of the reasons is that a novel “grabs and holds the attention” (Bal 2009, 11). Narratology, the study of the techniques of narratives, shows how the novels narrate risk and their involvement in the cultural, social and political contexts of anticipatory anxieties. Such analysis may, for example, include the examination of the temporal dimension of the story, the anticipation of catastrophe in the fabula orchestrated through suspense, and focalization in the perception of risk. Bal’s terminologies are crucial for the study because she pays attention to agency and subjectivity, decision and power, which are essential aspects of the world risk society. As such, the construction and ossification of power asymmetries, risk definitions, Manichean binarism, and exclusion may be highlighted through an interrogation of the narrative form and represented realities in the novels. In opposition to some poststructuralists and postmodernist narratological approaches that seek to establish the inconsistency of meaning and signs, and show the plays that undermine narrative structures, reading risk and narratology in a context that is sociologically engaging establishes the ideological and critical functions of narrative texts especially those of ‘subaltern’ subjects. In this way, narrative is not simply restricted within an aesthetic and mediative function of the author. In light of engaged writings – *écriture féminine* and postcolonial writing back, for example – that presuppose a deliberate actionable power in narratives, narratology allows an interrogation of the use of elements and aspects of the narrative text that are disruptive to the status quo. The analysis through narratological means

also recognizes the polyphonic voices of characters in a complex system. Analyses in this study emanate from an interpretative position that examines the world risk society's fictional representation from the so-called margins.

I have chosen to adopt Mieke Bal's comprehensive explication of narratology, summarizing the core tenets, and leaving out the theoretical implications and arguments from competing fields. This exclusion is deliberate. Narratology opens the narrative structure of the novels and in the case of this study, it allows the isolation of narrative elements into fragments that can be unpacked for analysis. This thesis uses her narratological concepts as tentative tools for engagement, a guideline for naming aspects and elements of a novel. While the constraints of such a structural approach are apparent, an expansive theoretical rehearsing of arguments on narratology seem tangential, on the whole, to this work. The lynchpin of the analysis is an attempt to put forward arguments on the ongoing globalization process and its representation by African writers. Consequently, a greater emphasis has been placed on the social, political and ethical dimensions of the constructions of risk, hazards, and threats in the world risk society. Narratology is essential here because its use shows how risk is constructed, perceived, and disseminated in contemporary African migration novels. Bal's distinction and the ideological bent permit a tentative coherent interpretative schema.

In other ways, Bal's rejection of the axial opposite in characterization is vital to how I interpret the complexity of migrant and non-migrant experience, since binaries, fixed polar oppositions between the immigrant and non-immigrant evokes a few problematics. As will be shown in Chapter 6, non-immigrant characters in Imbolo Mbue's novel are open to certain economic risks, too. The precarious conditions of these 'autochthonous' characters resonate with Guy Standing's (2011) argument that neoliberal economics has produced a class of 'precariats' that includes the working class and many immigrants. I do not mean to conscript all immigrants into a precarious class because there is a varied, hierarchized immigrant group as Sara Ahmed has written in "Home and Away: Narratives of Migration and Estrangement" (1999). The undocumented immigrant, the finance executive, the subnational organization lobbyist, and the uneducated migrant are all immigrants but in different ways. The undocumented immigrant, for example, must experience life in the present. "This living in enforced presentism is a symptom of disenfranchisement" (Bal 2009, 78). Uncertain futures and life on a financial precipice are also the human condition of many working-class individuals that results from a contractual work culture and weakened labor unions. These factors pertaining to class, in some ways, subsume the immigrant and non-immigrant in a similar risk group.

This study thus provides a personalized and individualized view of character experience and perception of risk in the world risk society. Literary productions are reflexive in examining the successes and inequalities of modernization. Each chapter begins with a brief theoretical exposition of the process that leads to world risk society. Each chapter can be understood on its own while contributing to the overall analytical scope of the world risk society.

The study begins with a theoretical chapter which introduces the concepts and theories of the world risk society, narratology, and postcolonialism. To give a context to my work, I will first give a review of migration and diasporic writings, highlighting the significant arguments and linking the arguments to my work. The sociological and political positions on migration from Africa as explicated by scholars like Aderanti Adepoju (1976) and Mojubaolu Olufunke Okome (2002) will also be discussed because they are crucial to the frame of reference in which these texts are located. I will then give a short overview of postcolonial theory and its arguments on power, agency, ambivalence, and the place of the postcolonial in globalization. I will discuss Beck's articulations of the world risk society as a viable sociological tool for understanding the socio-political world of the texts. The lifeworld of the world risk society is uncertain, unknowable, and reflexive in the sense that the success of the first modernity has led to unfavorable conditions in second modernity; hence, modernity has occupied a discursive focus on itself. In this way, the world risk society is transnational, political, and opened to definitional and epistemological conflicts. World risk society stipulates a private side with individualization, personal perception, construction and the victimhood of risk. The public side entails the urge to de-individualize the subject as personal risks are treated under general political risk definitions of risk calculus. Mieke Bal's structuralist narratology will be read as an example of an analysis of narrative structures. The three levels of narratives: text, story, fabula will be examined in detail and adopted as a tentative tool for understanding the elements and aspects of the texts that will be analyzed.

In chapter two, I will analyze the novel *The Maestro, The Magistrate and The Mathematician* (2014) by Tendai Huchu. I chose this text for its depiction of an immigrant family's life whose ideas of gender roles, domestic, and professional work are redefined post immigration. The characters in the novel are acutely aware of an institutionalized individualism that mostly results in interpersonal risk. By drawing from Ulrich Beck and Elisabeth Gernsheim-Beck's work on individualization, I argue that the novel, through its characters, creates a story world that acknowledges the institutional individualization that Beck and Beck-Gernsheim explicate. The characters, through innovative technologies of the self, create new biographies for themselves.

Such categories as gender roles and people's occupation are reinvented and negotiated to be adaptable to the institutional frame of the world risk society. Rigid categories of self-definition, such as nationality, are also reinvented by subverting the legal identification system and acquiring a newness through identity theft.

Chapter three centers on Olumide Popoola's coming-of-age novel, *When We Speak of Nothing* (2017). I show that it is through the immigrant character that the hierarchies in global environmental discourse and risk are highlighted. Popoola's novel traces the Niger Delta's unlivable conditions. It sets these against London, where the main character Karl lives. Risk perception is filtered through the place; hence environmental risks such as climate change gain attention in London while oil pollution is a significant concern for characters who live in the Niger Delta. This difference gestures at how the immediate environment conditions perceptions.

In chapter four, intimate relationships are taken as a subset of the gender revolution. The chapter shows that the gender hierarchies of early modernity are deconstructed and (re)negotiated in the United Kingdom and Nigeria; the characters are compelled to negotiate the novel gender performance under uncertain terms. The chapter then interrogates how the characters deploy their agencies to subvert and question the categories of love, and gender roles of early modernity. This chapter brings together the arguments of African feminists with Ulrich Beck and Elisabeth Beck-Gernsheim's work to examine the new era of love and feminine agency that Sefi Atta fictionalizes in *A Bit of Difference*.

Chapter five examines the risk of terrorism in Elnathan John's *Born on a Tuesday*. I argue that risk is thematized in the novel as a product of transnational discourse coalitions and conflicts. The risk of terrorism, as represented in the novel, is an intentional danger as it is based on human decision and agency; thus, this risk evades the mechanisms of accurately predicting, knowing, and controlling the future. The novel demonstrates a risk culture that emanates from monologic imaginations of religion's dogma that prioritize one way of knowing above other forms of discourses. This chapter will show that the unintended consequence of modernization is evident on two levels: firstly, it arises from a transnational network of religious fundamentalism that global finance, communication, and transportation networks allow; secondly, the novel shows that governments wrongfully curtail civil rights in an attempt to curb the risk of terrorism.

If risk is generally considered as an anticipation of catastrophe, finance risk is primarily portrayed in a more positive light. This chapter interrogates the representation of the world of work and financial opportunities in *Behold the Dreamers* (2016) by Imbolo Mbue under neoliberal economics. Immigrants and working-class characters are the primary focus of this chapter. Their lives and future are depicted mainly as precarious and uncertain. The American dream of financial prosperity and happiness from the neoliberal economy is endlessly different for the characters. This chapter borrows from the scholarship on precarity to supplement Beck's articulations on the world risk society of precarious work. The global economy and the causative effect of Bretton Woods' policy are shown to influence immigration. The two primary characters, Jonga and Neni, emigrated to the United States on the heels of the Structural Adjustment Program's failure in their native country, Cameroon.

Chapter seven engages the world risk society within a postcolonial frame. It argues that, though there are inhibitions in using European theories like Beck's, late modernity and the world risk society can serve as tentative tools. The chapter also argues that the way forward for African novels is one that engages the planetary difficulties of the world risk society.

This study contributes to literary scholarship by bringing together the useful concepts of the world risk society into literary analysis and it develops new ways of reading the contemporary African novel. While Beck may have embraced and postulated a cosmopolitan outlook based on a normative western modernity, his work generalizes and ignores other groups' particularities. His postulations on the migrant, for example, are limited to the classed aspect of domestic care work. My project brings in a nuanced reading of the imbrication of modernities within the world risk society. Therefore, my reading signposts the fictional representation of this global process of modernity, asymmetrical power relations, alterity and the precarity of the world risk society as significant aspects of these novels. This study seeks to apply Beck's crucial theories to contemporary African migration novels. Further, the study tempers the Eurocentric assumptions in Beck's theories with a postcolonial awareness that acknowledges other epistemological constructions of subjects where they have been largely ignored.

To conclude, this study emphasizes the influence of literature on sociology and vice versa as a productive tool to engage socio-cultural phenomena. Ulrich Beck has stated that studying risk without the sociological aspects is blind (1999, 4). Literature gives the sociological an imaginative might to process unknowable futures; migration literature depicts the lived conditions of lives that may not be part of the ontological experience of the readers. Literature,

especially in the realist and naturalist modes, provides imaginable and perceptible contexts to create present and futures of risk. “The immateriality of mediated of and contested definitions of risk *and* the materiality of risk as manufactured by experts and industries world-wide” (Beck 2009, 4) occupy central narrative space. These components are meaningfully demonstrated in these chosen texts. Hence, this study’s principal objective is to analyze representations of the world risk society in selected African migration novels based on the modified categories of Beck’s globalization processes to pinpoint the necessity of understanding risk from various ontological and epistemological perspectives.

CHAPTER ONE: FROM RISK SOCIETY TO WORLD RISK SOCIETY: THEORIES OF NARRATIVE, MIGRATION AND RISK.

Migration literature, narratives, and the world risk society have been at the center of various academic surveys, analyses, and studies. There are sub-theorizations and conceptualizations of what these terms entail. This chapter examines essential theoretical approaches and arguments that will underlie the analytical frame of this study. The chapter considers migration literature as Frank Soren (2008) uses the term and provides other scholarly arguments that address the various themes and aspects of mobility, movement, and migration. Furthermore, the chapter discusses Ulrich Beck's theory of the world risk society. As a tentative tool, the chapter furthermore outlines Mieke Bal's narratological taxonomies that will be employed to analyze the novels in question.

Scholars in literary studies have sought to understand the place of risk in modernity as an individual, political, cultural, ecological, and social issue. Ursula Heise (2008), Suzan Mizruchi (2009), Sylvia Mayer (2014, 2016), Jeanne Cortiel (2016, 2018), and Julia Hoydis (2019) have examined the perception of risk, its role in forming characters, and the politics of fear and doubt. These works often draw from the theories of Ulrich Beck (1986, 1992), Mary Douglas (1966), Niklas Luhmann (1991), Anthony Giddens (1990, 1991), and Michel Foucault (1982-1983) to articulate risk as a 'real' oncoming danger, constructed phenomenon, mechanism for governmentality², or individual experience. These writings likewise acknowledge the dynamics of late modernity, occupied with discussions of technological catastrophe, financial troubles, gender inequality, sexuality, individualization, ecological devastation, and terrorism.

In the arena of literary and cultural studies, scholars have taken up the issue of risk and engaged in interdisciplinary readings to analyze the fictional representation of risk as both a social, political, and cultural construction on the one hand, and as a material manifestation on the other. For example, Ursula Heise's important study *Sense of Place* (2008) examines the types of narratives that shape risk perception and the depiction of environmental catastrophes. Relatedly,

² Governmentality here is used in one of the senses that Michel Foucault uses it; it denotes the organised apparatus through which the government enacts obedience and control.

Sylvia Mayer (2016), Susan Mizruchi (2009), Karin Hoepker (2015), and Christian Kloeckner (2015) have in various essays evaluated the representation of risk in different cultural productions. By examining English novels in a diachronic approach, Julia Hoydis' (2019) study has shown the peculiarities of risk as an enduring artefact that precedes late modernity. Although these works, largely, ignore African texts, their theoretical underpinnings are indispensable for this study, which builds on, and also argues against some of the positions. Importantly, this thesis draws from this earlier analytical corpus and argues that migration literature from Africa and its diaspora is genuinely planetary and fictionalizes the existential and anxious conditions of the world risk society. Not only do these texts depict the globalizing processes of hazard and risk production in late modernity, but they also speak back to the hegemony of western epistemologies in the way they demonstrate an awareness of the asymmetric global economic, cultural, and political structures in the world risk society. They therefore pose such questions as to whose modernity does Beck refer? How are other modernities included in his concept of late modernity? Is modernity Eurocentric? Where is the postcolonial place in this late modernity, especially when the memory of the middle passage, the enslaving of African people, the annihilation of Indigenous people, and colonialization come into play?

To answer these questions, the first section of this chapter provides an overview of arguments, theories, and concepts that underlie globalization, mobility and migration literature. The second section outlines the theoretical exposition of Ulrich Beck's concept of the world risk society and the processes that have led to uncertainties, risks, and insecurities in late modernity. The section also provides an examination of Mieke Bal's introductory terminologies to narratology.

1.1 MOBILITY AND MIGRATION LITERATURE

Toyin Falola's book, *The African Diaspora: Slavery, Modernity, and Globalization*, a study on African diaspora, serves as an important point of departure for contextualising the politics, aesthetics, and conditions of migration literatures. While he focuses on the African diaspora, his work places the new diaspora, that is recent immigrants to the United States, as an important group in his discussion. He interlinks this with the old diaspora, those forcefully taken from Africa to other continents of the world. He argues that the histories of the individuals of the different migrations are not similar. He distinguishes two types of diasporans: the old one, which is constituted of diasporans created by the Atlantic slave trade, and the new one:

transnationalists and recent migrants. The lingering impact of the Atlantic displacement remains in the racial politics and misery that has resulted from it. Indeed, systemic racism persists, in spite of this, Falola argues that the old diasporans have been able to forge complex identities and a sense of belonging foregrounded by the sore experiences of slavery. New diasporans are usually voluntary migrants (3) who maintain connections with Africa and in this way strengthen the forces of globalization (3). Communities of the new diaspora possess a dual existential positioning: a private and a public identity (11). The public emerges in the discourses on race and the experiences of racial politics that emerge from anti-black systemic structures. A private one exists in the recognition of an original ethnic community (11). Such categorizations, also recognised by Falola are compounded by the multi-ethnic origins of these new migrants and interactions with the old diaspora, particularly visible in marriages. In addition to these communities, Falola argues that the identity formation of these ethnic diasporas is also deployed to self-characterize as “conditions” like struggling people, strangers etc. By mapping the past and the future of the diaspora with its migrative routes, Falola traces the connection to the continent through memories of rebellions, religious practices, arts and Pan-African Black intellectualism. Falola thus situates African underdevelopment in the world economy and global politics by pointing to the history of Africa in the Atlantic world; the domination of the continent by certain European powers, and a contemporary movement out of the continent caused by the ensuing declining economies which have forced out thousands from the continent (Falola 2013). All these have contributed to creating a new versatile diaspora group.

Of importance too is how intra-Africa and intra-national migrations have been missing from analysis of migration in Africa. Hein de Haas, (2005, 2006, 2007), Aderanti Adepaju (1995, 2000, 2001, 2004), De Bruijn, M., R. van Dijk and D. Foeken (2001) have provided a re-examination of this challenge. In their studies, they highlight the (dis)continuities in African migrations. Africans have for example been crossing the Sahara since precolonial times, these crossings involved trade, religious and academic exchange. Bakewell and de Haas strengthen this position and argue that some of these crossings continue within the structure of the colonially created nation-states; especially because a “move to a neighbouring country may involve less social and political upheaval for the migrant than a move to the capital” (de Haas and Bakewell 2007, 17). An understanding of this intra-ethnic border-crossing is relevant for the chapter on transnational religious discursive conflicts and intraregional migration. Migration from the continent to the Global North also constitutes a lesser percentage of

migrations on the continent. Trade, humanitarian support, familial and religious exchange are important vectors in migration within the continent. Further, according to scholars like L. Barros et al. (2002), S. Bredeloup and O. Pliez (2005), as quoted in de Haas, a substantial proportion of migrants consider North Africa (in particular Libya) as their primary destination, whereas others failing or not venturing to enter Europe prefer to stay in Northern Africa as a “second best option” rather than return to their more unstable and substantially poorer origin countries” (5). Thus, migration in Africa betrays a complex dynamic of choice, agency, and poverty as a push factor. What is more, “most of the border crossings are over land frontiers that are passed with minimal if any formalities. As a result, there is only limited knowledge about the forms and patterns of migration across large parts of Africa (Bakewell and De Hass 2007, 2).

However, fictional productions have sought to fill this gap, bringing together individual stories and acknowledging the vast ecosystem that motivates and mitigates migrations. Writers, like those under analysis in this study, have over the years relayed (im)migrant stories that seek to fictionalise and depict the painful, alienating elements of migration and the world risk society. What is at stake is that migration stories adopt a humanizing lens to the pains and estrangement of migration. To be on exile, to migrate is to be at loss. In his well cited *Reflections on Exile*, Edward Said remarks on the sequestering character of lives on the move: “it has torn millions of people from the nourishment of tradition, family, and geography” (Said 2000, 181). Said’s reflections are largely political, they align with some aspects of the exilic conditions of many African writers who left oppressive regimes to seek exile in other countries. Lewis Nkosi in “The Wandering Subject: Exile as ‘Fetish’” examines this condition by drawing nostalgia together with exilic conditions and an ensuing melancholia; he writes, “The Condition We Call Exile”, explains that “[t]he dictionary meaning of *nostalgia* as a kind of “homesickness” braces us to confront the nosology of exile as that pathological “desire to return to some earlier time in one’s life, or a fond remembrance of that time, usually tinged with sadness at its having passed” (2006, 209).

Migration then involves an antinomy, a form of loss and a form of gain, a retrospective view embodies a loss and a projection into the future is an anticipatory space, unknowable, embodying both gains and losses. While home is lost, the world and a wider worldview may be gained; for [t]he exile knows that in a secular and contingent world, homes are always provisional (2000, 190). Edward Said appropriates the musical concept, “contrapuntal” to describe the plurality and simultaneity of visions that exile may give (191). Said differentiates

between the exile, refugee and the expatriate. The one who is on exile is (s)he who is prevented from returning home. The refugee is a creation of twentieth century modernity: large herds of innocent and bewildered people requiring urgent international assistance (187), while an expatriate “voluntarily live(s) in an alien country, usually for personal or social reasons” (187). Exile, and new forms of mass migration like refugee, economic migration are unwanted consequences of the first modernity’s success. Scales, at which these classes of displacement occur, are associated with “the modern warfare, imperialism, and the quasi-theological ambitions of totalitarian rulers—[this] is indeed the age of the refugee, the displaced person, mass immigration” (180).

There is always a sense of loss, leaving behind of an irretrievable affective home as a result of going on exile. Exile and emigration are also, on another hand, possible routes for liberation since migration is discontinuous, migrants may choose new ways to build their lives. Emigration itself may be self-formation: secular and religious education are important reasons for movement. The different possibilities and conditions of exile and diaspora have been imaginatively depicted in African migrant novels. These novels share thematic and formal features with the fluid genre of migrant literature. These novels actively construct and betray elements of the world risk society. The ontology of risk is achieved through the novels’ adoption of transnational, planetary awareness of uncertainties, precarity and anticipations of catastrophe. An important task of this study is to show the migrant literature as a viable vehicle for examining the cultural production and consideration of world risk society with an emphasis on the novelistic representation of how migrant characters cope with and contribute to the process.

Early explanations of migration linked people’s movements to geographical differences in labour demand and supply (Lewis 1977, Fei (1963, 1964, Todaro 2000); the belief was that some countries exert a pull effect while specific factors push citizens to emigrate. The cultural, social, and political implications of migration, especially with the rise of far-right organizations, have also produced new concepts and understandings of migration. All these have led to the conscious and unconscious production of cultural artifacts, most especially literary works. Literary and nonliterary productions have advanced our understanding of the ebbs and flows of people. This thesis examines the migration novel, a vital element of cultural production on migration. The migration novel fictionalizes the complexities, disjunctions, uncertainties, and risks of late modernity. By bringing together individual stories and acknowledging the vast

ecosystem of the world risk society, they provide thematic, formal, and aesthetic representation of late modernity.

Writers such as Fatou Diome (2006), Dinaw Mengestu (2007) Pedo Holist (2012), Chimamanda Adichie (2013), and NoViolet Bulawayo (2013) and many more writers have, over the years, narrated the individual stories, personal disappointments, and frustrations of (im)migrant characters. These works provide insights into the anxieties of belonging and identity, financial risks, and the complex homeland – the nation-state. Crucially, their works also provide new understanding of being African and interrogations of the global system. In this way they provide narrative frames through which the existential struggles of late modernity may be read. The novels expand the thematic focus and go beyond established themes of early African writing like liberation, nationalism, class struggle, and communalism to represent new agency, individual subjectivity, environmental consequences of modern technological advancement and transnational terrorism. It is in this way that one differentiates between contemporary African writing and previous writings on (im)migration which centered on nationalism and nation-state social categories.

In *Literature and Migration*, Frank Soren's analysis of migration literature provides some answers to our understanding of displacements, movements, and boundaries in novels. Crucial to Frank's study is his definition of migration literature as "all literary works that are written in an age of migration —or at least those works that can be said to reflect upon migration" (2). His conceptualization of this genre goes beyond categorization that limits an understanding of migration literature to its author's origins or migration experience; instead, he emphasizes features of texts such as content and form, and extratextual context (3). One can then argue that migration literatures are literary texts that narrate thematically and formally the ontological and epistemological disruptions, continuities of movements, displacements, self-formation, and home-specifics of individuals in such a way that a substantial portion of the fabula focuses on migrant actants and events. Hence, the real world author's location may not be a signifying factor for migration literature; this is also an argument that this work adopts. Frank argues that themes dealing with movement are ubiquitous in works after 1950 while he also notices a shift from an emphasis on the representation of nations' homogenous identity to one that incorporates global concerns. He believes that the plot, themes, and characterization of post-1950 novels are geared towards migration. Notably, their protagonists are, according to Frank, migrants, "whose presence enables a profound renegotiation of national identity, belonging, and home" (1). Furthermore, wars, decolonization, authoritarian regimes, globalization, and

faster means of transportation have contributed to the greater number of individual migrations; and the experiences of migration therefore constitute much of the content of literary productions.

Nevertheless, the term migrant literature versus migration literature remains a topic of debate. Wolfgang Behschnitt (2010) and Graeme Dunphy (2001), for example, prefer the term 'im/migrant literature.' This classification valorizes the birthplace/nationality of the author's identity, and they argue that this has an influence on their work. However, by underlying their arguments on such ontological essentialism, their analyses foreclose the imaginative and mimetic aspects of literature. For example, the case of the French writer Daniel Theron (Jack Alain-Leger/ Paul Smaïl), whose work narratively appropriates the 'Beur' migrant experience in France emphasizes this point that one does not need to be an immigrant to be able to tell an immigrant story. While such appropriation of experience may raise ethical questions, it is important to bear in mind that fictional texts are imaginative artefacts, hence there is no limit to boundaries of representation. That literature should not be restricted to criteria like identity of the author is further underscored by the fantastic narratives of Nigerian writers Amos Tutuola and Daniel Fagunwa whose works involve migrations between the human and non-human realms. In addition, it is pertinent to question the syllogism of the author-tied description of literary production because it creates an ossified concept of identity. In light of this author-based classification, questions like, *how long can one be described as a migrant? Can a naturalized citizen be described as a migrant author?* complicate and subvert the category, (im)migrant literature. Furthermore, the pitfall of arguments that uphold an essentialist understanding of literature based on the author's origin is that they uphold nationalistic thinking and reject the performative dimension of identity and belonging. Soren Frank's definition of migration literature provides a tentative frame for this study, and it emphasizes the representation of multiple places of (un)belonging, socialization, political, economic, and ecological conditions.

This study thus takes Frank Soren's definition and characterization with caution especially because a broad term like migration literature might occlude and generalize experiences. Arndt and Brinsinki have, for example highlighted the dangers of such grand terms like migration. They contend that the term "migration" harmonizes and disguises hierarchies and is "applied to wholly different processes without critical reflection or specific clarification" (2006, 44). As such, analyzing character experiences and worldviews within the migration literature frame must interrogate the ontology of the subjects and power asymmetries that uphold the global conditions. Further, migration literature should not elide the differences in migration trends and

routes. As Sarah Ahmed rightly asks in her analysis of home, narratives, and migration, “what different effect does it have on identity when one is forced to move? Does one ever move freely? What movements are possible, and what movements are impossible? Who has a passport and can move *there*? Who does not have a passport and yet moves?” (1992, 332). Similarly, we may demand in regard to the world risk society, who defines risk, who produces these risks, who are the major victims, how is risk constructed and staged with the help of the media and cultural productions?

This study, therefore, expands the analysis of the world risk society beyond Euro-American-centrism and focuses on migration literature from Africa. The migratory trajectories and routes of African migrant characters that these novels depict allow access to several villages, cities and countries in Africa, Asia, Europe, and North America. This means that it becomes easy to read the unintended consequences of the globalizing late modernity since these novels depict emplacement and displacement, and the existential conditions of the period. The genre problematizes place and encourages a polyphonic account of place memories, histories, and experiences. Furthermore, these migration novels from Africa are crucial in provincializing Euro-American spaces because they “offer an analytical approach by means of which Europe is ‘provincialized’ and the complex character of transnational European identities and transcultural processes in Europe can be specified” (Arndt 2009, 103 - 104). In this way, migration literature traces and invests in the diversity of experiences across the world while it also puts into focus the power asymmetries in international and intercultural relationships.

Azade Seyhan (2000) has, in other ways, highlighted some of these global features of migration literature in her articulations of transnational, diasporic, and ethnic literature. While she seems to prefer these terminologies to migration literature, the core of her analysis focuses on transnational and global conditions of diasporic selfhood and the planetary experience of late modernity culture. Seyhan asserts that “narratives that originate at the border crossings cannot be bound by national borders, languages, and literary and critical traditions” (4). She stresses, for example, that “transnational literature is a genre of writing that operates outside the national canon, addresses issues facing deterritorialized cultures, and speaks for those in [...] “paranational” communities and alliances” (Seyhan, 2000, 10). By acknowledging and addressing deterritorialized cultures, transnational literature then allows a multivalent and simultaneous awareness of experiences. Language plays a vital role in Seyhan’s articulation of transnational, diasporic, ethnic literatures. The linguistic form of their writings, Seyhan argues, involves expressions of “loss or dislocation, such as fragments or elliptical recollections of

ancestral languages, cross-lingual idioms, and mixed codes to create new definitions of community and community memory (Seyhan 2000, 17). Seyhan further argues that diasporic writings seek to blur the lines between history and story and question such assumptions in official histories. Hence, they truncate the dominant western narratives and epistemologies. By bringing to date the living conditions of migrating subjects, the memories of history and loss, one can read the late modernity in a truly universal pattern.

A feature that cuts across migration literature is, importantly, one that characterizes the difference between early and late modernity, that is the shift from the national to the transnational, from a homogenous narrative of selfhood to a heterogeneous one that exists as a constellation of identities. This implies that the epistemological scaffold that upholds the *Gestalt* of nation and nation-states' politics is deconstructed through the dialogic forms of migration literature. Categories such as nature, gender, endogamy, and discourse sustained by a unified theory of the self and the nation in first modernity can no longer hold. The subversive tendency of migration literature and the demonstration of the breakdown of social categories therefore fictionalize the five processes of globalization that Ulrich Beck asserts lead to world risk society.

This consciousness of late modernity heterogeneity and its risks exist in the literary productions of Africanists and postcolonial experts. For example, Cajetan Iheka and Jack Taylor in *The Migration Turn in African Cultural Productions* provide an overview of contemporary migration discourse in imaginative texts, which covers a vast thematic and formal discourse on migration by examining belonging, subjectivity, estrangement, precarity, globalization, and racial politics. In their introduction, Iheka and Taylor argue that there is a shift from the nation-themed early 'migrant' writings (2018, 2), which were usually occupied with returnee characters and "the dominant thematic issue of African literature was the figuration of the nation, newly independent nations, or those struggling to emerge from the colonial doldrums" (ibid , 2) to a more expansive field of transnational inquiry. It then follows that, even though earlier African migration literatures depicted characters and migratory events, these were usually temporary and fictional vehicles to depict and thematize the tensions between "so-called modernity and tradition" (ibid 2). Iheka and Taylor's observation lends credence to this study's argument that narrative texts from Africa display or depict transformations and disjunctions in their thematic focus between the first and second modernity. They further argue that contemporary literature is witnessing "a shift from those early works focused on the nation to the outward, transnational emphasis of recent migration texts" (ibid 3). In this present research,

I recognize this shift from the national to the transnational and demonstrate that the novels fictionally depict how the processes of globalization undermine the idea of a unified nation-state, based on enlightenment ideas of determinate aims and exclusive national identities. Ecological risks are for example now trans-spatial and threaten the supposed security of national boundaries. The global risk of terrorism seems to be the obvious example of the threat to national security that nations now face. Also, within the nation-state, the sanctioned social categories are undermined by individualization and gender revolution, this means that categories and attitudes that were thought to be 'natural' in early modernity are not only being questioned but they fall apart under self-criticism and self-assertion of citizens. Furthermore, the assumed 'purity' of national identity is subverted through the supplementary histories of formerly enslaved people, colonized citizens, Indigenous populations, and immigrants. For this reason, the linear history of the erstwhile dominant demography and its social practices are brought into question such that the modern conception of a people as citizens of the nation-state can no longer be guaranteed or signified by essentialism. Therefore, social performances and categories become disjunctive, multiple, and interconnected. Consequently, the world of risk and its late modernity features are constituted by redefinitions of individual and national boundaries, this also implies that risk is reconstituted and what counts as risk is redefined within new and emerging paradigms.

How then does migration literature come to terms with these uncertainties, disjuncture, and plurality? It is through the metaphors of the double (reflection) that represent the 'other', themes of 'risky' subjects and transnational solidarities, characterization of immigrant lifestyle and plural temporalities, migration literature throws into relief the incompleteness and uncertainties of the present social condition that is a world risk society. As an instance, in his essay, "Life, Sovereignty and Terror in the Fiction of Amos Tutuola", Achille Mbembe (2003), through the metaphor of the mirror, provides a reading of the notion of the ghost as produced in Tutuola's *Palm-Wine Drinkard* (1952) and *My Life in the Bush of Ghosts* (1954). In these works, he argues that "the idea of life, sovereignty, and terror is fundamentally linked to that of the imagination, work, and remembrance" (Mbembe 2003, 1). By demonstrating how the ghost (wandering subject) subverts borders between the real and the imagined, self and other, and how these constitute a reinvention and continuous work on the self, the idea of fixed subjectivity, ethnic particularity, humanist totality is presented as unfixed. In more ways than one, Mbembe's reading echoes in psychoanalytical and necropolitical stances the sociological arguments of the world risk society, particularly in the risk deriving from individualization. Mbembe's analysis

of the sovereign, terror, and subjectivity and the self-evolving subject that is constantly reshaping themselves to navigate the ghost world echoes the individualization of the subject in the chaotic world of work in late modernity in which Beck argues that the subject rewrites their biographies outside of existing boundaries. Work in Mbembe's explication is risky because it "is a permanent activity, this entails actions and decisions and technologies to disarm danger/death, represented through the figure of a character who traps" the bearer of danger and death (Mbembe 2003, 16). Mbembe's psychoanalytical scaffolding for his analysis involves the self, here, recognizing the sociological background of the world risk society, it is the individual within an institutionalized individualism that must work on themselves. As he mentions

the temporality of each reality is, moreover, itself shattered. Life is henceforth but a series of moments and instants that have no overarching unity. The entire structure of existence is such that in order to live, one must constantly escape from permanence; one must continuously jump back and forth between one horizon and another. For permanence is the bearer of precariousness (Mbembe 2003, 21)

The individual in this society no longer performs a fixed identity, but identity in this context is one that needs to be made and remade, and requires a constant reworking when faced with the future's incertitude. When one brings this in contact with Beck and Beck-Gernsheim idea of individualization, everyday life for the individual implies the danger of choice, whereby "work for life thus consists in capturing death and exchanging it for something else" (Mbembe 2003, 16). The individuals' precarious conditions in the world risk society hinge on the reworking of the individual; death, danger, and other anticipated catastrophes sharpen these biographies. To wit, it can be argued that the human in late modernity is posthuman in the sense that the human has metamorphosed into a 'nature' that is no longer autonomous, or the 'crown of creation' as enlightenment philosophers like Immanuel Kant and Friedrich Hegel argued.

If an individual is not complete on their own, it thus presupposes a lack, a state of incompleteness. The sense of incompleteness should then be a point of departure in arguing for conviviality,³ whereby incompleteness is an element in the self's formation, as Francis Nyamnjoh argues. Conviviality ensures awareness of futures as unknowable and uncertain, which, however, possesses hope if it can be duly negotiated. He asserts that a pluralistic view of epistemologies and systems reduces the risks of uncertainty and ontological threats. The migrants, those in liminal spaces, and other border crossers provide an example of

³ Nyamnjoh defines conviviality as the "recognition and provision for the fact or reality of being incomplete" (Nyamnjoh 2017, 262).

conviviality's positive potentials. He posits, "[f]aced with inadequacies, we, now and then, invest hope, interpretation, and mediation in those claiming the status of seers and frontier beings, in those imbued with larger-than-life clairvoyance and capacity to straddle worlds, navigate, negotiate and reconcile chasms" (Nyamnjoh 2015, 256). These border crossers "make boundaries real by crossing and interlinking them, they are better able to contest these very same boundaries when activated to challenge their mobility as frontier beings. Operating at the margins, in conversation with those in their various homes, they challenge essentialisms, play with limits, and expand possibilities for flexibility and inclusiveness" (ibid 260). Their conditions exemplify and give nuance to the essentialisms and strict binaries that the enlightenment and early modernity have erected. The world risk society with its ambivalence and multiplicities problematizes such essential forms like autochthon/immigrant, African / European, since nothing remains the same for long, but all is in constant flux. Using the symbol of the ghost bodies in Tutuola's work, Nyamnjoh reads some malleability to form, body, and self. Hence the adjustable, redefinable corporality of the ghosts and the protagonist of the novel as he migrates typifies the individual's condition in the world risk society. Ontological uncertainty and adjustments, re-formations, unknown outcomes, and decisions with unknowable consequences reflect the living conditions. The acknowledgment of this incompleteness may then lead to "social action in which interconnections, interrelationships, interdependence, collaboration, co-production, and compassion are emphasized" (ibid 260).

What runs through these aforementioned arguments is the assumption that migration literature and its cognates address a broad thematic field and are not formally uniform. Crucially, migration literature pinpoints the asymmetry in a globalized world. For example, Susan Arndt and Marek Spitezok von Brisinki (2006) articulate a hierarchy in globalization's social and political fabric. "Whoever cannot master the rules of the game of the "global village," or whoever cannot even meet them due to lack of technical and economic preconditions (which applies to most of the world's population) remains excluded" (2006, 41). Migration literature, through its emphasis on place polygamy and multicultural expressions thus highlight the historical, social, gendered, political, racial, cultural conditions of a globalizing world.

African scholars on migration recognize this complexity in migration. Their writings and explication have been more critical in understanding the gender dynamics of this research; in addition to the widespread global attention by scholars already mentioned, they foreground the understanding and the theoretical framing of the arguments, especially in chapters two and three. In their study on female migration in Ghana, Mariama Awumbila, and Gertrude Dzifah

Torvikeh (2018) acknowledge the complexity of factors for female migration trends. Migration, for example, may be empowering, yet more dangerous for women than men. The racial dimension of their being may mean they suffer double discrimination as migrants and as women. This inequality calls for a gendered understanding and interrogation of migration discourse. Migration, it was established, exposes more women to opportunities; this “makes them more assertive, which, in effect, can improve their full participation in society” (184). Despite the opportunities, they indicate that migration also exposes them to multi-faceted vulnerabilities, including exclusion and exploitation, sexual abuse and human rights abuse. In particular, the participation of females in migration has led to “the development of a labour niche for females often characterized by low wages, unfair labour practices and exploitation and exclusion of females from certain kinds of work” (185). Rosabelle Boswell and Silvana Barbali (2007), Medina Ina Niang (2019), Mmapula Diana Kebaneilwe (2019) and Camilla Cockerton (2002) have contributed to the growing field of migration, relying on theories and concepts of gender studies to interrogate the vulnerabilities, empowerment, agency, labour laws and subversion of gender roles and the domestic division of labour.

In the field of literary studies, Arndt and Briniski, who have been cited earlier, have provided transdisciplinary approaches in analyzing transnational movements and the results of these movements, adopting terms, concepts, and arguments that are inflected with postcolonialism, feminism and transnational studies to evaluate diasporic literary productions and gender discourse within that field. For example, Arndt has argued that diasporic writings provide a space for provincializing Europe since “the complex character of transnational European identities and transcultural processes in Europe can be specified” (2006, 104) within such imaginative productions.

Anna Toivanen (2016) has considered the cosmopolitan ethics and politics in writings that are thematically centered on movements and migrations. She persuasively argues that non-places like the airport, which are natural sites that enhance the cosmopolitan society, pose challenges for equal access to cosmopolitan worlds. Officials at the airports possess the institutional power to withhold access through visa stampings and abort prospective (im)migrants’ journeys. Mobility for the female characters in the three novels Toivanen analyses also erases their identities; the characters are defined within an asymmetrical world order that emphasizes excluding particular bodies from cosmopolitan engagements.

Forms of exclusion and asymmetrical power relations in a global order have not foreclosed the possibility of (im)migrant African success. The presence of characters of African origins who “belong to no single geography, but feel at home in many” (Selasi 2005, n.p) recurs in many contemporary African novels. These characters are recognizable by their

funny blend of London fashion, New York jargon, African ethics, and academic successes. Some of us are ethnic mixes, e.g. Ghanaian and Canadian, Nigerian and Swiss; others merely cultural mutts: American accent, European affect, African ethos. Most of us are multilingual: in addition to English and a Romantic or two, we understand some indigenous tongue and speak a few urban vernaculars. There is at least one place on The African Continent to which we tie our sense of self: be it a nation-state (Ethiopia), a city (Ibadan), or an auntie's kitchen. Then there's the G8 city or two (or three) that we know like the backs of our hands, and the various institutions that know us for our famed focus (Selasi 2005).

Selasi has proposed the term Afropolitanism to describe these ‘New Africans’ who are recognizable by their hypermobility and hyper cultural orientations. Afropolitanism in this light has come to earn criticisms for its commodification and perceived elitism (Santana 2013, 2016; Dabiri 2014, 2015). For Grace Musila (2016), Afropolitanism betrays anxieties about Africa; it, therefore, exhibits a “mode of integration into a mainstream that appears to remain uneasy with cultural difference, hence the need to tone it down” (Musila 2016, 111). The term is exclusionary, incorporating certain individuals who by class and education are Afropolitans, and on the other hand, certain immigrants are excluded from the group. She also raises concern on “its easy comfort and uncritical embrace of consumer cultures and an equally uncritical embrace of selective, successful global mobility and cultural literacy in the global” (Musila 112).

In Amatoritsero Ede’s “The Politics of Afropolitanism” (2016), he criticizes the problematic literary productions geared towards a Western readerly gaze and taste. He argues that “the Afropolitan does pander to the white metropolitan gaze in targeting that public as its first literary audience” (94). He contends that Afropolitanism is an asymmetrical trend that shuns some groups while embracing other more powerful and conceding groups. “Afropolitanism [...] thus sets itself apart from a pedestrian and an often powerless crowd of metropolitan blacks or coloured people” (94). Nevertheless, he provides a broader context to the usefulness of the term and its productive energy if worked alongside historical trajectories and ideologies. Of interest to this study is Ede’s recognition of Afropolitanism “as a transnational material and ideological condition, which leads to an inherent individualism and identity politics when it is confronted by metropolitan racial/class tensions and politics of difference” (88 - 89). In this way, Ede is aware of the late modernity individualizing process backed up by the institutions

of the state and global politics. Ede engages Afropolitanism as a transnational socio-historical condition haunted by subjective acquiescence, which seeks to cope with global trends. To be an afropolitan or to adopt afropolitanism in the cultural sense of the word may therefore entail some deliberate forgetting, an effacement of memory, and a valorization of culture as “a coping mechanism against the nausea of history. That politics occurs, within a postcolonial context, in relationship to the global public realm” (Ede 2016, 93). This argument is plausible, especially when juxtaposed with other arguments like Stephanie Bosch Santana’s, Emma Dabiri’s, and Binyavaga Wainaina’s who have argued that the term is elitist, Eurocentric, and commodifying. What cuts through their arguments is that they recognize the metropolitan privilege, facile mobility, and hierarchy that the afropolitans attain by their cosmopolitan and individual success.

In his influential article, “Rethinking African culture and identity: the Afropolitan model” (2014) Chielozona Eze takes account of the term by situating it within a cosmopolitan ethos and advancing moral aspects to its usage. He posits that “Afropolitanism corresponds to what has been called the cultural face of cosmopolitanism” (Eze 2014, 239). He also emphasizes the elitism and exclusivity of the term but agrees that while “Afropolitanism smacks of elitism, [...] one does not need to be an elite or even to live in one of the big cities of Africa or the West to be an Afropolitan” (Eze 2014, 240). An Afropolitan then appears to him to be a complicated term that shuns arguments of puritanism, simplistic subjectivity, and essentialisms.

In contrast to these criticisms of elitism and exclusivity, other scholars have privileged the positive sides of Afropolitanism. Simon Gikandi argues that the term dismantles stereotypes and victimhood of the African; his position is quoted at length to highlight the worldly outlook and the possibility of a more positive future that the term espouses.

The idea of Afropolitanism [...] constitutes a significant attempt to rethink African knowledge outside the trope of crisis. Initially conceived as a neologism to describe a generation of Africans born outside the continent but connected to it through familial and cultural genealogies, the term Afropolitanism can now be read as a description of a new phenomenology of Africanness – a way of being African in the world. [...] To be Afropolitan is to be connected to knowable African communities, nations, and traditions, but it is also to live a life divided across cultures, languages, and states. It is to embrace and celebrate a state of cultural hybridity – to be of Africa and of other worlds at the same time. (Gikandi 2011, 9).

Thus, Simon Gikandi and other academics consider Afropolitanism as transcending the Euro-American-centricity and consumerism of which it has been accused. Afropolitanism embraces diversity and multiplicity, which includes Africans in Africa and elsewhere. African in this light assumes a broader meaning and is “clearly related to the postcolonial gesture of twisting the

simplified colonial image of Africa around and to restore the perception of the continent's cultural diversity, complexity and richness” (Gehrmann 2015, 63).

Achille Mbembe’s position aligns closely with Gikandi’s. He evaluates the new forms of subjectivity that emerge from several encounters within and outside the continent. Afropolitanism signifies a new way of being African. It provides a novel vista into the ontology of the African being in the world, “Afropolitanism refers to a way—the many ways—in which Africans, or people of African origin, understand themselves as being part of the world rather than being apart” (Mbembe and Balakrishnan 2016, 29). Mbembe’s articulation of Afropolitanism embraces an ethical view that acknowledges and questions the asymmetry of globalization and inequalities implicated in it.

In their essays, “Cosmopolitanism with African roots. Afropolitanism’s ambivalent mobilities” (2016), and “The Nigerian Diaspora in the United States and Afropolitanism in Sarah Ladipo Manyika’s *Like a Mule Bringing Ice Cream to the Sun*” (2019), Susanne Gehrmann and Sandra Sousa, respectively utilize Afropolitanism as a critical lens on global politics. In their analysis, Afropolitan characters are argued to have complex personalities, and they question the dominant metropolitan discourses; the narrative structure and thematic concern of these works also depict the metropolitan’s discriminative practices. Consequently, one cannot limit the philosophical underpinnings of Afropolitanism to mere superficiality and commodification. In contrast, these texts highlight and open up space for evaluating global conditions, and the racialized politics of global finance and the ecological tendency to use resources from the Global South to intensify capitalist exploitation further.

Bringing all these arguments and analyses together, Afropolitanism and its product, the Afropolitan remain an elusive and complicated sign. What is vital to this study is that Afropolitanism provides a global, pan-African context to interrogating the globality of interactions, asymmetrical financial inequalities, and the African in the globe. New ways are needed in analyzing and understanding late modernity and African migration literature, which seems to evade a strict construct, tentatively used here to tidy up disparate forms of writing and concerned with different aspects of the migrant experience. While all these novels thematize movements in one form or another, the characters' lived experiences differ. Interactions with the host community and racial politics/exclusion are usually defined alongside other categories like class, gender, and career identities.

1.2 FROM THE RISK SOCIETY TO THE WORLD RISK SOCIETYUlrich

Beck's concept and arguments brought together here are spread across his books and academic essays. Arguments for a world risk society are not contained in one book, but the arguments cut across concepts, reformulations, and essays on cosmopolitanism, globalization, risk society, and reflexive modernization. What follows examines Ulrich Beck's cosmopolitan manifestoes, academic writings, and arguments on the radical changes in late modernity and the risk globalization and its processes have engendered in contemporary societies. All these are assembled to provide a tentative theory of a world risk society, where the world signifies the global space shared by different societies, epistemologies, politics, cultures, and technologies. Thus, the world risk society means that risk, dangers and insecurity are potential realities; this means that society is always in an anticipatory mode for catastrophe. The virtuality of risk means that a threatening future creates an impulse for action for a phenomenon that cannot yet be known but appears knowable through expert knowledge. Expert knowledge therefore gives the impression that the future can be controlled, but the complex systemic structure of technology, society, individualization, gender, and sexual awareness makes it uncontrollable. Also, 'glocality' is the world risk society's lifeworld, meaning the global and the local intertwine in such a way that they imbricate each other in previously unknown ways. Such intersections imply a social change that distinguishes between early modernity and late modernity, which also means to argue that humanity has not arrived at postmodernity, as Jean-Francois Lyotard has argued (Lyotard 1979).

In his extensive writings, Beck argues that modernity has become reflexive so that the success of modernity has produced risks. Hence, one can speak of a risk society because risks accompany the production of wealth. Furthermore, reflexive modernization implies that modernity occupies a discourse of itself, becomes a problem for itself, and creates unintended consequences (Beck 1999, 2). In Beck's view, the early years of modernity dovetail with what he describes in *Risk Society: Towards a New Modernity* (1992) as an industrial society or early modernity characterized by a favorable outlook on technological and scientific progress. During early modernity, scientific progress hinges on advancement that sought to know and master 'nature.' Furthermore, society was structured in a fixed work society, and this accentuates gendered division of labour, a professional work culture that is patterned towards economic growth, and the fortification of national democracy. Risk and the probability of loss in early modernity also follow a strict knowable pattern because they respond to insurance principles' actuarial calculations. At many points, Beck hints that his awareness of the first modernity is

limited to the West, mainly because he foregrounds his arguments on European and North American examples. In fact, with Bonß and Lau, he argues that “there are groups of countries it does not apply to, for example, parts of Africa or Asia. According to the criteria laid out above, these areas never experienced a first modern society, although they are now enduring several of the same destabilizing forces as regions that did” (Beck et al. 2003, 7).

However, if Beck’s criteria are anything to go by, the import of colonization and missionary activity into Africa and Asia incorporates these continents in different ways into modernity. Disputably, as Anthony Giddens has argued, modernity is a project with its origins in Europe (Giddens 1990, 1), what Beck and Giddens overlook is the constitution of modernity as a result of colonial contact. Walter D. Mignolo (2007) and Olufemi Taiwo (2010), in their respective works, have attempted to demonstrate the fault lines in such assumptions that exclude the Global South from modernity. By looking at the legal and the theological frameworks that structured the colonizing process and missionary activities, Mignolo and Olufemi Taiwo powerfully inscribe the global south in the modernity project. Furthermore, through the civil service, the institutions and systems of colonization further throw into relief modern institutions. Early modernity is also the division of labour in postcolonial civil service and the nuclear family code that persist in the gendered forms of work and spaces. This system features prominently in the early writings of Africans like Peter Abrahams’ *Song of the City* (1945), *Mine Boy* (1946), Buchi Emecheta’s *Joy of Motherhood* (1979), Cyprian Ekwensi’s *People of the City* (1963), Ngugi wa Thiong’o’s *A Grain of Wheat* (1967), Mariama Ba’s *So long a Letter* (1979) and the list goes on.

French and Portuguese colonization’s assimilative dimension further enacted and established an epistemic system geared towards empirical rationalism, individualization, and functional differentiation. In this sense, the formal and informal dimensions of missionary activity, western education, and colonization signal modernity in Africa and Asia. Acknowledging that African countries experience early modernity has a telling significance for this study. Firstly, locating Africa’s early modernity, colonial legacy, and its epistemological frame of definitions will be seen as the basis of recent construction of ‘nature’ as separate from ‘culture’, which aligns closely with the enlightenment idea of utilizing nature for the development of humanity. Secondly, the colonial and missionary enforcement of nuclear family structures created a genderized family structure for many Africans.

Consequently, we can speak of “the modern/colonial gender system” (Lugones 2008), which is being deconstructed by the decolonial epistemic framework of African feminist and womanist discourses. Further, by highlighting early modernity built on missionary episteme and colonial structures of power and institutions, the world of work and its division of labour, will be understood as being in a transformative stage. The nation-state’s political dimension as the rational ground for self-identity and international relations is a characteristic of early modernity in Africa. The amalgamation of otherwise autonomous structures into profitable colonial assemblages called states signifies an early modernity frame. All these do not suggest that modernity in Africa and elsewhere did not encounter defiance or subversion; instead, evidence points in the direction of a tensed and ambivalent acceptance of European modernity. It is in this regard that this study argues alongside Partha Chatterjee that there is ‘our modernity’⁴ in the sense that even within what Beck has called early modernity, there was no singular way or form of modernity; instead, the imbrication of imperial and colonial encounters complicates an easy sociological classification of modernity as an absent phenomenon in Africa or Asia. As a result, Beck’s absolutism in addressing the institutional and systemic dimension of modernity based on the sociological formation of Western institutions requires provincializing. It is important to read Beck in the context of post-colonial and neo-imperial situations because, despite his awareness of anthropological arguments that question the binary opposition between the West and its *Other*, he leaves the epistemological base of these assumptions and structures as they were; such that the knowledge system that produces the ethical and ideological grounds for modernity are not sufficiently addressed. If modernity is viewed in light of structures, as he and Giddens⁵ have argued, the importation and violent enforcement on the colonies deserve some attention. Juridical, legislative, and executive overhauling of institutions means that simple modernity existed in the colonies, alongside awareness and adherence to traditional institutions that provide a frame for a hybrid form.

⁴ Chatterjee, 1997. Chatterjee’s position that, “The burden of reason, dreams of freedom; the desire for power, resistance to power: all of these are elements of modernity. There is no promised land of modernity outside the network of power. Hence one cannot be for or against modernity; one can only devise strategies for coping with it.” Chatterjee articulates the adverse consequences of modernity. Modernity here aligns with a series of negotiations and decision makings. Her position anticipates my argument that colonial modernity in Africa was already reflexive.

⁵ Anthony Giddens’ theories share a lot with Ulrich Beck’s and Scott Lash’s. However, he considers symbolic tokens and expert knowledge as important aspects of late modernity. He also engages the capitalist angle farther than Ulrich Beck or Scott Lash.

What constituted the first modernity in the colony and the West was a series of signifiers that denoted nationalistic thoughts and institutions. These had consequences on the political, socio-cultural, ecological, financial, and individual aspects of citizens' lives. As such, early modernity signals "the modernity based on nation-states, where social relations, networks, and communities are essentially understood in a territorial sense" (Beck 1999, 1-2). Similarly, risk, hazards, and dangers in the first modernity were mostly perceived as calculable and within the calculus of insurance and actuarial science. Such that, risk implied conditions with knowable results instead of uncertainties that possess a sense of the unknown.

Contrastingly, the certainty of actuarial science has, in late modernity, been undermined by the transnational, trans-temporal quality of risk. Furthermore, the subjective and socio-politicized perception of risk and the waning unity of expert knowledge has further decentered the unity of risk definition, which means that even the calculability of damages and compensability which insurance promised in the early modernity is waning in late modernity because when the risk materializes, the extent of danger cannot be revoked or sufficiently measured due to their temporal and spatial dimensions. Hence compensating victims of risk accidents cannot be adequately done (ibid 34). In cases of accidents from multinational company disasters, the litigation's transnationalism means that national courts of law may not sufficiently address damages.

Despite the Euro-America-centricity of Beck's early modernity position, his understanding of the second stage of modernity offers a broader frame. Late modernity takes the world as its object of attention and evaluates the disjunctive, transnational dimensions of risk distribution, prevention, containment, and production. All these alter the social fabric of the society, and this forms the fulcrum of Beck's world risk society, that is, the virtuality of 'glocal' risks have led to social transformations or metamorphosis, as he discusses in a later book *The Metamorphosis of the World* (2015), from early (first) modernity to late (second) modernity. In the book, *World Risk Society*, he argues that five processes have altered these changes that have created uncertainties, insecurity, and risk: "globalization, individualization, gender revolution, underemployment and global risks (as an ecological crisis and the crash of global financial markets)" (Beck 1999, 2). Across his other body of works (1992, 1999, 2000), Beck examines these processes and suggests that all these results in unintended consequences of early modernity victory. In such a way, the controllability, certainty, and security, which were hallmarks of early modernity flounder due to these processes. Based on these, the risk and uncertainties of late modernity are typified by their human production such that late modernity

creates new forms of ecological concerns, intimate relationships, capitalism, economy, and transnational subpolitics. By subpolitics, Beck means political networks, influences and activism outside of the nation-state structure and these agents alter the roles of borders and limits of nation-state sovereignty. In this way, they exceed the nation-state through transnational networks of activist groups; this is globalization from below (Beck 1999, 37-40).

On the other hand, subpolitics also signifies the transnational force of international coalitions of other nations states like the European Union (Beck 1999, 37). *Tout court*, the world risk society undermines the structures of what Anthony Smith refers to as “methodological nationalism” that is, the formation of society along with the premise of a nation-state. Consequently, the sociological impulse to rely on such rigid nationalistic frames effectively results in epistemological contradictions, ontological uncertainty, competitions, and conflicts. The transformation of the society caused by transnational encounters also has a telling effect on individuals whose lifeworlds, once structured in line with early modernity frames of reference, are inundated with forces beyond the social constructions of their parents’ generation. To speak of the world risk society is therefore to take cognizance of the globalizing forces that demand a reinterpretation of knowledges, an acknowledgment of global asymmetrical power relations, novel forms of state control of territory, and the deconstruction of nationally defined collective identities like class, ethnic groups, and gender. Therefore, it is not an economic revolution in the mold of Karl Marx’s class conflict that changes society; it is contrastingly the normality of these side-effects and changes that have altered how we live.

Since society has metamorphosed from a stage of simple, nationally defined modernity to more open, late, complex modernity, it then follows that the concerns of this later modernity will include a concern for the future. Beck’s articulation of the world risk society is overwhelmingly concerned with the future and the anticipations of catastrophes that the world risk society engenders. He defines risk in anxious futuristic terms, arguing in *World at Risk*, for example, that risk

represents the perceptual and cognitive schema in accordance with which a society mobilizes itself when it is confronted with the openness, uncertainties, and obstructions of a self-created future and is no longer defined by religion, tradition or the superior power of nature but has even lost its faith in the redemptive powers of utopias (Beck 2009, 4).

In *World Risk Society*, Beck argues that risk “is the modern approach to foresee and control the future consequences of human action; the various unintended consequences of radicalized modernization. It is an (institutionalized) attempt, a cognitive map, to colonize the future” (Beck

1999, 3). If it concerns itself with the future, risks, therefore, presuppose decisions, which involves politics, power, definitions, and (trans)national coalitions. Beck's argument on the 'energizing principle' of risk to prompt decisions echoes Anthony Giddens's arguments in *The Third Way. The Renewal of Social Democracy* (1998), where Giddens discusses risk as being debated democratically through discourse rather than violence and reaches political conclusions.

Nevertheless, at the same time, discourses and decisions derive from already established knowledge structures, which presupposes institutions and experts' power. Expert knowledge, especially in science and technology, is reflexive because science and technology, as the producers of risk, are also responsible for the development of evaluation and solutions (Beck 1999, 99-100). To add to this, conflicting scientific studies that dictate the levels of permissible risks and dangers undermine the expert authority on ecological, technological, and health risks. Because expert knowledge is opened to circumstantial and perspectival interpretation, future catastrophes can never be sufficiently known since risk and security assessment and responsibility are taken with incomplete or partial knowledge.

According to Beck, risk features are altered in late modernity such that damages from risk and danger are non-compensable and non-calculable (Beck 1999, 8). If early modernity was a 'stable' *duree* with fixed nation-state sovereignty and extensive monopoly on state political power, the subpolitical dimension of late modernity disrupts this, opening up space for inclusive and multivariant voices, forces, and actors. Such multiplex power constellations then lead to the contention of absolute supremacy and power game on which aspects of the political, social, and cultural aspects should be considered a risk. Beck uses 'relation of definition' to show the conflicts and struggles over definitions (Beck 2009, 194), and the question of what is permissible as risk within the legal, legislative framework becomes pertinent to understanding and evaluating risk scenarios. Nevertheless, the dangers and risks produce oppositional politics for arriving at solutions (Beck 1995). Beck's constructivist view is most evident in this position as he argues that "risks are social constructions and definitions based upon corresponding relations of definition" (Beck 2009, 30). Institution and knowledge combine to erect risk judgment. The questions "what counts as a risk?", "what knowledge leads to that conclusion?", "who decides what knowledge to use to determine risk and proof?", "within what cultural frame is risk determined?", "how are victims of risk compensated?" are crucial in the world risk society. The definitions then account for the negotiation, recognition, legislation for compensation, and risk avoidance (51). The calculus of risk, compensation, and insurability are

in these ways tied to the social and political aspects of socio-cultural decision making. The contradictions of risk calculation for technological risk are also evident by culprits and judges (1999, 58). That is expert knowledge that produces risk is usually the source of risk measurement. Risk in world risk society is then incalculable (2009, 4) because the fixed norms of calculation falter in the face of catastrophes that are difficult to measure due to their scale.

The tangibility of risk in its anticipation of catastrophe and the cultural ascriptions to the phenomena are pivotal to Beck's articulation of the world risk society. Risk thus exists in a hybrid state, one of constructivism and empiricism, so that risks have a constructed and material presence. Beck pays particular attention to how cultural definitions construct risk and still uphold the 'realness' of risk. In this regard, it can be argued that Beck straddles the middle ground between Mary Douglas and Aaron Wildavsky's cultural theory and the realism of environmentalist movements. He argues that his choice is rather pragmatic as he cites insufficiency in totally adhering to a strict realist or constructivist view (Beck 1999, 134). However, alongside Bonß and Lau, Beck argues that both are not contradictory but functional and legislative (2003). In his book, *Ecological Politics in the Age of Risk*, he argues that this fusion of the realist and constructivist approach to risk may be dubbed the "sociological perspective" (Beck 1995, 76). That Beck attempts to evade the dualism of an either/or syllogism is a strength of his theory. On the one hand, because the pragmatism of his approach ensures that the power asymmetries in definitions of risk are linked to cultural and sociological backgrounds, on the other hand, the reality of such global threats like climate change, the Chernobyl catastrophe, the Niger-Delta pollution, Three Mile Island accident, all point to the importance of measuring and analyzing future dangers through empirical means. For example, in reading the Niger Delta environmental degradation due to oil exploration, it is through the attempt of scientific positivism that the risks are measured, evaluated, and offered for discussion. Another dimension that one may interact with Beck's theory of risk society is to evaluate the normative sociological categories against ecological and technological threats. It is evident that such risks from gender revolution and individualization mostly result from the social constructions.

A crucial question then is how the future is constructed and what mechanisms of control and governmentality are maintained and politicized. Beck argues that through the staging of reality, *Realitätsinszenierung* (Beck 2009, 10), the future may become present. Stagings are thus encoded with politicized precautionary measures such that rationalistic understanding or objective evaluation of risks becomes impossible.

Beck considers the mass media machinery as vehicle for staging and it concretizes the abstractness of risk, by imaginatively creating scenarios that pre-empt selection of risk. Literary works may also be considered a medium for staging, even though they mostly lack the sensationalism of risk of the mass media and the deliberate politicization of risk for governmentality, control, and exclusion. Ulrich Beck has highlighted the resourcefulness of the imaginary might of literature in examining the risk situations as a channel “to fill by imaginative means this irrevocable uncertainty regarding the spaces of the future” (Beck 2009b, 292). Therefore, literature can channel the anxieties and uncertainties of the future into narrations, thereby making it “experienceable and perhaps even biographically and politically understandable” (298). What is more, literature helps in fictionalizing experientialism modes; it also mimics how risk is manufactured and diffused through government institutions and the media in real life. Beck’s attention to the importance of literary artifacts on risk and distillation of risk is most evident in his attention to novels of risk. For example, in *The Normal Chaos of Love* (1995), he, alongside Beck-Gernsheim, introduces the book with Michael Cunningham’s novel, *A Home at the End of the World* (1990) and Scott Turow’s *The Burden of Proof* (1990) to demonstrate the ‘newness’ of intimate love, family life, and personal freedom (1995, 1).

Having highlighted the kernel of Beck’s theory, it is crucial to underline the blind spots of his arguments. Firstly, the claims of Beck largely ignore the nuances of postcolonial life. While he recognizes the Brazilianization and late modernity world of the Global South, his idea is a chaotic global southern world that ignores class, race, sexuality and gender. Secondly, Beck’s ideas can also be countered by a postcolonial history that has always considered Western intrusion as a pollutant in the postcolony. This second argument has two implications for a postcolonial reading of Beck. There is a sense of belatedness to his arguments on the unintended consequences of late modernity, especially in arguments related to technology and nature. The colonial invasion of postcolonial spaces and the technology it brought had been noted for their unintended consequences. The literary representation of these destructions abounds in many literary works. In Niyi Osundare’s anthology of poetry, *Eye of the Earth* (1986), the excessive mining, extraction, and mechanization of farming are represented as destructive. These antinomies of an already existing late modernity condition in the postcolony and the contemporary sense of a world risk society disregard the Global South’s environmentalism. Two, it may occlude the epistemological frame with which Africans regarded the interaction and intertwinement between nature and culture before the colonizing effect of enlightenment education that sought to control nature and create a binary between them.

There is a need to provincialize the interrogation of the world risk society, in the mold of Dipesh Chakrabarty's historization of European history and the sociological outlook (2008). In the world risk society where the citizens of the world participate in the same temporality and lifestyles, where economies interface, categories like the Global South, the Migrant, and the poor deserve an ethical base. Also, all these categories should not be treated as homogenous groups in the way Beck regards them. Instead, group politics, individual nuances, and a cosmopolitan ethical ground should be based on academic intervention. To take Beck's attention to ecological and technological risks as a case in point, he neglects the global power asymmetries and local elitism in how ecological damage is being done to flora and fauna. While he acknowledges the West's waste exportation to Global South as inherent ecological risk, his arguments suggest that the 'poor' countries accept this toxic waste erases the power asymmetry in international cooperation and aid administration. Similarly, the extinction of biodiverse ecosystem that he discusses in *What is Globalisation?* (2000b, 40) is compellingly a result of the global capitalist system that demands resources from the usually impecunious Global South; this implies that Indonesia's palm oil arrives in the West as bio-fuel. The balance of trade and usually Western-supported governments in these countries suggest a complex, ecological destructive regime. Beck also overlooks colonial history and the resulting colonialism that follows: Walter Mignolo and Sabelo Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2015), have described it as the continued practice of neo-imperial extraction that follows colonialization.

Hence, the extractive economy of colonization is sustained by the extant global economic order. The world risk society as a cosmopolitan project is therefore obliged to pay attention to the late modernities beyond Euro-America-centrism if it is serious about tracing the globalizing process that has led to uncertainties and anxieties risks. Such wholistic scholarship implies that the conceptualization of global ethics, the realm of humanity, law, and legislation must be understood as epistemes and power systems. Within this power system are regimes that delimit into the enactor of rights, power, and the subjects or objects of control. Against this, the neo-imperial condition of the world, especially one acquired through the militaristic and economic coordinates of colonization, can only be tempered with a world society that coordinates itself within a multivocal discourse formation. France's continued dominance in francophone affairs establishes this regime of power outside Beck's assumption of American, Russian, and Chinese hegemony. The epistemological foundation of rights and power encoded in education, primarily as illustrated through the decolonizing arguments of Ngugi wa Thiong'o, emphasizes that global power goes beyond military and finance rudiments (Thiong'o 1986).

1.3 ON NARRATOLOGY AND NARRATIVES

Narratology is the study of narratives. It examines the constituent parts of narratives and deals with such questions on how narratives are constructed and narratives' constituents. According to Monika Fludernik's important definition, "it is the study of narrative as a genre. Its objective is to describe the constants, variables, and combinations typical of narrative and to clarify how these characteristics of narrative texts connect within the framework of theoretical models" (2009, 8). On this account, narratology aims to create a schema through which narratives can be analyzed, discussed, and interpreted. The question of what constitutes narratives, narratology have presented scholars with some problematics. As the study of narratives, narratology poses major issues beginning with the semantics of narratives, the object of its studies. Mieke Bal defines narratology as "the ensemble of theories of narratives, narrative texts, images, spectacles, events; cultural artifacts that 'tell a story'" (2009, 3). Peter Barry also provides a definition that opens up a functionalist window to understanding narratology. For Barry (2002), narratology deals with "how narratives make meaning, and the basic mechanisms and procedures [...] which are common to all acts of story-telling" (2002, 222 - 223). His argument that narratology "is not the reading and interpretation of *individual* stories, but the attempt to study the nature of 'story' itself as a concept and as a cultural practice" (223) may foreclose the poststructuralist analysis of discourse, narrative structures, in the construction of narratives.

The urge to name and observe the structure and constituents of a narrative may be traced back to Aristotle's *Poetics* and the study of tragedy plot since his study delineates the constituent parts of a tragedy. However, recent theoretical precursors of narratology are classical formalism and linguistic structuralism, especially the Russian and French schools. In his book, *The Morphology of the Folktale* (1968 first published in 1928), the Russian formalist Vladimir Propp developed a list of thirty-one functions that may wholly or in different combinations make up fairy tales. Function, in this sense, he explains, is "an act of a character defined from the point of view of its significance for the course of action" (1968, 21). Propp argues that the functions are constant and may be taken up by *dramatis personae* with different names; this makes them variable. Propp's task was to provide a morphology of folk tales to adumbrate the components and examine the relationship of one component to another. His work has inspired scholars like Claude Bremond (1973). By taking up Propp's ideas, Claude Levi-Strauss (1950) proves the scholarly usefulness of narrative studies to social and cultural issues; this is a point which many other narratologists have taken up. According to Susana Onega and Jose Angel Garcia Landa, the post-structuralist reaction to an otherwise structuralist 'science' has opened

it up to novel developments (Onega and Landa 1996, 1). Hence narratology is no longer limited to naming the components of narrative and examining their functions; instead, it also interrogates how these components may be involved in discourse construction and ideology. Narratology also transcends literary studies as narratological studies have been used to examine nonliterary genres and even history like Hayden White (1988), and many others have done. Such studies unveil the connection between semiotic representation of events, the failures of representation, the discourses that may be produced by manipulating aspects and elements of the narrative, and the play of temporal and causal link. As Onega and Landa have posited, narratology or studies of the narrative concerns itself with authorship, enunciation, action, narration/narrativity, reader reception, and self-referentiality (Onega and Landa 1996). Furthermore, narratology examines the binaries between the content of the text and its presentation, which are usually typified by concepts that range from the *sjuzhet/fabula* in the manner of Petre Petrov's approach, form/content as espoused by New Criticism, *histoire/recit*, and story/discourse.

Since the 1970s, Gerard Genette's work has questioned the basis of these binaries. He argues against the limited dualism that early narratologists like the Russian Formalist *sjuzhet/fabula* classification and the Jamesian approach of distinguishing between showing and telling. Instead, Genette proposes the triad levels of narrative: the story (the narrative content), the narrative (the narrative artifact), and the narrating (the presentation of the story) (Genette 1972). Genette sustains the author/narrator distinction similar to Wayne Booth's 1961 classification in *Rhetoric of Fiction*. Genette's work also builds on Tzvetan Todorov's ideas on focalization and postulates a relationship between the one who narrates and the one who sees – the narrative situation. Despite Genette's important typologies, his concepts are in no small extent structuralist and are more concerned with the components of narratives. While his ideas are innovative and crucial for narratology, significantly how he distinguishes between the mood and the voice, his theorization is largely functionalist. The limitations of this are most glaring when one considers the ideological angle that Mieke Bal and many other scholars of narrative have infused into narratology.

Bal's narratological analysis proves useful in how it moves beyond the formalist and structuralist analysis of narratology. Her work shows practicality in unpacking the ideological and ethical dimensions of narrative aspects and elements. For her, narratology is not merely a descriptive tool for pinpointing narrative but may serve as a mechanism for unraveling manipulating the abstract material, *fabula*, the story, and the text in meaning-making. Bal's

theory is that a narrative study transcends the written text's realm and maybe co-opted into film, art, and theological analyses. In Bal's introductory book to the study of narratology, *Narratology: Introduction to the Study of Narrative* (2009), she spells out this strategy of reading other unwritten text types by expanding the range of artifacts come under narratology. As such, she demonstrates that narratology is "the ensemble of theories of narratives, narrative texts, images, spectacles, events; cultural artifacts that 'tell a story'" (3). The object of study is a narrative text, "[...] a text in which an agent or subject conveys to an addressee ('tells' the reader) a story in a particular medium, such as language, imagery, sound, buildings, or a combination thereof" (5). Bal continues in the Genettian tradition of mapping out narratives into a triad structure she differentiates as text, story, fabula. A text is a medium that conveys a story (5). A Story is converted into signs and the presentation of fabula. Fabula derives from the mental activity of reading (10); the material or content worked into a story (5, 7). Bal's delineation of a narrative into these three components provides an analytical tool that is at once coherent and non-confounding. The separation into three layers also create an analytical scaffolding that allows the distinctive analysis of each layer; this proves useful for trans-media re-rendering of fabula. Bal's scholarship's strength rests on the discursive dimension she brings to the study since ideological, historical, cultural implications such that while a fabula remains, the story and the medium through which it is represented have a meaningful impact on its aesthetics, reception, and even politics.

The remarks that follow seek to offer a brief explanation of the three categories; this will be useful for the analytical chapters of this thesis as the narratological approach is based on Bal's typologies. Bal, in her *Introduction to Narratology*, first address the layer, 'text', which is the access into the story and consequently the fabula. A narrative agent, a function that expresses itself in language, tells a story in a text. The narrator exists on the narrative textual level using language; this is different from the focalizer, a colorer of worldview, or an agent through which objects, feelings are perceived. The narrator is in no way the author, an argument made since Flaubert's *Madame Bovary's* trial of 1857; neither is it parallel to Wayne Booth's 'implied author' the implied author can only be discussed after the interpretation of textual description. The narrator tells the story that orders the fabula into narrative strands that occur as the story. This telling can exist in two situations: firstly, externally whereby the narrator does not figure in the fabula; secondly, a narrative situation where the narrator occurs in the fabula, that is, a character bound narrator when the 'I' is identified with a character. The character bound narrative situation is further systematically divided into the perceptible and

imperceptible to distinguish between a character bound narrator who refers to themselves during narration and imperceptible to a narrator that does not make their presence explicit, respectively (27 - 28). Bal discounts the possibility of a second-person narrator in the strict sense of the word, and this contrasts with other narratologists like Monika Fludernik, who have opined that the second-person you-narratives are valid narrators who tell the story of a narratee (Fludernik 2009, 31). Conversely, Bal's argument against a second-person you-narrative is not solely based on "the story of a narratee," but instead, she seeks a linguistic approach to deconstruct the assumption of such a narrator. If the question "who tells" foregrounds an understanding of the narrator, then it can be argued that attempts at subverting language through play on the second person pronoun falter on the grounds of deictic irreversibility. She contests the possibility of a second-person narrative voice like in Bruno Latour's *La Modification* and argues that it is instead a self-referential you for it lacks the deictic essence of language. However, the pronoun 'you' seems to reference a second person you. The deictic reversibility of 'you' and 'I' in light of Emile Benveniste's deictic explications is usually lacking in the second-person. Hence, the 'you' cannot confirm the subjectivity of the other, which further strengthens Bal's categorization of the external and character bound types of narrators as opposed to first-person, second-person and third-person narrators. However, contemporary writers have continued to use this subversive mode of the narrator. Of particular interest to Bal's explication of the text is how she reclaims the text's descriptive and argumentative aspects from the arguments of realist superfluity that Roland Barthes (1968) tender. These texts' components are crucial to the ideological and aesthetical framework of the narrative and may further be divided based on their relevance to the events and actions of the fabula.

Bal further distinguishes two other levels that constitute the narrative: the story and the fabula. Unlike Genette's term, which examines the elements that make the story world possible, Bal distinguishes between the medium and the 'message' in a similar way to the Russian formalists' binary of *sjuzhet* and *fabula*. The emplotment of the series of events and actions, she calls 'story' while the abstract material of which the events and actions are constituted, she calls *fabula*.

Thus, the story emerges as a "product of the use of a medium" (Bal 2009, 75) and the result of ordering. In this way, time, temporal order, events, actions, perspectives, and frequency may be manipulated for ideological and aesthetics purposes like suspense and pleasure. Bal's story level is made up of sub-categories: order, frequency, rhythm, time, character, space and focalization, all these she calls 'aspects.' Bal demonstrates that the aspects may be employed to

achieve aesthetics, explanatory and psychological ends, which also may be imbued with ideological coding (81).

Of particular interest to Bal's work is how, in the Genettian tradition, she shows the disjunctures between the story and the fabula which is obvious in her breakdown of the chronological ordering of events in the fabula and its presentation in the story. The fabula is sequentially in order as they mostly adhere to the cause-and-effect logic of time and space. Stories then may be disruptive, and in this way, certain forms of deviation are produced in the order of narrative direction. In this case, one may speak of Bal's use of the terms anticipation and retroversion to suggest how the story progresses (93). Anticipation points at the forward narration of events or the outcome of the fabula; this, in many ways, parallels Genette's prolepsis. On the other hand, a narrative may move to the past to retrieve the memory, or for explanatory and complementary purposes in this way, one can speak of retroversion, which is similar to Genette's analepsis (1977). Bal favors the terms anticipation and retroversion over the flashback and flashforward models of early narratology because the later terms are invested with psychological connotation and exhibit certain vagueness levels.

Bal's construction of other aspects is equally crucial to understanding the framework of narratives. A crucial aspect that she explains in detail is the essentiality of certain events and their presentation: the rhythm of the text, which indicates the speed of presentation; it signifies the time of the event on time covered in telling (Bal 2009, 98). In a narrative, it is represented by the space the story covers in the text. Narrative theorists like Paul Ricoeur have been concerned with how to render events in time. Here, the question, "how many pages does it take to present the story?" is essential in assessing rhythm. In Paul Ricoeur's view, the act of "presentification that is the fact of 'narrating' and the thing 'narrated' are distinguished", and this differentiates between the time taken to narrate and the narrated time (1984, 1996,130). Bal, in a similar fashion, maintains that narrative time does not equal narrated time. She argues that isochrony, the equality of narrated time and narrative time, cannot occur in narrative language. Character dialogue may be the closest to what she terms isochrony (100). Within rhythm, one can point at the scene when events are expansively presented (103). That is, fabula time is roughly given equal time as story-time (103). Bal highlights three other types of rhythm: a summary indicates a quick telling of events or a summarized version of events. Ellipsis occurs when nothing about the fabula is given. Ellipsis may result from trauma, pain, memory loss, indicated by time passing. For descriptive and argumentative passages, Bal uses pause to signify this stop of fabula time. Rhythm may also be slow when an event takes a long time; it magnifies

the event. A concept like rhythm is useful in showing through the textual material, how risk in late modernity – with the rapidity of communication, travel, and interconnectivity – is being perceived.

Further, it reveals the narrative emphasis of movement in migration novels. The duration of stay, movement, and importance of non-spaces are highlighted through summary, pause, stay, and ellipsis. For example, The Magistrate's ruminations and wandering around Edinburgh are given prominence in Tendai Huchu's *The Maestro, The Magistrate & The Mathematician* through scenes, allowing the reader to experience his existential anxiety and the uncertainties of his occupational condition.

By and large, Bal's conceptualizations and explications are hybrid of the syntagmatic study of structures and the paradigmatic speculative approach. Structures and their components have names, meanings, and functions; this allows for further analyses based on the experts' speculative reading. Thus, while a syntagmatic structural approach like Genette names such aspects as narrative frequency and arrives at its function within the narrative, Bal takes this up and goes beyond inductive analysis to provide a semiotic, speculative, and paradigmatic evaluation of the text. For example, she draws from Gerard Genette's (1979) concept of narrative frequency to show the numerical relationship levels between the events in the fabula and the story (109). She pinpoints the repetitive and iterative, respectively, the alternative presentation of events by different agents and various events' solo presentations.

Similarly, there exists a regular frequency when an event is narrated as many times as it occurs (111). In Bal's argument, the agential ideological leanings of a narrator or a character may be evident through the omission, emphasis, and addition of information in the narration. In *Born on a Tuesday*, one of the texts that will be analyzed in this study, when two of the conflicting characters, Sheik Jamal and Abdul-Nur, repeat the events of their journey to Saudi Arabia, the political and dogmatic leanings of both parties is fused in the retelling. Thus, the act of telling and retelling, whether from the character or narrator, may be a vehicle to locate their ideological leaning. That telling is imbued with ideology and worldviews further reinforces the argument that even the most realistic novels are constructed, and they are creative illusions embedded with the narrators' worldviews and subjectivity. The awareness of discursive and epistemological construction of character indicates that the textual production and complexity in character production is not neutral or innocent, but a compelling epistemological and ideologizing aspect.

Experts like Herbert Grabes (1978), Gerard Genette (1979) and Uri Margolin (1995; 1996) have worked on constructing typologies of character and unravel how they emerge. Others have sought to unravel the level of ‘realness’ in the fictional representation of characters. A syntagmatic structural reading of such characters may overlook the cultural context highlighting only functions or the relations of certain characters to the other or, in Genette’s analysis, the difference of narrative levels between the narrator and character, and the metadiegetic frame. Furthermore, a paradigmatic and discursive reading like Mieke Bal’s situates such readings within social, historical, and cultural contexts creating an analytical approach that is similar to Edward Said’s ‘worldly’ approach to the study of texts (2000). Character is thus an essential aspect of narratological analysis; in fact, they constitute an essential aspect because the study emphasizes the place of the character as a functional aspect of the novels, the perceptual and agential components in the fictional composition of narrative subjects is an attempt at representing the uncertainties of the individual in the world risk society.

How do words construct the anthropomorphic figures, characters, and how are these figures imbued with a compelling appeal? (112). Bal proposes that these figures be considered as effects and not ‘real’ persons. A character is “the effect that occurs when a figure is presented with distinctive, mostly human characteristics” (112), and the figure of the character is constructed through traits that are repeated, semantic axes⁶, accumulation of characteristics, relation to other characters, and transformations, self-reflection, the information given by the character itself (131). According to Bal, a character, despite its resemblance to a human, is not one, but a textual production and “a complex semantic unit” (113). For this reason, she de-personalizes ‘character’ by describing it in the third person, the impersonal pronoun ‘it’ in such a way that the reader can evade the anthropomorphic projections of human realness and the fallacy that proceeds from that.

Bal’s consideration of character as an inhuman figure enhances this understanding of character construction as a tool. Characters thus do not exist in the way humans do; the psychological depth usually ascribed to them are human projections to create a realist illusion (113). However,

⁶ Semantic axes, a pair of oppositional meanings may be used to determine a character’s characteristics. Bal agrees that this axial opposition may however prove problematic for it reduces the complexities of the character into binaries, and hence asymmetrical hierarchies in certain characters that are imbued with positive attributes. However, the ideological Manichaean binary of this is not lost, early colonialist authors for example set African characters in opposition to the white colonisers.

narratives produce ‘character-effects’: which indicates the attainment of a “resemblance between human beings and fabricated figures is so great that we forget the fundamental difference” (113). Bal strengthens her point by showing the anachronisms that emerge because of such flat-realistic thinking as error-prone in geographical and temporal terms. By understanding and approaching characters from a standpoint that acknowledges them as fabricated figures by the narrator, the risk of fallacious interrogations and flat realism on extra-textual lives is reduced. Therefore, a character should be understood as a figure that “has no real psyche, personality, ideology, or competence to act, but it does possess characteristics that make readers assume it does and makes psychological and ideological descriptions possible” (113).

For this reason, characters in the analytical chapters are treated more or less like human-tools to reach a narrative end. Despite the close resemblance of certain characters and places to ‘real’ life persons and places or frames of reference, this is despite the close resemblance of certain characters and places. Such possibilities where characters appear to be a replica of ‘real’ life human, and situations are themselves illusions and idealized versions of representation; the illusionary realism of such attempts is thrown into relief when the critic considers the ideological, cultural, and political assumptions that are involved in the construction. For this reason, this analysis has moved away from strict extra-diegetic, and indeed as Hayden White’s deconstructive approach has demonstrated, the represented reality is a narrative illusion constructed on social conventions and authorities (White 1981).

An essential aspect of the story which Bal revitalizes is her arguments on focalization, an important aspect for how risk is perceived. The issue of the ‘point of view’, which had earlier incorporated the preceptor and narrator in the same person like in the works of Norman Friedman and Wayne Booth, took a turn first with Gerard Genette, who argued that there is a difference between who sees and who narrates. Bal continues in the tradition of Genette by demarcating the perceiving agent from the narrating agenting. To depict who narrates, she adopts the term narrator. To depict who sees, she uses the term ‘focalizer’; and accepts and privileges the term ‘focalization’ for its technicality and close link to photography. Bal’s adoption of focalization helps her negotiate the manipulative effect of ‘vision’ and the emotions of the focalizer. Further, that focalization is the substantive of ‘focalize’, a verb which demands a subject and an object means that focalization can is not limited to the agent of action and the receiver of the act of perception. (Bal 2009, 147). Bal exemplified the usefulness of this terminology in her analysis of subjectivity and reality (Bal and van Bohemeen 1984), perceptual

identification, and embedding (Bal 1981) in which she demonstrates the relationship between the vision and what is seen (perceived). Her position on perception relates closely to Paul Ricoeur's belief that focalization "governs the conceptual vision of the world in all or part of a work" (1983, 93). Focalization rests with the narrator, or a character, or an ambiguous vision between both. The act of focalizing therefore possesses significant ideologically and aesthetical import. It is in this way that one may understand how focalization colors with subjectivity (Bal 2009, 8), especially because "perception is a psychosomatic process, strongly dependent on the position of the perceiving body" (Bal 2009, 145).

It is then safe to argue that the psychology of the perceiver, worldview, distance to the object of focalization and previous knowledge contribute to how an object is perceived and constructed, since focalization reveals something about the focalizer and their object of perception. Because focalization orients, focuses on, interprets its perspectival objects, and does not contribute to the event, it pertains to the story. Focalization, however, acts as a steering perspective on the fabula (ibid. 165). It is also crucial to point out that Bal's work on focalization is that she pays attention to the object of perception. In this way, the focalized object or character is not merely an object without agential responsibility or subjectivity; instead, the perception of the focalizer acts on the object to produce a subjective idea.

Studies of narrative have compelled experts and authors alike to arrive at the contents of the deep narrative, which is the story's content, what Bal calls the memory traces. The story content has been discussed as a plot (Forster 1927), discourse (Todorov 1973; Greimas 1983; Genette 1979) in some narratological accounts. A driving question is what is constituted in the story? Bal considers this content and the mental image of events as fabula; this is closely linked to Vladimir Propp's use of the term as "the raw material of a story" (Popova 2015, 28). Changes, progress, alterations, actors are central elements to fabula. According to Bal, fabula is the mental print of events and exists on the third level of Bal's narrative categories; it is "a series of logically and chronologically related events" (Bal 2009, 194) which involves events, actors, time, location. Fabula is a self-sufficient structure that can stand on its own, non-constitutive of extra-diegetic views and opinions even when these seem related to the fabula. It is, however, elements and developments that interrelate to construct the fabula. Events occupy a vital position in Bal's explication of fabula. Events are crucial to the development and progress of a fabula because these constitute the question of change, choice, confrontation as the development of the fabula. Besides, actors exist within this realm as they progress the events and actions of the fabula.

Bal also discusses a constellation of actants, which she describes as actants, a terminology that echoes the Proppian classification of actors (Bal 2009, 202). Bal's work refers to Greimas' structuralist classification, which itself, at least in *Structural Semantics: An Attempt at a Method* (1983, 197-213), relies on Propp's categorization of a bundle of actor functions as actants. "An actant is, therefore, a class of actors whose members have an identical relation to the aspect of telos which constitutes the principle of the fabula" (202).

1.4 MIGRATION LITERATURE, NARRATOLOGY, AND RISK

African novels and their concerns exhibit a broad spectrum of form and content. Migration is a crucial one; recent migration novels are however formally and thematically different from the early writings of remigration, and European contacts. For example, in the works of Ama Ata Aidoo and Chinua Achebe. What differentiates contemporary writing is a disavowal of home as a singular place. Instead, home is constituted in multiple places for the characters depicted in these works. The inclination towards early writers' national relevance and nationalism has also been eschewed by contemporary writers who turn to a planetary observation and representation. This shift marks the metamorphosis between early modernity African migration writing and late modernity African migration literature. African migration literatures with at least a migrant character are aware of the changing, uncertain world risk society. Crucially, African migration literature complicates Africa as both a product of colonial hurt, dissatisfaction, and yet a space of promise.

Mobility and an awareness of global politics, racial politics, exclusion of particular bodies from places are critical to reading these works. It explains why I have opted to engage the sociological theory to analyze five novels by African origin writers. The uncertainties, truncations, impermanence of migration should be understood not as exact replicas of real-life experiences but as fictional creations; the representations are affected by writers' aesthetic choices, narratology, and structuralist inclinations that allow a tentative frame for analyzing these choices and their outlook on cultural production. The complex, transnational system that Beck's world risk society explicates provides a frame of reference for the sociological analysis of the literary representation of migration literature and its place polygamy. The novel can reflect, and as reflexive in the age-old adage, literature is the mirror of life. Furthermore, literature reflects

through the descriptive and ideological intrusions of narrative thoughts, and is reflexive in its attempt at mirror-like capacity.

Mobility is critical to the world risk society in search of educational self-fulfillment, transnational activism. While early modernity deployed an ontology of difference (1999, 10), late modernity transcends early modernity's essentializing differentiating factors. However, through transnational discourse coalitions in the construction and awareness of risk, the world risk society reflexively deals with self-generated manufactured uncertainties of modernity (2009, 31). These manufactured risks, specifically the risk antagonisms through which wealth creation and technological advancement in some areas of the world lead to impoverishment and environmental disaster in others, may generate vulnerable conditions for many whom Beck calls 'eco-refugees.' The historical and geographical coordinates of African countries within the world risk society are steeped in a postcolonial ambivalence enmeshed in multiple discourses and epistemologies. All these contribute to the *modernities* that scholars like Ulrich Beck, Elisio Macamo, Femi Taiwo, Partha Chatterjee and a host of others have highlighted in their works. By drawing from sociology and literary studies, I hope to demonstrate the globality of the world risk society fictionally recognized by these authors; and ultimately, to unpack the systemic scaffolding of the world risk society and its proclivity towards uncertainties, fragmented subjectivities, and insecure futures.

CHAPTER TWO: INDIVIDUALIZATION AND RISK IN TENDAI HUCHU'S *THE MAESTRO, THE MAGISTRATE & THE MATHEMATICIAN*

Categorizing African literature according to periods has its challenges. One of them is the tendency to canonize themes, modes, and genres as representative of a particular period; in this case, works that are outside these categories are usually left out of criticism and scholarship considerations. Despite these shortfalls, classifications such as periodic literary waves may be tools to examine thematic concerns and broader socio-cultural issues. Thus, by grouping African migration literature into early modernity and late modernity frames, one notes a shift in the narrative concerns of these writers. For example, novels like Cheikh Hamidou Kane's *Ambiguous Adventure* (1972) and Ata Ama Aidoo's *Our Sister Killjoy* (1977) depict characters whose self-identities are shaped by gender roles, nationality, religion, and class. On the other hand, beginning in the 1990s, contemporary African migration literature has turned its attention to the possibilities and risks of being African in the world. In spite of the criticism levied against these works as apolitical and sometimes tediously preoccupied with experimentation and aesthetics, these contemporary writings are aware of the signs of the time, especially in their depiction of the social and psychological neurosis, fragmentary subjectivities, and existential anxieties of a changing world. Furthermore, they depict new forms of individual rights, and the global comes under the narrative frame of their work. In this way, these novels fictionalize the late modernity forms of institutional individualism which Beck and Beck-Gernsheim have called individualization.

Individualization results from a breakdown in the social categories of modernity; it indicates the metamorphoses of social and welfare structures of early modernity into unreliable and unstable forms in late modernity. Due to individualization, the certainties and securities of early modernity embedded in professional life, class, and gender roles have waned; these certainties have been substituted by lifestyles and agencies that are largely independent and subjectively crafted. Consequently, in late modernity, individuals make their lives outside of previously known and recognized structures like class, status, and gender. According to Beck and Beck-Gernsheim, "[i]ndividualization is understood as a historical process that increasingly questions

and tends to break up people's traditional rhythm of life – what sociologists call the normal biography. As a result, more people than ever before are being forced to piece together their biographies and fit in the components they need as best they can” (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim 2002, 89). This questioning of life stories and biographies hinge on the institutional frameworks of social welfare, job market, education, and mobility. In this way, individuals navigate their way within new and emerging structures that produce an institutionalized individualism. If they fail or succeed, the outcome is entirely the individual's responsibility. It then means that while the social forms of gender roles, professional life and class have broken down, the individual appears to be free to choose their path and chart new courses. On the other hand, the possibility of personal success and happiness that come with freedom is tempered by the demands, controls, and constraints of the ephemeral job market conditions and the brittleness of neoliberal capitalism. Since their failure is believed to be a result of their inactions, decisions, and choices, the individual is required to engage in the task of constant improvement and awareness as they are expected to consistently redefine themselves and leave certain aspects of themselves behind. Because late modernity perpetually demands control of one's life, the material, biological, and spatial coordinates of one's life can no longer be left entirely to traditional dictates (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim 2002).

The first section of this chapter attempts to bring together Beck's writing on the concept of individualization. His work with Beck-Gernsheim is also vital in understanding the manners in which the institutions of modernity have engendered the social risks and attributes of reflexive modernization. The second section engages the story aspects and elements of the fabula in *The Maestro, The Magistrate and The Mathematician* (2014). This section argues that the novel constructs individualization as risky, anxiety-inducing, and reflexive. The second section also demonstrates, through an engagement with the characters' lifestyles, that education, mobility, and technological-enhanced mass-production of cultural artefacts have birthed new and evolving social formations such that the lives of the characters are characterized by rule-finding and reflexivity (Beck, 1992, Beck and Beck-Gernsheim 2002).

2.1 BETWEEN EARLY MODERNITY AND LATE MODERNITY'S INDIVIDUALIZATION

An argument that cuts through most of Ulrich Beck's work is the division between early and late modernity and the unintended consequences of the success of early modernity that have led to reflexive modernization. Individualization is one of the outcomes of modernity's institutional frame. Beck's attempt at mapping the changes in modernity as it concerns the individual was first articulated in *Risk Society* (1986 and 1992). Beck argues that the 18th and 19th-century individualization of the bourgeoisie differs from that of late modernity because the former was a product of ownership and capital accumulation derived from a struggle against feudal domination and authority (1992, 93). Consequently, Beck argues that early modernity was half industrial and half feudal. Therefore, while the triumph of industrial modernity seemed to have resulted in the dissolution of feudal politics, religious transcendentalism, and the *ancien regime*, the feudal characteristics of gendered domestic and public spaces, parenthood, gender roles, class, and sexuality survived into early modernity (Beck 1992, 106). As early modernity confronted the feudal elements of modernity, society becomes reflexive in two ways. Firstly, the premise on which the society constructs these categories is questioned such that modernity becomes the topic of itself. Secondly, it becomes evident that modernity is marked by ambivalence and contradictions that was inherited through feudalism. As such, modernity was not yet a complete project. It is by questioning these feudal assumptions about the individual and society that early modernity transits to late modernity. This transition has also been prompted by innovation in science and technology so that the advancement in technology has also engendered individualization. Due to these technologies, the individual is perceived to be endowed with various sources of self-control and self-improvement; consequently, the individual's success or failure is solely theirs within the framework of institutions. It then follows that the impulse to make oneself the center of one's goal is an impetus for self-administration, evaluation, and reconstruction of subjectivities and identities.

Furthermore, class is also a critical arena whose structure and attitudes have been altered by late modernity's order. The upward mobility of working-class individuals, their improved standard of living, especially in Western countries, and their consumption of goods and services for their symbolic values have transformed the ways one thinks about social class. The change in class dynamics implies that the idea of social class in early modernity, which was inflected by early capitalism and class attitude, has waned, so that norms about class bonds, lifestyles, mobility, settlement patterns, and housing have shifted, and are now fluid. Although economic

inequalities remain in the way Marx posits in a capitalistic economy; what has changed is that individuals now construct their lifestyles and goals based on personal, quotidian, and existential requirements. Consequently, the Weberian arguments on attitudes that come with class are up for contention (Weber 1958). Therefore, Beck argues that there is a transition from a class society to a world risk society, which is distinguished firstly by self-understanding and self-definition of traditional social groups in a way that these early modernity's definitions of tradition lose their distinctive traits and subsequently interface with other classes. Secondly, inequality metamorphoses into a personal affair. The social dimension is transformed into the psychological "as personal inadequacies, guilt feelings, anxieties, conflicts and neuroses" (Beck 1992, 100). Thirdly, political and social alliances lose their traditional forms because in defining their problems, individuals gravitate towards affiliations that solve their problems which means that there are no fixed affinities but fluid affiliations. Fourthly, there are conflicts along the lines of 'ascribed characteristics' of traditional social categories (Beck 1992, 101) because the essences of these characteristics of society are being disputed as constructed.

A consequence of this erosion of the traditional modern categories is risk because, "if it is correct that routines and institutions have an unburdening function which renders individuality and decision making possible, it becomes clear what kind of encumbrance, exertion and stress is imposed by the destruction of routine" (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim 2002, 8). Since there is the need for constant writing and rewriting of biographies, life projects are for the short term and not the long haul. Futures are, thus, open to endless choice, re-evaluations, and negotiations. Even careers and professions are no longer fixed forms of identity in late modernity. This means that the prospects of a long-term lifetime career are undermined by truncations and the possibilities of occupation transitions. For example, in the novel under review in this chapter, the character The Magistrate begins his adult life as a magistrate but ends up a care worker in an older people's home. This is comparable to extra-textual biographies whereby occupations are no longer life-long projects, but they are constantly revised, upgraded, hybridized or changed.

Individualization goes a long way to explain the transition from early modernity's lifeworld to what it is in late modernity that is global, changing, and dynamic. Despite its rigor and attempt to encapsulate the social and institutional framework in which individuals find themselves in the world risk society, individualization does not accurately account for the disparities in continued traditional expectations and roles. For example, the retained aspects of the feudalistic gendered division of labor mean that female spouses and single mothers may carry a higher

work burden. This, as it will be fully examined in the chapter on gender revolution, is due to the Western nuclear form of family. As Spivak holds, there are still “domesticated human females caught in feudal patterns of loyalty” (Spivak 1995, 68). Consequently, the institutions of early modernity built on feudalistic structures appear to undermine modernization and create different forms of risks and anxieties for individuals. Tendai Huchu’s *The Maestro, The Magistrate & The Mathematician* (hereafter referred to as *MMM*) fictionally depicts these risks and anxieties and the manners through which characters deal with them or through which institutional frameworks harm some of the characters.

This chapter deals with the representation of individualization in the novel *MMM*. It argues that institutionalized individualism poses a risk for the characters as they try to construct a world of their own. The characters negotiate social categories like gender roles and class as they embrace new ways of meaning-making in the fictional ‘risk society.’ The characters live beyond the normative social categories of early modernity and participate in late modernity’s risk society. These lives are uncertain, and they are aware of risk. For example, the three protagonists are depicted as unpredictable and living on the edge. In addition, the novel depicts technology, education, and mobility as contributing to individualization.

2.2 CHARACTERIZING INSTITUTIONAL INDIVIDUALISM

MMM is Tendai Huchu’s third novel, after *The Hairdresser of Harare* (2010) and *Untimely Love* (2010). *MMM* recounts the lives of three central characters: the Maestro, the Mathematician, and the Magistrate. They live separate and rarely interlocking lives in Edinburgh. The Maestro is a reclusive white Zimbabwean who attempts to detach himself from social contact to actively construct a life on his own terms without the pressures of institution and tradition. He ends up dead in the cold and is mourned by his Eastern European female friend and a group of other Zimbabweans with whom he never made acquaintance. Farai, the Mathematician, is a doctoral student in economics; he works on hyperinflation in Zimbabwe. His story is entangled with a love affair with his Scottish girlfriend Stacey and a group of friends. His interest in the economic and political policies that resulted in Zimbabwe’s hyperinflationary economics draws him in conflict with the agents of the state; in the process, he loses his life to the oppressive murderous regime of the Zimbabwean government. The Magistrate immigrates to Edinburgh with his wife, a nurse, and daughter, Chenai. His life story is upturned because he cannot find employment commensurate with his juridical training in

Edinburgh; so, he takes up a caregiving job in an old people's home. He also becomes the leader of a Zimbabwean nationalist union through the orchestration of a secret government agent, Alfonso. Unbeknownst to the Magistrate, the union is a machinery of the state in undermining diasporic activism. His life takes a new turn when his teenage daughter becomes pregnant by her Scottish boyfriend.

The narrated lives show different immigration experiences and highlight the existential uncertainties inherent in building new biographies in late modernity. *MMM* is a narrative of individualization. Characters seek to live a life of their own and create biographical solutions to late modernity's institutional constraints. The existential uncertainties, anxieties, and neuroses of the characters' biographical profiles are signs of individualization since these biographies are personalized and individualized responses to systemic problems. Thus, consequent upon the institutional individualism of the story world, ambiguities occur because there are no earlier referential frames, and this leads to anxiety and risk.

In Huchu's novel, the characters are removed from traditional social compulsions. They develop ambiguous relationships to the certainties of traditional categories like class, gender, and nature of early modernity as they attempt to make meaning of the contemporary world. Compulsive self-evaluation, fragmented loyalties, and anxieties from decisions thus constitute the subject-matter of the novel in obvious ways. Therefore, these central characters are loyal, not to transcendental values, groups, or material gains but, to their individual biographies. Their subjective definitions of success and failure shape their fidelity and life projects. Similarly, for certain characters, their identity is not limited to traditional nationalized ideas of race and ethnicity. These characters invent, adopt, and adapt to identities depending on their evaluation of the conditions at hand. They negotiate the space between their lived experiences and the disembodied characteristics of globalization.

The three protagonists of the novel are immigrants; the consequences of individualization are two-fold for them. Firstly, they feel alienated from an 'initial' home community and social network. For this reason, they have to reinvent themselves and find new ways of living in the host community. Secondly, the institutional frameworks in their host countries are already susceptible to individualization; hence, they are sentenced to a continuous state of re-creation and reinvention. However, without the security of the welfare system that is available for the 'native' characters, some of the immigrant characters must take up new occupations and education to survive after immigration.

It is crucial to draw a line between earlier fictional manifestations that valorized or centered the individual. The tendency to celebrate individuals had begun earlier on in the writings of Dambudzo Marechera, Ayi Kwei Armah, Joseph Conrad, George Orwell, Joyce Cary, and Wole Soyinka. This kind of writing is most noticeable in (post)modernism which focuses on the individual, subjective feelings, anxiety, and representation of the human psyche through the use of devices like stream of consciousness, avant-gardism, experimentation, and symbolism. On the contrary, individualization, as used in this study, is a consequence of modernity's institutional structures, the reflexivity of modernity's success on the characters. It means that while the above-listed works exhibit self-consciousness, which are hallmarks of modernist aesthetics, they do not necessarily portray the institutional changes of the world risk society in light of institutionalized individualism. Rather, contemporary African novels like *MMM* demonstrate, through their transnational foregrounding and globalized frame, that characters are gradually released from conventional roles, duties, and attitudes and their scales of interaction undermine strict definitions of identity and tradition.

The chapter proceeds with individualization as a trope that structures individual choices. Tendai Huchu mobilizes characters that acknowledge the individualized institutional space in Edinburgh. Huchu's story demonstrates simultaneously the discontinuities and continuities of early modernity into late modernity by disrupting the sense of a cohesive temporal narration. The novel employs different grammatical tense structures to complicate narrative time as the fabula is narrated in the past and present tenses. This way, one can argue that this narrative aesthetic portrays the infusion of early modernity in late modernity, leading to ambiguous interpretations of time while also recognizing the continuities of early modernity fragments in late modernity. As such, the novel demonstrates the imbrication of the past and present so that late modernity appears to derive its meanings from the evolving fragmented system of modernization.

Furthermore, Huchu employs several focalizers and a heterodiegetic narrative style to dramatize the different risks and experiential scenarios of Zimbabwean immigrant-characters in Edinburgh. This narrative choice opens up a complex of subjective positions and agencies in constructing, interpreting, and understanding the present decisions and perception of risk. Huchu's use of postmodern aesthetics like multiple narrations, pastiche and his thematic interest in displacement and immigrants therefore aids in highlighting the social hierarchies and hegemonic discourses that remain in late modernity.

2.3 INDIVIDUAL LIVES AND BIOGRAPHIES

At stake in the novel is the representation of the individual as the subject of a welfare state, as such, characters who due to their immigrant status cannot enjoy the benefits of the welfare system are left to precarious conditions. These characters are mostly Africans who are in Edinburgh for studies, work, and family reunion. They act in ways that demonstrate that they are the locus of social plans, economic opportunities, and their overall biographies. Furthermore, they are without the certainties of family association, national community, and class identification; hence, their worlds are filled with dangers, ambivalent opportunities, and existential anxieties. However, as immigrants, these protagonists – the Maestro, the Magistrate, and the Mathematician – experience heightened risk. Since they are liberated from known systems of living from their home countries, there is a loss of stability as they navigate their present and integrate into the new system. The standard institutional life expectations, like when to enter school and what possessions to have at a certain age, open them up to uncertainty, anxiety, and risk. There is also a sense in which these characters' lives are new and different. They are in an ambivalent state between a traditional frame of reference from their African homelands and new ones in their Edinburgh homes. The ambiguities of individualization are negotiated continuously through cultural hybridity that is re-negotiated constantly within the community's structures.

These forms of hybridity and interpenetration are likewise reflected in the story frame of the novel, especially in the way the novel complicates narrative linearity and time: the heterodiegetic narrator of the novel narrates the Magistrate's fabula in the past tense and the Maestro's and the Mathematician's in the present tense, representing the unstable and non-linear structure of late modernity. This aesthetics also suggests the multiple temporalities and multilinearity of late modernity. Hence, though the events in the three characters' lives coincide, they are not depicted in the same tense; this points to the flows, incoherence, and multiplicity of experiences that the characters occupy in late modernity.

Consequently, *MMM*'s story structure symbolically demonstrates a fictional system of a life of one's own. These multiple 'time-zones' of the past and the present narration dovetail with late modernity's characteristics as constitutive of early modernity's social categories and the new evolving shapeshifting of late modernity. In narrating the Magistrate's life in the past tense, an already accomplished certainty exists. His narrative counterposes the uncertainty and transience of the present tense of the Mathematician and the Maestro. Their lives are in the

process of being reshaped by the anticipated risks of late modernity. Given that the Mathematician and the Maestro are in their prime, a period associated with experimentation, risk-taking, and decision-making, the present tense creates a time-lapse that leads to suspense as the characters await the consequences of their actions. Unlike the Magistrate, for whom the actions are unalterably in the past(tense), the Mathematician's and the Maestro's lives are in a precarious state of insecurity since they cannot know beyond the present. As the Maestro and the Mathematician disengage from the routine expectations of traditional social attitudes of class and work culture respectively, the complex networks of self-definitions and uncertainties that they navigate become a Herculean task, a "kind of encumbrance, exertion and stress [that] is imposed by the destruction of routine" (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim 2002, 8). This disruption conditions a late modernity lifestyle through which the life stories of the characters can be read as socio-culturally and institutionally new and fluid. Therefore, as the characters navigate these multiple and fluid realities, they adjust their careers, social attitudes, and psychology to contend with the institutional expectations of their world. Based on this, each character navigates a labyrinth of interpersonal conflicts, career decisions, gender roles, and existential inquiry to forge their biographies.

The Magistrate's professional life typifies this world of indeterminacy and negotiation. The routines and institutions that he had known in his home country melt away in the present late-modern Edinburgh. As a respected magistrate in Zimbabwe, he had a middle-class income that sufficiently catered to his familial needs. Furthermore, his career provided him with job security and high social standing. As he enters the British legal and work systems, the need for recertification and bar qualification destabilizes the certainties of his career as a magistrate. This change in circumstance results in an adjustment of ontological security; so, when he visits Alfonso's office to search for a menial job, "it pained him to think of his past, to recall memories of what once had been. If only he had no memory of his old self, then it would be easier to accept his new circumstances" (Huchu 2014, 39).

If professional futures are no longer certain and thereby creating untenable risks, the other option that the novel presents – being out of work – is also not acceptable. The novel points at the risk of such withdrawal from the labor force through the white Zimbabwean self-secluded character, The Maestro, to show the anxieties and difficulties in completely living a life of one's own. In the case of the Maestro, he perceives the welfare system and job markets as psychologically oppressive networks. However, as the Maestro withdraws from them, he faces financial risk, psycho-social anxiety, and social death. These risks arise from what he

recognizes as the compulsive tendency of institutions to control the individual's life. "Was he really anyone's friend? He lived his life on a knife-edge and anytime he might slip off [...] He didn't like the feeling of being committed against his will [...]" (Huchu 2014, 141). At this moment of epiphany, his self-questioning becomes the first step into seeking a life independent of controlling external forces such as the state and/or the duties of relationships. Furthermore, this moment of self-realization and criticism of the institution is rendered in an unstable combination of free indirect discourse and external focalization. They show the ambivalent state in which the Maestro finds himself in the novel. His character demonstrates the problematic aspects of embracing extreme ways of a life of one's own as extreme psycho-social anxiety with fatalistic outcomes.

Consequently, the Maestro's fatalistic gesture towards liberty, individualism, and individualization poses a pertinent question: "How can the longing for self-determination be brought into harmony with the equally important longing for shared community?" (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim 2002, 159). Through the life of the Maestro, the novel sees no resolution to such conflicts; self-determination stands opposed to shared community. By embracing shared community, the character risks losing himself. With the Maestro, such a stance engenders forms of existential nihilisms where the individual is obliterated through immiseration and death. Hence, self-determination and shared community are mutually exclusive. A livable biography is only achievable through the negotiation of action and decisions. To a certain extent, other characters like the Magistrate, the Mathematician, Brian and Stacey understand that life in the world they live in requires a renegotiation of choices and decisions since there are no longer certainties, and no phenomenon can assure certainty and security. While the Maestro considers the fragmentation of metanarratives⁷ to the point of incomprehensibility, such as religious doctrine where the sacred word is no longer divine and scientific positivism is too brutish to provide assurances and certainties (Huchu 2014, 210), these other characters map out ways of engaging these institutional frames to escape immiseration and death.

⁷ See Lyotard (1979) on the incredulity towards the totalizing nature of grand narratives. In The Maestro's case, grand narratives like science and economy are the objects of concern

2.4 INDIVIDUALIZATION AND GENDER BIOGRAPHIES IN *MMM*

Gender is an essential social, cultural, and political category of individualization in Huchu's novel. As Beck argues, the ascription of gender characteristics is the basis of the (European) industrial society (Beck 1992, 104). Within the fabula of the novel lies a reflexive confrontation of modernity's gender rules and roles. In the novel, the presupposition of a gendered society is challenged through the dynamics of individualization and the breakdown of traditional gender roles. New forms of cohabitation threaten established gender roles, and the nuclear family structure requires a constant negotiation of gender roles. Beck and Beck-Gernsheim recall that in nineteenth-century Europe, women had scarcely any opportunity to shape their lives (2002, 57). Conversely, the point out of the contemporary world, "the bonds to family life have loosened somewhat and through the expansion of educational opportunities women have gained a greater capacity to recognize the specificities and restrictions of the context in which they live their lives" (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim 2002, 59).

In *MMM*, education, mobility, and competition loosen the traditional grip of gender performance. Edinburgh, far away from the Magistrate's and his wife's homeland of Zimbabwe, creates a conducive interruption of gender expectations and norms. Perhaps it is Chenai, the couple's daughter, who best understands the new power dynamics when she tells Alfonso, "I go to school. Mum goes to work. Dad disnae [sic] do anything. That's why he has to do the housework" (Huchu 2014, 8). With the domestic sphere of the Magistrate's home in Edinburgh, their gender roles are flipped, questioned, and subverted. In this other space, the Magistrate realizes the dynamics of power in his marriage. While he was a magistrate in Bindura in Zimbabwe, his wife Mai Chenai and their steward were confined to the domestic realm. The realization of Mai Chennai's private labor as a wife and public duty as a nurse was not 'obvious' to the Magistrate in Zimbabwe. The stringent burden of his wife's double labor, which is based on Victorian-era gender norms, becomes evident to him in Edinburgh. Some might argue that the social system in Zimbabwe lightens the burden of domestic work through the help of stewards and/or mothers-in-law, yet, this domestic side of labor is structured along a gendered line, which does not preclude imbalanced labor between the couple. Symbolically, the condition of unpaid labor and the thanklessness of Mai Chenai's and the maid's jobs and the precariousness of the latter's situation become evident to the Magistrate when he must do the arduous domestic tasks. While he cooks, he wonders how their maid in Zimbabwe could have done this "with such ease" (9). Of course, in understanding the dynamics of the social world of the Magistrate, the intersection of class with gender needs to be considered. Thus,

when the Magistrate misses the upper-middle-class life that he had in Zimbabwe, it is not surprising that “[i]t was the maid he missed most of all [...]. The house was a woman’s domain. Now he found himself questioning the conditions under which the maid had worked for him. The first time this had occurred was when he was bent over, brush in hand, cleaning the toilet bowl. In his entire life, he’d never imagined himself carrying out such a humiliating task” (Huchu 2014, 8).

In Edinburgh, these roles and duties are shared between the Magistrate, Mai Chenai, and their daughter which implies that geographic relocation and finance subvert traditional female role and undermines the relegation of the women to the domestic space and activity so that all these are renegotiated. In this way, the individualizing culture removes the couple from the hold of traditional gender roles. For the couple, “money becomes all the greater in the event of sharp conflicts because it allows women to escape more easily from disputes in the parental home or from a failed marriage” (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim 2002, 64). It follows that their marriage becomes shaped by personal and individual decisions and worldviews. Individualization also requires that individuals define the parameters of their unions and relationships. They are also responsible for creating novel marital forms.

However, in addition to mobility and finance, the individualizing aspects of gender roles are linked to the progression of time from early modernity to late modernity. Through the technique of retroversion, the Magistrate’s past in Zimbabwe is contrasted with the present he lives with his family in Edinburgh. Thus, during the “the time of his father, whom he’d never known, [when] a man’s role was clearly defined. He was the provider. Nothing else was required of him. He had no duty towards his kids, save for occasional moral correction – by the belt. The Magistrate imagined the past a simpler time, free from the overwhelming complexity of modern life” (Huchu 2014,12).

Such contrastive narrative material brings to light the emerging and disjointed gendered worldviews of both early and late modernity. By depicting the past as linear, the Magistrate reads a simple and established past that is based on the biological determinism of gender roles. Here, the character insinuates a Manichean opposition between woman as the caregiver and man as the provider, a motif that ran through gender construction in early modernity. On the other hand, after his daughter Chenai gives birth to her baby, the Magistrate participates in caregiving. When this action is compared to what he describes about his father and his gendered world in Zimbabwe, the reader is aware of the upturned strict gendered performance. At the

present time, mobility, equal financial earnings, and education have positively altered the power dynamics and the social positions of the characters.

Marriages and relationships are not, therefore, uniform and transcendental in the novel since the characters who are in intimate relationships define their unions per time and context without a reference to religious dogmas or gender tradition. The series of contestations that come from these definitions mean that conflicts are expected in the conceptualization of relationships and expectations because there are no rigid templates to follow. For instance, the Mathematician's girlfriend, Stacey, believes that partners should have a united drive towards a common goal. Farai feels that Stacey needs to make her decisions based on her life objectives. When Stacey tells him about her plans to take up a course in social work, Farai responds, "I'm all for it, but only if you're doing it for yourself. The last thing I want is you doing stuff that's important because you think it will please me. I'm happy with you just the way you are" (Huchu 2014, 105). After this happens, Stacey confronts Farai that he is not interested in her life goals since he does not care about her decisions. For Farai, an individual must make their choice. Stacey disagrees: "I find it weird that when I talk about the future, it's like you're happy for me to go wherever and do whatever. That means you're not thinking about a future with me" (106). Stacey's reaction to Farai dramatizes a worldview that embraces a communal ethos in decision-making and progress. If relationships like those lead to marriage, she is conversant with the matrimonial idea of collective decision making in marriages of early modernity. Then, "the family still plays an important role, but at the same time – and this is what is new – values of autonomy, independence or personal space are emphasized much more strongly than in the past" (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim 2002, 103). Farai upholds this independence and individual autonomy. For Stacey, Farai's lack of interest in her career decision means a lack of commitment; for Farai, it is the best way through which Stacey can maintain her individuality. Their confrontation leads to what Klaus Wahl terms the 'modernization trap', "a split between myth and reality in modernity, between internalized promises of, on the one hand, self-confident autonomy, family happiness, and social progress [...] and, on the other hand, actual experiences of withheld recognition, contempt for human dignity, and damaged self-esteem" (qtd in Beck and Beck-Gernsheim 2002, 105). The confrontation emerges from the ambivalent qualities of individualization in late modernity where the strands of early modernity are not totally obliterated but subsist in late modernity. It is in this way that unclear lines of individualization pose interpersonal risks for partners in relationships.

In *MMM*, as patriarchal gender relations and early modernity social attitudes wane, discourse on sexual inhibitions is also released from traditional modes of ‘morality’. The systemic controls encoded in discourses of propriety that bordered the sexualized discourses and actions in early modernity are eroded by technological interventions and social frames that center the individual. This liberalization of sexual morality underlies the novel’s depiction of sexuality and individualization, which is set at odds with early modernity standards. For example, Chenai and her boyfriend, Liam, embody the seeming sexual freedom of late modernity in the way they are exposed to sexualized cultural productions and their early engagement in sexual acts. Their stance and actions on sexual freedom stand in contrast to the Magistrate’s and Mai Chenai’s, who find it difficult to reconcile the sexual expressiveness of their teenage daughter in the liberal European city, Edinburgh. The couple tries to police her sexual freedom by imposing spatial restrictions after they find her engaging in a fellatio with Liam. Considering his daughter’s early sexual activity, the Magistrate regrets immigrating leaving Zimbabwe: “We should have left her in Zimbabwe. This is not the sort of country in which to raise a little girl” (Huchu 2014, 172). The narrative irony is apparent when one considers the Magistrate’s regret and his perception of Zimbabwe as unchanging in relation to Edinburgh. As readers learn about the other characters, they realize that the notion of an unchanging Zimbabwe that upholds ‘traditional’ African values is a myth. The Mathematician, in a dialogue with his friends, reveals, “[t]he thing is, every time I go back, I feel more and more like a stranger. The lingo’s changed [...] the whole vibe, the way people do things is completely different” (99). The globalizing individualization process likewise influences the fictional Zimbabwe of the novel. Chenai’s expression of freedom for sexuality should thus be read as resulting from an epochal rather than a change of space. Characters like the Mathematician’s girlfriend, Stacey, read this epochal change in the socio-cultural attitudes better when discussing it with the Mathematician’s friend, Brian, and they agree that the 1950s and 1960s were years of politeness and community (80). The task of these individuals, as far as sexuality is concerned, thus rests on finding individual definitions and solutions to the systemic contradictions of extant early modernity aspects and the metamorphosed constituents of late modern society. Hence, social problems engendered confrontations and contradictions since their definitions are outside of shared meanings. These confrontations pose problems for the Magistrate, who is not able to come to terms with the duality of social definitions. He also does not recognize the epochal and socio-technological changes that result from the ubiquity of commercialized sexual materials through the mass production of pornography.

Such a mass production has a ready-made market, especially one that seems to have adopted a libertarian ethos in approach to issues of sexuality, lust, and desires. The portable technology of the video cassettes of the 80s also eases the inhibitions that consumers of pornography may have encountered earlier; through the intervention of the narrative voice, the novel seeks to present some form of objectivity to the changes in the pornography industry. This is achieved by its use of a frame of reference that historicizes the ubiquity of pornography: “In the 80s VHS brought porn into every home with a VCR [...]. In the 90s, as in any industry, a new cohort of stars came through, primed and positioned for the DVD market” (78). Nevertheless, it is the internet that the narrator mostly credits for the widespread availability of pornography: “who would buy a DVD when there was this unlimited supply online, available discreetly, catering for every taste [...]” (78). The ready availability and accessibility of pornography thus present a shift in the public perception of morality, erotica, sensuality, and sexuality. The availability also transgresses the boundaries of arts and performance or the borders of what is acceptable as cultural productions as music videos incorporate a level of sensual materials into their videos. Alfonso is, therefore, concerned about the aestheticized profanity of “gyrating, near-naked babes performing around a hunk lounging on a deckchair [sic]. They wiggled their bottoms and flashed their big breasts at the man who sang” (5). The ubiquity of pornographic materials in the novel thus points to the individualizing quality of portable and mass-produced technology. The stimulating self-help qualities of pornography also push the individual to a further individualized pleasure without consequences like pregnancy or sexually transmitted infections.

2.5 IMMIGRANT, AMBIGUOUS CLASS, AND IMMISERATION

In *MMM*, Huchu depicts the forms of anxieties and anticipation of catastrophe involved in the institutional frameworks of the labor force. It appears that in the novel, the condition for being fully human is to be actively involved in the capitalistic labor structure even as a lumpen proletariat. Therefore, the reader is confronted with the existential anxieties and the loss of self-confidence that characters like The Magistrate and The Maestro experience at the points when they are without jobs. In the case of The Magistrate, he faces severe financial risk along with marital tension. His inability to find a job that fits his education means that he lives in uncertainty, fear, and anticipation of economic catastrophe: “[h]e hardly had a penny to his name. When the gas beeped, or, God forbid, the electricity ran out, he had to wait for Mai

Chenai to sort it out. It was not meant to be like this” (Huchu 2014, 12). Here, the links between the prestige of social class and the wealth that come with it are ambivalent for the Magistrate. Such antinomy is one of the signs of the structural ambiguities in late modernity that separates it from early modernity.

Whereas relatively clear criteria for when someone was rich or poor existed in the proletarian and the bourgeois culture, this is less and less the case in the situations and optics of the self-culture. Thus, someone may own expensive consumer goods that used to denote a successful career and yet still be poor – for example, if he or she lives off benefits and has to look after several children who arrive hungry at school – or else may live in a bungalow, have large debts and be threatened with the abyss as a result of unemployment or divorce or both (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim 2001, 50).

The Magistrate is then confronted with the choice to reinvent his professional identity and lose his class’s prestige as a magistrate and take up a menial job. His dilemma is summed up in the proverb “*Mwana wamambo muranda kumwe*”⁸ (Huchu 2014, 38-39). He is aware of the precarious situation he is in and remembers “a time when he walked into places and people rushed to serve him” (39). So, while a vestige of the Magistrate’s former class privileges is still considered in his encounters with another character, Alfonso, his unemployed status means that he cannot match this up with economic success. As the Magistrate contemplates his condition, it becomes clear that his unemployed status also hurts his sense of self. His self-esteem, however, seems to be boosted after the Zimbabwean movement votes him as the chairman: “[i]t felt good to be back at the center of things, even if this was a small orbit. The dreadful slide to obscurity that he feared was gradually receding into the background” (120). At this point, this milieu of class ambivalence that the Magistrate finds himself in “is not a ‘neither-nor’ culture but a ‘both-and’ culture” (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim 2001, 52).

Perhaps Stacey, the Mathematician’s girlfriend, best depicts the rule-finding characteristic of individualization in the novel. Stacey, a former pornography actress, participates in the commercialized sex economy. The liberalization of pornography and its mass production through the internet means that a starlet like Stacey may not make a name for herself in the industry because of the commodification of sex and the mass-produced porn actors. Flexible work in the industry means that there is no professional certainty, especially, as the narrator attests, the industry is inundated with many other flexible and amateur actresses. This instability leads to constant self-reinvention through do-it-yourself schemes and career changes. For these reasons, characters embrace career paths like nursing and care jobs that are sure to bring them

⁸ Shona Proverb: “A chief’s son is a nobody in another man’s land.”

economic leverage. Farai thinks, “[i]t’s like every fucking Zimbo’s a nurse now” (Huchu 2014, 227). Mai Chenai also understands the precarity of unemployment as she continuously nudges her husband to take up employment regardless of what it is. When the Magistrate gets his caregiving job, a “[s]light smile” settled on her face. “He embraced her and fell into a deep, dreamless sleep” (71).

For the Maestro, work defines life. “He only saw his flat as a base, a place to rest outside of work” (157). Individualization for him thus constitutes a structural process, an institutional scaffolding. The do-it-yourself culture implicates constant reinvention. Yet, the vestige of modern age expectations streamlines to what extent the individual can be reinvented. At 28, The Maestro finds it hard to live a life outside retail. He complains, “A lot of jobs were closed to him, not enough experience, no qualifications. The limitless potential of his youth had finally made a home for itself in retail: shelves and checkouts, the thought made him even more melancholic” (205). The ambivalence of individualization structures puts the Maestro at a crossroad because he enters the hosting space in an advanced age, where the market expects him to reinvent himself. In contrast, the modern structures of socio-economic and cultural expectations of age restrain him from fully achieving individual success. For the older characters, the Maestro and the Magistrate, their failure to achieve career successes results from the structures of institutionalized individualism.

Despite the waning assurances of professional life, characters are still at risk of choice. Huchu fictionalizes this by presenting a wide range of career options like beauty therapist and make-up artist for Chenai. These diverge from the classic career paths such as law and nursing that her parents preferred. While Chenai is faced with a dilemma to choose, her father sees her occupational choice as one of economic risk. “He’d stopped asking Chenai what she wanted to do after school. Her answers varied wildly from beauty therapist to make-up artist, occasionally nursing, to a few sinister-sounding prospects that filled his heart with dread. He wanted her to go to university, do law, or any useful degree outside of the humanities and build a safe, stable career for herself” (115). No career is stable. A child of immigrants, Chenai has a broader range of careers to choose from. She already participates in the do-it-yourself culture, which promotes constant reinvention of the self.

Furthermore, a character like Brian, the Mathematician’s friend, adopts an attitude toward socio-economic progress in a manner that shows he is an agent of his socio-economic condition. To make economic progress, Brian studies to be a nurse, a logical career that might ensure his

financial prosperity. While aiming to be a nurse, he also takes up a job at the same nursing home as the Magistrate. The Mathematician claims Brian bursts his ass wiping older people's bumholes (101). In this way, Brian takes up his agency. He transforms his life into a task, even an inconvenient one, to evade a precarious lifestyle. He is, therefore, responsible for his life on a quotidian basis. Since the institutions of the government and socio-political frames encourage governmentality of the self and individualization, to fail or to appear to be a victim would be perceived as Brian's fault.

2.6 “WHAT HAPPENED TO YOUR YOUTH?”: INDIVIDUALIZATION, THE IMMIGRANT, OLD AGE, AND RISK

As argued earlier, the narrative that depicts the Magistrate's life is written in the past tense; however, the Magistrate still has to run the course of everyday life. A distinction between time in the fabula and tense in the story shows the anxieties and apprehensions are in the 'future' in the fabula. His anxieties about the future are palpable to the reader, who may ignore the story's past tense time. As an example, the Magistrate fears for the loneliness that may ensue in his future when he finds out at the nursing home that people leave their old family members in such homes. He considers it incomprehensible “that these people, who, after all, were fathers, mothers, brothers, and sisters, could be rounded in this Gulag, waiting to die. Was this the fate that awaited him should he stay in this country for too long? Would Chenai allow that? She was already too modern, too westernized” (68). What the Magistrate refers to as “too modern” is perhaps the hyper-individualizing trend of late modernity. It tended to cut the filial responsibility bond that individuals have for other family members. The anticipation of such risk is heightened by the metaphor of a 'gulag.' This points at a severe fear of the future, especially one that will include an 'unhomely' home that is sequestered from the known security of family and friends: “[i]t depressed him to think that one day he might find himself in that position: old, vulnerable, isolated, without the care and comfort of those he loved. Moreover, what would happen to him then? What was the point of life if it was to end in pain and degradation?” (153). The choice is instead a disastrous end that eventually leads to catastrophe as the Magistrate is torn between a home with a pension reduced by inflation and a lonely life if he stays back in Edinburgh where “the open spaces of a life of one's own are created by a society that is highly differentiated by function. How those spaces are filled can no longer be dictated from above or outside, neither can it be predicted in advance” (152). Individualization

is, to this end, a risk site for *The Magistrate*. The future is an unnarratable realm only open to speculations based on present knowledge. Such modes of ‘realist’ narrations like *MMM*, therefore, open space for engaging representations as a constructed form of knowledge.

In spite of the waning categories of early modernization and the tendency for the characters to live their lives on their terms, Huchu’s novel still fictionalizes the continued relevance of religion in the lifeworld of characters. Religion is, in fact, a technology of the self⁹ to cope with anxieties, depressions and uncertain futures. The Magistrate’s wife, Mai Chenai, exemplifies this. In seeking to navigate the institutional contradictions and disruptions of late modernity, she embraces religion and attempts to make her life goals based on the guidance of existing biographies in her Christian religion. Furthermore, she embraces her faith to counter turbulent forms of diasporic melancholia. However, the Magistrate’s view of religion and its importance radically opposes his wife’s. The Magistrate conceptualizes the usefulness of religion in light of the enabling and supportive structures of the welfare system. For him, the institutions of welfare, technologies of production, and progress in science and technology, hallmarks of modernity, have enabled the release of the individual from religion. He asks, “[w]hat need do they have for God and old superstitions when science has answered all their questions? The sick turn to doctors, not faith. The poorest people on welfare get free housing and more money than most people in the world” (195-196). In this way, the Magistrate demonstrates that the individual, aided by institutional facilities, is responsible for the consequences of their lives and actions and not a transcendental being.

To conclude, this chapter sought to argue that the sociological concept of individualization as experienced by the characters leads to various forms of risk; immigrant characters are individualized in the late modernity sense although doubly faced with the risks from individualization. Further, the narrative strategy whereby several narrative voices narrate and focalize three major characters instantiates a reading of the novel as fictionalizing living a world of one’s own. In line with Beck and Beck-Gernsheim’s position of a constantly negotiated life of individualization, the immigrant characters constantly seek to navigate the uncertainties of their various existence through social technologies of integration, re-negotiation of gender roles, transnational communication and textual correspondence with ‘home’. The

⁹ Michel Foucault discusses technologies of the self as that “which permit individuals to effect by their own means or with the help of others a certain number of operations on their own bodies and souls, thoughts, conduct, and way of being, so as to transform themselves in order to attain a certain state of happiness, purity, wisdom, perfection, or immortality” (Foucault 1988, 18)

characterization differentiates actively between individualism and individualization. The Maestro, the white immigrant Zimbabwean character, unspeaking and entirely focalized by the narrator, is the most individualized. Other characters at different points embrace hybrid forms of the traditional and late modernity biographies; it is only the white character who experiences absolute individualization, which ultimately leads to his death. In the novel, there is an extant socio-economic class hierarchy whereby the unemployed immigrant is at the bottom of the ladder. In the novel, individualization as a form of institutionalized individualism is ongoing as the characters attempt to make sense of their lifeworld and shape their biographies in meaningful ways. However, these characters do not exist as unified entities with a totally assured sense of self and meanings, but as subjects aware of the social hazards of their time, that is, the “*immanent contradictions between modernity and counter-modernity within industrial society*” (Beck 1992, 13, italics in original). In their highly differentiated society, these characters resort to taking responsibility for their own life and performing in structures, discourse, and narratives that ensure a continuous sense of self-autonomy that is in a state of flux.

CHAPTER THREE: REFLEXIVE MODERNIZATION AND ENVIRONMENTAL RISK IN *WHEN WE SPEAK OF NOTHING*

Studies on the environmental crisis in the Niger Delta usually center on the gross pollution by oil multinationals, government corruption, or minority rights (Ejobowah 2000, Eweje 2006, Orogun 2010, Ebiede 2011). In literary studies, the attention usually focuses on depleted and polluted landscapes, rivers, creeks, lagoons, and ocean which are covered with grime and oil – itself a useful and productive imagery in representing oil pollution¹⁰. While all these are crucial and representative of the nature of power, greed, and petro-capitalism that has rendered the Niger Delta unlivable, this chapter proposes another dimension to look at the environmental discourse. It proposes through an analysis of a literary text that the problems of the Niger Delta can be examined through the frame of reflexive modernization while also paying attention to the questions of neo-imperialism, class, and national politics. By bringing Beck's typology of global threats (1999, 34): *bads* and poverty-related environmental risks into contact with the narrative world of Olumide Popoola's novel *When We Speak of Nothing* (2017), this chapter will demonstrate the reflexive dimension of modernity which the characters and the institutions in *When We Speak of Nothing* are confronted with as institutionally self-produced present and future that are consequences of the victories of early.

In Beck's articulation of the world risk society, he submits that modernity has advanced into a new stage where modernization looks back at itself and questions the adverse consequences of its successes and victories. He describes the process of self-confrontation with the hazards and dangers that modernity has produced as reflexive modernization. Whereas in early modernity, society was concerned with the production of goods and services without paying much attention to the adverse side effects, reflexive modernization implies that there is an inadequacy in addressing the consequences of the world risk society with industrial society models (Beck 1999, 73). Beck argues that the world risk society becomes reflexive in three stages: firstly, the globalizing process of modernity becomes an issue and problem for itself; secondly, the global dangers produce international alliances between state actors; and thirdly, organizations that do not possess the political powers of the state will form "alliances of mutually exclusive beliefs."

¹⁰ Helon Habila's *Oil on Water*; Kaine Agary's *Yellow Yellow* are examples.

These constellations, according to Beck, “appear of a sub politics at once global and direct” (1999, 20).

These stages emerge from the reflexivity of modernity as the consequences of modernity’s victories in science and technology, global finance, and international trade. They pose problems for modern individuals as they manufacture dangers and hazards that transcend space and time. In this way, the dangers of environmental risk are shared realities on a global scale. This global risk evades the institutional state structures of early modernity because they are often incalculable and uncontrollable when compared to the actuarial science and risk calculus of early modernity. These were usually limited to nation-state jurisdiction and legislative authorities and, thus, were stable and controllable. However, since risks are now trans-spatial and trans-temporal, it follows that compensating the victims of catastrophe cannot be determined within the frame of industrial modernity because “the social, political, economic and individual risks increasingly tend to escape the institutions for monitoring and protection in industrial society” (Beck 1994, 5). State regulations that once controlled technological and industrial development in early modernity cannot sufficiently protect the environment and individual in the context of the world risk society because risks, such as global warming or nuclear explosions, transcend nation-states and borders.

The extraction of fossil fuel by multinational companies and the destruction that the extraction leaves in its trail exemplifies Beck’s position. In the Niger Delta region of Nigeria, where the novel *When We Speak of Nothing* is partly set, the allocation of responsibility collapses in the face of the transnational status of the multinational corporations; consequently, this rupture makes it difficult to apportion blame to the culprits of environmental destruction. The lack of political interest to pursue the environmental polluters in international courts aggravates their destruction. Insurance logic and compensability laws undermine holding culprits responsible because risk is incalculable in terms of its temporal and spatial reach; at the same time, the nationalistic frame through which the legal and legislative are understood and applied have been undermined by time and transnational conditions. In the Niger Delta, to bring it closer to the text under analysis, these risks are profit-driven ecological destruction and technological, industrial dangers. At the same time, the environmental destruction is also poverty-related because the oil multinationals leave behind, with the pollution from hydro-carbon extraction, an immiserated class of people whose livelihoods are permanently destroyed. There is, therefore, an inverse relationality in the production of *bads* and the victimhood of the *bads* since

the rich may externalize the hazards of their wealth production in such a way that it is the poor who bear the brunt of their ecological destruction; Beck describes this as risk antagonism.

On a postcolonial level, Beck's arguments about the contradictions of risk production and victimhood resonate in some respects with Dipesh Chakrabarty's hypothesis in "The Climate of History: Four Theses," where Chakrabarty expounds on the global economic, military, and politico-cultural forces that shape environmental crisis like climate change. Chakrabarty stresses that the threats to the environment develop from the global quotidian techno-social lifestyle of the present age, which are intended to further intensify global capitalistic expansion. He argues that "the burning of fossil fuel, industrialization of animal stock, the clearing of tropical and other forests, and so on are after all part of a larger story: the unfolding of capitalism in the West and the imperial or quasi-imperial domination by the West of the rest of the world" (Chakrabarty 2009, 216). Consequently, there appears to be a global interaction in the production of late modernity's environmental dangers and *bads* to the extent that poverty-related environmental threats result from global demand for resources.

Giddens has argued in the context of western nation-states that "despite the high levels of security which globalized mechanisms can provide, the other side of the coin is that novel risks come into being: resources or services are no longer under local control and therefore cannot be locally refocused to meet unexpected contingencies, and there is a risk that the mechanism as a whole can falter, thus affecting everyone who characteristically makes use of it" (Giddens 1990, 127). Here, Giddens highlights the challenges and repercussions of risks that can no longer be contained locally and the adverse consequence of globalization for the West. However, his argument is also true in other places. The 'resource curse' in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria and the Bhopal Catastrophe in India result from the 'dis-embedding' of production and consumption of petroleum products and the externalization of pollution because affluent western privileged (mostly white people) tend not to live in these areas. It is thus imperative to approach Beck's aphorism "poverty is hierarchical, smog is democratic" with caution because the materialization of certain risks results from the unequal power relations between individuals, organizations, and countries that wield financial powers and the poor countries who are direct victims of risk.

Rob Nixon (2011) has already posited through his concept of slow violence that place and time occlude certain environmental categories. He considers how risk attracts the attention of the media and populace of Western nations based on their proximity to the place of catastrophe.

However, certain risks like global warming may be ‘democratic’ because they have been projected to cut across the planet. That they are planetary does not in any way preclude the fact that some individuals, based on their geo-location and wealth, may be more vulnerable than others. Due to this, Ulrich Beck’s (2000) call for a cosmopolitan outlook in the global governance of environmental risks needs to be broadened to account for other late modernity spaces like the Global South. This readjustment will interrogate the politics of environmental dangers and *bad*s in such places. This call is in line with contemporary environmental critics like Lawrence Buell (2006), Ursula Heise (2008), Patrick Murphy (2009), Elizabeth DeLoughrey (2010), Pablo Mukherjee (2010), Erin James (2015), and Cajetan Iheka (2017) who have in different accounts and dimensions demonstrated a global concern for the environment that considers hierarchies of powers and neo-colonial domination in examining environmental threats.

3.1 (CON)TEXTUALIZING ENVIRONMENTAL RISK

African writers have fictionally concerned themselves with the environment and ‘nature’. In Wole Soyinka’s *Dance of a Forest* (1963), trees are not merely depicted as a background for the plot. Instead, trees are implicated in the narrative fabric and form an important component. Furthermore, Cyprian Ekwensi’s *The Burning Grass* (1962) presents a roaming character through whose actions and movements the environmental risk of desertification is brought to light. These writers across the continent display differing stylistics in African environmental writing and also set the tone for this present study. For example, in Niyi Osundare’s anthology, *Eye of the Earth* (1986), the subject matter of many of his poems throw into relief the adverse consequences of the extreme use of machinery and other abuse of the ‘earth’. In this way, Osundare reflects on the harmful side effects of modernity’s technologies. Like in Osundare’s work, Popoola’s novel addresses the issue of industrial-induced environmental degradation and colonial situations of mineral extraction and environmental degradation, which from a postcolonial perspective, establishes the problem of global inequality in environmental studies. The current environmental situation and the future forecast and anticipation of crisis and catastrophe engendered by an unbridled modernist technology, uncontrolled extraction of natural resources, and the excessive use of land for consumption are thematic concerns in many of these works. One can say that the postcolony has been aware of reflexive modernization in the Beckian sense since its initial contact with colonization.

In his poems “Ours to Plough and Not to Plunder” and “Excursion”, Osundare paints a gloomy environmental future in the face of technological hazards and dangers. Similarly, like Osundare’s *The Eye of the Earth* (1986), Birago Diop’s ‘African’ worldview presents a symbiotic relationship between nature and humans; sometimes, the limits are not defined. In fact, in Birago Diop’s poem “Breath”, the human/nature binary is blurred in such a way that the Manichean opposition of earlier ecocritical movements, which thoroughly set culture and nature at odds, is absent from this worldview. Diop creates a circular, co-sustaining system where the dead are in the woods, and the woods provide the living with sustenance. These poems acknowledge the unintended consequences of scientific and technological advancement and re-examine the epistemic frame through which nature is constructed as an object on which human ‘order’ may be imposed. The fractures between the enlightenment rationality of scientific progress and positivism and the reflexive questioning of these advancements are most evident in the issue of the Niger Delta pollution, which has been fictionalized in many novels, films, plays and poems. In the case of the Niger Delta, the risk of antagonism, the collapse of insurance calculability and reflexive modernization, which Ulrich Beck discusses, aptly describes the environmental risk scenarios that are depicted in *When We Speak of Nothing*.

On the global literary field, recent literary and cultural productions have focused on the globality of environmental risks and scholars are further involved in the interpretation of environmental motifs, forms, and fictional demonstration of these risks. In addition, films like *Elysium* (Neill Blomkamp 2013) and *The Day After Tomorrow* (Roland Emmerich 2004) have created futuristic portrayals of a (post)apocalyptic earth after environmental catastrophes. In these two films, the futures of environmental disasters are imagined in dis-similar ways. In *Elysium*, the spectator is confronted with the possibility of a favorable outcome for individuals on a better economic standing as the wealthier personages can emigrate to a more conducive planet, *Elysium*, after an environmental catastrophe. Such endings disrupt the universality of the outcome of risk implied in Beck’s axiom “poverty is hierarchic, smog is democratic” (Beck 1992, 36). The plot of *Elysium* contrasts with the plot of *The Day After Tomorrow*, where the earth freezes over due to adverse climatic conditions caused by consumption, fossil fuel, and other forms of environmental misuse. The possibility of escaping earth’s doomsday by emigrating to another planet and the *cul-de-sac* that a dystopian environmental future produces help to shape the perception of risks and the possibility of escape.

Migration as a response to environmental and climatic uncertainty is therefore present in contemporary texts, especially those in the dystopian and science fiction mode. This is usually

not the concern of African writers who focus on environmental problems from an anti-colonial perspective. Writers like Niyi Osundare (1986) and Kaine Agary (2006) and filmmakers like Wanuri Kahiu (2009) seem to offer, in imaginative ways, the dystopian futures that the lack of attention to the environment presents. Their representations of these environmental present and future are shaped by the neocolonial extractive and excessive exploitative economies of late modernity. Furthermore, many African writers, unlike the environmental risk concerns in Western fictional works, do not narrate the transnationality of risk. That is, the environmental risks they narrate do not cross multiple borders like in Karen Tei Yamashita's *Through the Eye of the Rainforest* (1990) and Barbara Kingsolver's *Flight Behavior* (2012). Instead, risk and danger seem imported from other nations, mostly the West, as toxic dumping, multinational despoliation, or technological recklessness. This inattention to cross-border environmental risks is not short-sightedness; it is, instead, an articulation of the urgency of environmental concern for the forgotten and the slow, invisible violence against the poor. Future fictional writings may, therefore, entail a portrayal of the means through which carbon energy and resources from Africa serve in fueling the technological progress and finance systems of the West. This situation is in no way to argue that there are no texts that depict the global inequality and the environmental damage and its implication on global capital and technology. However, the argument is that attention to the local (place) is usually the case in environmental writing from Africa. The fictional environmental texts nevertheless produce characters, for example, white characters who work for multinationals. Further, another reason why a global environmental issue like climate change has not been a recurring motif in contemporary African writing might be because the responsibility for an anthropogenic geological force needs to be shouldered by the assumed major producers of greenhouse gas.

This may be compared to environmental writings in contemporary Anglo-American writing that aims at global apocalyptic imaginations. Novels like Steve Amsterdam's *Things We Didn't See Coming* (2009/2011) and *When the Killing is Done* by T.C. Boyle (2011) point to an apocalyptic end where the earth is depicted in the aftermath of catastrophe. The global dimension of the catastrophe is usually conveyed through mappings and naming-calling and may be considered an attempt at a cosmopolitan outlook in the depiction of environmental risks. African writers pay attention to the local, and expatriate white characters. For example, in Helon Habila's *Oil on Water* (2011), the oil multinational Shell and its stand-in, Mr. James Floode, are presented as the ultimate polluters of the environment. These texts should nonetheless also be read for their portrayal of environmental risk since environmental degradation is usually a

result of modern technology and globalization. This is because when reading with globalization in mind, environmental risk becomes a global human concern and

can [. . .] become a powerful basis for community, one which has both territorial and non-territorial aspects [. . .] Post-national communities could thus be constructed and reconstructed as communities of risk. Cultural definitions of appropriate types or degrees of risk define the community, in effect, as those who share the relevant assumptions. “Risk-sharing” further involves the taking of responsibility, which again implies conventions and boundaries around a “risk community” that shares the burden. And in our high-tech world, many risk communities are potentially political communities in a new sense – because they have to live with the risks that others take. There is a basic power structure within world risk society, dividing those who produce and profit from risks and the many who are afflicted with the same risks. (Beck 1999, 16)

Arguing along the line of Nixon’s slow violence (2011), that is, the spatial and temporal dimension that toxicity takes in manifesting itself in the human, another dimension is suitable for investigating toxicity in the Global South that is a risk. Dangers are anticipated and are statistically undemocratic in the sense that some individuals outgrow average life expectancy. This also includes class differentiation and access to wealth, inter-subaltern subjugation and oppression. Consequently, access to the coercive power of the state and the traditional monarchical systems which privilege certain groups based on hereditary undermines a facile examination of slow violence.

3.2 READING ENVIRONMENTAL RISK IN *WHEN WE SPEAK OF NOTHING*

When We Speak of Nothing (2017) tells the stories of two friends, Karl and Abu. The novel shows their journey as they discover their identity and struggle against street violence. Karl is a mixed-race, transgender boy who lives with his single mother in London. Abu, his friend, is a son of working-class immigrant parents. Karl, in wanting to know about his father, travels to Nigeria with the help of his uncle, Tunde, and with the knowledge of his assigned social worker, Godfrey. In Nigeria, he sees environmental pollution first-hand. He meets the activist, Nakale, and falls in love with his cousin, Janoma. Abu, in London, falls in love with Nalini, a school mate and takes part in a protest over the killing of a Black man, Mark Duggan, as he recovers the history of Mary Prince as a school assignment. When Abu becomes a victim of street violence in London, Karl leaves Nigeria to attend to his friend. The narrative frame of the novel intermixes street violence, racial tensions, and gentrification of London with the environmental

pollution of the Niger Delta. The novel can be read for its carnivalesque qualities for bringing together multiple voices of Yoruba mythology, LGBTQTI+ subjectivities, as well as a linguistic patchwork of Nigerian pidgin, Nigerian English, British English, London street slang, and social media registers.

The novel may not be outrightly described as an environmentalist text; in fact, blurbs and reviews generally describe the novel as a narrative about queer, friendship, and biracial politics. Nevertheless, the text's ecology of diverse thematic and aesthetic threads allows a quotidian analysis of the characters' interaction with the environment: toxic discourse and climate change. The (in)attention to petrol devastation can also be read in the materiality of the global environmental risk where oil and the devastation that oil production causes form a tiny portion of the global discussion on multinational environmental pollution; this lack of attention, in itself, is a form of unseen violence which comes to light only in the form of activism and negligible media mentions. Oil seems a sub-theme; in this sub-thematization of oil emerges a representation of oil as a neglected complex part of a daily whole. The novel, in its thematic preference for daily lives, friendship, and identity politics allies with Kaine Agary's *Yellow Yellow* (2006) which, while narrating the identity crisis of a female character and sexuality, also sheds light on the environmental crisis in the Niger Delta. In *When We Speak of Nothing* like *Yellow Yellow*, the exploitation of the environment and crass corruption are present. Popoola's seeming inattention to oil politics but everyday precarity and existential anxieties evoked by oil multinationals makes it an important read for uncertainties in the world risk society. 'Risk antagonism' and threat in the face of the government's technology of terror situate the characters in a setting where they can only anticipate the worst. Risk, in its social and cultural understandings, interacts with governmental and multinational violence and becomes an everyday reality for the poor characters of the Niger Delta who are powerless to act against its effects. This risk atmosphere is further complicated by the slow violence of the hazards and the 'invisibility' of the victims of these hazards.

Consequently, the characters in the Nigerian section of the novel are perpetually exposed to petrol-product risk and live in anticipation of future environmental dangers. In this regard, uncertainty and risk shape the narrative of the novel in two ways. Firstly, they demonstrate the individual perspectives and worldviews that come into play in the perception of dangers, hazards, and risks and, secondly, they reveal that uncertainty and risk build up the major events of the novel. To better comprehend the way risk and uncertainty shape the fabula of the novel, it is important to note the anticipation of outcomes by characters like Karl in meeting his father,

Nakale's apprehension of his research and the probability of acceptance and reward in the foreign press. These outcomes are further based on personal and institutional decisions that are consequences of the multivalent structure of the world risk society. This sense of indeterminacy is first introduced in the prologue, where Esu, the god of the crossroads, misleads two friends. According to the African American scholar Henry Louis Gates, "Esu is the Black Interpreter, the Yoruba god of indeterminacy, the sheer plurality of meaning, or *ariyemuye* ("that which no sooner is held slips through one's fingers")" (Gates 688, 1983). This story of Esu, which frames – as a prologue and epilogue – the fabula of the novel, provides a context for understanding the hermeneutics of risk. Through the prologue, for example, Esu readily calls attention to the semantics of risk and the relations of definition. For what is a risk to one character is capital gain to the government and multinational oil company with power. In another way, this intertextual link between the orature of Esu's narrative and the modern novel under review evinces the multiplicity of epistemologies within the world risk society. Through the frame narrative of Esu in the prologue and epilogue, the novel is embossed in an uncertain modern world of conflictual, indeterminate definitions, epistemological uncertainties, and unsure future of risk ontologies. Unpredictability is the lifeworld of the plot; characters' lives are shaped by the anticipation of catastrophe. As Esu occupies the space between binaries and eradicates a unified signification of the referent, the reader encounters the problem of accurately interpreting technological progress in the novel as a sign of progress or a potentially catastrophic phenomenon. Consequently, as some characters in the fictionalized Niger Delta experience improved living conditions – if one considers cars, planes and other modern infrastructure as signs of favorable lifestyle – the extractive economy and its pollution, which the oil glut engendered, reverses this progress as a sign of regression and descent in quality of life. The one thing that appears to be certain is death manifested in the actuarial science of life expectancy, which Nakale puts at 35 years.

The narrator deploys aesthetics of modernism like fragmentary narration and streams of consciousness to highlight the indeterminacy of risk representation and the existential anxieties of the characters. Through its fragmentary story structure, the narrator presents a fabula that entangles the planetary problem of climate change with individual ethical concern, responsibility and effort towards the environment. A hybrid of the dystopian and pastoral modes shows an interaction between existing savannah wilderness despoiled by oil and major urban geographies like London and Port Harcourt. In personifying objects of pollution, Popoola animates risk objects as substantive and potential embodiments of catastrophe. Her aesthetic

choice in opting for linguistic diversity informs certain forms of risk perception in the characters while also pointing to the globalized dimension of environmental risk. Signs of the side-effects of modernism or the unintended consequences of modernism are present in the novel both as familiar objects in the case of erratic weather conditions or the dystopian as in the case of the oil mess in the Niger Delta. The imminent environmental crisis in both spatial settings outlines an interesting reading through Ulrich Beck's conceptualization of the world risk society. A concept that builds on his risk society and incorporates a reading of the environmental crisis with transnationalism and urges for a planetary outlook in seeking to engage environmental problems.

Therefore, the frustration of Port Harcourt inhabitants is enunciated in their reaction to a diseased 'natural' state that has been infiltrated by oil. Faced with government inaction to a progressively degrading environment, the local sensibility to pollution is further escalated by Nakale to the international space as a way to counter the powers of government militarized monitoring and multinational operation. They are able to achieve global attention through a transnational coalition between the scientist Nakale, Karl, and the foreign media. The activities of these major characters thus globalize the local condition of environmental risk in a way that circumvents the nation-state media infrastructure. This transnational turn in *When we Speak of Nothing* consequently attests to the cosmopolitan ethics of its thematic concern.

Ulrich Beck's cosmopolitan vision sees risk as a productive force for cosmopolitan ethics: "In this sense, global risks open up a complex moral and political space of responsibility in which the others are present and absent, near and far, and in which actions are neither good nor evil, only more or less risky" (Beck 2009b, 3). Risk – whether the risk of individualization, sexual identity, or environmental risk – in the novel is a trope that progresses the plot of the novel, that is, determining characters' actions like Karl's decision to travel to Nigeria and Nakale's scientific projects. These risks do not necessarily garner transnational attention. Instead, environmental risk in the novel, although already on the way, fails to garner a collective and transnational moral coalition. In this way, the novel appears to question the hierarchy of attention given to risks based on the place and the spectacularism of catastrophe. For example, the novel depicts the pollution of the Niger Delta as out-of-sight slow violence (Nixon 2011); consequently, there is no adequate global attention and activism to propel political action. While Nakale attempts to prop up global attention, Karl's ethical cosmopolitanism concerns the local place and population and a global outlook. Since the media and international journals are the

gatekeepers, a sub political response to the threats is undermined by their inattention and lack of urgency to this risk.

Consequently, reading *When We Speak of Nothing* as a risk narrative broadens the conceptual understanding of Beck's world risk society in how the novel 'stages' environmental catastrophe as cultural, political and scientific. The postcolonial works of Rob Nixon, Elizabeth DeLoughrey, and Dipesh Chakrabarty also expand our understanding of risk. Their analyses of fiction and non-fiction texts have paid attention to the global politics of power and recognition that place value on certain nationalities, knowledges, pains, memories, and histories over others. That Nakale's scientific output is neglected might better be understood if one considers the geographical and political contexts that confine the locals to the subjecthood of "disposable people" (Bale 1999) and their activism as environmentalism of the poor (Alier 2002). What the novel points to is that such assumptions that underlie Beck's cosmopolitanizing are geared towards a planetary abstraction and the spectacular present and future events like climate change. As such, catastrophes that are attuned to globalized importance or bear global consequences like the September 11, 2001, terrorist attack in the United States as well as nuclear, biological, or chemical threats (Beck 1999, 35), dominate media concern and academic inquiry. This contrasts with the slow violence and inhabited risk of the Niger Delta, which is distantly invisible to activists and sub political groups. The politicization of risk is consequently limited and undermined by the geopolitical force of media, international relations, and imperial importance. These contradictions are thematized in the novel through the glossing-over of the agonizing conditions of subjects and their short life expectancy, despoiled places, and the immiseration of their livelihood by rendering lands unfarmable and unfishable (Popoola 2017, 108). The narrative voice's declaration towards the end of the novel puts the response to environmental threats between Nigeria and the United States into a comparative context. "There was a case in The Hague. There was also a recent oil spill in the mighty US of A. That one was, of course, much more pressing, because it was about American lives [...] So no one cared for lives that came from places that were so far away in their orbit because everyone was so busy being close to the main action" (Popoola 2017, 218).

The views espoused by these characters are not engendered by a sense of responsibility based on the expectation of global risks; however, they take on an ethical view that considers and reacts to present environmental injustices against the poor, minorities, and citizens of the Global South. It then follows that in the world risk society, as depicted in the novel, the anticipation of global and West-based catastrophes, not just catastrophe, governs risk politics.

The narrative voice's observation highlights the politics of environmentalism that elevate certain bodies and places to a level of importance above others. What this means in the context of the world risk society is that the characters like Nakale who inhabit the Global South hold environmental views from the West in equal admiration and suspicion. By portraying this unequal attention to catastrophe, the novel questions the ethical basis of environmental projects and situates it in a cosmopolitan tradition that valorizes every human. Despite their perceived powerlessness, Karl, Nakale, and Janoma embrace this ethical questioning and moral responsibility to the globe. Their planetary outlook is similar to the environmentalism that Lawrence Buell and Ursula Heise articulate as ecoglobalist affect (Buell 2007) and eco-cosmopolitanism (Heise 2008). In both, environmentalists pay attention to the local and the global and look beyond the anthropocentric views of certain environmentalists. This approach compels a postcolonial outlook on environmental catastrophe by valorizing hybridity, transnationalism, and multiple place affiliation. In this way, attention to risks and hazards cannot be conscripted to a location. As a result, Popoola's text reconceives the binaries of purity and hybridity and the emphasis on place that early environmentalists embraced and thematizes a transnational awareness of environmental risk.

A significant amount of Beck's scholarship has centered on the consequences of globalization and the implications of globalization. He argues that there are "oppositions and contradictions of continents, cultures, and religions – third and first world, hole in the ozone layer, mad cow disease, pension reform, disaffection from political parties – arise in lives that have become inextricable from one another" (Beck 2000, 73 - 74). In this way, individuals are unmoored from centeredness to a particular and instead espouse what Doreen Massey has described as a "progressive sense of place" (1993). Beck describes this de-territorialized sense of place as place polygamy that is "marriage to several places at once, belonging in different worlds" (Beck 2000, 73). The import of Beck's articulation of this multilocal phenomenon to the text under consideration is in the ethical significance of such an outlook. This is crucial on the textual and story level, especially regarding ecological management and environmental pollution. On the textual level, given that the novel falls under the rubric of what this study has categorized as migration literature, the novel is poised to question the ethical foundations of contemporary superficial cosmopolitanism (Johansen 2008) that discuss migration and multiculturalism in celebratory tones without evaluating the material, social, political, and moral dimensions of such movements. On the story level, place polygamy and the ethics it embodies provides a

cosmopolitan moment for characters like Karl and Nakale, who possess a global outlook on environmental hazards.

As such, Karl's responsibility to multiple locales, despite his origin and affiliation, demonstrates that he practices territorialized cosmopolitanism (Johanssen 2008). He questions the dominant and violent histories and acts of the oil multinationals while also learning and engaging with the locals. His approach and volunteering echo Lawrence Buell's idea of ecopopulism, the idea that activism is non-elitist. He places emphasis on community and reconceives environmentalism as an instrument of social justice (Buell 1998, 643).

While the thugs employ agitations for personal gains, Karl adopts altruistic activism. He internalizes and is disturbed by the excess and pollution of the Niger Delta to the point of trauma. In fact, the specter of "'Shell's light' ... kept him up at night thinking about the thirty-five-year life expectancy" of the inhabitants of the Port Harcourt area (Popoola 2007, 112). Considering the looming environmental risk, Karl opts for a committed and ethical engagement with Port Harcourt. For this reason, "Karl ... could not leave like some lazy tourist who had only seen the inside of some fancy bungalow" (106-107). Karl's responsible environmental concern resonates with Alex Weik von Mossner's analysis of characters in Amitav Ghosh's *Hungry Tide*. In this story, "affective attachment to place can be a choice: one that binds one both broadly and narrowly to others, and that does not necessarily require nativity or even permanence" (2006, 136). Significantly, "Karl didn't want to leave. Was trying to be Nakale's sidekick. Learn more. Be of use" (118). The environmental ethics that place polygamy entails and that characters like Karl, Nakale, and Janoma espouse contrast sharply with those of the oil multinationals and Karl's father, whose characterization is close to that of a villain. The novel, therefore, suggests that a commitment to the ideals of place polygamy and respect for an environmental ethos that concerns itself with human and non-human species can reduce environmental hazards and forestall risks.

3.3 RISK ANTAGONISM AND ENVIRONMENTAL RISK

In late modernity, science and its successes occupy an ambiguous space of progress and dangers. *When We Speak of Nothing* captures this ambiguity fictionally by situating the dangers of the present and oncoming environmental catastrophe in its global and individual frames. For example, Karl, Abu, Nalini, and Janoma utilize modern gadgets, appliances, and technologies

in ways that pay inadequate attention to their organic origins or effects on the biosphere. The antagonism between techno-scientific progress and its *bad*s is a dominant theme in the novel. The antinomies are further heightened in the global power dynamics of risk antagonism. The producers of hazards and risks are not the victims of their adverse consequences. The fictional representation of risk antagonisms manifests in two ways in the novel. Firstly, the perpetrators of risk are temporally removed from their consequences, especially in the unknowable risk of climate change. While the signs of transformed climatic conditions are already on the way, characters like Abu perceive the changing and erratic weather conditions in anomalous terms and perceive the weather conditions as temporary (Popoola 2017, 20). Consequently, the characters feel temporally alienated/protected from their actions because of the infinite possibilities of climate change risk and because they perceive it as a phenomenon that will occur in an unknowable future.

Secondly, in the case of oil pollution, that one is not present at the site of risk does not preclude responsibility. Even though decision-making multinationals who prospect, mine, and transport fossil fuel do not live in the represented villages and cities, they are still responsible for the pollution that comes in the trail of oil extraction. Thus, act(ion)s that trigger adverse ecological consequences for the inhabitants of the fictional Niger Delta towns are produced by individuals who will not suffer the consequences because they are transnational agents whose social and economic powers afford them transnational mobility. Furthermore, the Nigerian government's complicity in the deadly ecological scenarios in the Niger Delta is also an instance of removal from the site of ecological violence because the political decision-makers and beneficiaries of oil profits are located outside of the space of extraction. Furthermore, the specter of pollution and its consequences do not catch global attention due to their distance from centers of powers and because of the coalition of government and multinational corruption. This link between pollution and lack of global attention to its hazards is best exemplified by Karl, who does not know Ken Saro-Wiwa, a popular figure of the Niger Delta activism whose death led to a reasonable level of global attention to the Niger Delta cause (158). Karl's initial lack of knowledge about the precarious and violent conditions of the people of the Niger Delta is thus a synecdoche for the disinterest of the centers of power in matters that do not embody existential and environmental threats to them, even though as Jennifer Wenzel has argued, fossil fuel is "an unfortunate necessity for so many aspects of everyday life" (Wenzel 2014, 157). In this case of environmental threat from an oil spill, risk appears to derive its recognition from the

victims in a paradoxical form where the producers and co-producers of risk through consumption are mostly invisible and do not readily acknowledge the risks.

But in the novel, the foreign multinationals are not the sole agents at the center of risk antinomies; instead, the novel demonstrates the national dimension of risk antagonism in the ethnocentric frame of Nigeria. As such, the novel reflexively engages the modern framework of the Nigerian state so that the lack of cohesion and ethnocentric chauvinism become apparent in the way the state apparatus relates to the constituent minority entities. These tensions highlight the simultaneous existence of indigenous political structures and the rigidly enforced modern nation-state that cannot deliver the social contract between the state and its populace. In this way, the reality of the Nigerian state as a modern construct becomes a problem in itself in two ways for the characters: one, the issue of minority politics derives from the modernity project of colonization that amalgamates disparate ethnic nations for economic and the pretension of *mission civilatrice*. In the case of the represented Niger Delta people, their minority status negatively affects their political leverage so that decisions and policies regarding resource control, environmental management, and federal political mobilization are not usually in their favor. Secondly, this model of political minority victimization is entangled with a space politics that derives from the framework of colonial governance that separated sites of extraction from the colonial quarters so that the seats of government and the residence of colonial officers were usually situated in places outside of raw materials extraction, agriculture, and mining sites.

The novel is reminiscent of the colonial extractive economy. It depicts extraction sites in their squalor and hideousness and juxtaposes them with the cozy, well-built, and gated administrative communities. These parts of Port Harcourt where oil workers live are not thoroughly touched by the devastation and the oncoming environmental risk; for instance, Karl's father lives in comfort and flamboyance (Popoola 56), whereas the villages/communities that Nakale and Karl visit are cesspools of depravity. By juxtaposing the sites of extraction with the lush parts of Port Harcourt, the novel thus establishes the unequal power relations and antagonism in oil wealth production and the perception of environmental risk. It follows the poor and remains distant or removed from the rich.

Further, the benefits of oil exploration and its impact on national and global industrialization are not reflected in the Port Harcourt surroundings. Some "kids in some remote villages didn't even know what electricity was [...] Some kids knew electric light only from these skinny

chimneys. The ones with the waving, spitting fire at the top” (Popoola 2017, 108). The personification of the chimney creates a monstrous, destructive and threatening image. In this way, the narrative voice demonstrates the contemporary environmental risk that has been set in motion such that catastrophe is both present and is anticipated. To this end, one can speak of a fictional account of the production of wealth and the social production of risk as articulated by Beck (1992, 2009) since the socio-economically immiserated class is further impoverished as a result of reckless oil exploitation, gas flaring, and environmental pollution of the multinationals.

It is important to highlight how environmental risk manifests in the novel as a result of conditions in late modernity. Firstly, the insurance principle of the ‘polluter pays’ collapses not solely as a result of the incalculability of the consequences but also because of multinational negligence sanctioned by government corruption. This derives from the national political framework in which the indigenes of these villages are, as earlier stated, deprived of the development from oil proceeds. While the author utilizes a name-and-shame approach by mentioning the multinational oil company Shell (119, 158, 286), yet in the novel, the conglomerate is not penalized for its destructive practice in the Niger Delta or made to clean up its environmental mess.

On the other hand, because the political situation of minority citizenship means there is no adequate representation, the indigenes resign themselves to the disenfranchised system that leaves them vulnerable to the risks. Thus, Nakale demonstrates the breakdown of a comprehensive interaction between the ruling class and the indigenes of these places. He tells Karl, “they neva tell us how much de danger, what it go do for us. For our health. And this our leaders be too greedy. Anything whey come him way, him go take. Him no go ask wetin dey happen for later. He just think make me chop now” (109).

Consequently, as Nakale stipulates the dangers of oil exploitation, he is at pains to show the imbrication of government avarice and their complicity in neglecting scientific assessment of future environmental catastrophe. What is unsaid is that the juridical framework of insurance principle entails a calculus of probabilities and fault ascription, which is most likely not compensable under the corrupt economic and political regimes of the fictionalized Nigerian state.

The world risk society that is thus narrativized in the novel demonstrates that the adverse consequences of industrial extraction and pollution cannot be controlled or compensated by insurance. The problems of transferability of accidental and compensational foundations are further heightened through their trans-border aspects. To put it in another way, the risk situation in *When We Speak* calls attention to the dangers of the unintended consequences of industrialization and carbon fuel economy and also the asymmetrical power relations of the global political architecture described by Karl as “the fucking world out of balance” (112). This risk scenario echoes the kind of environmentalism of the poor that Sule Egya highlights in his study whereby “it is [...] often for the interest of the powerful few, from the global North and the global South, that millions of innocent ones, like those in the Niger Delta region, are left to suffer in neglect and abandonment. Indeed, environmentalism of the poor is pervasive in Africa today due to global activities harmful to the environment” (Egya 2016, 7)

Likewise, risk segregates as it traverses from the boundaries of rich countries to the poor, eliminating major factors of equalizing tendency. In this case, it is only with the production of international activist alliances that the risks attempt to catch up with its producers.

Hence, the production of wealth and its attendant risks in the forms of toxins, gaseous components, pollutants, heat, and diseases are not direct risks for the producers. This risk antagonism, whereby there is a disruption between the producers and victims of risk, is further compounded by the scientific calculation, which certifies risk or defines risk. Politically sanctioned scientific results can both render risks visible or invisible. Risks for multinational polluters are thus doubly invisible. Firstly, in their occlusion from sight in terms of the spatial dimension and, secondly, in their refusal to accept and validate risk definitions.

Furthermore, as in the case of the fictionalized Shell, modernity falters in its definitions of place. The risks do not transgress borders as risk. Nakale also mentions that the legal and legislative institutions cannot curtail the risks. The globalization of multinational extractive industries thus put compensability and insurance policy under threat. The novel thus emphasizes the social risks positions that protect the producers and profiteers of risk. Hence, while risks are located in geographically specific areas, the transgressive power of globalization ensures a form of disembeddedness for Shell that allows it to disappear and evade the juridico-legislative sanctions. What follows for the characters who live in these environmentally degraded regions are broken trust in the system and a sense of existential insecurity.

This is because a sense of social depravity and risk seem to follow oil extraction in the area. It thus follows that when John's perspective of the degradation is focalized in the novel, it is in terms of loss and absence that the novel delivers a contextual framing to the presence of the oil multinational: "John was all about trying to make some context, for the missing father, the oil, the city, the Nigeria. How the beautiful city had lost its beauty. How oil money was not invested properly. How developments were not for the general population" (96). This relationship between oil wealth and impoverishment of the local population resonates with Rob Nixon's arguments on micro-minorities enclaves which are "undemocratic, often destitute nation-states that register in the global economy principally as sites for the unregulated extraction of oil, minerals, and timber" (Nixon 2011, 117). Thus, the novel situates the environmental injustice that the indigenes suffer in the world risk society that is enabled by asymmetrical power relationships backed by the neoliberal excessive extractive economy.

This power hierarchy intermixed with government corruption is also depicted as constitutive of risk antagonism because the producers of threats can circumvent state sanctions like the remedial process of environmental clean-ups through a manipulated optics of responsibility. Here, 'Manipulated optics of responsibility' refers to those symbolic gestures that are performed, manipulated to tell a falsified story of ethical environmentalism. Consequently, to meet global best practices, one of the oil corporations put up a faux clean-up exercise. Nakale exposes this as digging up "the earth so that the fresher white sand lay on top, merely covering the stained, polluted soil and underneath. That was it. Nothing else" (Popoola 2017, 123). It is thus a ploy to erect a positive outlook in the face of the international attention the oil company got for "the structure of short metal valves and fittings [that] had spurted gallons of oil high up in the air" (123). The novel thus acknowledges an imminent environmental risk that can only be forestalled by recognizing local production of knowledge and espousal of planetary environmental consciousness.

Even though the environmental threats are well in place in the novel, the fractured sense of nature and indeterminacy of what constitutes the environment draws attention to the lack of clear analytic concepts of the environmental risks. The symbolic mediations of nature in the novel in pristine pastoral landscapes still occupy a central space. But this wilderness is fused with industrial toxicity, which is a risk object.

Hence, a depiction of wilderness and pollution meshes with a wilderness that seems untouched and in its pristine state: "The wilderness in front too thick to look through but in the distance

those ugly funnels, making a whole lot of noise. Hissing. Burning. Spitting” (108). The narrator personifies the funnel as an animate object that is hideous, which disrupts the wilderness’ pristineness. All three participles – hissing, burning, spitting – lack objects. This occlusion of the objects demonstrates how the victims of the violence and destruction of the multinational companies are rendered invisible. Furthermore, the subjects or agents behind the destruction are not seen, so the ability to be insured and risk culpability are also free-floating. In this case, wilderness, as shorthand for nature, is emptied of its cultural and ontological pristineness. The wilderness is thus one that can no longer be perceived due to the pollutants and toxic elements that have mingled with it. Instead, this wilderness is a monstrous Faustian entity that turns its back to strike back at its creators. For this reason, the author must adopt a contemptuous diction in showing the disapproving hissing, which may also point to the serpentine symbol of lurking danger, and intimidation. In conjuring burning, the multinational excavation of oil portrays a tedious relationship with the environment, which is further meaningful when burning is understood to represent irrevocable devouring and damage. Also, by opting for the participle spitting, one can understand burning as a contemptuous and disgusting act. In personifying and giving agency to objects of pollution and environmental risk, Popoola presents an active presence of multinational destruction, which affects readers’ perception of the multinational as an intrusive, contemptuous presence. This further leads to the reading of the text as an environmental risk narrative as the depiction of the destruction is present, and the adverse consequences are well on the way, which explains the choice of dystopian landscapes in the villages.

3.4 RISK PERCEPTION: CLIMATE CHANGE IN *WHEN WE SPEAK OF NOTHING*

When We Speak of Nothing pays attention to the environmental threat of oil pollution in the Niger Delta. Additionally, it represents anticipated planetary dangers by presenting in non-perceptible ways the risk of climate change. This risk is described as non-perceptible because the two instances of changing climatic conditions and their effects – erratic weather conditions and flooding – are not perceptible to the characters. Therefore, they do not produce anxiety and anticipation or garner political and social interest. Instead, characters like John, Nalini, and Abu perceive this ‘threat’ in anomalous terms as they appear to be ignorant of the link between the transforming and irregular atmospheric situation and the probability of its risk.

In the early pages of the novels (15-17), the reader is confronted with an abysmal climatic condition. However, the characters do not perceive this as a sign of adverse climatic conditions or a climate change issue. Instead, they engage this change as simply erratic atmospheric conditions. In the light of this non-perception, the novel presents the social frame and cultural implications of risk that are attended to and those that are not. Crucially, while the children play with snow and complain about cold days in April, there is no scientific knowledge to validate the possibility. Instead, the social implication and attention take center stage in ways that do not point at anticipate catastrophe. This representation qualifies the argument of Beck that risks in some ways derive their cultural powers from staging and scientific knowledge production. On the other hand, the latent quality of climate change means that the children and other characters cannot adequately measure or compare the phenomenon to consider it a threat. To agree with Mayer, analysis of climate risk derives from scientific models that are dependent on “situated knowledge” (Mayer 2016, 209). Similar to Chakrabarty’s conclusion in “Climate and Capital: On Conjoined Histories” that climate change “is a problem defined and constructed by climate scientists whose research methods, analytical strategies, and skill-sets are different from those possessed by students of political economy” (Chakrabarty 2014, 21) the absence of scientific knowledge of these characters and its transmission through various media contribute to the indifference with which the characters like Nalini react to the rare snowfall.

The temporal setting of the novel, the 2010s, sees the thawing/thinning out of snow and erratic nature. While the characters are not particularly perceptive of it, the latent nature, socio-cultural encoding, latency, and seeming unurgency of the catastrophe make it non-threatening. The climate and weather as motifs in British culture make this ambivalent. The characters may anticipate a future that collapses, or this threat may be forestalled. Beck’s staging of risk or the absence of staged risk mediated by scientific discourse and media narratives seems to be absent as the characters move on in their everyday lives, oblivious to the futurity of this catastrophe.

Consequently, the perception of a threat as a future catastrophe is closely tied to its substance as risk. For these characters, there is no environmental risk of global warming. Without uncertainty towards anticipation of global warming, the characters evince subjective apathy to the looming materiality of risk. Sylvia Mayer shows that climate change novels like “strong reliance on scientist characters. These characters serve several purposes: they introduce scientific information on global warming and climate change, they address the controversy and uncertainty that mark scientific knowledge and they draw attention to the complex connections between science, politics, the economy, and the cultural realm” (Mayer 2016, 506). Without

these factors, it is thus comprehensible that the tone with which these characters respond to the change in the atmosphere lacks urgency. This is evident in how the youngsters express unconcerned incredulity when it snows in April, “*I mean end of April, for real?*” (16). As such, apathy to the assumed global warming in the novel ignores the anthropogenic force of climate change and its relation to carbon usage, raw material exploration and extravagant consumption culture. The silence of the fictional characters to this represents the inattention that the intangibility of this risk entails. Hence, there are no narrative actions¹¹ towards positive social, political, cultural, or economic transformations in the face of impending danger.

To this end, one may differentiate between climate change narratives in which the characters’ risks are perceptibly anticipated threats and those that are non-perceptible. This perceptive schema can be discerned in *When We Speak of Nothing* on two levels. While the characters are not threatened by the emerging threats, the narrative voice discursively situates the change in a temporal frame that shows a progression and transformation in the weather conditions; hence, the narrative voice recognizes, for example, that “the summer was drifting unbearably” (116) and that London warmed up finally. Summer was here” (117). The implication of this is that the antinomy between the narrator’s perception and the characters’ perception produces a discrepant awareness (Jochum 1979) and an ironic effect on the reader as the reader interprets the apathy of the characters as political or just as a knowledge issue.

This failure of perception resonates with Roy Flickinger’s understanding of the dramatic irony effect whereby “the *double entente*” is usually known to the audience (in this case, the readers are aware and conscious of the impending risk of climate change), a considerable part of whose pleasure consists in viewing with prophetic insight the abortive efforts of the dramatic characters to escape the impending catastrophe” (Flickinger 1910, 202). While Flickinger relates this device to Greek and Shakespearean tragedies, whose denouements are measurable and achievable within the timeframe of the tragedies, there is a sense in which the suspended tragedy of alienation and loss, that is probable post-catastrophe in this novel, aligns with the tragic tenets of Greek tragedy. This appears to be on a global level, provided one reads the anthropogenic force as a unified human agent. The hubris of the victories of modernity, carbon consumption and depletion of earth resources, come back to haunt in alarming, although not yet fully knowable, ways to humans. If the consequences of the rise in temperature are already in the making, highlighted in the erratic snowfall and flooding, then the dangers are sooner than

¹¹ Action here implies the act of causing or experiencing an event. See Bal 2009, P 6.

expected, and a catastrophic future is expected. It is in the probable and alterable future that this emerging future that has not been perceived by the characters that *When We Speak of Nothing* might arouse action on climate change. It is thus in anticipation of catastrophe and the use of dramatic irony that *When We Speak* may be read as a world risk narrative because the oncoming threat of climate change reflects the globalized ontology of the risk and its presence whose (long-term) effects has an intercontinental dimension. In this case, the absence of the scientific representation to gauge this threat creates a sort of invisibility of the threats while also unhinging the quotidian activity and decisions from its environmental side effects. Consequently, the manner in which these characters interpret the risks orients their (in)action and indifference to the threat of climate change. This inattention may derive from the phenomenology of uncertainty whereby the “invisibility of causes, distant impacts, lack of immediacy and direct experience of the impacts, lack of gratification for taking mitigative actions, disbelief in human’s global influence, complexity and uncertainty, inadequate signals indicating the need for change, perceptual limits and self-interest” (Moser 2010, 31) all lead to apathy.

If characters like Abu and Nalini in London do not perceive the oncoming climate change, the risk of flood triggers a similar reaction. When Karl visits Port Harcourt, he is told, “normally it is very hot, but it is rainy season.’ [...] Sometimes the cars look like they are swimming” (56). Also, “Uncle T had told him about the downpours that could make water levels rise in the city because there was nowhere for it to escape to” (56). In both situations, the characters do not pay attention to the linkages between the risk of flooding and global warming. According to Sylvia Mayer, “global warming causes the melting of the polar ice caps and of glaciers in other parts of the world as a result of which rising sea levels threaten to inundate coastlines worldwide and extreme weather phenomena such as heavy storms, flooding, heatwaves and droughts become more commonplace” (Mayer 2014, 21).

In both cases of the risks of climate change analyzed above, there is a crisis of causality, in that the individuals cannot also trace their actions to the emerging risk; here, the individuals are set against the global scale of their actions; the seeming irrelevance of scale and the banality of simple, minute decisions in the frame of things like the use of generators (112, 192), air-conditioner in Uncle T’s house (75, 158) or Uncle T’s and Karl’s air travel do not appear to sum up to such a colossal problem. Textual examples show that Uncle T’s European trips are quite common “There was time, two weeks, as Uncle T continued on his journey to the south of Europe. Business again – ‘I’m doing this trip a lot lately’” (44). Indeed, “the reality of risks,

their influence on our subjectivities and on our personal and collective notions of self, strongly relies on the imagination in its concretization as anticipation” (Mayer 2016a, 502).

In addition, as a result of postcolonial dysfunction, the environmental catastrophe might emerge from multiple points, which presents a conundrum in the attribution of responsibilities. If there is flooding, the reader is wont to ask if this results from extensively cultivated land, soil erosion, rising sea levels or from the unhurriedly built infrastructure. This multiplicity of effects and the lack of a direct causal link between individual action and atmospheric alteration constitutes Popoola’s environmental concern, especially in the larger frame of world risk society.

Consequently, the representation risk of climate change, the perception and social response to it are thus in opposition to the figuration of the risk of environmental pollution in the text. This difference draws from the temporal and perceived non-threatening aspect of the risk of climate change and the indeterminacy of the risk, which is not ratified through scientific knowledge or mediatized staging. In the case of oil pollution, the novel presents a scientific character, Nakale, whose training, experiential knowledge and social activism put him in the position to evaluate the risk and situate it in risk discourse, especially for the international audience. Nakale takes on an experimental quest to understand, define and examine the soil and water pollution levels of the villages. While he seeks to produce credible, first-hand knowledge about the environmental situation, he is hindered by structural hurdles like lack of research grants and outdated laboratories (109) in ways that draw attention to the geo-economic situation of Port Harcourt. He instead sells his research to foreign environmental organizations that mediate the production of knowledge. What this then means is that a global means of knowing and its production of effective prognosis are fictionalized as geo-political and uncertain hence risk is unmoored from its appearance of scientific positivism. This implies that the global power differentials in knowledge production and dissemination are the basis of anticipation of catastrophe based on incomplete knowledge production. Nakale acknowledges this problem of knowledge exclusion as he wants Karl to know about “[w]hat was left out” (Popoola 2017, 109); however, he adopts a pragmatic frame by accepting that such selections are better than none.

By juxtaposing these two environmental risks and their (non)perception, the novel demonstrates that the materiality of risk is not necessarily a condition for its social and cultural attention. Instead, the perception of risk for these characters in two different countries is framed, questioned, and embedded with cultural, social and scientific information and validation. Thus,

the cognitive schema through which future events and ongoing threats are discerned are closely linked to the a priori knowledge schemas, media staging and scientific positions.

Furthermore, there is a sense in which Popoola's opting for the non-narratable responds to the difficulty of representing the latent deferred risk of climate change. Such imaginative difficulty is filled with the readers' personal perspective; thus, the formlessness and knowledge uncertainty of this risk is represented in what is known at the moment. To employ the unknowable is thus to begin from the known along with the cultural apathy, denialism and politics around it. Popoola's realistic tendency, in effect, represents the ongoing actions and extant calamitous outcomes to the carbon economy of the world. This route which departs from the spectacular and urgent representations of risk narratives, consequently recognizes the ethical, political and persuasive dimensions of the politics of risk.

It is in the mediatized and politicized frame that risks derive their cultural meanings for narratives of anticipation like the risk of climate change in *When We Speak*. This risk, in spite of its imminent materiality, is undermined by the uncertainties and cultural meanings that natural objects like snow possess. On the other hand, the realist and constructivist aspects of the environmental risk of oil pollution is depicted in their scientific evaluation and interpretation but constructed and politicized through the power asymmetries in global attention to risk and the selectivity of media materials.

The novel goes on to demonstrate the insidious working of the global reaction to spectacular environmental risk and the global (in)attention it garners based on its geopolitical power and location. Nakale, for example, does not understand why his reports on oil spillage in the Niger Delta do not get as much headline as a "recent oil spill in the mighty US of A" (Popoola 2017, 218).

To this end, talks of "transnational discourse coalition" (Beck 1999, 24) are undercut by the geographical positionality of the risk in a way that is comparable to Rob Nixon's articulation of slow violence (2000). Consequently, as Nakale attests, the response to the oil spill in the United States differs from the response to the numerous incidences of the oil spill in the Niger Delta because of the biopolitics at play whereby certain lives are deemed more valuable than others. To then put the world risk society in a broader perspective that acknowledges the fissures and gaps of Western representations, *When We Speak of Nothing* situates the power hierarchies as problematic in environmental pollution. This confrontation is also alongside the relations of risk definition and the mediative role of international media organizations in staging risk.

To bring it all together, Olumide Popoola's *When We Speak* focalizes on the local and its situatedness in the global discussion of environmental issues. Her migrant biracial protagonist, Karl, demonstrates a cosmopolitan outlook towards the environmental risk of oil toxicity. Other environmental risks like climate change are perceptible but do not gain political and media attention as they lack the spectacularism of ongoing risk or the politicized risk; hence they do not constitute urgent risk attention for the characters. Popoola's novel depicts everyday environmentalism. It is by prioritizing the everyday experience that the environmental risk becomes evident to the reader. Her environmentalism sidesteps the valorization of one place of early environmental writings as the novel is foregrounded in multiple places. The characters' individual lives, the peripatetic Uncle Tunde, who embodies the consumerist lifestyle of Nigerian elites, Janoma, and Karl, who move at specific points in the novel, provide a transnational outlook and highlight global inequalities caused by excessive consumerist culture and asymmetrical power relations on a global scale.

Olumide Popoola depicts these risk scenarios while situating them in the global context of the world risk society. Hence in her novel, the environmental risk from oil pollution and the risk of climate change typifies the consequences of modernity becoming an issue and problem for itself. Things have fallen apart in the assurance of national security and sovereignty as the global demand for fossil and the government's need for foreign exchange and government corruption propel neglect of environmental safety standards. On the other hand, the legal system means that the culprit cannot be brought to book in the country where they have committed environmental atrocities. Hence the environmental risk in terms of the producers of dangers and victims of dangers are cross-border systems and individuals. On the other hand, the risk cannot be delimited in time as the extent of the hazard cannot be calculated at present. The breakdown of risk calculus regarding time and space is most evident in the depiction of climate change since it is scientifically impossible to calculate and locate the producers of risk and the extent to which it goes into the future. In fact, the narrator shows the impossibility of mapping strict risk perpetrators by placing culpability on a wide anthropogenic force since individuals in the novel depend on fossil fuel for their cars and generators, and they produce toxic gases from their air conditioners. The novel embraces a global humanitarian approach to depict the quotidian use of fossil fuel. Here the government's failure to provide basic infrastructure like uninterrupted electricity is implied in the consumption of more fossil fuel, in this case, diesel. Diesel and a diesel-gurgling machine, and generators are present in the text. However, these everyday objects are not perceived as an environmental risk by any of the characters despite the

global attention to fossil fuel. The presence of everyday items like the air conditioner, which produces the greenhouse effect and global warming, is also not considered a risk object but a sign of affluence and comfort with a ubiquitous presence in cars and houses (Popoola 2017, 158). On the surface, the novel does not seem to pay much narrative attention to the link between fossil fuel extracted from the Niger Delta and transported around the world and the risk of global warming. This indeterminacy and lack of connection dwell on the temporal frame and the impossibility of knowing or tracing fossil fuel to global warming. Outcomes are unknown except when they are based on scientific mappings and forecasts of climate. The novel also demonstrates the dependence on fossils through its energy use. The use of transporting systems like the airplane that traverses the world is also presented without considering its implication on the planetary environmental risk of global warming. In this way, the novel gestures towards a structure of implications, a causal link between the ‘innocent’ use of a commodity and its imbrication in planetary degradation, while not turning an eye from the contemporary reality of oil environmental degradation.

Sylvia Mayer and Ursula Heise have deliberated on the usefulness of genre in representing risk and threats. Their points center on the reader's reaction to genres and the effectiveness of specific genres to represent environmental calamity. As a novel that relies on a realist mode of representation, Popoola's strategy effectively conveys the political, social and cultural dynamics of environmental risk and response to catastrophe. The question thus is, how effective is this in a genre field where writers are prone to the doom and gloom of apocalyptic language and literary devices. Perhaps, the dramatic irony where the reader appears to know more than the characters brings to mind that one “can address the problems posed by serious affective modes—and foster a self-critical attitude that does not hinder but in fact enables environmentalist work” (Seymour 2014, 62). Since environmental choices are easily engaged as matters of individual choices and moralism, the dramatic ironies in the novel thus draw attention to the structural attitudes, economic frameworks, and social behaviors that underpin environmental responsibility as a collective and public concern. It is in the superficiality of these actions and their economic reward with personal progress as in the case of Uncle Tunde, who globe-trots, uses fossil-consuming generating sets that the paradox of individual responsibility is evident in the sense that these little actions accumulate with the actions of other individuals to pose an environmental challenge. Thus, Popoola shows that many people are superficial in their concern for the environment because they are tied to systems of consumption and pollution that require little or no self-regulation. Furthermore, the thematic concern of the

novel demonstrates the breakdown of a cohesive social contract and an ecosystem interrupted by *techne* and toxic matters.

CHAPTER FOUR: ONE (WO) MAN'S CATASTROPHE, ANOTHER (WO)MAN'S FREEDOM: GENDER REVOLUTION, INTIMATE AFFAIRS, AND RISK IN SEFI ATTA'S *A BIT OF DIFFERENCE*

Love is not trivial [...] Love can be dangerous. Love can be deadly in this day and age, and there are casualties, so write your story. (Atta 2013, 142)

A Bit of Difference opens with Deola, the protagonist, arriving at Atlanta's Hartsfield International Airport. She notices a walled photograph depicting, stereotypically, an indigent African woman. The photograph is momentarily blocked by a passing woman whose afro-hair, bangle-size earrings, and black pin-striped trouser suit suggest she has a corporate job (Atta 2013, 1). This scene of a career woman moving in the airport's non-place (Auge 1992) depicts a feature of late modernity: the gender revolution in career and the domestic sphere and access of women to public spaces. The novel also concerns itself with intimate relationships as they evolve from the institutionalized individualism, risk definitions, assurances, and gendered norms of early modernity.

This chapter will analyze the characters' intimate relationships in *A Bit of Difference* by drawing from Ulrich Beck and Elizabeth Beck-Gernsheim's argument on the 'normal chaos of love' (1995) to show that the interpersonal zone of marital commitment, affection and love are sites of quotidian risk heightened by gender revolution and individualization. Beck and Beck-Gernsheim argue that the everyday chaos of love is a product of late modernity's gender revolution that encourages individualization, multiplicity, liminality, and continuous ontological evolution (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim 2002). Therefore, in late modernity, previous social categories and structures give way to interpersonal negotiations, multiple forms of identity, new and uncertain modes of performance. This transformation produces risky situations as individuals navigate the murky waters of hybridized and emerging social forms.

The changes and discontinuities in intimate love affairs and gender revolution are closely tied to individualization, which in early modernity was a characteristic restricted mostly to men

since education, the power to choose careers, relocate to another city, and make decisions for the family were mostly restricted to men. Religious teachings further amplified these restrictions through the trope of the submissive wife and biological determinism. However, the liberties of equal opportunity, faster mobility, education and feminist theorizing have opened up modes of activism and prospects for women to challenge the essentialist discourse of gender performance and attitude in the sense that previously held assumptions and the social category of a woman have been deconstructed with women now pursuing their individual life goals and biographies in ways that are different from their ancestors.

What these changes imply is that traditional expectations in gender norms and roles are no longer valid but are works in progress that require revisitation and negotiation for individuals who seek to pursue romantic relationships or a nuclear family. Since, according to Beck and Beck-Gernsheim, “time-honored norms are fading and losing their power to determine behavior”; it follows that what “used to be carried out as a matter of course now has to be discussed, justified, negotiated and agreed, and for that very reason it can be canceled” (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim 1995, 7) even in the private sphere. What this means is that love has become a chaotic interpersonal domain contingent upon the willingness of interested parties to map new terrains in circumstances where there are no established guidelines, and the premise of conventional norms are no longer dependable. Consequently, the new world of relationships – liberalized relations, serial monogamous marriages, and the nuclear family – can best be described in the words of Beck and Beck-Gernsheim as tumultuous in their complexities.

In their book, *The Normal Chaos of Love*, Beck and Beck-Gernsheim articulate the systemic inhibitions, freedoms and progress that have altered the institution of marriage and love. Their arguments are based on three psycho-social grounds. Firstly, they argue that “prescribed gender roles are the *basis* of industrial society” (23) which implies that the traditional family required a partner, the husband, in the industries while the wife worked at home. This spatially and biologically determined situation is deconstructed and re-negotiated in late modernity as more women gained education, entered the labor market, and moved freely. The revolution or transformation in gender norms presupposes changes in self-autonomy and in love affairs as earlier rules of relationship and marital engagement are broken down. In spite of the chasms that emerge in ontological conditions of marriages and personal identities, there is, and this leads to their second argument, an inherent longing for bonding, which becomes fundamental to close relationships as other social ties become tenuous due to acts that are primarily self-motivated. This desire means that individuals will continually seek intimate companionship to

counter loneliness and existential insecurities (24). A break-up in marriage does not, for this reason, foreclose new marriages or companionships. Instead, a marriage may lead to another marriage or other forms of intimate relationships. The more individualized one becomes, the more there is a need for bonding. Thirdly, the family or intimate relationships are settings for conflicts as the parties figure out whose interest comes first regarding jobs, family planning, alternative lovers, and other private sphere matters (25).

Furthermore, bio-medical advancement, technology, mobility, education, women's rights activism, and the labor market have questioned and undermined the 'essence' of a patriarchal family structure that defines one party as the provider and the other as a caregiver. This questioning has also been accentuated by the desire to live a life of one's own and has produced family and conjugal structures that are both consistent with the past in terms of being unions of persons but unrecognizable because of the many forms they assume through informal marriages and common-law partnerships. Breakdown in marriages leads to more marriages as individuals seek personal freedom. The institution, family, has become unmoored from social expectations and political exigencies that privileged marriage over the individual in early modernity. The contradictions between personal freedom and family demands create interpersonal antagonisms. Love comes with tensions, as men and women insist on their rights as traditional roles are slowly dissolved by gender revolution. Men who insist on traditional roles will be jolted into a new reality by women's freedoms, financial security, and other protective frameworks like the welfare system. Further, these options, choices, and consequences erode the emotional base that love seemed to provide in early modernity. As each member of the relationship aims to achieve a better societal and financial standing, struggles emerge that may tear such relationships apart. The affective dimensions of such partnerships thus portend risk. Loneliness, financial precarity, loss of residency, psychological, mental, and emotional trauma may follow some breakups. Consequently, in relations, "love will become more important and equally impossible" (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim²); hence intimate love becomes a chaotic affair.

4.1 PROVINCIALIZING INTIMACY

While Beck and Beck-Gernsheim acknowledge that their arguments address intimate affairs within the developed countries of the world, with emphasis on Germany, their observations and

theories are specific to 'White' Europe. This means that their work largely ignores the changing attributes of intimate affairs among non-European cultures, minority and ethnic groups and even inter-racial relationships in Europe and the Western world, which are briefly discussed but without sufficient attention to the power dynamics and multiplicity that these relationships possess. To be sure, intimate conflicts arise from the assumptions of binary roles in the nuclear family. Discussion about gender performance and its relationship to the gendered division of labor in families in Africa, for example, is central to the work of Oyeronke Oyewumi (1997, 2000, 2002), who has argued that European feminism responds to the European nuclear family structure so that woman is framed as a synonym for wife. The construction of the wife or woman is based on biological classifications that attach deterministic importance to body parts and functions such that procreation and lactation are, for example, given as the reason for the woman as a caregiver. This bio-logical determinism is, however, confronted by late modernity's openness to transformed gender performance, expectations, and achievements (Oyewumi 2002). Hence, as more women became educated, their mobility and career choices could no longer be restricted to the home. The change in social norms and roles thus engenders demands for gender equality which is also reflected in the domestic arena of intimate affairs. This implies that based on recent and emerging forms of gender equality and equity, there is a need for interpersonal negotiations for individuals willing to enter intimate relationships.

Despite the perceived equality gaining grounds because of the gender revolution, the violent nature of patriarchal misogyny subsists across the globe, and this also requires that discussions incorporate the broad spectrum of gender studies and activism. In particular, for example, the violence that immigrants face due to violent partners and the traumatic experiences of trafficked people indicate that a broader frame of reference is needed in engaging, intimate relationships, love, and feminine agency. The Nigerian-British feminist Amina Mama considers the multiple ways violence is committed against women, which is most apparent in the state's institutional apparatuses. She argues:

Feminist responses to violence against women in late-capitalist countries have also presumed a certain type of state structure, namely one that provides welfare support, such as housing, and a law-abiding, if recalcitrant, police force. It has been assumed that most women live in nuclear marriages with bread-winning husbands upon whom they are economically dependent. However, these assumptions do not hold for many black and working-class women. For one thing, public services have failed miserably in their attempts to offer appropriate support to black women, and welfare professionals (mostly from parochial middle-class backgrounds) have often demonstrated their class prejudices. For another, because of racism, black women face additional hardships in obtaining public housing, appropriate police protection, or legal support. On account of the increasingly discriminatory immigration laws, many black women constantly confront the risk of

being deported when and if they seek assistance, or of being racially harassed when and if they seek police or legal intervention (Mama 1997, 59).

By highlighting ‘race’ and ‘class’, Amina Mama gestures at the inadequacies of studying the everyday chaos of love outside intersectional engagement. These two social categories, which constitute what Ulrich Beck classifies as zombie – *living dead* – categories (Slater and Ritzer 2001, n.p), are important in reading beyond the psycho-social dynamics of chaotic love affairs and call into question the violent and physical manifestations of interpersonal relationships. Also, in studying gender within the domestic realm, it is essential to highlight the double-edge dimension of transnational and non-transnational care-giving jobs which may equally reinforce certain gender stereotypes since there exists an imbalance in how women are financially and socially positioned to do these kinds of jobs (Mulinari and Sandell, 499).

4.2 FINDING LOVE, DISCOVERING CHAOS: *A BIT OF DIFFERENCE*

Sefi Atta's novel *A Bit of Difference* fictionalizes the varied love experiences of immigrant and non-migrant characters in late modernity. She demonstrates an aesthetics of interpersonal risk anchored on the transformed dynamics of intimate relationships and love by depicting characters whose choices are haunted by interpersonal risks, marital (in)fidelity, existential fears, and loneliness. Some of the characters resort to negotiations, coercion, and familial bonding to navigate a crisis of affection, intimate bonding, and marriage. The female characters especially possess a social vision that positions them outside of previously known gendered roles and attitudes. Atta's novel, therefore, aligns closely with Cixous' call to transcend the past's determinism. She writes of a present where women embrace new living identities, imperfect but bold (Cixous 1976, 875). These new forms prompt subversive poetics and representation of agential power in the female characters' interactions with their male partners. As such, the female characters, when confronted with risk or traditional gender performance, choose to circumvent existing and early modernity conventional ‘time-tested’ (marital) gender roles for a contemporary multiplicity of subjective performance. As they undermine norms and choose their futures, it becomes evident that the normal chaos of love seems to be a male problem. As the women opt for career choices that are in their favor and, in other cases, divorce, they claim a happier and more liberating future. At moments when intimate spaces are sites of risk, Atta provides alternative forms of closely-knit relationships like family and sisterhood that provide ontological security for the women. In this way, one can only speak of a normal chaos

of love for the women in terms of unknowable futures without conventional frames of reference. This fear of the future is, however, usually perceived by the older female characters like Deola's and Subu's mothers, who believe the transformed sociological order of negotiated relationships are risky since these changes overturn established traditional ethos.

A Bit of Difference presents various aspects of late modernity but primarily the normal chaos of love that results from 'gender revolution'. The novel fictionalizes ongoing social processes that demand a new analytical approach. It shows that class, gender, race, and immigration interact in determining uncertainty and catastrophe. Therefore, this chapter assumes that the multiple social positions that characters in migration literature occupy allow an interrogation into the global state of individualized gendered changes and intimate affairs. Indeed, Sefi Atta is one of those writers preoccupied with depicting individualized lives and the existential uncertainties of globalization, post-colonialism, and modernity. Her novels, *Everything Good will Come* (2005), *Swallow* (2010), *The Bead Collect* (2019), and short stories portray characters who, in different ways, try to make meaning in late modernity. *A Bit of Difference* acknowledges these changing patterns. It revolves around changing intimate relationships and nuclear family structures. In the novel, the anticipation of a future event is not left to norms and traditions. Instead, characters choose ways to navigate their intimate relations.

The novel tells the story of Adeola, a British Nigerian accountant in the United Kingdom. Her story intersects with the lives of her Nigerian friends, Subu and Bandele, while it also presents the biographies of her siblings, mother, and aunties. When she returns home to Nigeria on a job assignment and for her dad's memorial, Deola meets Wale Adeniran, with whom she gets pregnant. This event makes her reconsider her migration choices and life history.

In the novel, gender revolution creates a space to circumvent social boundaries that govern female bodies to established norms. To break these norms, the characters evince self-awareness and agency but exist in a *risqué* zone. *A Bit of Difference* articulates the social acts that enforce gender policing and the dispositions that encourage slut-shaming to control sexuality and align female behavior to early modernity decorum. Slut-shaming, therefore, emerges as a motif in the novel. It fictionalizes the personal struggles and social death that evolves from sexual boundaries for the female. Slut-shaming occurs in an economy of Victorian moral codes that produce moralistic binaries. According to Deola, London-based Nigerians group Nigerian women into two types: the well-brought-up 'housewives-in-training' (Atta 2013, 27) girls who

dress and behave conservatively, cook for their boyfriends, and do not party much, and the ‘useless girls’ who sleep around.

A Bit of Difference highlights the disturbances, mutual obligations, and threats that “transnational place polygamy” places on intimate relations (Beck 2002). The difficulties of transnational interpersonal relationships are depicted through the interstitial and other spaces that immigrants occupy. For example, the novel opens at an airport, a place of transnational flows and interactions that emblemizes the global village (McLuhan 1964) that has been much spoken about in late modernity. Furthermore, at different points in the novel, the narrator collapses space and airplane flights to compress the distance between nations and cultures. For instance, when Deola travels from London's Heathrow Airport to Lagos, the narrative time is shortened to an introductory paragraph that only informs readers about onboarding flight rituals: a woman reading her Bible and passengers unclasping seat belts and grabbing their bags from the overhead compartment (Atta 51). The scene presents no event if one understands an event as something consequential to the fabula and in terms of “the transition from one state to another state, caused or experienced by actors” (Bal 2009, 189).

By underlying its fabula with multiple settings, *A Bit of Difference* fictionalizes individual experiences on a planetary state. Through an external narrator and mostly character bound focalizer, the novel also presents multiple ways through which the female characters, Deola, Jaiye, Subu, and Eno, disrupt gender norms and achieve agency. In turn, that agency allows them to form new selves and outcomes in their intimate and matrimonial relationships. These widely traveled immigrant women combine different identities, personalities, and professions. Whether as a management consultant, born-again Christian, financial advisor, hip-hop enthusiast, medical practitioner, or accountant, they transgress social barriers and deconstruct gendered roles. Their success partly derives from their higher education as it affords them the ability to migrate to other places and free them from the demands of family norms. In other words, their mobility and freedom signal their social and financial independence, which influences how they choose to perform their roles.

But gender revolution is not a stand-alone phenomenon in the novel. The institutional framework of modern society, which is also based on the social structure of industrial modernity, reacts against the evolving gender revolution. This conflict results in unintended consequences and risks for some female characters. Hence, since female characters are expected to live lives of their own and the institutional condition is that of rule finding, success or failure

in life endeavors are usually ascribed as individual responsibilities. Since members of the society have been unmoored from customary certainties and protections such as the extended family, lifetime stable work conditions, marital fidelity, and religious charity, the characters must map out futures for themselves outside of marriage. Thus, while the social context of gender revolution presumes agency and freedom for women, wives who act outside of this order or outside of traditionally prescribed norms of housewife or domestic work are susceptible to the vagaries of adverse financial conditions. In fact, financial dependence or preclusion from the economy, for women, is a risk factor that leads to a life of penury; this economic depravity impedes the sequestering of gender performance from traditional norms. The risk of immiseration that may emerge for a wife after the loss of the traditional male breadwinner is highlighted through the case of an unnamed dead male member in Subu's church, who dies from a liver problem and his wife. When Subu tells Deola about the incidence of his death, Deola's concern centers on the financial situation of the widow in a way that typifies the discursive context of independent womanhood and financial responsibility in late modernity. So, Deola rhetorically asks Subu, "Please tell me his wife was working" (23). Deola's worries are closely aligned to late modernity's expectation that women are no longer expected to be 'nurturers' and 'caregivers' at the service of family but that the dynamics of breadwinning and gender roles within the family have taken a transformative turn which has deconstructed norms and perceived values that restricted women to certain duties. Accordingly, in the novel, individualization is depicted as lined up with gender revolution, which requires that women build their own financial and social worth.

Yet, Atta's novel recognizes the place of class and wealth and their relationship to gender revolution. Crucially, the central characters in the novel are pooled from the echelons of middle- and upper-class societies. Through these characters' lives, the novel represents the continued importance of class, especially economic class, in the lives of individuals. As a result, the wealth, vestiges, and legacies of Deola's parents ensure that Deola is neither like the widow from Subu's church nor is she like one of the widows in Elizabeth Okereke's non-governmental organization. It is significant that her "father was a founder and chairman of Trust Bank, Nigeria. Her mother owned shares in the bank. Lanre [her brother] is the deputy managing director of the bank. Jaiye [her sister] is a doctor, and her practice has a retainership with the bank. Her family has survived without her father, but it might not have without the bank" (24). The economic situation of the Bellos, therefore, provides a level of privilege and protection from financial risk in case of marital problems. Jaiye, Deola's sister, provides a better context

in understanding how the economic class privilege of the Bellos affords security in failed marriages. When Jaiye marries Funsho, her father worries that her marriage with Funsho will not last. In order to forestall the risks and problems of a failed marriage for his daughter, he registers the house he gives to the freshly married couple in his daughter's name (69). Their father's decision pays off as the novel reaches a climax, and Jaiye ends her marriage with Funsho (180). In this sense, economic class remains a valid protective apparatus for Jaiye in negotiating gender roles and boundaries in the newly structured and contested ways of risk society.

4.3 INTIMATE AFFAIRS AND GENDER ROLES BETWEEN EARLY MODERNITY AND LATE MODERNITY

In many instances, *A Bit of Difference* references authors and works of early modernity. Atta uses John Osborne's *Look Back in Anger* and Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* to chronicle Deola's formation and signals cultural changes from early to late modernity. This authorial choice enables a comparative reading of the transformation of intimacy and gender norms from its early modernity to its late modernity state.

The references to Jane Austen provide opportunities for epochal comparisons and support the idea of a transformation from early modernity to late modernity. The allusion to Austen's works provides an imaginative acknowledgment of the progress in feminist writing, particularly the representation of the living conditions that constitute the space for intimate affairs. *A Bit of Difference* recasts the marriage-as-women's-objective plots of Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* and *Sense and Sensibility* into a progressive fabula that takes into account the many ways women are, in contemporary times, successful. As a way of example, Deola and Jaiye display more concern about their career, hobbies, and fashion than a successful marriage. Deola, particularly, does not aspire to marriage or consider it a sign of success.

Seen in this way, Deola's characterization sharply contrasts with the Bennet sisters, for example, in *Pride and Prejudice*. These sisters have in many accounts been described as individualistic, a point that draws comparison to the characterization of Deola, Subu and Jaiye. However, *A Bit of Difference* demonstrates the transformed relevance of class as compared to the importance of landed gentry in *Pride and Prejudice*, and also reflects the breakdown of

gender norms and subtle indifference to marriage. Hence, the individualistic subjectivities lead the characters to personal aspirations that are still conditioned by marriage, in a way that it appears marriage is the destination and success metric for them. Such intertextual engagements further draw parallels between the meanings and significance of class as a social and economic category. Therefore, while marriage is a motif in Austen, the motive behind the intention is linked to the possibility of upward social mobility, a point that Mrs. Bennet stresses many times in the novel. As such, Mrs. Bennet's fascination with marriage reflects the social and economic contexts of her industrial modernity and calls attention to the primacy of class in determining one's social and economic stations. It is therefore incumbent that marriage is crucial to the plot of Austen's novel. Furthermore, the 'naturalness' of marriage as a point in one's biography is built into the narrative structure of the novel in the way of its adoption of realism, and the 'objectivity' of the narrator in the descriptive and argumentative sections of the novel. Austen's often-quoted opening lines, "[i]t is a truth universally acknowledged, that a single man in possession of a good fortune, must be in want of a wife" (Austen 1813, 4), naturalizes the claim in its assumption of a linear life biography.

To wit, the similarities and differences in the representation of feminine agency, marriage, personal freedom and society demonstrate the transformation from simple modernity to hypermodernity that has transcended social justifications, meanings and categories in relation to gender. In this way, one can talk of a transformation of the social imaginary in the way Charles Taylor utilizes the concept to symbolize the "common understanding which makes possible common practices, and a widely shared sense of legitimacy" (Taylor 2003, 23). As a result, the 'acceptable' in Atta's novel takes a different form in the sense that the social contexts valorize these post-gendered practices and individualization. So, the state of Deola's, Subu's, and Jaiye's personal happiness take precedence over duties and obligations to class, status and institutional authority (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim 1995, 81). The relations of definition pertaining to what is right or wrong and the standards of ethics and morals have evolved in the world of these characters. Deola recognizes the epochal change between *Pride and Prejudice's* early modernity world and her current world, and her outlook on the benefit of reading Jane Austen for guidance is perceived as irrelevant as if to support Beck and Beck-Gernsheim's claim that the "preordained, unquestioned, often enforced ties of earlier times are replaced by the principle: 'until further notice'" (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim 2003, 3). The consequence, as depicted in the novel, is that conventions and traditional reactions are no longer a tenable frame of reference by which one can live one's life. Therefore, when Deola compares her relationship

with Wale Adeniran to the characters in Austen's novel, there is a sense of inconsequentiality and inapplicability between the actions of Austen's novels and her life. "She comes downstairs with *Pride and Prejudice* and returns it to the bookshelf, the story now irrelevant to her. Austen women did not have one-night stands. Austen women did not take the morning-after pill. Austen women took to their beds when they were heartbroken or down with colds" (Atta 103). At the moment of this epiphany, her life emerges as a distinct project, sharpened by the consequences of her decision and unbothered by the social legislations of religious moralism or class attitudes.

Similarly, in spite of the appearance of levels of conservative and ethics of Victorian-age morality that many characters in the novel espouse, their life goals, decisions and interaction with intimate love affairs are late modern constructs. The character cluster comprises the married, the single, the widowed, those in partnerships, and the love skeptics. All of them display complex self-awareness, agency, and identification. This character constellation portrays the multiple ways of loving, unloving, and other intimate emotions resulting from late modernization's interpersonal ecology. Given this, characters map subjective ways of engaging and subverting dominant gender tropes. For the female characters, their independence and subjectivity derive from the institutional individualism of late modernity where personal goals, aspirations and social definitions are subjectively constructed.

This change occurs at the cultural, social, generational, and institutional levels; it is due to these levels of changes that one can read a distinction between female characters in earlier works like Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*, Flora Nwapa's *Efuru*, and Ama Ata Aidoo's *Anowa*, and many others where female characters embody a high level of autonomy and possess subjective agency in the way Oyeronke Oyewumi has theorized. For example, the character Ekwefi in *Things Fall Apart* seems to deconstruct the arguments that the unmooring of gender roles from the biological facticity is novel. Importantly, the politico-structural frame, cultural paradigm, and social dimensions of female autonomy in the precolonial world that Achebe depicts are more complex and extensively relational than the nuclear family structure. Understandably, the Umuofia society that he depicts is prior to the enforced colonial modernization, which implies the structures of power, domination and institutional frameworks that privilege the nuclear family structure and industrialized gendered division of labor has not been enacted. Furthermore, as in the other examples, gendered roles and norms were socially conditioned, and they were generally collectively agreed upon. In addition, marriage was destiny and even when characters like Ekwefi, Efuru, or Nnu-Ego left their husbands, they re-married or finally became votaries of goddesses due to the violence they experienced with their husbands.

In *A Bit of Difference*, the lifestyles and life goals are different from the above-mentioned scenarios. What remains are majority female characters who are engaged in rule-finding and pathfinding missions in which marriage is a tentative stage that can be dissolved and redefined along with personal justifications. Aunt Yinka, one of Deola's mother's friends, embodies the changing meanings of the self, marriage, commitment and life goals. When the nuclear marriage institution espoused by Beck and Beck-Gernsheim's theory is read alongside Peter Ekeh's articulation of social formations in the postcolony, it can be understood that Aunt Yinka, due to colonial modernity's influence, was socialized within modernity's frame of reference. According to Ekeh, "the nuclear family is one of the social structures transplanted from the imperial West to Asia and Africa through colonization (Ekeh 1983, 9). Aunt Yinka demonstrates the self-autonomy of the female outside of the normative nuclear family structure by leaving her husband because he lacks ambition in order to live a life of her own. In this sense, her identity, being and essence do not derive from her attachment to maleness or marriage, but the ambition-seeking tenets of late modernity allow her to carve her identity and define her success outside of earlier dominant norms of male-female relations and marital identity. Therefore, Aunt Yinka distinguishes herself from her predecessors like Ekwefi and Efuru because she subverts the transcendence of the nuclear family code through feminine individualization, which means that she is released from the traditional peculiarities of industrial modernity in order to situate her life goals within her personal demands. Consequently, self-love, autonomy, and the will to progress allow her to carve a better life outside the injunction of female submission to marriage or male authority in family matters. In other words, feminine individualization, because it provides ways for the female expressive self that is outside of conventional dogmas and modes of living, provides a social context for Aunt Yinka to exercise her freedom from marriage in a way that her choice does not allow the traditional baggage of shame imposed on such decisions.

However, while the novel does not dwell much on the consequences of Aunt Yinka's decision for her husband, the reader, aware of the risks of intimate affairs, may surmise the psychosocial and affectionate crisis her decision portends for her husband. This assumption is in no way out of order if one considers the anxieties of failed marriages and the erosion of a sense of self that marital rejections engender. In their work on intimate affairs, Beck and Beck-Gernsheim argue that arguments and quarrels in marriages are "deeply hurtful [because] they form part of the security system to which the couple, for want of any other firm emotional base, has entrusted itself" (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim 1995, 3). Personal freedom like that of Aunt Yinka is thus

proportional to the tensions, anxieties, sadness, and loneliness of her husband. Relatedly, the definition and perception of ontological and interpersonal risk as it affects the man is hence a consequence of the patriarchal structures of power and domination that traditional gender construction enforces. Such that this attention paid to the emotional turmoil of Aunt Yinka's husband after she deserts him only arises from the cultural definitions of marriage that favor masculine domination and freedom over female rights. Hence polygyny is a recognizable normative schema together with polyandry. In fact, the novel demonstrates this double standard by establishing in permissible light the philandering of male characters, as Deola's male friends have chains of lovers, likewise her father's friends. The actions of these characters do not draw societal ire or attention to the emotional state of the female partners. Thus, the concern for Aunt Yinka's husband's loneliness and similar subjective risks are predicated on the premise of modernity's patriarchal matrix of powers and, also, on a 'stable' family structure that validates male authority.

4.4 GENDER REVOLUTION AND PARENTING

If personal happiness and individual freedom are eroding conventional marriage structures, as argued with the example of Aunt Yinka, childcare outside the known structure of the nuclear family is also depicted as a feature that re-defines family. The case of Deola and Wale Adeniran who await a baby, albeit unmarried, typify the condition of family in late modernity. For them, the expected family frame will most likely exist in a frame outside the conventional model of father-mother-child. Instead, because they have decided to stay unmarried, which also opens up the possibility of other partners down the line, the outlook of their family structure appears to be one that will be complex; firstly, in the spatial dimension of what will constitute home for the child, and secondly in the interpersonal network of families and relatives that the child will have.

The decision for Deola to keep the baby and the individual decisions of Deola and Wale Adeniran not to marry is a site of risk, anxieties and worries, which are closely linked to the view that her pregnancy is unwanted and career-threatening. "The word "unwanted" jolts her. Does she want to have this child? She plods down the steps to her sitting room, trying to interpret what it means to want a child: what does this mean for the child?" (160). These anxieties are further compounded by Deola's fears that she cannot adequately raise a child;

more so, the “life inside her” assumes a form of weightiness that is “too heavy to carry” (160). As such, her antenatal state and the aftermath of her pregnancy are presented as a burden that may have a telling effect on her personal liberty and even career. Deola’s fear thus results from the conditions of, and complexities of late modernity parenting whereby there are numerous demands on parents to give their children “the best possible start” (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim 128). As such, her unborn child henceforth becomes the focus of her efforts. This sense of complexity and anxieties about the future also is a focal point in the disruption of Wale Adeniran’s biography. In the scene when Deola and Wale Adeniran discuss marriage, infidelity and monogamy, this idea of complex life as a result of Deola’s pregnancy and his potential fathering is depicted through the free indirect discourse, “His life is no longer simple, thanks to her” (200). However, in this sense, it is Deola whom he appears to blame for getting pregnant and in the process, complicating his life.

In Deola and Wale Adeniran’s partnership, *A Bit of Difference* further demonstrates the waning ties between fatherhood and bread-winning. The family provider role, once ascribed as natural and male, is upturned through character actions that question fatherhood's essence. Wale Adeniran thus embodies Christopher Ouma’s position on fatherhood in chaos, whereby there is “a crisis of recognition of the legitimacy of the father as the symbolic progenitor and as the embodiment of a discourse of knowledge, power and identity” (Ouma 2011, 78). Unmoored from the conventional social dictation, Wale Adeniran’s place as a father and the constituted meanings and responsibilities the category father entails in normative terms are deconstructed for negotiation with Deola during her pregnancy and after childbirth. As such, androgynous parenting emerges as a norm in the novel, as Deola demands and regulates Wale Adeniran’s responsibilities to their unborn child. When Wale Adeniran assumes that Deola will be interested in marriage and suggests it to her, Deola puts their relationship into proper context, and she defines his place along with biological terms, “no one will force me to do anything. At my age, you're just a donor” (Atta, 183). By referring to just the act of insemination or donation of sperm cells, Deola sees their relationship in biological terms, firstly. Here, the social category of fatherhood is given little importance until it is evaluated and negotiated. Deola’s choice of words thus echoes the de-traditionalized and impersonal possibilities in the bio-technology of sperm banks, where the technical procedures can exclude the conditionality of fatherhood.

Consequently, in the stories of Deola and Wale Adeniran, fatherhood, which was a given that aligns with masculine biographies and ‘husbandhood’, is deconstructed, and the biological is

unhinged from the social and cultural derivatives. As a result, being a father is extricated from the nuclear family structure and is repositioned in a gender-neutral structure.

4.5 TRANSNATIONAL ENCOUNTERS, INTERNATIONAL DESERTION

As a migration novel, *A Bit of Difference* depicts the contraction of time and communicative distance made possible through the textual contraction of space. The technology-enhanced time and space compression foreground the facility of intimate transnational relationships and also affect the set-up of marriages. However, in spite of the ease of travel and communication, these relationships are also prone to misunderstandings and misgivings, which lead to interpersonal risks. Furthermore, the novel records how the facility of travel contributes to economic precarity and marital instability for characters like Omoroge and his family. Omoroge, whose story is given little attention in the novel, is crucial to understanding how globalization and the ease of doing business, transferring money, and travel may complicate family life. In fact, Omoroge's story seems tangential to the fabula of the novel as he is only presented in relation to another character, Ivie, who is related to the central character, Deola. Ivie, Deola's cousin, is Omoroge's lover; however, Omoroge is married with triplets, although his marriage is motivated by compulsion and emotional manipulation. When it is discovered that Omoroge is at the heart of a bank fraud, because of the investigations, he travels to London, "abandoning his wife and triplets" (84). In Omoroge's case, individual decision-making aided by global flows of transportation can thus be argued to undermine the supremacy of the family. Accordingly, Omoroge's action will inadvertently result in adverse consequences for his deserted family.

On the other hand, international travel enhance the concessionary practices of marriages while it also expands the pool of possibilities for intimate encounters. With so much freedom for individuals in marriage and relationships, especially the affluent characters in *A Bit of Difference* to move across cities and countries, the implication of movements and transnational interactions on the social fabric is evident in the transcultural marriages that the novel records. The novel portrays these forms of marriages as disruptive to traditional attitudes to marriage and conventional expectations. These disruptions inevitably result in several confrontations between inter-racial partners like Deola's brother, Lanre and his wife, Eno. While Lanre's parents are Nigerians, Eno's parents are Nigerian and British. The novel appears to point to

Eno's cultural formation as one heavily influenced by her Mum's Britishness. Since transcultural marriages typically involve the coming together of two individuals with contrasting epistemological bases, deciding which forms of knowledge to subscribe to engenders interpersonal risks. Eno and Lanre typify the lack of coherence of the tasks and attitudes of such relationships. The use of retroversion in the novel evinces the changing pattern of the love life of both partners. While their love was initially colored with the pleasures of the exoticism of the other, as the couple grows older, these cultural idiosyncrasies emerge as sites of struggles. Quotidian marriage details, such as what to eat or how to cook, exacerbate the friction between the duo. Commenting on the culinary skill of Eno, Lanre's racially mixed wife, the latter says, "[s]he can't cook, man [...] And she never uses enough pepper" (64). The cultural dynamics of taste coupled with Lanre's patriarchal inclinations drive the husband's misapprehensions about his wife. What is also crucial is that this change in taste is representative of late modernity's love system whereby individuals, in making a life of their own, develop new choices, identities and tastes that may markedly be different from what they possessed earlier. In other words, individuals like Lanre change, which means that some objects that create excitement at a younger age lose their appeal with age. So, while Lanre cruelly criticizes his wife's cooking, the narrative provides a broader context to examine the changing priorities and desires of the characters. Through Deola's recounting of Lanre's past, for example, the reader learns that, in his youthful years, Lanre favored fish and chips, and that was all he ever once wanted (64). At the ptime of this action, when he is older, this preference changes, and he instead prefers spicy food with "enough pepper" (64). Such changing patterns in lifestyles and choices are consequences of a normal biography since growth implies change and the acquisition of a broader taste, and life biographies imply that the character can "play by different rules at different times in different situations" (Wardi 2005, 201). The result of this change is interpersonal tension between Lanre and Eno to the point that Deola describes him as being "wicked to the woman" (Atta 2013, 64).

Correspondingly, Lanre's issues with Eno also result from the change in body aesthetics, a situation he closely links to the sense of personal responsibility for one's outlook. His response to Deola when she asks why he is wicked to the woman is thus that "she's not taking care of herself" (64). Lanre's declaration follows an earlier assertion that Eno is growing fatter and fatter (64); his frustration and desires thus emblemize the problems of intimate love affairs in late modernity whereby after the couple has "built up a solid basis and now starts to develop separate interests which they have to defend against one another" (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim

1995, 66). Lanre's concern about Eno's changing body, which now contrasts the "skinny girl in drainpipe jeans" he met and married (67), provides a context to understanding the psychological havoc that the conditions of perpetually searching for one's happiness and desires engender. Since it is outside his power to enforce beauty standards on Eno, he soothes himself by engaging in marital infidelity. Seen in the light of biographical changes, trivial matters like issues of weight and taste and the banalities of the quotidian further make intimate relationships difficult for the couple.

4.6: NEW GENDER PERFORMANCE AND THE PATRIARCHAL ORDER

This chapter has dealt much with the figuration of gender revolution and intimate affairs in Atta's novel *A Bit of Difference*. But the talks of gender revolution have mostly been limited to disruptions of gender norms and duties in the individual lives of the characters. But one can only speak of gender revolution to the extent that the requirements for gender performances have been undermined by social, political, cultural and economic events that have deconstructed the fallacy of male dominance. In spite of these disruptions and female agency, one cannot fully discuss the ongoing events as completed in the sense that gendered asymmetrical power relations still subsist in the social and intimate relations of individuals. As a narrative of social change, written in late modernity, Sefi Atta's novel puts these limitations and powers into perspective by representing male dissent and reactions to the changing social mores.

In order to represent how male structures maintain the asymmetries of power in gender relations, the novel depicts how male characters like Lanre and Funsho seek to discursively control the lives of the women and circumscribe them within an oppressive marital structure that restricts their freedom to speak and to choose. For the male characters like Lanre and Funsho, Jaiye's husband, they insinuate that acting outside of gender expectations is outside of feminine subjectivity. Funsho's reservation towards Deola is, for example, constituted of a binarized gendered performance on the one hand that retains speaking to masculine subjectivities, while on the other hand, the woman has to conform to societal assumptions of subservience and docility. In his dialogue with Jaiye, his wife and Deola's sister, he draws a line between Deola's singleness and her questioning stance, "You see? [...] That is why your sister is not married. Her mouth is too big for her good" (Atta, 69). This way of denying female

vocal agency and power is related to patriarchal domination and control of discourse evident in industrial modernity where economic power and the right to public discourse is still a male privilege as much as the formation of habitus and symbols of speaking power like the media is under male control. This also closely aligns with the arguments made by Oyeronke Oyewumi that the Western problem of sexism derives from the nuclear family structure (Oyewumi 1093, 2000). Such assumptions are also imprinted into the social imaginary, and cultural productions as attested by Deola, who notices “[t]he scripts (of Nollywood movies) are written by men” (Atta 70). By seeking her autonomy and living by it through the act of speaking and contestation of social frameworks, Deola is a detraditionalized, non-religious, individualized person who breaks out from the structure of early modernity to seek personal freedom and satisfaction outside of marriage. Deola, on several occasions, subverts the patriarchal will to power and monopoly of discourse and power by embracing and recognizing her subjectivity.

Still, *A Bit of Difference* articulates the social acts that enforce gender policing and the dispositions that encourage slut-shaming to control sexuality and align female behavior to established acts of decorum that were prominent in early modernity. Slut-shaming, therefore, emerges as a motif in the novel. It fictionalizes the interpersonal and social death¹² that evolves from discursively creating sexual boundaries for the female. Slut-shaming is carried out in an economy of Victorian moral codes that creates a binary between good and bad ‘morality.’ According to Deola, the general perception amongst Nigerians in London of “[w]ell-brought-up Nigerian girls” was that they were “housewives-in-training. They dressed and behaved more mature than they were, cooked for their boyfriends and didn't party much. Useless girls slept around” (Atta 27). This description of the social norms of these Nigerian immigrants in London, further attests to the continued structures of patriarchal power that construct the social principles by which characters can live. Consequently, some female characters in their aim to retain the façade of ‘feminine virtue’, perform the ideal African woman stereotype. Such stereotypes are, for example, conveyed through the metaphor of ‘marriage material’ which represents the extent to which a lady exhibits the perceived qualities of a ‘good woman’ (29). This is concomitant with the ideal of mooring women’s biographies to marriage, which implies a means of societal control that conscripts women into the gendered societal structure. The assumptions of how a woman should behave in order to be attractive for marriage is further evinced by one of Deola’s

¹² Social death here indicates the ostracization of subjects and desertion from community; this also includes other activities that may cause harm to the social position of persons as subjects and individuals. In comparison to Orlando Patterson’s use of the term in the context of his study on slavery (1982), it signifies the impossibility of a full life within one’s social group.

ex-boyfriends, who searches “for a woman who was marriage material” (29). Marriage material stands for ‘sexual’ purity, domestic and wifely duties inherited from African and Victorian family hierarchies and gender and sexual norms. To act against these, as Deola does by not living her life with a prescribed biography, is to establish a sense of self-assertion and to positively transcend the limiting dictates of such norms.

4.7 HEALTH RISK AND GENDER REVOLUTION

The technique of representation in *A Bit of Difference*, which favors a female narrative voice and largely focalizes on the female subject Deola, allows the subjective and psychological evaluation of female individualization in late modernity. The novel further draws on feminine experience and feelings about the techniques of living in late modernity. If gender revolution implies a certain level of sexual freedom, then the thoughts and patterns of choice for female characters in relation to sex demonstrates the extent to which they are individualized. One way in which this becomes obvious is in their understanding and use of technological and biomedical tools to undermine the biological consequences of sexual actions. However, in reading Deola’s and Tessa’s outlook on sexual freedom, pregnancy and contraceptives, the novel traces the adverse consequence of what may be called the paradox of blame in the sense that while the availability of contraceptives and other birth control methods are ubiquitous, the expectation is that a woman uses these positions at the risk of blame in a situation of pregnancy. “The pill and other contraceptive improvements have also faced women with *a new dilemma*, with a classic ‘double bind’ of irreconcilable demands. At the start of a new relationship, the man often expects or tacitly assumes that the woman is taking the pill or using some other device” (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim 2002, 70). This new dilemma implies that women often bear the consequences of the accidents from contraceptive embarrassment or non-usage of such devices. Blame and psychological trauma thus follow failure to comply or an appearance of non-compliance, as in the case of Deola when she tells Tessa that she is pregnant and Tessa questions, “What! How did that happen?” (165). By couching her surprise within the interrogative form, Tessa demonstrates the women are expected to ‘protect’ themselves from such awkwardness like unwanted pregnancies. Further, her position means that a male partner like Wale Adeniran is indemnified from the blame. But as soon as Tessa assures herself that Deola is careful, she resorts to explaining the pregnancy in the language of an unexpected and undeterminable event, “Tessa pats her arm. “We can't control these things [...] You're so

careful. Too careful. How could this ever have happened to you?” (166). In contrast, while Deola suffers the psychological anxieties of the pregnancy and blame, Wale Adeniran is in no way questioned. This polarity between the treatment of consequences of sexual freedom along gender lines resonates with the contradictions inherent in the principle of responsibility. The psychological condition of Deola after the pregnancy further impedes and strains her plans to live a life of her own.

In fact, when Deola discovers she is pregnant, she is greatly concerned that the situation will hamper her decisions after pregnancy, thus threatening her sense of self, and she is momentarily ‘paralyzed’ to take steps out of her bathroom (160). Paralysis in this scene may also symbolize the ontological risk of not being able to mold her biography in the shape she wants, and this is further highlighted by representing the existential shocks of having a child; so the “word ‘unwanted’ jolts her. Does she want to have this child?” (Atta 160). Due to this, childbirth and living for another being becomes a source of risk for Deola. She anticipates a future that is out of her control: “for the first time in years, I don't know what is going to happen to me next” (166). She anticipates parenthood as a site of anxiety: “Can I do it on my own? How will I cope?” (203). Furthermore, “She doesn't know where she stands with him [Wale Adeniran], other than being the accidental mother of the child” (203). Childbearing, a necessary ‘natural’ stage of feminine biography in early modernity, takes a new turn as a site of choice, a decision in the service of subjects in an institutionally individualized world. Deola projects her uncertainties, anxieties, and fears on Wale Adeniran, whom she thinks can no longer live a simple life due to her pregnancy (200). New forms of ‘family’ after ‘the family’ that Beck and Beck-Gernsheim earmark emerges in this context. Wale Adeniran already has a daughter, Moyo, from his first marriage. Although Deola and Wale Adeniran do not show signs of marrying each other, they have to forge new means to move ahead with a blended family. Thus, their earlier plans are reevaluated or suspended as their lives become entwined because of the pregnancy. Forging new routines implies that the event – the pregnancy – necessitates a break in life goals and individual decisions. These break and life-changing dimensions are quite evident in the reality that Deola relocates to Nigeria while she insists that Wale Adeniran has to bend to her terms of raising the unborn child.

If contraceptive embarrassment and unwanted pregnancy are depicted as consequences of biomedical advancement and hence a source of anxiety and interpersonal risk, the novel further extends the unintended consequences of sexual freedom to involve the body and health risk. It has been recognized that the aftermath of the contraceptive ‘accident’ with Wale Adeniran, on

the one hand, results in anxieties of childbirth and interpersonal relationship because it occurs outside the socially ordained parameters of marriage and threatens Deola's life goals; on the other hand, the realization of the possibility of contracting an STD (Sexually Transmitted Disease) structures Deola's decision after the event. The fear of contracting HIV for her becomes an internalized and personalized health risk. This fear of HIV shows that for her, the body is itself a project "which requires vigilance towards the management and maintenance of one's body" (Lupton 1995, 105, Shilling 1993). This is reflected in the language of bodily invasion that Deola uses to discuss the possibility of contracting HIV from Wale Adeniran. The risk of HIV, then as an aftermath of sexual intercourse, is precipitated on the sexual freedom of late modernity that permits sexual encounters outside the celibacy of singlehood and early modernity's marriage circle. The anxiety that emanates from this is thus situated between the dialectics of sexual expression and bodily integrity for Deola. It explains why Deola's fears are narrated through the language of infestation, as obvious in her prayer and the use of free indirect discourse when she goes for her HIV test, "[h]elp me, Lord, [...] What if he infected her? What if she infected him? What would happen to his daughter? The ramifications are extensive and possible" (133). Furthermore, Deola's apprehension is anchored on the rhetoric of unseen consequences that are linked with invisibility. Since the virus is invisible, her perception of risk is likewise shaped by this indiscernibility, and it is within this context that Deola interprets the danger of bodily invasion. To her, the virus is invisible, "one that takes over cells and mutates, one that she can carry, transmit and pass on to a child without realizing. For her, this is the greatest terror of all" (137). The thematic display of uncertainty and invisibility reveals itself in the novel's formal composition, and its climax resists easy closure.

Furthermore, in expressing her fears, the narrative voice expresses the future consequences in light of anticipation of biographical catastrophe that will be conditioned by the biomedical innovation of artificial insemination. As such, the health risk of HIV goes beyond the threat to bodily and organ violation but also to the social and motherly biography of Deola. Hence, her fear of contracting HIV is also interlinked to the possibility of infecting her child since she hopes to become a mother through artificial insemination (133).

The health risk occupies an important role in the narrative progress as the narrator sustains the fear, anxieties and anticipations of Deola through extended narrative space. As the story's pace slows down, the reader experiences her fears stretch into several pages. These pages reveal her prayers, thoughts, and psychological state. She raises questions related to coughing and fatigue (135), symptoms that add to the writing's suspense. The use of narrative duration enables

readers to access the feverish anticipation of catastrophe. It is this narrative extension of time that makes the risk further palpable and tangible and demonstrates a psychological state that induces fear.

If Deola's anticipation and uncertainties emanate from deliberate sexual actions outside the nuclear family, Jaiye's fear derives from her position in a patriarchal-sanctioned family structure. Unlike Deola, Jaiye is married, which implies that she and her husband Funsho are bound to the nuclear family code of fidelity, from which Funsho strays. His infidelity does not only affect the ethical and moral constitution of their nuclear family, but it invites the risk of Jaiye contracting a sexually transmitted disease (STD) and having emotional distress. In dialogues with Deola, Jaiye reveals her fears of STDs, which demonstrates the anxieties, fears, and uncertainties of sexual infidelity. She is aware that her husband's affairs carry the risk of sexually transmitted diseases like HIV (62). Consequently, trust, a vital component of romantic love, erodes in the relationship between Jaiye and Funsho, which finally leads to separation and animosity.

Outside of the family lives of Jaiye, Eno, and Deola's mother, the novel engages the romantic lives of the female characters and links these to their individualized biographies. Thus, characters like Deola, Tessa and Anne consider marriage as a life project that can be deferred and annulled. A crucial representation is a symbolic approach through which these three single female characters unmoor their subjectivities from motherhood as a given. In Deola's case, she opts for motherhood outside of the conventionally prescribed nuclear family structure where she hopes to negotiate and partner with Wale Adeniran outside of the binary norms of fatherhood performance like bread-winning and motherhood performance like caregiving. In this way, she delinks her subjectivity from the traditional notion that connects a woman's nature to loving and caring for children while the man works outside. On the other hand, Tessa, Deola's high school friend, and Anne, her colleague at work, upturn the demand to stage feminine biographies in strict linear modes. For these two characters, the requirements to marry and to bear children that were once pertinent at a certain stage of a woman's life are subverted through their choices to evaluate marriage on their own grounds and in the biomedical solutions of insemination. However, these decisions are 'realistically' depicted with the uncertainties and anxieties of the financial implications. While Anne, a white middle-class woman who lives in Atlanta, United States, may readily be able to obtain the process, Deola confesses that such procedures are particularly expensive in Lagos (10). In this way, the novel links gender revolution to the class aspects of late modernity and demonstrates the limitation and risks of

ontological conditions of its characters. The anxieties are further compounded in the recognition that the female characters are supposed to plan their biographies such that events like pregnancy should be scheduled alongside career decisions. The risk that comes with this is produced in the location of the subject and the class position, as in the case of Anne and Deola. Through the lives of these important characters, the novel participates in narratively mapping and examining the risks of late modernity vis-a-vis the antinomies of social structures that derive their makeup from early modernity's ways of being. It is because of the contradictions that the co-existence of these two modernities generate for gender roles and intimate love affairs that the characters, Deola, Jaiye, Tessa, Eno and Anne, experience ontological uncertainties and risks.

4.8 LOVE IS THE NEW FAITH

The fabula of *A Bit of Difference* is woven around the life of Deola; as the central character of the novel, her interpersonal relationships structure the lifeworld of the novel as they gain narrative importance by progressing the events and leading to the climax of the novel. Similarly, by presenting the multiple lives and anxieties of these characters who are interwoven with Deola's, the novel fictionalizes the uncertainties of intimate love affairs in late modernity. Relatedly, through the dialogues and encounters between Deola and other characters, the reader has a sense of the changing attitudes in gender norms and the flexibility of love through its individualized characters. Through the aforementioned means, the precarious condition of intimate interpersonal relationships is brought to bear. Love is thus shown as democratic, and the altered social understanding constructs it as an essence on its own. Three categories of characters as regards intimate love affairs can be read. Firstly, there are the older characters, such as Deola's parents, who participate in conventional love structures. Secondly, there are married couples like Jaiye and Funsho, Eno and Lanre, who began their love affairs in the late modern period. And thirdly, single characters like Deola, Tessa and Anne, who, considering the tensions of intimate interpersonal affairs in late modernity, are skeptical about marriage. For the latter two groups, it may be argued that love is desirable but not attainable due to the social structures that require individual definitions of love, relationship demands and life goals. For these characters like Deola and Jaiye in late modernity and whose lives are shaped by the individualized sense of self, there is risk in unnegotiated love, and this risk prompts psychosocial problems. As a way to evade such anxieties, the only available way is to leave. Because

of this, Deola interlinks her desire for happiness with satisfaction from romantic relationships, so “[s]he considered herself the sensible sister, but Jaiye was the pragmatic one in the end. Jaiye was able to settle. She, Deola, has been capricious in her relationships as well as her career. The moment she is not happy, she leaves” (61). In recognizing and acting on her sense of self and subjective agency, she takes control of her life and seeks her happiness outside of prescribed gender norms. Because of this, Deola leaves multiple relationships that do not agree with her worldview and she seeks her own terms with her relationship with Wale Adeniran.

Taking control of her life and biography is best exemplified in the symbolic act of taking control of her body through the synecdoche of the hand. At the scene when they both negotiate the pregnancy, Wale tries to take Deola’s hand, she objects to him taking her hand because her hand belongs to her (215). This symbolism of taking a hand possesses both a figural and literal meaning when one considers that the idiom “to take one’s hand [in marriage]” implies a biographical stage in the life of a woman. In this way, the traditional expectation of marrying and owning the woman with whom one shares a child is dismantled through taking control of the symbolic part of her body, the hand. Consequently, Deola’s decisions and body are therefore symbolically and corporally retained as hers. For Deola, liberty and agency to choose within a patriarchal and late modernity nuclear system leads to independent forms of living; her sense of self does not derive from the nuclear family structure hence she aims to seek a new form of living independent of traditional compulsions of a nuclear family. Through this, alternative forms of risk are in sight; ways to raise the kid, where to live, and extended family arrangement may be sites of uncertainty. Choice, the agency to decide, individualization, and the acknowledgement of gender revolution are implicated in intimate affairs. All these are sites of risk, as Bandele counsels Deola that she needs to stand her ground, especially if Wale Adeniran is anything like many other men. He thus understands that risks are intrinsic to intimate relationships; decisions in intimate and casual affairs may be potentials for catastrophe, he advises, “but there is nothing to fear” (212). All these are entangled in a maze of late modernity elements like technology, individualization, gender revolution that enhance wider liberties and movements.

What emerges is a textual representation of the everyday encumbrance of the interpersonal encounters within the domestic sphere. As an illustration, after Wale spends the night in Deola’s London apartment, the new forms of interpersonal conflict that Beck and Beck Gernsheim discuss is evident. Beck, in “The Cosmopolitan Society and its Enemies” (2002b, 25), considers the French sociologist Jean-Claude Kaufmann’s argument in *Schmutzige Wäsche* (Dirty

Laundry) as a viable way to understand the dynamics of intimate relationships. The questions “Who washes for whom? What counts as dirty? What as clean? What happens in each case, if he says yes and she says no?” (25) are pertinent in understanding the conflicts, negotiations, failures of such intimate interactions. For Wale Adeniran and Deola, such questions begin in the symbolic private space of the toilet in Deola's London flat. How should the lid to the toilet seat be left is a potential site for interpersonal conflicts, “She [...] is used to being alone. She goes to her bathroom and sees he has left the toilet seat up. She will let him off, just this once (217). The risk may be intensified as Deola decides to re-migrate to Nigeria, where she will see Wale Adeniran more; interpersonal conflicts that could have been shielded through the distance may then be obvious. Deola and Wale Adeniran typify the struggles for intimate affairs in late modernity; while the two have a level of affection for each other, the two cannot come to terms with the contradictions of gender revolution, individualization, and intimate love affairs. For them, the personal desires of a single-father man and the middle-aged Deola necessitate their meeting. However, individualized challenges like in the case of Wale Adeniran, a daughter of a late wife; and in the case of Deola, the constraints of step-motherhood with career seem impossible. For these two, while they recognize that intimate love is important, they also find it impossible, at least in the context of having a nuclear family.

The novel maps ways of survival and minimizing future catastrophes, pains of heartbreak, loneliness, painful divorce, and coping against unknown futures. It portrays the individual characters' agency in negotiating the complex nodes in late modernity's intimate affairs. Characters carve their individual choices and forms of loving. This includes an assemblage of varying dispositions and arguments. Marriage and these intimate relationships are, in fact, in all cases based on individual inclination and are often transactional. Consequently, Aunty Bisi, Deola's aunty, maps ways to satisfy emotional and financial security while not being officially married. “Aunty Bisi is in her fifties now and for years has been involved with one of her clients, who is known as an industrialist and philanthropist. She is not actually married to him. He is a Muslim and has other wives. She has a son by him, and he supports her financially” (54). The liberty to choose how to lead one's life sets late modernity marriages and intimate relationships apart from early modernity when such living modes were mostly deviant. The extended social permission and normalized way of living represent the institutionalized individualism of late modernity that is the temporal setting of the novel. “She [Aunty Bisi] was a child of the sixties, and they got divorced whenever they pleased” (179). Aunty Bisi came of age during the period

Beck signals as of late modernity, which coincides with anti-colonial and Pan-African awareness, setting up the colonial against the African outlook.

During this period, individuals commonly oscillate between the two worldviews, dismissing the other when it benefits them. Aunty Bisi does not wear short dresses to support her “African” propriety. As a child of the American sixties, she partakes in the individualization of relationships, believing she can divorce when she chooses. In particular, Aunty Bisi did not get married because she did not want “a husband always around and irritating her” (179). However, she has a son for Hakem’s father, whom she calls sir and Daddy (179). Aunty Bisi’s marital form or intimate relationship dynamics show she acquiesces to being a mistress, recognized by the traditional African system in which she grew up. Anachrony, a discrepancy between the order of events in a story and their presentation in the plot, includes retroversion to show that a change of attitude and taste attests to the paradigm shift in conceptualization and social conditioning in marriages and relationships.

Sefi Atta’s strength is her ability to carve out differing biographies that represent the social situation of the contemporary era. Her characterization displays a complex view of agency and self-reflection of female characters. Gender revolution, decisions, and uncertainties are not straight lines but are involved nodes of articulation that disable easy disentanglement. Aunty Yinka, a friend to Deola’s mother, for example, seems to operate within established gender norms by getting married and performing her expected gender role. However, she subverts the hegemonic discourse to create better-living forms that are not conditioned by social or early modernity’s strict regulations that subdue the individual under socio-cultural and political expediency. Against the transcendence of the Judeo-Christian construction of love, especially in the context of *Agape* unconditional love, which upholds patriarchal and nationalistic structures of power, Aunty Yinka seeks self-love that counteracts such unconditional conceptualization of love. “Aunty Yinka left her husband because he lacked ambition” (Atta 121). Self-love and the female progress in the scheme of things allow her to carve a better life of her own, outside the injunction of female submission to male authority in family matters. The right to choose happiness over traditional dictates on marriage, love and gender performance spreads throughout the novel. Similarly, Deola’s mother seems, on the surface, to support Judeo-Christian and early-modernism ways of living in many respects, yet she undermines this in other ways. Her choice to re-migrate to Nigeria may be traced to the good-wife typology of conservative nuclear family discourse, but a deeper interrogation of her characterization reveals that her choice to re-migrate despite a nursing career in London is

precipitated on Deola's father's seeming liberalism to embrace her form of subversion of traditional gender roles. It is, in fact, because Deola's father's approach to the nuclear family espouses a division of labour based on some form of equality that Deola's mother accepts to stay on with Deola's father. The multiple forms of being adopted by Atta in the novel, therefore, show that immigration, gender performance, and the nuclear family are not tied to a dominant traditional form. Instead, the various characters adopt an agency in navigating and negotiating decisions and intimate relationships. The transcendence that romantic love took in early modernity and the privileging of male decision over such choices like immigration and family life take on a form of synecdoche in the novel, they indicate a strand in the changing ontology of late modernity; in this stage of modernity, love, marriage and relationships are negotiated. Immigration and the liberty to live away from one's nuclear family and traditional gender functions is depicted as a key to gender revolution and freedom. In the case of Tessa and Pete, the couple engages in acts of negotiation on the choice and decision to immigrate. The intimate relationship between Tessa and Pete undergoes interpersonal conflicts, particularly because Pete's father, whom the narrator describes as raising Pete like a wild animal with no respect for women, gets involved in the initial decisions to immigrate to England (161). The interpersonal conflict is resolved when the couple agrees on a solution outside traditional expectations that require the female to emigrate.

What this chapter has tried to achieve is to situate the novel *A Bit of Difference* in a socially transforming interpersonal environment that is hastened by individualization, gender revolution, and immigration. Late modernity forms of intimate relations, love and marriage, are thematically considered as sites of risk that may result in interpersonal conflicts, health risk and economic risk. Characters are aware of the normal chaos of love, typified by the meta-thematic *mise-en-abyme* expounded by Deola, "love can be dangerous. Love can be deadly in this day and age, and there are casualties" (142). Characters like Deola and Wale, Jaiye and Funsho, Lanre and Eno are entangled in the normal chaos of love. Late modernity is here viewed in its reflexive state that is the successes of modernity have unintended consequences, in this case in intimate affairs and transnational relationships and the nuclear family form. Sexual freedom and the globalizing factor also accentuate the health risk of Sexual Transmitted Diseases, deriving from multi-sexual partnerships, especially as individuals move from one place to the other.

A complex way of understanding the dynamics of late modernity's intimate affairs is represented in the novel. Younger female characters are depicted as retaining and at the same

time operating outside of the older women's feminine passivity to patriarchal oppression. Funsho's mother, for example, is not impressed with Jaiye if she will not cook at family functions; importantly, Funsho's mother considers her son's infidelity a "petty matter that Jaiye ought to be mature enough to ignore" (107). This can be explained away as Funsho's mother's generation saw polygamy as rampant and such acts as philandering considered as not important as long as the home front is secured. However, such acts took on a new meaning as women began to rightfully ask for equal rights. Further, such behavior exposes partners to risk of sexually transmitted diseases. Jaiye is aware of this as she tells Deola that Funsho may do as he deems fit as long as he does not infect her with the diseases. Being aware of Funsho's infidelity in South Africa, she says, "He has a girlfriend in South Africa [...] Chase whomever you want to, swing from chandeliers if you want. Just don't give me diseases" (114).

The normal chaos of love and its attendant risk perception is thus outside the dialectics of negative or positive within modernity. Characters opt for biographies and intimate relationships and choices that they deem adequate. The nuclear family structure and single parenthood do not provide absolute certainty as their uncertain futures are potentially catastrophic. Families are therefore complex institutions that can breed interpersonal risk. Deola recognizes this and tells Wale Adeniran, "Nigerian families are too complex" (185). Towards the end of the novel, Deola realizes that "she had to develop her own method of defence fast, especially as her team seemed less unified and prepared" (201). This will form the architecture of intimate relationships in late modernity. Risks and uncertainty as depicted in the novel mirror how agency, gender revolution and immigration undermine traditional patriarchal nuclear family structures, contributing to interpersonal risk and other times forming freedom for the characters.

To conclude this chapter, *A Bit of Difference* aptly fictionalizes the social world of late modernity. In the novel, the female characters establish new ways of loving and question existing social constructions of gender. Importantly, it is the story of the novel that first appears to disrupt the ossification of gender norms and attitudes. Since it is narrated by an external narrator who favors an individualized female perspective, the reader encounters a narrative that colors, taints and shapes our perception of interpersonal romantic relationships and gender; in the novel, the female narrator's thoughts are not only limited to the arena of the domestic; instead they take up global concerns and the collective anticipation of catastrophes in different relationship domains. In this way, the narrator can link the peculiarities of the world risk society situation to gender revolution and the evolution of late modernity love affairs by pointing at the global force of fast mobility, which links characters to other parts of the world where they can

shed parts of their ontologies and take up new forms of living. In other ways, the mass character of this changing view on marriage, companionship, family and gender roles are brought to light through the fictionalization of a diverse character range that is sociological complex and touches four continents of the world.

An awareness of risk in intimacy, marriage, and love becomes obvious as the novel reaches a climax; importantly, no character is rewarded with the happily-ever-after of love stories; in the end, the climax rather opens an uncertain future. This signifies the normality of the chaos of love. The normal is a quotidian lifetime commitment to errors, decisions, victories, losses, loneliness, trust. Individual choices and negotiations will be the reserve of intimacy in late modernity. The conservative characters, the 'radical', all participate in uncertain futures imbricated with anticipations and potentiality of catastrophe, albeit on interpersonal and personal levels. Divorce opens up a new vista: love is not a destination; instead, it should be negotiated and renegotiated.

Risk thus is a social construct, a stream of discourse that conditions what fears and insecurities to have, evident in the novel's discursive economy of marriage, for example, validated by the scientific data on risks of childbirth and menopause that mandates women to marry before a given age. The biomedical advancement has undermined this, as it provides new ways for women to circumvent the biological limitations that their parents knew. The awareness of this provides a level of freedom and assurance for women, as a character like Tessa can suspend marriage goals to pursue their career and other objectives.

CHAPTER FIVE: MAKING OF THE TERRORIST: MIGRATION, GLOBALIZATION AND THE RISK OF TERRORISM IN *BORN ON A TUESDAY*

The postcolonial state is crucial in understanding the origin and proliferation of the global risk of terrorism. Despite its influence, the sovereignty of many postcolonial nation-states is undermined by colonial history, transnational legislation, and the *cosmopolitanization* of religion through a global community of faith, financial, and tactical support. Antithetically, the state retains some powers to make laws and exert security measures through the monopoly of coercive power. Local ways of belonging, law, religion, movements, and politics thus shape ‘terrorist discourse’, a discourse that seeks recognition of a global ‘ideoscape’ (Appadurai 1996) while denying and antagonizing the ongoing globalization. Similarly, countries in the Global North seek their national interest in a globalizing world through strategies reminiscent of the ‘cold’ war to gain the upper hand in global finance, military, cultural and foreign policy. In the United States, for example, the USA PATRIOT Act and the whole essence of the war on terror engages in a dialectics of the local and global on risk. While on the one hand, the war on terror is globalized through the preventive measures in airports, surveillance, international media, networks of intel and security operatives, on the other hand, national interests, border control, and legislation demonstrate the local control of risk and the definition of risk. Ulrich Beck’s understanding of the risk society through a realist-constructivist approach is crucial in understanding the construction and materialization of the global risk of terrorism. A precautionary approach to risk is based on an ‘authority of statistics’ (Bigo 2004) that rationalizes the state of exception (Agamben 2005) that the war on terror has taken. In this sense, then, the global risk of terrorism is in many ways a self-contradictory phenomenon. The antinomies are evident in the discourse of good governance and democratic liberation that utilize dictatorial weapons of enforcement. This is also evident in the security framework that racializes certain bodies and marks them for surveillance in the Global North. The racial dimension of the ‘war on terror’ contrasts sharply with that in the Global South, where race plays only a little role. Age (youthfulness) and religious affiliations easily become grounds for surveillance and policing in Nigeria, for instance. Here, a constructivist approach may consider

the risks and risk definitions that nations consider for security attention. What exists is close to what Aradau and van Munster have described: “once terrorist suspects cannot be clearly identified through technologies of profiling, we have a renewed panopticism, forms of surveillance that target everybody, as the potential terrorist could be any of us” (Aradau and van Munster 26). Religious terrorism, and fundamentalism that leads to it, as discussed in this chapter, lie outside the discourse of the global ‘war on terror; in the sense that an ‘other migrant stranger’ is not the terrorist per se. The transnational dimension only appears along the postcolonial nation-state lines that demarcate the Hausa-Fulani in Nigeria. Further, transnational ideoscapes (Appadurai 1996) – a community of individuals with similar belief systems and religious epistemologies – are constructed and energized through the process of immigration and religious exchange in this discourse. This means that the nation-state method of monopolizing the use of violence is undermined by the transnational network of terrorist funding, training, and transnational ethnic communities. Hence, the nation-state may deploy certain technologies and apparatuses of violence to dissolve and disempower local terrorist cells in any country; a transnational approach is important in countering and monitoring such process. The global risk of terrorism thus appears as a negative consequence of modernity.

First, anti-modern religious fundamentalists appropriate violent technologies brought about through the mass production of biopower. Achille Mbembe provides a Foucauldian assessment of state terror by asserting “that the sovereign right to kill (*droit de glaive*) and the mechanisms of biopower are inscribed in the way all modern states function; indeed, they can be seen as constitutive elements of state power in modernity” (Mbembe 2017, 17). The violence of fundamentalist terrorism is turning the mechanisms of modernist nation-state terror on itself and other states.

Second, fundamentalist terrorist groups undermine existing state institutions and modernity because their objective is to realize societies that adhere to their strict interpretations of scriptures. They aspire and strive to achieve this goal by controlling or declaring autonomy and sovereignty over swathes of lands belonging to nation-states and expanding beyond the borders. Boko Haram is an example.

Third, the interpretation of the Sharia laws that fundamentalist groups seek to enact radically contravenes such modernist codes like democracy, neoliberalism, and human rights. As Ayse Zarakol states, “Al-Qaeda (and the particular well of Islamic thought it draws from) extols communities organized around ordering principles based on religious authority such as the

Ottoman Empire or Medina during the time of Mohammad as models of political organization” (Zarakol 2333 - 2334). In the case of Boko Haram, Othman Dan Fodio’s 19th-century Jihad, which saw the enactment of Sharia codes, may have given impetus to the call for a state governed with Sharia laws. The process of establishing colonialist modernist administration through indirect rule is also seen as closely aligned to Western power and an affront on Islam. As Henaff has argued in “Global Terror, Global vengeance,” the economic and techno-scientific ‘advancement’ of modernity was connected to certain politico-juridical epistemologies (91). Fundamentalist terrorism eschews these epistemologies and seeks to restore Sharia’s religious, political, socio-cultural principles. Hence “[w]hat makes transformation difficult in Muslim societies is that underlying the crisis of modernity is the question of religion. Since Islam does not separate faith from culture, fully assimilating itself to globalization appears to weaken their faith and deny their culture” (Henaff et al. 2008, 92).

By considering the restrictive aspects of anti-modernity and anti-Islamic aspects of fundamentalist understanding and interpretations of Bida, that is, innovative additions, Ali Mazrui confronts the rigid scriptural interpretative approach of religious terrorism (2004, 813). Mazrui argues for a true Islam that carries the weight of the present era. His thesis is consistent with the conclusion of this chapter. Both argue that the fundamentalist and violent dimensions of terrorism emanate from an erroneous interpretation of Bida and Sharia. Mazrui argues that

on the path to empowering Islam, the varieties of Islam must be enlisted to reinterpret Islam for the modern era. Crucial in this regard will be promoting an Islam that is not obscurantist and promotes knowledge and intellectual freedom; an Islam progressive in relation to gender roles and basic human freedom; and perhaps even an Islam tolerant about difference on such matters as sexual orientation” (Mazrui 2004, 808).

Mazrui provides a broad context in which Islam can engage the changing world. His position espouses a tolerant outlook that can be incorporated into late modernities’ dialogic discourses. Combined with Beck’s cosmopolitan stance Mazrui provides a tolerant, mutually conducive ecology in a globalized world.

5.1 RELIGIOUS CONFLICTS AND (IM)MIGRATION

A causal link between terrorism and immigration is not easy to draw, and this study does not aim to establish such. Instead, it proposes a confluence of reasons for the present risk of religious terrorism. Constituted within this is (im)migration, which in certain ways facilitate the risk of terrorism and produces certain bodies as risk carriers. Terrorism is used to depict acts of

violence based on ideological, religious, and political convictions. The focus here is on religious fundamentalist terrorism. While (im)migrants have variously been linked to terrorism, they should not be considered terrorists by default, but rather another demography with a subset that could be risk factors for terrorism. In Kano, Nigeria, the religious fundamentalist Maitatsine and his followers were described as immigrants from the Northern part of Cameroon; however, their fundamentalism excelled because they found support amongst some of the locals. Also, the ideoscape of religious discourse creates affiliative ties across borders; this allows easy integration of immigrants within similar religious frameworks. There is as well the ethnic dimension that the colonized nation-state structures evoke. Ethnic groups, during colonization, were broken into neighboring states. For instance, De Montclos has shown that many Izala Muslims were settlers or children of immigrants; the success of the group may not be unconnected to the similar ethnic make-up and colonial delineation of national boundaries, which split the Hausa/Fulani into parts of the Niger Republic (75).

This chapter discusses (im)migration, terrorism and the world risk society. (Im)migration here means movements from one place to the other. Three types, as represented in the novel, are delineated here: intra-regional migration especially typified by the Almajirai boys and Abdul-Nur's retraction to the outskirts of Sokoto with his followers to create an enclave, intra-national migration typified by Abdul-Nur, his brother Jibril, and wife, and international migration from Nigeria to Saudi Arabia and Iran typified by Abdul-Nur, the Sheik, Hussein and Hassan.

Born on a Tuesday's narrator is named Dantala, Almajiri, a word derived from the Arabic, *al-Muhajir*, which means migrant (Ogundipe 2018, 147). Hansen et al. contend that "The Hausa word, Almajiri, has its origins in the Arabic expression al muhajir, a person who emigrates in search of religious knowledge" (Hansen et al. 2016, 83). The Almajirai may not be considered as migrants as per the United Nations definition of one who crosses a border for more than twelve months. However, they are important in understanding the political and social context of fundamentalism in Northern Nigeria. In "Patterns of Almajiri Migration in Northern Nigeria", Zakirai, Akinyemi and Bamiwuye posit that, "The children involved are exposed to parental neglect, societal abuse and exploitation" (2015, 86). Due to these reasons, many scholars have concluded that the Almajirai pose social, political, and insecurity challenges. In the literary sphere, the Almajirai have presented writers with thematic and aesthetic materials to portray the localized manifestations of the global war on terror. The Almajirai migration constitutes one dimension of immigration that this chapter examines. The intranational and

international dimensions of (im)migration are importantly present in the World Risk Society, where terrorism is palpable.

5.2 FEATURES OF GLOBAL RISK OF TERRORISM: POSSIBLE/ACTUAL CATASTROPHE AND MIGRATION

In addition to the environmental, technological, financial, and individualization risks, Beck's scholarly work also dwells on the global risk of terrorism in late modernity. Drawing from Kant, he argues that the cosmopolitan society "can take shape in the perceived necessity of world risk society" (Beck 2009a, 2). The cosmopolitan turn in late modernity necessitates a delinking of the risk of terrorism from other forms of planetary risks like ecological and financial risks because the risk of terrorism departs from the others in a few but important ways.

The risk of terrorism is predicated on the intention of a subject. This opposes other kinds of risks like ecological risks, where the risk is an unwanted consequence, an accident of the advancement of modern technology. Active *mistrust* takes the place of active trust as the required social and civic reliability in neighbors, governments and strangers is replaced by a compulsive suspicion. The risk of terrorism poses a challenge in the sense that it is not economically insurable. Individual rights are also cancelled because the risk demands systemic intervention where the terrorist risk is deliberated and dispersed through the state, business, and insurance actors. These actors adopt risk calculus based on past occurrences. In this way, the risk is reasonably unknowable and uncertain. According to O'Malley, "This 'governmentality of uncertainty' [...] is derived from an imagination of 'expectation' rather than the inventiveness of stable prediction upon which insurance relied" (qtd. in Aradau and van Munster 2007, 31). The relations of definition of risk are also implicated in the way the risk of terrorism is constructed, as state and intelligence agents (experts) define risk; this implies a simplification and totalization of enemy images because of the pluralization of expert rationalities (Beck 2002).

The adverse consequences of the risk of terrorism become perceivable and material in its 'staging' and actualization. Staging entails the imaginative process through which a probable risk scenario is made tangible to prevent the substantiation of the risk. When risk becomes concrete through staging, then this becomes an adverse consequence for civil liberties.

Anticipation thus reorders society temporally, spatially, and socially. It is through staging and the power relations of definition that the strange foreigner is depicted as a terrorist. Important dimensions of early modernity crumble as civil liberties are threatened and as the counter-modernity of the terrorist throws into sharp relief the shortcomings and non-universality of neoliberalism and democracy.

If risk calculates probable catastrophe, then forms of knowledge on how to counter or prevent catastrophe are crucial to understanding fundamentalist terrorism. This is because fundamentalist terrorism is steeped in eschatological discourse where the wrath of a god awaits the ‘non-believer.’ This pits fundamentalists against other groups and individuals even within the same religious groups. The intentionality of the violence and jostling for a politico-theological authority, therefore, poses an indefinite unknowable threat (*Nicht-wissen-können*). Thus, “the rationality of catastrophic risk translates into policies that *actively* seek to prevent situations from becoming catastrophic at some indefinite point in the future. War is mobilized alongside other technologies of precaution in a governmental disposition to avoid terrorist irruptions in the future” (Aradau and van Munster 2007, 29). Omanga argues that terrorism was not simply ubiquitous in its violent expression or its cellular spread across the globe with countless sympathizers and martyrs, but it also gained power through its ability to influence the outcome of elections in far-flung states (Omanga 2014, 23).

The arguments in this chapter assume that the novel *Born on a Tuesday* by the Nigerian writer Elnathan John fictionalizes the global risk of terrorism as a consequence of a transnational network of actors. The subject matter of the novel addresses risk as unknowable even though agents of the state attempt to curtail future catastrophes, this way of an attempt to know and control the future thus leads to stereotyping and profiling which in many ways undermines the civil liberties of modernity. The battles for the future in a global world to create meanings is precipitated by an illusion of control, as these decisions are based on judgements on the quicksand of the past. The analysis focuses on the representation of risk of terrorism that is presented as local, that is, within Northern Nigeria, but that is also transnational because the terrorists include fundamentalist supporters from neighboring countries creating a transnational rhizomatic network that provides funding and training. The novel does not pay much attention to terrorist risk and attacks that occur in the West; instead it focuses on fundamentalist attacks that are locally produced in Northern Nigeria and whose victims are majorly from the region. The omission suggests that definitions assume new meanings as they cross borders and are dependent on the actors who define risk.

5.3 FRAMING THE LITERARY DISCOURSE OF RISK

This chapter teases out the representation of monologic imaginations of discursive powers that create an environment that sustains the risk of terrorism in the world risk society. Compared to Edify Yakusak's *After They Left*, another Nigerian novel on the risk of terrorism, Elnathan John suggests that social structure and monologic religious doctrine allow terrorism to flourish. In the novel, the reader recognizes that the motive of the religious fundamentalist is both political and religious. This political aspect is linked to the emotive aspects of identity construction, belonging and control of worldviews. The struggle to make meaning and sustain power is thus a result of colonization which forcefully amalgamated many nations into a nation-state. Therefore, this text points to postcolonial writing and futurity in a close sense with which Boehmer argues, that is, in relation to futurelessness and the consummation of personal desires and nationhood (2010, 146). The religious fundamentalist, since they think in terms of absolutes, thus aims to carve a future when their religious dogma and worldview, ways of life, and political stance are the rule. Terror to the terrorist can thus be read as a 'colonization of colonization' in the sense that they aim to upturn colonial modernity in order to install a new political order. The political intent of terrorism and fundamentalism in Nigeria explains why the risk of terrorism is not necessarily anti nation-state. Rather, it seeks to shape the nation-state according to its tenets. How are the unknowns of the risk of terrorists represented? How are the uninsured insured?

Beck worries about the dimension of insurance in the West, where risk was previously calculated through risk calculus, that is, "how to negotiate and distribute the costs of terrorist threats and catastrophes between businesses, insurance companies and states" (2002, 44). Does this then mean that World Risk Society excludes the Global South? I argue no! Globalization, the contemporariness of modernity, the global economy, finance, knowledge, and the network of religious actors make the world risk society planetary. This opens glocalization of risk scenarios where risks are produced, disseminated, understood, interpreted, and experienced in different ways. For Beck and many researchers of cosmopolitanism and terrorism, the risk of a terrorist attack is foreign and transnational; that is, these risks are produced elsewhere and transported to certain places. Furthermore, the unpredictability of a terrorist strike rests on the subjecthood of the actor in the sense that terrorist acts are usually executed by non-state actors. But the lines are blurred when one considers the acts of aggression of certain state-sponsored individuals on other states. The risk of terrorism might seem to circumvent and dismantle the

nation-state in the West. In certain regions, these risks are sought to consolidate nation-states that are based on religious ethos. In this sense, religion and politics intertwine to violently interrupt the nation-state structures violently. This disrupts the white man's colonizing mission to 'civilize' and bring together disparate social and political groups for economic expansion. Beck proposes the frame, monologic imaginations, to interrogate the univocal authority of certain grand narratives. This stands in opposition to the Bakhtinian carnivalesque concept of dialogism that embraces multiple voices in discourse.

The concept of a risk society has been appropriated in different ways to aid the analysis and representation of terrorism in literary works. However, most of these analyses are limited to European and American texts. In *Sense of Place*, Ursula Heise, for example, analyses how metaphors and ironies portray an aesthetics of uncertainty. Her work considers the planetary implication of environmental and technological risks.

A comprehensive study of risk by the University of Bayreuth's American studies program further establishes the resourcefulness of risk studies in literary analysis. Sylvia Mayer's work, for instance, dwells on the "re-negotiation of personal and collective security in post 9/11" (Mayer 2013, 79). Through her reading of American novels, she shows that characters have a complex relationship with risk. Despite the center-staging of risk by terrorism, characters are aware of environmental risks and the increasingly complex challenges of a globalized world.

African writings have also engaged, thematically and formally, the shapes risks have taken; this includes, in important ways, the risk of terrorism. *After They Left* (2016) by Edify Yakusak and *Buried Beneath the Baobab Tree* (2018) by Tricia Nwaubani depict the horrors of the risk of terrorism by demonstrating the dangers of kidnapping, murder and rape caused by terrorist groups or ethnic-religious characters. The works, in the realist mode, are also socio-political commentaries that criticize the (in)actions of the government. These novels create pathos by fictionizing the tragic experiences that victim characters undergo. Literary criticisms also employ these devices to make sense of religious fundamentalism. Unfortunately, these approaches conflate the fictional world of the characters with reality. Heise has argued that "what has emerged clearly from several decades of research and theorization, however, is that risks cannot be investigated outside the socio-cultural contexts that shape them and endow them with meaning (Heise 2009, 23). Literature provides materials that inform and question risk. Fiction that contains its representational ambiguities only constitutes a way of understanding and making sense of risk. Realistic portrayals are thus, at the most, approximate representations

of objects that constantly evade total mimesis. The homodiegetic narrative situation that most of these novels also take cancels out and subjectifies other experiences. While these novels, in their realistic portrayal, aim for empiricism and rationalism, they provide subjective approximations laden with ideologies of narrators.

5.4 NARRATING RISK AND MIGRATION

Born on a Tuesday is Elnathan John's first novel. Reported through a character-bound narrator, the narrative depicts the life of Dantala as he moves between three Northern Nigerian towns. He encounters other characters with different religious beliefs. Dantala's life begins in Bayan Layi where he is a member of a group of political thugs. His group attacks the secretariat of the Big Party, kill the security man, and burn the building. In response, the police attack Bayan Layi. To evade arrest and torture, Dantala runs away to Sokoto. There, he meets Sheik Jamal, a moderate Islamic preacher. Jamal's deputy, Abdul Nur, leaves the Sheik to establish a fundamentalist group. The novel reaches a climax when Abdul Nur's group kills the Sheik, the army invades the town, and arrest Dantala and many other youths.

The novel opens with a religious and ethnic crisis; these two elements, the reader will learn later in the novel, are important vectors in the way the characters make sense of a changing globalized world. In this sense, the local ways of life are shaped by globalization. Ulrich Beck points out that the local contributes to the global as "globalization from within, globalization internalized, or [...] 'cosmopolitanization of nation-state societies'" (Beck 2002, 23). In the novel, local politics and religious ideologies inflect the actions and choices of the characters. Therefore, it is important that the fundamentalist character, Abdul-Nur "is a Yoruba from Ilorin. In fact, his name was Alex before he converted, learned Arabic and memorized the whole Quran in just one year" (31). While he is generally accepted in the earlier sections of the novel, many characters view him as an outsider and essentialize his identity along stereotypical lines of traitor and close to an infidel. A Mallam thus claims Abdul-Nur "is trying to lead Muslims astray" (189). The geographical context and ethnic affiliation are therefore important in understanding the global risk of terrorism. Because, though Abdul-Nur belongs to the same religious sect as the Mallam, the Mallam and another character, the politician Alhaji Usman, relapse into ethnic affiliations and stereotyping. In fact, despite their similar religious identification, Alhaji Usman understands the identity of Abdul-Nur firstly as a Yoruba that can be repatriated to his 'place of origin.' Alhaji Usman tells the Sheik, "some Yoruba converts

come here and be doing all of this [...] We will send him back to whatever bush he came from” (216). Despite Abdul-Nur’s radicalism and terror, Alhaji Usman manages to construct a hierarchized identity scale whereby ethnic identity can cancel out a religious identity as he labels them “enemies of our people and enemies of Islam” (225). These identity politics plays into the multiple ways of being for the individual in late modernity. The characterization of Abdul-Nur thus questions the earlier unified sense of self whereby citizenship and individuality were constructed on ethnicity and religion.

Toyin Falola and Matthew Kukah have argued that “the belief that Islam makes no distinction between religion and politics flourishes more as an ideology in the North than anywhere else in the country” (Falola and Kukah 1996, 19). Consequently, in the character of Abdul-Nur, the cracks in the construction of a single Northern identity begin to emerge, particularly because he has a vast knowledge of the Quran and he is popularly accepted. Abdul-Nur thus questions the structure of political power. He wrestles powers from the hegemonic political group that had enjoyed unquestioned political authority. As a way to counteract his rise to power, some elites mobilize the discourse of belonging and group identity. Yet, identity in the novel is not fixed but a series of readjusted contingent meanings. While the elites consider the majority Christian South as another group who “were attempting to take power away from our people, whose turn it is to rule” (27), Abdul-Nur is also considered an *other* because of his ethnicity. In spite of this, he cannot be totally dismissed as an outsider because religious authority is similarly important. In fact, political power is closely linked to religious authority. This is why Sheik Jamal links religious influence to overall political power, as he explains that elections are important and are a vehicle to gaining political powers and religious control (117). Alhaji Usman also befriends the Sheik to appeal to his religious base. This alliance leads Alhaji Usman to condone questionable religious personalities because these individuals enjoy popular support.

An expedient political victory thus engenders a collective community where ethnic and religious lines are blurred. However, Abdul-Nur conflates these distinct identities as he enjoins the characters at the mosques to “stand up and fight against the government because they are not doing anything about the Muslims that are killed by those Berom people in Jos and that we should burn all the drinking places and the mosques of those who are not agreeing with us” (97). By deploying Islam, Abdul-Nur effaces the ethnic dimension and instead constructs a religious identity which he supposes surpasses ethnic identity. The definition of the self along unstable identities is thus a point of contestation throughout the text. This instability will also

be a motivating factor why Abdul-Nur turns violent to forcefully coopt individuals under his terrorist administration.

Because the powerful characters like Abdul-Nur, the Sheik and Alhaji Usman seek to control the social imaginary by constructive collective and communal identities, characters who attempt to carve out an autonomous sense of self for themselves are met with coercive force. Therefore, Dantala and his friend Jibril who is also Abdul-Nur's brother at different points in the novel, are monitored and censored. To then have a sense of self that departs from the norm is to form such consciousness in secret. If Western education is taken as a symbol for the other, then Dantala's approach to learning it in private underscores the risk of the outward embrace of this form of education. So, he does not acquire Western-style education and the English language in the formal walls of a school. He acquires English through some auto-didacticism and through his friend, Jibril.

The example of Dantala stands out when read intertextually with other *Bildungsromans* from the continent. Usually, novels like Camara Laye's *The African Child* (1959) and Sefi Atta's *Everything Good Will Come* (2005) depict the lives of Western-style educated characters who mostly emigrate to Europe and the United States. Therefore, Elnathan John's characters are significant representations of modern Nigeria in socio-political and cultural context as the thematic considerations of the novel move between social, economic, cultural, and religious aspects. The characters' liminal space and precarious living conditions typify a realistic social text that aims to fictionalize everyday experiences. Movements and (im)migration are prominent tropes in the novel with elements of the picaresque and bildungsroman. Importantly, education takes a critical ideological position in the novel. As mentioned earlier, the novel shifts from the missionary/western-style education of characters in many African novels to an Islamic-styled education. Furthermore, it presents Islamic countries as alternative and viable spaces of immigration for the characters. Dantala, for example, imagines a nice and luxurious life in places like London, Dubai, Cairo, or Saudi Arabia (139). One can contrast his perception of place with protagonists in well-known African migration novels. In NoViolet Bulawayo's *We Need New Names* (2013), the female protagonist perceives Western countries such as the United States as admirable and others like Pakistan as not. By contrast, in *Born on a Tuesday*, Saudi Arabia and Iran are admired and perceived as places of religious education. This perception is further heightened by the portrayal of the Sunni and Shia divide as precipitating migration choices. Sunnis (im)migrate to Saudi Arabia and other countries with Sunni majorities while Shiite characters turn to Iran.

The character bound narrator Dantala is a peripatetic character as he moves from place to place within the Northern region, first due to Islamic education and then due to conflicts. He migrates from Dogon Icce to Bayan Layi to Sokoto (3, 18, 23). All three places are deployed as constitutive of the (a)formation of the protagonist. Dogon Icce depicts the conflictual familial space that shows the power of religious affiliation over familial bonds. Shiite members of the family are treated as outcasts. This place illustrates the affective power of religious identity. In Bayan Layi, the protagonist completes his almajiri education and becomes a social deviant involved in political assassinations and arson. In Sokoto, through the mentorship of The Sheik, Dantala forms the protagonist into a self-reflexive character. Hence, (im)migration occupies a series of articulations that localize the world risk society and provide a fictional context through which the global dimension of the risk of terrorism can be read. Immigration occupies a contentious position as it is linked to knowledge seeking, religious obligation and a channel for fundamentalist indoctrination. Further, through intertextuality, the commandments and the religious implication of immigration are incorporated into the narrative world. For example, Dantala, in reading a *hadith*, examines the transformative and informative implication of (im)migration on the individual, “actions are but by intentions and every man shall have only that which he intended. Thus, he whose migration was for Allah and His Messenger, his migration was for Allah and His Messenger, and he whose migration was to achieve some worldly benefit or to take some woman in marriage, his migration was for that for which he migrated” (40).

The acquisition of knowledge forms a fulcrum for the migratory quest of characters. The Sheik, for instance (im)migrates to Egypt to go to the big university (97). The unnamed modernist Islamic cleric takes a pragmatic stance that interweaves political and global knowledge with the religious. He encourages knowledge-seeking anywhere it can be found to attain a stronger role in global politics so that Muslims will “not be defeated in learning or in science” (98). The migratory pattern further highlights the religious ideology and the forms of knowledge that the characters seek to acquire. This might explain why the head of the Shiites studied in Iran (133) and Dantala’s brothers, Hassan and Hussein, “were all in Lebanon for a normal Muslim course” (105). The ideological import of migratory trends and the religious schism between the Shiites and the Sunnis, is represented here in the normalization of knowledge acquisition. (Im)migration for these characters takes a turn away from immigration to the West. This change is because Lebanon, Egypt, Iran, and Saudi Arabia have become important centers of international immigration. Countries, where characters immigrate to, are considered as

influential to the formation of religious ideology. Shiites who have travelled to Iran are considered dangerous (107). (Im)migration also underscores the victimization of certain religious groups by the majority as the Shiite minority have to regionally migrate to Zaria, where there are many Shiites (107), while Alhaji Usman's first son migrates to Sokoto to join the big Shiite Mallam (116). A discourse of religious filiation and solidarity is then established in the migratory options of the characters.

Immigration is imagined as a political tool for ideological containment or neutralization. The Sheik, in a bid to counteract Abdul-Nur's religious fanaticism and popularity, sends Abdul-Nur to Saudi Arabia. This action will prove ineffective as Abdul-Nur's journey to Saudi Arabia only intensifies his fundamentalism (132). Such forced migrations are usually subverted as Abdul-Nur creates new alliances in Saudi Arabia. Travelling to Saudi Arabia, the host site of some of Islam's most important symbols, functions ambiguously in the novel. While the travel to Saudi Arabia further radicalizes Abdul-Nur's religious monologic imagination, Saudi Arabia also represents a space for debates, depicted in the monastery where one can retreat to "away from the distraction of screaming followers" (187). The dialectics of monologic and dialogic imaginations confront each other, particularly when the two travel to Saudi Arabia for a debate. During the debate, Abdul-Nur engages in a synchronic interpretation of the Quran, and The Sheik considers the historical and pragmatical dimensions in how he interprets the Quran. Abdul-Nur seems to echo the "*You are not doing it right*" sentiment that Kwame Appiah discusses in his book *Lies That Bind* (41). Abdul-Nur, however, betrays the hypocrisy of his fundamentalist interpretation when he agrees to be taped in Saudi Arabia. By participating in this recording, he negates the anti-modernism of his dogma since the technology of recording is an icon of modernity. A schizophrenic personality emerges that, on the one hand, encourages the destruction of technology, and on the other, embraces technology as a tool for the propagation of his message.

Abdul-Nur's travel to Saudi Arabia results in a conflictual climax. After he returns from Saudi Arabia, he starts a new movement – the Mujahideen – popular amongst motorcyclists, tea sellers and butchers, and many of the young men who were Sheik Jamal's disciples. His sojourn to Saudi Arabia also reveals the Maliki Foundation, an organization in Saudi Arabia that once supported the Sheik (211) and now funds him.

Abdul-Nur's movement attains a violent apogee and constructs a government of its own through which it collects taxes and gives loans to start new businesses or expand old ones. The group

also monopolizes violence, and the necropolitical comes into play as “they beat up anyone who tries to make trouble with them, and they threaten non-members who have similar businesses around them” (187). The government of the fundamentalist movement constituted within a camp burns books and discs “that contained other forms of knowledge” (189 - 190). The movement outside of the town (195) evolves into a cult that retreats from the public, enabling a politics of segregation based on monologic imagination. The camp becomes the site for their assault against constituted authority and for further indoctrination, as Jibril tells Dantala.

The global network of signs, news coverage, and novel modern technologies conflict with the homogeneous religious identity that the fundamentalists espouse. Kwame Appiah describes this conflict as a “global rise of a concern with identity” (Appiah 2018, 56). In understanding the globalizing effect of capital, culture, and media, individuals who feel that their religion and ways of being are threatened engage in the contemporary contextual reading of religious texts wherein their experiences, beliefs, and knowledge influence interpretations. This is one way in which religious adherents contest western educational knowledge. The contestation of knowledge leads to sectarian politics where new forms of religious identities ossify and establish themselves as ‘The Truth’. This struggle and will to truth may result in violence often considered “ennobling, redeeming, and necessary to the continuance of life itself,” to quote Neil Whitehead’s questioning of violence and culture (2007, 40). An awareness of the global condition of a postcolonial other relegated to the fringes in global deliberations, financial flows, and cultural representation is related as disturbing. When Dantala arrives in Sokoto, he meets people in the mosque discussing the elections; the conversation degenerates into anti-Semite rhetoric and an excoriation of global financial bodies. Sheik Jamal says, “this country is a slave to Jews and their usury, [...] I am hearing of a World Bank and IMF for the first time” (30). As Dantala contemplates the importance and the function of organizations such as the World Bank and IMF in order not to appear stupid, he concludes, the IMF is just a bad Jewish thing that helps the World Bank, which gives money to enslave them (30). The disdain for international organizations is therefore presented as a product of hearsays and uninformed arguments among those who feel side-lined and targeted by modernity. In this way, globalization “transforms everyday consciousness and identities significantly” (Beck 2002, 17). Thus, colonization and globalization interact as an explanatory tool for the order of things. Anti-modernity, therefore, stems from the perceived adverse consequences of modernity.

Similarly, when Dantala goes to Dogon Icce for a visit, he overhears two women speaking; the daughter of one of them has given birth but is still very ill. The woman links the continued ill

health of her daughter to a new fertilizer: “It’s all poison, wallahi. When it was only cow dung, who heard about such things for Allah’s sake?” (41). Issues of global concern are becoming part of the everyday local experiences and the ‘moral life-worlds of the characters (Beck 2002, 17). For the youths in the Mosque, globalization fuels the thinking that war on terror is against all Muslims. Bilal, Dantala’s co-occupant in the mosque, tells a story of his father as fighting the “infidel” Americans in Afghanistan and Iraq (58). In constructing an infidel, the enemy is imaginatively put up for slaughtering. In addition, globalization is implicated in the easy flow of international funds to fundamentalist ideological training. International finance networks allow transfer of money for fights against other religious groups like the Dariqas and Izalas (107), Saudi Arabia and Iran as mentioned earlier.

5.5 ANTINOMIES OF BELIEF

In *The Lies that Bind*, Kwame Appiah expounds on the source-code fallacy and its ties to fundamentalist beliefs. Source-code fallacy implies an “idea that the true nature of a religion lies with its deepest, most foundational texts, abstracted away from the real-world range of its actual adherents; that access to these codes can reveal that religion’s real essence” (Appiah 2018, 64). Inherent in the source-code mode of scriptural interpretation is the contradiction that ensues based on a literal deterministic interpretation of the scriptures; these fixed and dogmatic readings of the scripture are depicted in the novel as cannon fodder for religious extremism.

Antinomies ensue in *Born on a Tuesday* as some characters develop their modern lives against the history and textuality of the scripture. Human agency clashes with divine dictates. Characters like Dantala and The Sheikh can either succumb to the weakness of the human condition or adapt the scripture to align with the modern context. Conversely, fundamentalist Abdul-Nur’s antinomies ensue from his dogmatic and literal interpretation of the scriptures. Characters who belong to the first group that negotiates religion and modernity are presented as dynamic in the face of new facts and reasoning. This view is evident in the characterization of Dantala. He, firstly, assumes an unquestioning stance towards the will of God and fate. He explains, for example, that, “[n]o one holds a grudge in Bayan Layi. Gobedanisa still has a scar, but he follows Banda and does what Banda says. Everything that happens is Allah’s will, so why should anyone keep a grudge” (3). Yet, Dantala’s belief in predestination and the will of a supreme being is at many points interrupted by expedient actions. At the scene where they burn

down the secretariat of the Big Party, he, alongside the other thugs, takes actions that may not be the will of a divine being; instead, political expediency dictates their actions. Pragmatism supplants fatalism. For this reason, Banda collects money to put up posters for the Small Party; he smashes up cars as a way to undermine the political victory of the Big Party. The irony is further heightened as the characters rationalize their roles in the killing of the alleged thief 'Idowu'. The narrator ascribes his death— Idowu – to Allah (4) even though he was beaten with a nail and bled to death. The withdrawal from a subjective position that entails agency means blame is shifted, and this affects his sense of duty and responsibility. As he reminds himself, “sometimes, even then, we just let it go on because no one dies unless it is Allah’s will” (3).

Destiny and predestination are, in this case, embedded with shifting meanings and signification. These ironies and hermeneutical contradictions frustrate a monologic reading of scriptural texts as a grand narrative. Human agency clashes with divine predestination; characters face a dilemma of choosing whether to accept human failing due to the divine will or as a human choice. For the Sunni characters, their disdain for the Shiites emerges from the human agency involved in the Shiites' choice to split from what they consider 'the one true religion.' The Sheik, who may be described along Ali Mazrui's line of classification as a modernist Muslim, undermines the grand narrative of other Sunni characters. The Sheik explains that it is Allah's destiny that separated the Sunni from the Shiite (141). Allah's will and human agency are contested, and it is at the level of human interpretation and understanding that the fundamentalist differs from the modernist.

The moderate Muslim characters like The Sheik and Dantala seem to abdicate the role of the judge and transfer this to 'God.' But for destiny and judgment to be the prerogative of God undermines sin. For sin implies human agency to willfully disobey God. To sin then may be to do God's will since all has been destined by God. Dantala is aware of this and questions sin (haram) as a product of human agency. He wonders if God destines acts of haram and wishes he could change some of the things that have been destined. Characters like Dantala and the Sheik can come to common sense conclusions through an unending dialectical approach. The individual's helplessness is put into perspective, and sin takes on a contextual form that shifts according to time and space. When Sheik asks Dantala if he has called his (Dantala's) brother, Hussein, Dantala lies. He then interrogates the lie and questions if lying about calling Hussein is a sin and makes him a bad person “since one can lie without even thinking about it” (178). The Sheik and Dantala are examples of Mazrui's classification of modernist and liberal Muslims. They have adapted to modernism in their different ways and see some forms of

compatibility between these forms of living. Sheik Jamal and Dantala accept the foreignness of the Other and in this way, they put the negotiation of contradictory cultural experiences into the center of activities (Beck 2002, 18). In this sense, Dantala demonstrates how “globality means reflexive globalization, a global everyday experience and consciousness of the global” (22). A mastery of the enemy’s tool can dismantle the sections of the enemy’s house that are not compatible. The Sheik sees the possibility of upholding Islamic tenets in secular places like Nigeria (John 2015, 198). Therefore, when he speaks about the cluelessness of the Nigerian government, it is not to start a religious caliphate, but he reacts to the government’s inability to curb security threats like Abdul-Nur’s Mujahideen group. The narrator tells the readers that “Sheik speaks about [...] the cluelessness of the Federal government and why we need to support and vote a Muslim president in the next elections” (217). By sticking to dogmas that do not reflect the times, Abdul-Nur, on the other hand, correlates to a large extent with the Orthodox Islam Mazrui describes. He favors a literal interpretation of the Quran and the Sunna, “ritualistic in its observances, traditionalist in gender relations, with an emphasis on a God of Justice. On the whole, Orthodox Muslims are far less receptive to other culture” (Mazrui 2004, 810).

Compellingly, Abdul-Nur exhibits a literalist interpretative trait. When the religious group from England visits, Abdul-Nur shows his aversion to arguments and instead sticks with a literal interpretation of the Quran. He says, “Islam does not mean peace, [...] Islam means submission. Submission to the will of Allah. And the will of Allah is not the will of the infidel or the will of America. Islam means that we do not submit to anything or anyone but Allah” (84). His irrational argument is juxtaposed with other characters as Dantala makes clear: “*We all* understood what they were saying. They were telling us to be good and kind to change the way the world sees us Muslims” (84, emphasis mine). Abdul-Nur is the antithesis to Ali Mazrui’s empowering approach that advocates that “the varieties of Islam must be enlisted to reinterpret Islam for the modern era” (Mazrui 2004, 808). Abdul-Nur couches his obscurantism in abuses and insults, which contrasts with Jibril, who uses the familiar to explain the complicated religious themes (John 2015, 86).

Paradoxically, Abdul-Nur’s public position as a literal scriptural exegete conflicts with his private life. The perfect orthodox of his public profile directly opposes his moral deficiency. The tension creates an ethical concern and reveals that personal gain motivates his interpretations and practice. He steals from the contributions in the mosque (85), and he defiles his wife, forcing candles and bottles into her anus; “[h]e flogs her with the tyre whip when they

are doing it. Some days she faints” (149). In fact, his beating cost them the second child (177) and his masochism for “he likes to beat and wound people” contradicts Islamic ethics (181). In the face of death, the hypocrisy of his orthodoxy is revealed; in order not to be caught, he shaves his beard and pretends to be a cattle herder (249). The indigent Saudatu observes the absurdity in terrorism and suicide: “I don’t understand why people would not learn. Someone asks you to die for him, yet when it comes to it, he himself is afraid of death” (227). His actions are depicted as contradictory to Islamic dictates and throw into sharp relief self-assertion and narcissism that Sebastian Wojciechowski describes as a psychological source of terrorism (Wojciechowski, 2017).

The character-bound narrative situation may not allow a broader evaluation of Abdul-Nur to determine his psychological reflexes; however, the political and religious context can aid in analyzing his personality. De Montclos, Beck and Appiah have argued that fundamentalism is a response to modernity. Montclos has also argued that “conversions to Islam have worried strategic analysis, as neophytes are usually considered to be more extremist than traditional Muslims” (de Montclos 2008, 71) as the case of Abdul-Nur shows. This neophyte disposition to extremism may then explain his fundamentalism and why he becomes a Mujahideen for the cause of religion. His conversion and further religious practice then take on a radical and fundamental dimension even in his relationship with other Muslims.

Given his predisposition, it is thus expedient for Abdul-Nur to seek to control religious discourse and interpretations. The most conspicuous communication tools, telephone, speakers, and projector, are controlled by religious and political authorities, and in the case of the latter, it heightens Abdul-Nur’s violent inclination. In his analysis of the role of loudspeakers in some Islamic countries, Larkin argues that some non-Muslims perceive these public address systems and technologies as a direct attack on their religion (Larkin 2014, 1003). The projector stands as a symbol of theological and epistemological attack on Abdul-Nur since it is through these technologies that his authority as an authoritarian exegete is contested. For this reason, Abdul-Nur and his movement target Sheik Jamal and behead him. To erect the audio-visual apparatus implies a vast audience even beyond those directly in front of the projector screen. An interpellation of the subject through the projector threatens Abdul-Nur’s monologic imagination and amplifies the religious authority of the rational religious voices like the Sheik.

The Sheik, who is moderate, appeals to common sense. As the character-bound narrator, Dantala’s narrative account may be predisposed towards his mentor, Sheik Jamal, but as the

text, through a Dantala-bound focalization, focuses on the audience while relaying their affective response to the message emanating from the projector, a consensus about anti-fundamentalism may appear. The world is not shut out through the technology of cinema that conscripts individuals away from the outside world; instead the open air creates an open space for ideological engagement. Such media are not neutral but instead ordering devices installed to maintain socio-political and epistemological powers through the authority and amplification they give. Abdul-Nur uses the technology of projection and public address system to separate those who subscribe to his fundamentalism and those who do not. In his binarism, Abdul-Nur establishes that universities and democracy are anti-Islamic and implies that anyone who supports such institutions like the Sheik is a 'kafir' (196).

The novel demonstrates varying epistemological systems within Islam. The contending point is a fight of epistemic superiority as religious groups, and political actors seek to monopolize meanings and definitions. These contentions result in the risk of terrorism for the extremist, fundamentalist interpreters of the scriptures who seek to affirm their ethics of morality and cultural affirmation. Religious leaders like Sheik Jamal and Abdul-Nur play important roles in formulating, determining, and orienting religious discourses. *Born on a Tuesday* is at pains to show that human-mediated understanding leads to misinterpretation or suspicion of interpretation. Dantala demonstrates that personal interests engender scriptural misinterpretations and misrepresentations. Dantala acknowledges this when he says even if the Quran gives all the answers, people will still misinterpret it (206). Knowledge and its exegesis are in contention in the depiction of the global risk of terrorism; terrorism is not fixed to a place like the nationalist agitations of white supremacists and all those who seek to enforce the nation-state of early modernism. In the narrative world of the novel, the authority of the holy book as all-knowing is supplanted by the *petit recit* of some of the characters like Ahmad, an acquaintance of Dantala who consistently falls into sin and considers other forms of truth. He usually does not concede to the eternal truth of the Holy Book but apologizes casually for his thoughts.

In the book *World Risk Society*, Ulrich Beck articulates the symbolic politics of the media and its influence on direct politics (44). In the novel, the media are represented as shifting and dimorphic as they enter certain spaces. Media organizations that are presented in the novel do not relay a sole, unifying message; instead, it is adapted to fit into the local discourse. Firstly, translations by the British Broadcasting Corporation news service are conditioned by ideological positions. The message relayed from English no longer remains the same when it is

transferred into Hausa. The malleability of interpretation and its evolving significance is evident when Dantala compares BBC Hausa to BBC English, “words turn into something else when they change from Hausa to English and back” (83). Dantala seems to show that to get a better grasp of messages, the English version needs to be heard. So, he contends that the Hausa translation for the United Nations, if rendered back to English, would mean, “Association of Joining the World” (83). This translation signifies a possibility of being left behind and an admission into a committee of the world; this relays a message of exclusion and an urge for belonging. To further compound this, the news is sensationalized as this stimulates transnational religious anger. On BBC Hausa service, the drivers listen to a program that mentions the war in Gaza that ended earlier that year. The tone of the media report is provocative, mentioning that Israel seeks to kill all the Arabs there so they can take their land. One of the drivers announces his interest to join Hamas to kill an Israeli soldier (143). The media in the novel, therefore, functions as a two-edged, informative but, on the other hand, provocative. The media also serves as a bridge in the global dissemination of knowledge. News reports from other places are fed into the news machine and disseminated around the world, like in the case of Gaza. This also allows the characters to evaluate global politics and confront American neoimperialism.

In his study on the symbolism of Osama bin Laden’s terrorism, Mercel Henaff et al. argue that “the notion that a random group of victims must ‘pay’ for the guilt of all the rest, not because of any individual actions, but simply for belonging to a nation, emanates from a religious context that presupposes a notion of collective guilt or sin” (Henaff et al. 2008, 81). Abdul-Nur anchors his terrorism on religion, the collective guilt of all those whose interpretations differ from his and puts them up for victimhood. Due to this, he seeks to subvert the powers of the modern nation-state and to topple the established configuration by employing necropolitics. To Abdul-Nur, then, his fundamentalism and, in extension, terrorism is a violent reaction to an Islam that he thinks conforms to the dictate and principles of the nation-state. By choosing to possess the power to determine who lives or who dies, he establishes himself as the sovereign with the right to kill and as controlling the mechanisms of biopower which are constitutive of state power in modernity (Mbembe 2003, 17). It may explain why his followers savagely severe the head of Sheik Jamal and rampage the villages and towns.

The scope of the ideology of Abdul-Nur seeks to subvert the modern state and create his form of biopower. To this extent again, Abdul-Nur serves as a foil to Sheik Jamal. The Sheik's strivings for power is to the service of the modern state; this also means that Sheik Jamal seeks

ways to unite with other religious groups with differing opinions and ideologies even when he maintains a Salafist agenda. Conversely, Abdul-Nur's preaching aims beyond that. The structure of this movement: policing, tax system, laws outside of Nigerian nation is in the words of Ayse Zarakol 'system-threatening' (2008, 2330), an affront on the modern principles of the nation-state as the sole arbiter of rights and legitimate user of violence. Abdul-Nur, therefore, employs symbolic machineries of violence in creating an economy of fear.

All these indicate that *Born on a Tuesday* depicts the multiple contexts of terrorism. The transnational dimension of risk through immigration relates to the local and national ethnoreligious politics. The novel presents the failure of militaristic and methodological nationalistic means of understanding and solving the problem. It is vital what role place plays in the novel. Towns and villages become powerful receptors of global politics while they also contribute to globalization. Therefore, the risk of terrorism is informed by the politics of a world risk society where modernism confronts its unexpected and global scale side-effects. Ecology, global finance, and politico-cultural hegemony contribute to the risk of terrorism. A case in point is ecological risk whereby deforestation and flooding destroy the crops and livelihoods of the inhabitants of the village, Dogon Ice. Dantala sees a link between this almajiri training and drought (15). He says, "all I know is that when the rains first stopped falling and the millet dried up in the farm, my father sent them – Maccido, Hassan and Hussein – to become Almajirai in an Islamic school in a place called Tashar Kanuri" (43).

Desertification is also represented when he returns to Sokoto: "[s]ometimes it is just bare, dry earth, broken up like my dreams every time I fall asleep on the way" (18). The floods and other environmental risks like drought are present in the novel. In fact, flooding suffuses the narrative. One occurs when his brothers go to Quranic training and continue when Dantala visits his mother and Khadija later in the plot. His sister reveals that there were no grains because of the flood, and the local government did not deliver grains in the last week (48). Likewise, on his way to visit his Umma, an old man complains that the rains and floods destroyed his farm, which led to losing all his millet and maize (38).

Environmental catastrophe significantly impoverishes the protagonist and his family, presenting opportunities for social deviation as Dantala actively participates in a murder in Bayan Layi after his training. Some members of Abdul-Nur's Mujahideen movement are also reported as almajirai. These characters may also have been products of precarious environmental disasters. The novel's dialogic process brings together these risk discourses to

show a nexus between other unintended consequences of modernity and the risk of terrorism. The risk of terrorism as an existential and ontological threat produces forms of policing and governance that prioritizes excessive violence. Terrorist threats and risks have consequences for civil societies and human rights. Furthermore, because terrorist organizations strike at ontological security and at the heart of its certainty and predictability, this risk is uncontrollable and quite unpredictable and is capable of inducing mass paranoia. Ayse Zarakol argues that terrorism presents an assault on the modern (state) (2011, 2315) through the indeterminacy and ambivalence of its ontology. The expectation of catastrophe and possible terrorist threats short circuits the liberal and democratic tenets of freedom and citizen protection.

Fundamentalism and the expectation of catastrophe, therefore, undermine the individual's freedom, militarize public places, and normalizes surveillance and preemptive military intervention. A state of emergency becomes understandable and justifiable as the sacrifice that the citizens must bear to maintain state sovereignty. This ironic curtailment of civil liberties can be seen in the aftermath of the gun attack on Sheik Jamal. On the way to the hospital, Dantala encounters dozens of policemen. One of them orders him to stop while pointing a gun at his chest (John 2015, 125). The action exhibits a threat to civil liberties, which Susan Mizruchi observes emanates from a 'precautionary principle' through which threats must be actively confronted before they become imminent (2009, 115).

The fictional Sokoto devolves into 'a scapegoat society,' where those who point out hazards "provoke the general uneasiness" (Beck 1992, 75). Freedom is auctioned, and characters caught in the post-threat Sokoto after the beheading of Sheik Jamal must accept a government that positions them as ideal citizens who police themselves. Despite this self-policing, police arrest Dantala and other men who fit the terrorist profile — (men and women who appear in particular ways, for example, use hijab or turban) are indiscriminately arrested. This constitutes a form of control in which the government marks specific individuals as carriers of risk by a profiling system that is based on early modernity risk calculus. In this way, risk can be considered as a mechanism for governing and curtailing social problems.

Ulrich Beck describes the post-attack social and governing implications as follows, "although clearly inferior in a military sense, for a short time, the attacker can create a balance of horror; he can even provoke the expectation of catastrophe within world risk society and make it a permanent condition, by ensuring through his action that the more or less futile anticipation and defense become the reorganizing principle of society" (Beck 2013, 40).

The unpredictability and uncertainty of risk of terrorism and a militaristic condition of normality result in extra-judicial actions that make freedom and the rule of law incompatible with the existing realities. The military official symbolizes this: the freedom of the arrested persons results not from the judicial process but from dictatorial preference and determination. The arrested individuals must earn their freedom through betrayal: “The key to your freedom is in your hands,’ a man with a megaphone says [...] We will still win without you. All we want is to give the smart ones among you an opportunity to help themselves and their families” (John 2015, 237). Active mistrust is engendered as some characters are pitted against other characters. As an old man arrested with Dantala confesses, “Who likes Mujahideen? ... No one. But these people hate us equally. They don’t care who is Mujahideen or Dariqa or Izala or Shiite. All they want is to oppress and kill Muslims” (240).

Active mistrust leads to the construction of an identity based on a community of sufferers and from a fast and superficial government response to the risk of terrorism. Adopting methodological nationalism in fighting terrorism is depicted as political and ignores the fundamental governmental, precarious, and transnational dimensions that produce the risk of terrorism.

CONCLUSION

This chapter has taken spatial settings in a fictional nation-state, similar to Nigeria, as a starting point for interrogating the globalizing process of a world risk society. Elnathan John’s novel provides a realistic imaginary account of the globalization of terror within a postcolonial nation-state by presenting characters, settings, and (im)migration conditions that create intolerant fundamentalism. (Im)migration provides opportunities for forms of transnational actions and networks (International Migration and National Securities 198), and destinations are depicted as having an influence on characters' ideology. Furthermore, the global finance system allows easy finance flow that sees characters like Sheik Jamal and Abdul-Nur receive financial support from foreign countries like Saudi Arabia. Borders are redrawn and exceed the predetermined as immigrants; ideas move, ideas can no longer be said to originate from fixed points

Ulrich Beck’s articulation of the risk of terrorism provides a sociological and theoretical lens to examine the character and spatial politics concerning the risk of terrorism. Ali Mazrui’s classification allows a delineation of character traits and provides an analytical window to the

subjective positions and religious epistemologies that (dis)courage religious fundamentalism and terrorism. This is not to create a hierarchy of thought or binaries but a tentative tool for understanding characters and John's literary representationalism of nationalistic/religious politics. In fact, as exemplified by Abdul-Nur, religious orthodoxy demonstrates levels of ethical and interpretative contradictions that undermine a totalizing orthodoxy.

In the fictional exploration of religious fundamentalism and the risk of terrorism, the novel takes up a thematic consideration of fundamentalism and the risk of terrorism as an unintended consequence of modernism. The risk of terrorism once actualized in Abdul-Nur's attack and beheading of Sheik Jamal unleashes a torrent of human rights abuses. Almajirai characters and other characters who have a history of association with the dreaded Mujahideen group members are conscripted into a terrorist class and deprived of human rights. "These fears have one particularly unfortunate side effect: people or groups who are (or are made into) 'risk persons' or 'risk groups' count as nonpersons whose basic rights are threatened" (World at Risk 16). The attack produces a culture of further anticipation of risk, fear, and haste in containing terrorism due to political expediency in the represented region. The actions and reactions to terrorist attacks terrorist prevention destroy the institutions of freedom and democracy (World at Risk 10). The corresponding instrument of controlling terror is limited to nation-state use of force, territorial integrity, right over the border. Digital innovation and radicalization are done through technologies that draw knowledge closer and more readily available than ever before. The contradictions of interpretation and human mediation in interpretation have been analyzed as leading to the rise of fundamentalist terrorism.

Using a character-bound narrator that allows monologic and dialogic interrogation of religious epistemologies, *Born on a Tuesday* narrates other factors contributing to fundamentalist terrorism like drought and poverty. In fact, environmental risk and poverty recur all through the novel, evoking action and altering the progress of the plot. Environmentally induced poverty is at different points the reason for (im)migration and pushes people to join Abdul-Nur's Mujahideen. These factors remain the same as the novel that spans seven years (2003 – 2010) rarely experiences political and socio-cultural change. Perhaps the temporal dimension of the novel can be further analyzed because it presents temporal relativity and a phenomenology of time that differs on experiential and class status. Risk in itself as anticipation of catastrophe is related to time. The gross human rights abuse that succeeds the beheading of the Sheik is linked to the experience of time. Dantala remarks in the pit that his "hours are definitely longer than the hours of the soldiers outside, who can go home and lie on soft beds" (254). The varying

forms of experience necessitate the writing of other unheard voices into the literary corpus and canon of African writing. The values of these lives must be analyzed on their own merits and humanity against broad categories like “The African Immigrant.”

CHAPTER SIX: THE FINANCIAL CRISIS AND THE NEW WORLD OF WORK IN *BEHOLD THE DREAMERS*

Chapter Two analyzed the representation of individualization in the novel *The Maestro*, *The Magistrate* and *The Mathematician* and argued that Tendai Huchu presents characters that are aware of and respond to the institutionalized individualism of late modernity. Hence, self-definition and agency against traditional patterns of early modernity are important aspects of characterization in the novel. The current chapter acknowledges that institutionalized individualism and neoliberal political economy open individuals to delirious anxieties, insecurities, and uncertainty. This chapter argues that the fictional representation of work in the novel *Behold the Dreamers* (2016) is closely aligned to the precarious, flexible, and uncertain work cultures that Ulrich Beck puts forward in his concept of the new world of work.

Through a narrative world that recounts the lives of a Cameroonian immigrant family and an executive at Lehman Brothers, the novel represents the world of risk stemming from late modern neoliberalism. The agency of individualized prosperous subjects, incumbent on hard work that the neoliberal (American) dream presupposes, is portrayed in a deferred sense, activated, and controlled through Wall Street and a flexible market system that seems inaccessible to most of the characters. This chapter begins by highlighting the distinctive semantics of risk in the context of world risk society and risk in the economy of financial markets and regulations.

Financial risk in the neoliberal market mostly takes on a positive meaning. In this domain, individuals take and accept unknown and unknowable future consequences of present actions because escalated significant risks may mean greater than normal gain. In the neoliberal market, risk semantic entails opportunities based on probabilities and heuristic measures. Profits from the statistical aggregation of probabilities are potentially expected to annihilate loss. In this sense of the probabilistic unknowns and chance, risk reflexively constitutes a ‘danger.’ Unbridled risk in exchange for excessive gains engenders neoliberal capitalism, and it stands as an antithesis to the idea of citizenship equality. In response to this contradiction, Arjun Appadurai suggests an unmooring of the tools for market control from the probabilistic calculation and economic irresponsibility. “The techniques of calculability (and hence its

domain) have far exceeded the organizations and tools for its management, hence opening a new distance between expert and popular understandings of risk” (Appadurai 2011, 528).

Of course, the free rein that expert free market investors wield is open to speculations and artificial reworking; this opens the free market to adverse economic disastrous endings like the 2008 global financial crisis. In the United States, excessive speculation, artificial pricing, and subprime lending led to a catastrophic event that resonated in many parts of the world. The globalizing effect of finance on a world interconnected by technology and real-time information led many to lose their jobs, homes, and even lives. The consequences of neoliberal decisions have led to many precarious lives that are vulnerable and without a stable sense of job so that one can speak of the flexibilization of work as a risk regime. A brief account of the theorization of the flexible world of work and its place in the world risk society follows. This account helps in understanding uncertainty and financial risk in *Behold the Dreamers* and highlights the existential threat they pose for the immigrant family in the novel.

The deterritorialization of global economics means decisions in certain places may produce dire consequences across national boundaries. The Asian financial crisis of the 1990s and the 2008 global financial crisis are two instances. Both are linked to the global adoption of a neoliberal ethos that favors laissez-faire economics and minimal government supervision. “Risk is now part and parcel of the machinery of contemporary capitalism, and the ‘devices’ that measure, model, and forecast risks are central to the financing of modern capitalism. Uncertainty and risk in finance emerge through a distinction from knowing what we don’t know” (Appadurai 2011, 524) and thinking we know based on what we know. Unknown outcomes and probabilistic permutations produced by neoliberal capitalism have global repercussions because “[...] urban districts, firms, occupational groups, and thus millions of individuals of every skin color and religion, live and work in both local isolation and global association” (Beck 2000, 29).

While the criticism of neoliberal capitalism has continued to intensify, the term seems to evade strict definitions, and the meaning has changed over the years. For Milton Friedman, neoliberalism points at a state economic system that seeks to

to use competition among producers to protect consumers from exploitation, competition among employers to protect workers and owners of property, and competition among consumers to protect the enterprises themselves. The state would police the system, establish conditions favorable to competition and prevent monopoly, provide a stable monetary framework, and relieve acute misery and distress. The citizens would be protected against the state by the existence of a free private market; and against one another by the preservation of competition. (Friedman n.p).

Therefore, Friedman's position pushes for structures that replace the theories of the proponents of the earlier laissez-faire liberalism like Ludwig von Mises with the competitive drive. His agenda includes state interventions at crucial points. However, the free reins that his neoliberal definitions explicated have been curtailed, resulting in the legacy of the wolfish agenda of financial markets, the extreme privatization of government services, extreme competition, and erasure of union in many societies. This development has drawn criticism from scholars interested in globalization and postcolonial studies.

The term neo-liberalism designates economies that establish free-market and competitive and financialized regimes, despite the political system in place. Financialization implies "the increasing predominance of financial markets in Western economies, the dramatically growing trade volume of financial instruments, as well as the power of financial actors to shape the management of corporations and to greatly influence political decision-making" (Kloeckner 2015, 464). It renders "citizens into self-governing subjects whose human capital becomes a passport toward realizing individual freedom in diverse transnational realms. Extremist notions of individual freedom ('citizenship')—to be forged by the autonomous action of free individuals—can be a threat to democracy (Ong 2006, 231). Such an economic dispensation is opened to free-market rule, price volatility, and a *homo homini lupus* competitive ethos. Following this, the unintended consequence of the neoliberal free-market utopia is flexibilization, precarity, underemployment, foreclosures, and financial meltdowns.

6.1 FLEXIBLE EMPLOYMENTS, UNSTABLE LIFESTYLES

This thesis argues that Ulrich Beck's theorizations are not grand narratives but provisional tools in examining the social conditions of late modernity. It is then necessary to note that Beck's historicizing of the new world of work exempts many individuals whose works were flexible, dangerous, and uncertain in early modernity. The work types and conditions of African Americans in the United States and Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic (BAME) in Britain are cases in point. Across the globe, colonial regimes of power and economic control also made individuals poorer. Beck's categories and explication largely reflect on the neoliberal consequences of post-Fordism, flexibilization of work, and the transnational attribute of capital. He argues that the transcendental powers of multinationals over the state and society produce a politics of place that undermines national sovereignty (Beck 1999; 2000). While many accept

that globalization underpins capital flows in late modernity, Beck's explication is insufficient to understand how they affect (im)migrants in the West and populations of the Global South. Crucially, undocumented immigrants represent an unnamable class, aptly represented by the term 'denizen' in Guy Standing's work. "A denizen is someone who, for one reason or the other, has a more limited range of rights than citizens do" (Standing 2011, 14).

Citizens of the Global South, such as Sub-Saharan African countries that gained their independence in the 1960s, entered a world economy dictated by geopolitical economics and the expansion of the neoliberal ethos. The Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs) imposed on developing economies as conditions for loans from the Bretton Woods Institutions are a case in point. The design, instructions, orchestrations, and loan conditions emerged from the neoliberal policy. The outcome of the structural adjustment programs of the 1980s instigated severe socio-economic disturbances and displacements within many countries in the Global South. The World Bank's Structural Adjustment Programs minimized government finance of utility services and social securities encouraged privatization, devaluation of currencies, reduction or eradication of government subsidy for vital sectors like education and health care. These created precarious conditions for many of the Global South's citizens. In the aftermath, many citizens migrated to economically developed countries that needed labor, an act of self-actualization as citizens strove to make a better life from extant poverty.

In recent times, precarity has been an important concept in the social sciences and humanities. The term, widely used, primarily denotes two things. Firstly, it signifies the ethical concern for vulnerable subjects and the general vulnerability of the individual. This is mostly articulated by Judith Butler, who sees precarity and precariousness as a basis for ethical relationality. Precarity in this light provides us with a frame to capture human "grievability." Within this frame, the questions: who counts as human?, whose lives count as lives? are pertinent. The second entails consideration of neoliberal capitalism as capable of adversely affecting work security subjectivity. This strand of precarity theorises and evaluates contemporary cannibalistic capitalism and attempts to map meanings on human conditions. In this way, when one considers the second strand, precarity is then "an ongoing economic problem, indicating the link between uncertainty and the capitalist blooming. Capitalism thrives on instability, shaping bodies and minds." (Jokinen 88). It is within this second strand that Guy Standing articulates the 'precariat', a neologism that combines precarious and proletariat to signify a social group. Standing distinguishes seven groups within the old class system which persists, in this group,

the precariat lives in the bottom consisting of “an army of unemployed and a detached group of socially ill misfits living off the dregs of society” (Standing 2011, 8).

The Kenyan writer, Yvonne Owuor has powerfully conveyed a sense of this perilous economic state. “Precarity is a condition that is often associated with neoliberal capitalism and its perverted logic of blaming the victim for his or her suffering, rather than examining the skewed power and economic relations that might have contributed to that suffering – a logic that relies on scapegoating to absolve the inflicter of suffering from any blame” (Owuor 2018, 5). In this sense, precarity entails feelings of vulnerability and uncertainty in a neoliberal capitalist economy.

Aihwa Ong has articulated the universal logic of neoliberalism, and its ability to influence different political regimes like “capitalism, authoritarianism and postsocialist (2006, 237). For her, the failure of neo-liberalism stems from its “market-driven individualism [that] subvert[s] the freedoms enshrined in citizenship by stripping away the old guarantees of citizenship protections (237). In “Targeting and Universalism in Poverty Reduction,” Thandika Mkandawire denounces the neoliberal ideological stance for its “limits on social policy.” He argues that this “underpins the preferences for “user fees”, means-testing, market delivery of social services or “partnerships” in their delivery.” Importantly, Mkandawire sees a link between neoliberalism and the foreclosure of equity concerns (Mkandawire 2005, 2).

The co-opting of nation-states into neoliberal economics as a precondition for World Bank loans created the conditions and need for migration from the global south to the developed economies. Mojúbàolú Olúfúnké Okome argues, for example, that “SAP and democratization have generated some of the antinomies of globalization by causing both negative and positive forces that drive the unending desire for Africans to migrate, immigrate, and to seek political asylum in the US” (Okome 2002, 35). Moreover, the architecture of global neoliberal capitalism demands high and low-skilled labor, which has also necessitated unwanted surplus immigrant labour since work contracts are usually tied to residence permits and naturalization.

Nation-states are, in this way, still vital to the interrogation of emerging migration patterns. In enforcing border control simultaneously as they seek external labour for gross domestic and national growth, nation-states create a conflict such that the native working class is frequently set against the immigrant working class. Saskia Sassen-Koob demonstrates the dimensions through which borders create a labor reserve that is susceptible to exploitation and an opposing native precarious class that sees the criminalized ‘immigrants’ as a risk group (Sasskia-Koob

1981, 70). The enforcement of national borders contributes to the peripheralization of a part of the world and the designation of its workers as a labor reserve. Border enforcement is a mechanism facilitating the extraction of surplus labor by assigning criminal status to a segment of the working class – the ‘illegal’ immigrants. In this way, foreign workers are assumed to undermine a nation’s working-class since they may opt for lesser pay and undercut workers’ rights. Even though the state renders this class of immigrants socially and politically powerless, they are very active in the informal economy.

Border enforcement has over the years created a criminalized immigrant class – undocumented migrants—despite their vital roles in the informal economy. The criminalization of undocumented migrants is an interpellated gesture that designates the undocumented immigrant as an outlaw. Thus, the ethics of human rights and critical responses to the continued abuse and socio-economic stigmatization of undocumented migrants demand a moral, legislative, and legal reconsideration essentially because irregular/undocumented migrants seem victims of precarious conditions evolving from certain conditions. “Uncertainty and risk have become central features of the U.S. labour market, and this risk is disproportionately felt by the 11 million undocumented workers who occupy a structurally vulnerable position in the U.S. economy” (Halpin 2015, 420). The term ‘undocumented’ points at individuals in certain terrain whose place within a statistic agglomeration is unavailable hence losing “the power to name themselves” (Owuor 2018, 5). Since undocumented migrant groups form a class that cannot answer its name, they often opt for the self-exploitative dimension of migrant labor. Hence, they may take up unfair menial jobs, work for long hours without adequate compensation, and be silent about unfair tendencies to earn enough for quotidianly needs and remittances. According to Marcel Paret and Shannon Gleeson, “lack of citizenship and vulnerability to deportation, for example, commonly push migrant workers into grey areas of the economy where wages are low, benefits are non-existent, and basic workplace protections have limited penetration” (Paret and Gleeson 2016, 281). This chapter proceeds with a literary analysis of the thematization of the vulnerability of the undocumented migrant and the working class in a world risk society where work is flexible, uncertain, and (not) legalized. The neoliberal capitalistic economy in the novel *Behold, the Dreamers*, engenders working-class and immigrant subjects that are dispensable in a work society that is flexible and uncertain.

6.2 IN PURSUIT OF FINANCIAL HAPPINESS: READING UNDOCUMENTED MIGRATION AND FINANCIAL RISK

Behold the Dreamers (2016) is the Cameroonian American writer Imbolo Mbue's debut novel. It relates the lives of the immigrant Jonga family in the United States. Their lives are at different points tied to the Edwards, an affluent White American family whose patriarch works with Lehman Brothers till its collapse. Jendi Jonga, the patriarch of the Cameroonian family, works as the Edwards' chauffeur, working multiple hours without clear demarcations between his private and work time. His wife, Neni Jonga, also works occasionally for the Edwards family. Jendi Jonga is eventually fired when Lehman Brothers collapses, and Mr. Edwards's secret extramarital affair leaks to the media. Cindy Edwards forces her husband to sack Jendi, and this propels the Jongas' remigration to Cameroon. The novel creates a hierarchy of class, differentiated by access to Wall Street or national belonging. This also reflects in the high earning/low-income, citizen/denizen binaries that allow a more flexible work regime for some and not others.

The novel is set against the background of the 2007/2008 global financial crisis. Hobbesian strife in the finance market and financial insecurity form the background/substructure/or raw materials of the fabula. *Behold the Dreamers* overlaps the individual with the institutional, the quotidian or every day with the remarkable esoterica of Wall Street finance. Everyday life and the rush towards economic success underpin the novel's realist depictions. The idea of an American Dream where individuals can become wealthy if they work hard enough is truncated in a fabula that presents an immigrant family willing to go through the hard work to attain their dream only to be laid off because of their employer's domestic quibbles. The novel complicates the dream of neoliberal success and portrays neoliberalism in the global economy as central to human interaction and political decisions. As the novel reaches a climax, the Jonga couple comes to some wealth which they gather from saving, the goodwill of the church Neni attends, and a financial gift from Mr. Edwards. The financial capital gathered will set them apart in Cameroon, though a chunk of the proceeds emanates from the predatory practices of the former Lehman Brothers executive.

In the novel, financial risk marks the world of the Jongas. Their futures are uncertain due to their irregular immigration status; however, they perceive their immigration to the United States as actionable ways to redeem the past and map the futures in line with the American dream. Nevertheless, their need to become legal residents truncates a known, stable, and continuous

employment, as a predatory economy that unevenly relies on a laissez-faire economic control subverts future work projects. Further, the possibility of participating in the American neoliberal dream necessitates a cognitive and perceptual schema through which the protagonist and his family evaluate the future. To be sidelined by this dream produces existential uncertainties and anxieties, leading to an anticipated financial crisis for the characters. However, these risks are produced through decisions and are thus human-made catastrophes which are the unknown consequences of board room executive forecast, avarice, and greed.

Despite the global solidarity that the novel's timeframe espouses and the progressive context in which Barack Obama becomes the United States' president, the novel, through a fictional approach, disintegrates the humanist neoliberal dream and shows asymmetrical orders and conditions in attaining such dreams. Undocumented immigrant characters closely linked to what Guy Standing has described as denizens (Standing 2011) stand far removed from achieving the American Dream. For the non-immigrant working-class characters like Leah and Anna, anxieties emerge through the uncertain conditions of work. They recognize that attaining the dream involves choices, decisions, actions, and job choices are perceived as necessary in attaining this dream. Further, the romanticization of the ease of global movements and its corollary, cosmopolitanism, hit a brick wall, as the freedom of movement is not equal.

The chapter considers the forms through which characters make meaning of the world of work and its risks and argues that through the financialization and flexibility of post-Fordist work culture, a dispensable class of workers is created. So, the individual requires to consistently work on themselves and align with new job demands or take on additional duties. The novel, therefore, presents characters who are constantly anxious about the future of their employment. The novel adopts a reflective aesthetics to reveal the underbelly of capitalist neoliberalism and the precarity of undocumented immigrants as constituting the world risk society. Ethics and pathos rely on a narrative situation that prioritizes the focalization of an immigrant family in America who live through the precarious conditions in their home country Cameroon and uncertain futures as undocumented immigrants in the United States. Confronted with a potentially suitable future, the past life in Cameroon becomes an interpretative mechanism for their hope in the future. This way, the novel offers a mimetic representation of the social condition of immigrants in late modernity.

For Neni and Jendi Jonga, the impoverished Cameroonian past forces them to adapt to the flexible and uncertain contemporary work culture in the United States. The couple shapes their

daily lives to reflect and accept the conditions of the new world of work as they anticipate the catastrophe of possible deportation on the one hand and an immiserated lifestyle back in their home country. Therefore, decisive actions towards the future foreground a constant reworking of the self to be acceptable within the work economy of New York City, a commercial center where their hopes of financial freedom are possibly going to be fulfilled.

New York is crucial to understanding the finance-scape of the novel because it functions as a metonymy for the financial world order and one of the crucial points of late modernity's capital network. Therefore, the major characters are in the center of late global capitalism, which takes material form when Jendi takes Neni to Columbus Circle and tells her that they are literally in the center of the world (96). Such place politics and access to global capital destinations evince the systemic inequality that positions characters like the Edwards as the beneficiaries of the global financial system that is risky while the working-class characters like the Jongas and the staff of Lehman Brothers are left to the vagaries of inconsistent cash flow and managerial decisions.

The novel thus echoes the socially transformative power of literary productions as “a discursive practice that encodes and transmits as well as creates ideology, [literature] is a mediating force in society: it structures our sense of the world since narrative stylistic conventions and plot resolutions serve to either sanction and perpetuate cultural myths, or to create new mythologies that allow the writer and the reader to engage in the constructive rewriting of their social contexts (Lionnet 1995, 101). The realist aesthetic of the novel is a viable vehicle for articulating and engaging social change in the brave new world of work brought about by neoliberal capitalism.

Furthermore, the narrative spatial setting switches between Cameroon, a developing country, and the United States to show the dynamics in the consequences of neoliberal economics. The shifts to Cameroon present and explain the conditions that have encouraged immigration to the Global North as emerging from neoliberal capitalistic agents. This is duly dramatized through the antinomies of home which take on both a negative and positive significance. The Cameroon home is complicated and constitutes a site of flight for citizens. *Behold the Dreamers* highlights the multiple failures of the Cameroon government while also putting up global neoliberalism for interrogation. Neni Jonga sees immigration to the United States as a step away from the autocratic conditions in Cameroon and an escape from misery.

The novel shows that Cameroon's miseries, created partly by the consequences of Bretton Woods economic policies, severe impoverishment, and an oppressive government, contribute to immigration. The attempt to coopt the globe into a unified financial system represents a failure that exacerbates national dissatisfaction with Cameroon's political class. The combination makes Cameroon unlivable for Jendi and pushes him to immigrate. They also dramatize the failures of neoliberal projects on the continent. In a dialogue with Mr. Edwards, Jendi relates an oppressive regime and a form of a caste system that perpetually puts individuals in socio-economic classes that depend on their access to the political center. Jendi foregrounds this evaluation of home by comparing it to the United States:

Because my country is no good, sir," he said. "It is nothing like America. I stay in my country, I would have become nothing. I would have remained nothing. My son will grow up and be poor like me, just like I was poor like my father. But in America, sir? I can become something. I can even become a respectable man. My son can become a respectable man (39).

The passage highlights the consequences of lack of nuance about home, ignorance about the risks associated with emigrating, and the promise of success enabled by the American dream. Faced with a predictable poor future in Cameroon, where he expects to pass his poverty down to his children, Jendi opts for the uncertainty of immigration based on American success stories. He immigrates because he believes social mobility in Cameroon is impossible. The oppressive, postcolonial, and recently turned neoliberal state erases his opportunities to such a degree that he feels unable to acquire material prosperity. Jendi tells Mr. Edwards, "for you to become somebody, you have to be born somebody first" (40). The pronoun "somebody" functions as an indicator, describing the state of having influence and subjecthood. To be somebody dignifies a person and gives them the freedom to be human, which includes access to social, political, and economic prosperity without abuse. Jendi sees immigration to the United States as a vehicle to reclaim his lost 'humanity' and a means to remedy the future risk. He highlights this point to Mr. Edwards when the latter asks about his future in Cameroon: "That is the problem, sir. I could not even marry my wife" (43).

To further engage immigration as a vehicle for self-actualization, the novel presents Cameroon as a troubled place where citizens attempt to leave in droves to escape from the "crises thrown up by the potentate's murderous self-aggrandizement projects" (Adeeko 2008, 11). The anxiety associated with returning to such a place motivates Jendi to seek legal means to remain in America because he would not want to "return to a country where visions of a better life were the birthright of a blessed few, to a town from which dreamers like him were fleeing daily" (Mbue 60). Adeleke Adeeko in "Power Shift: America in the New Nigerian Imagination,"

argues that America is “a location for exilic recuperative” for the impressionable youth in Helon Habila’s *Waiting for an Angel* (Adeeko 2008, 14). Similarly, Jendi and Neni perceive America as a recuperative ‘beacon of hope’ where honest labor is rewarded. For Jendi, in particular, the redemptive aspect of the American dream and ‘open door’ image to a ‘city set on the hill’ is important in the health, finance, humanistic senses. His urge to leave Cameroon is most acute when he is unjustly thrown into prison by Neni’s father. “It was during the nights of his illness that he thought about his life, about what he would do with it once he was released. He could not think of anything he wanted than to leave Cameroon, move to a country where decent young men weren’t thrown into prison for minor crimes but were instead given opportunities to make something of their lives” (Mbue 2016, 245).

Significantly, in prison, free from the hustle of work in a post-SAP neoliberal economy, he is able to introspect and formulate strategies of escape. To this end, America looms large on his imagination as an equalizing nation with “milk, honey, and liberty flowing in the paradise-for-strivers,” contrasting the social hierarchies of rights and inequities of justice in Cameroon (19). The idea of America as a country that upholds rights and gives access to prosperity and freedom motivates him to emigrate.

In the United States, Jendi recognizes the substance of this idea as he looks out for symbols and acts that validate his presumption. In a dialogue with Mr. Edwards, his boss in New York, he appears to have achieved that state of personhood and subjective importance that the United States promises. He tells Mr. Edwards, “you are talking to me as if I am somebody, and I am sitting in this seat, feeling as if I am somebody” (44).

Similarly, for his wife Neni, the charm of the American promise of happiness is predicated on her imaginary construction of America that is shaped by her consumption of American cultural productions like soap operas and movies that depict egalitarian and prosperous lifestyles. “She began watching American movies like *Stepmom* and *Mrs. Doubtfire* not only for leisure but also as advance preparation, envisioning a future in New York where she would finish her education, own a home, raise a happy family” (312). Although she recognizes that America has its share of pains and inequalities, America’s promise reassures her that she “could still become far more than she would have become in Limbe” (313).

However, despite the Jongas hope and aspirations, their entrance into the world of work and the neoliberal demands for individual responsibility coupled with their undocumented status throws

them into the harsh reality of the American neoliberal economy. The telling signs are evident at the point of entry into America; Neni, for example, recognizes that “America may not be what it is in the media” (313) such that her positive image of perfect America disintegrates at the point of interaction with America.

Furthermore, the idea of a perfect country gets deconstructed when the reality of their immigration status dawns on Neni. Their uncertain state is burdensome since they need to work and plan for the future, but work is foremostly tied to the possession of work and residence permits, which are limited for many immigrant characters like her. Neni enters America with a student visa. Therefore, she can only work for a certain number of hours per week, which hampers her earning powers. Therefore, she cannot adequately enter into a late modern society where work is “the core value and mode of integration [...] to such an extent that almost no alternative remains” (Beck 1999b, 11). In the novel, visas and work permits regulate entrance into the world of work. The pursuit of visas and work permits creates anxiety and fear. For example, Jendi fears the rejection of his asylum application would mean he would lose his well-paying job and eventually lead to his deportation to Cameroon. Such an event means he would return to the lifestyle and poverty from which he had attempted to run. “How would he have explained that his work permit and driver’s license were valid *only* for as long as his asylum application was pending or approved, and that if his application were to be denied, all his documents would become invalid and there would be no green card?” (Mbue 2016, 8).

Here the conditional tense overlaps with the free indirect discourse to signal an emotive and causal result of his lack of proper documentation, which is linked to the possibility of him having a job or not. By fusing Jendi’s and the narrator’s thoughts, the novel establishes a moral vision that rests on the irony of Jendi’s condition since he is willing to work, but his legal status may undermine this willingness. As he waits for a decision, the cited interrogative free indirect discourse indicates Jendi’s perpetual restlessness that Jendi inhabits. His future is open to the risk of denial.

Jendi’s apprehension is further exacerbated by the deferral of his court case. The uncertain outcome creates ontological risk for Jendi and his family, and this is depicted when he answers a phone call from Boubacar. “He picked up the phone warily, knowing it had to be big news, good or bad: Immigration lawyers, like doctors, did not call to say hello” (56). Jendi’s anxiety stretches through the fabula until he decides to leave America.

Before that decision, Jendi prays, “oh, God, don’t let them deport me even though he is not particularly religious (71). Jendi’s fear and anxieties assume a psychosomatic dimension. He is unable to sleep and eat, and his and Neni’s fears extinguish their appetite (259). Furthermore, Jendi’s health deteriorates as a result of working long and strenuous hours. Indeed, to avoid a calamitous health episode, Jendi decides to leave his job and remigrate even while the asylum case is pending. His expectation of an unpleasant and unhealthy future in America creates heightened and ominous fear that enables him to overcome the limitations of life in Cameroon. Adverse health conditions for any of the spouses will result in a loss of fortune. Jendi acknowledges this when he complains to Neni that they will not be able to get adequate health care if any of them gets seriously sick (309). The health risk is an important decision factor. It is at the moment when he exits the doctor’s office that he arrives at the conclusion that he overcomes his anxieties about his residency asylum application (305). The arduous work culture in a new world of work backed by a production-centric inclination to meet consumerist culture instigates a health crisis inscribed corporally into the daily world of Jendi. By envisioning the future and anticipating a health catastrophe, Jendi decides to return to Limbe. He then constructs New York in its neoliberal and destructive excess. He complains to Neni, “I don’t like what my life has become in this country. I don’t know how long I can continue living like this, Neni. The suffering in Limbe was bad, but this one here, right now [...] it’s more than I can take” (306). The neoliberal work culture engenders medical uncertainty for him, which produces new dilemmas that ultimately make him return to Cameroon. If work causes the ultimate end of being an undocumented immigrant, especially without the safety net of social welfare, the American dream is then, in this case, deferred for Jendi and Neni to the point of complete failure.

Based on this unknown and unpredictable future that awaits him outside of America, the lives of the Jongas are restricted to the present; uncertainty about the future then foregrounds an anxious schema that taunts the stability of these characters. This lack of assurance is also evident in the way the narrative is constantly truncated through analepsis and contrast that interacts between New York, America and Limbe, Cameroon. The representation of their new lives in America is hindered by the past of Limbe; in trying to shed the past pre-immigration lives so as to enter the American work world, they are rustled by the bureaucracy of adequate documentation and immigrant policies. Consequently, to function in the world of work requires a political life guaranteed by the legislation and executive orders of citizen and residential identities. In light of Fabio Perocco’s (2018) explication of precarious conditions related to

migration, these characters experience the legal sphere as a site of subordination and risk since the right of abode is linked to work. It then follows that Jendi and Neni are limited to a Sisyphean job life that is unstable because the legitimacy within the host country, legal permit to work, needs to be fulfilled. They are unable to project their future, and this inability relegates the Jongas to the base of the social and economic ladder.

Accordingly, the fear of job loss underpins the story world of Jendi and Neni as they consider the adverse effect of the financial crash on their immigrant work lives. Similarly, while Jendi's legal status affects his economic situation, it certainly has adverse implications on his social position. Since New York is one of the spatial settings of the novel, then it can be argued that because Jendi and his family are within this space, the moral context of the American society, which aligns work to good moral standing, also applies to the Jongas. So, paid labor is, for Jendi, a means to be a responsible individual within the social order and where his individual existence can be validated through work.

By drawing on the biographies of Jendi and Neni, Mbue's *Behold the Dreamers* can be read as an allegory for the flexible work conditions in late modernity. Immigrants, as well as citizens, participate in a new world of work that is unstable and precarious. The undocumented Jendi who only possesses an Employment Authorization Document stands in for the millions of immigrants whose subjectivities and dignities are anchored on feudal-like subjects – denizens that are not sufficiently endowed with the rights to be humans. In this way, the novel raises ethical concerns about the contradiction between America's declaration of human rights and the dehumanization of undocumented immigrants. The tentative situation of the Jongas, like for many other undocumented immigrants, functions as a governmental tool of control that polices their choices in an uncertain and flexible neoliberal work system. As such, their desire to be recognized as humans and attain the state of *humanhood* and desirable immigrants is to adhere, firstly, to prescriptive individual biographies and legislated streams of performance. Hence, on an individual and family-scale, the withdrawal from undocumented immigrants like Jendi of some human privileges in the neoliberal economy produces multiple risks.

These risks are enacted for the Jongas through uncertain biographical frames, psycho-social alienation and health problems. The panacea for the Jongas' financial and medical condition is more work. When Mr. Edwards informs Jendi that he can take a paid vacation in the summer, he considers calling the cab company for work and also finds a housekeeping job for his wife, Neni (108-109). It is, however in the work condition after his sack that the risks and

uncertainties of the flexible world of work for the immigrant characters become clear. At this point, Jendi works “two jobs, mornings, afternoons, evenings. He worked weekends, too. For six days of the week, he left before Liomi woke up and came back after he was in bed” (257). It may be construed that more work results in less family time for Jendi and his family and that Jendi has little time for his personal growth. There are also health consequences for him as he takes on this work. Since he has little time for other matters, when he develops a foot ache, and Neni fears it might be arthritis, Jende could not take some time off to see a podiatrist (258). At this stage, Jende work exposes the neoliberal political economy in which low-wage earners have to take on multiple jobs in the US to maintain a respectable living standard (Beck 2000b, 116). This work scenario portends existential crisis and psychological anxieties for Jendi and his family which is evident in the language of agony and distress that Jendi uses when he tells his wife they have to return to Cameroon. “I don’t like what my life has become in this country. I don’t know how long I can continue like this, Neni. The suffering in Limbe was bad, but this one here, right now ... it’s more than I can take” (306). Further down the passage, he complains, “This work, work, work, all the time. For what? For a little money? How much suffering can a man take in this world, eh?” Jendi’s feeling of helplessness and hopelessness, within the work culture of the United States, evokes a sense of risk of the flexible neoliberal American economy. It is so not surprising that Jendi finds his redemption out of his denizen situation and work circumstances by leaving the United States, which is evident in the use of the simile of humble appeal and redemption from errancy, “like a child pleading for mercy” (306).

6.3 NEW WORLD OF WORK AND RISK

The novel does not limit its representations of financial risk to the immigrant characters, it also pursues a broader attempt at depicting the malaise and conditions of the working class in late modernity. This is represented by minor characters like Leah, Mr. Clark Edwards’ secretary and Anna, the Edwards’ domestic staff. Heightened nervousness is the lifeworld of the characters as *Behold the Dreamers* fictionalizes how the “methodically, rationalization, calculation and sober business practice” (Appadurai 2011, 522) hallmarks of early capitalist ethics are put aside (524) this later results in recession. Leah links the housing risk and failure to find proper housing to frenetic anxiety; she tells Jende, “Ever since the subprime unit fell apart ... everyone’s been nervous like crazy. And I hate being nervous. Life’s much too short” (49). Leah’s acute sense of ontological uncertainty is in recognition of the dispensability of her

low-wage role as a secretary. Her position is reminiscent of Halpin's contention that "often low-wage service workers are viewed as disposable workers and debates on employment flexibility depict peripheral workers in a similar capacity—highly disposable, peripheral workers buffer core employees from market fluctuations" (Halpin 2015, 420). Aware that it might be easy to lay her off, she asks Jendi, "When it's time to lay off people, do you think they're the ones who'll be going?" (50). What Leah's rhetorical question seeks to portray is the precarious condition of staff members like her, Jendi, Anna and Neni, who, having been cut off from unions, are left to the whims of the market and executives. Her rhetorical question is then a fundamental enquiry into the abject form of living of low-waged staff like her. This is also reflected in the social position and subjectification of people like her as "little": "No, honey, it'll be us, the little people" (50). Leah's pessimism is drawn from her social position as unequal; this feeling is typified by her view of herself as little. The power relation in this fragile world of work is embodied in the aftermath of Jendi's sack, where Mr. Clark Edwards shakes Jendi's "weak hand" (253). The asymmetry in the work dynamics registers a symbolic act that, on the first level, demonstrates the power relations as stated earlier; it also shows the subject/object positions of the involved characters if the reader considers the grammatical construction: Mr. Clark Edwards possessing the agential power and shaking, and the passive weakness of Jendi whose hand is being shaken. The weakness in this engagement and Jendi's refusal to seek redress for unfair termination depicts Gleeson's claim that "[u]ndocumented workers are often reluctant to activate workplace rights and protections in response to workplace violations and wage theft, which increases their vulnerability vis-a-vis their employers" (Gleeson qtd. in Halpin 422).

Behold the Dreamers further follows other forms of insecure employment. Employment models are depicted as highly precarious even for well-documented immigrants and American citizens. The stability and guarantee of a job with citizenship or valid work permit, even though jobs are sometimes an illusion makes Leah's condition different from Jendi. Leah, a citizen "I've got over twenty years of experience, honey. I'm not worried. I'm going to take a month and relax before I start a job search" (183). This is further heightened by the financial crisis, which negatively turns around the wealth of the Edwards' family. The uncertainty and vulnerability of employment that characters like Anna experience after the bankruptcy of the fictional Lehman Brothers are narratively extended on a mesoscale. Anna, for example, does not want to lose her housekeeping job with the Edwards', which means she has to do extra work so that Cindy will not fire her. But this is tied to her family's financial commitment to sponsor her

daughter, who is in college and support her son with his family, who is a construction worker (262). The novel thus reinforces its critical and seeming jeremiad mode by representing how “[i]n neoliberal frames of privatization, financialization, and management of crises, jobs are being taken away, hopes are obliterated, and bodies are instrumentalized and worn out. But new life forms and forms of subjectivity are also being produced (that is, human life turned into capital), as “debt” becomes a fundamental technology of biopolitical governmentality – a political and moral economy of life itself” (Athanasίου and Butler 2013, 12).

The novel depicts the new world of work on a global level, highlighting the precarious working conditions in a ‘third-world’ country and in a ‘developed’ country. In both cases, work is depicted as precarious and uncertain and administered through political policies and international forces. In Cameroon, the work culture is depicted as highly insufficient to meet the individuals’ basic needs; work is also a favor that individuals must seek in order to live above poverty conditions. Similarly, in the United States, the lives of many workers are subjected to consistent anxiety as news of downgrading and layoffs loom. A timeline of precarious conditions orientates the novel. By depicting a post-SAP Cameroon and the immigrant family’s precarious condition in the United States, the novel cites a global condition of work that succumbs to neoliberalism to create precarious subjects. Imbolo Mbue relies on realist mimesis to achieve this, and the power of the novel lies in the novel’s adoption of realist aesthetics, which serves to highlight the contradictions of individualized success and extreme poverty that a neoliberal ethos entails.

Furthermore, the differing class dynamics that exist in the novel present a thematic platform to engage the modes of risk and uncertainties that flexible and informal work on the one hand and the ‘neoliberalized’ social security structure on the other hand entail. While Anna and Leah are both gainfully employed, the tenuous employment positions that they both occupy means that Anna, as an immigrant worker, cannot look forward to social benefits after she leaves the home of the Edwards. Leah, on the other hand, has to wait for another five years to enter the social security system. In the neoliberal space, thus, the producers of economic risks are the victors of the system; this imbalance leaves characters like the Jongas, Leah and Anna, who represent millions, to the whims and caprices of neoliberal utopianism that hinges on the decision of a few. In the novel, the narrator shows that these characters cannot be trusted with upholding the tenets; instead, through unorganized irresponsibility financial speculation, the characters in the Columbus class like Tom and Lehman Brothers executives operate clandestine financial maneuverings that eventually lead to a financial depression (98-99, 177).

Imbolo Mbue focuses on underclass characters, invigorating a realist inclination towards the representation of social conditions. It is also through this realist element that the novel prioritizes the outlier immigrant outlier and other underclass experience in order to show the social inequalities and class hierarchies that demarcate certain people as disposable in neoliberal economies. The financial crash, as represented in the novel, thus births a rationalization of human labor dispensability. This is evident in Cheri's use of disposable language to explain Rosa (their maid)'s tentative sack. Cheri speaking of her husband, tells Cindy, "he thinks maybe we should *get rid* of Rosa for a few months, to save." (180, emphasis mine). Cindy also adopts this pestilential language of unwanted and fungibility. Mighty cites her when he tells Jendi of his probable sack, "she was telling my dad that he had to get rid of him, get rid of him right now, or else..." (242). This resonates with Ulrich Beck's argument about the problematics of the neoliberal job market that generates newer and sharper problems like "low wages, low productivity, low social security, growing income inequality" (Beck 200, 44-45) and, of course, uncertain futures.

Further, by focalizing on the human objects of unintended consequences of neoliberalism, a pathos is produced that shows the precarity of working-class condition. So, when Jendi anticipates his sack, he explains to Winston, "without this job, what will I do? My whole body is shaking. What am I going to do if they —" (244). His fears and anxieties inscribed in corporal form and depicted through his shaking body emphasize the daily stress of the uncertain, precarious condition of neoliberal work culture. Jende's anxiety and its repercussion on his life point at certain points the unalterable, represented in ellipsis. The urgency is related by the fast pace, short sentences, staccato rhythm of the narration: "Of course it was going to end happily. It was probably going to ... most likely going to ... but it was best he took out everything he owned and tidied up the car. But what if it didn't end happily? Of course, it was going to end happily" (249). This contrasts sharply with the agential power of Clark Edwards at the moment he intends to relay the news to Jendi. While the emotions and anxiety are simultaneous for Jendi, Clark Edward's actions are narrated as a series of events, ordered, intentional: he lifts his head, smiles, utters no word and motions while he continues writing (250). The delay versus urgency demonstrates the power of the Wall Street executive to determine the future of Jendi. He privileges a mandatory form of discourse in relaying the message, telling Jendi, "I'm going to have to let you go" (251). This is even though Jendi, in trying to keep his job, obeys Clark Edwards instruction to select events to record in the blue book. The power relations are, using synecdoche, depicted through the hand, Edward shakes "Jende's weak hand" (253). This

illustrates the one-sided advantage of a neoliberal culture that ignores social protection but valorizes profit optimization, a side effect of the world risk society.

6.4 GENDER AND THE NEW WORLD OF WORK

Late modernity might have seen broad ‘progress’ in women’s condition in regard to access to education, professional liberties, wider choices to live lives of their own and opportunities that do not restrict them to the margins of the home. However, if modernity work conditions were forged over a period when women’s rights were beginning to ossify; and if work conditions of industrial modernity, both for the bourgeoisie and proletariat, presupposed a gendered division of labor, it stands to reason that the erosion of these ‘conventional’ norms regarding work is prone to fissures, friction and risk. *Behold the Dreamers* instantiates these tensions and demonstrates double labor as a result of work culture and expectations shaped by the gendered industrial modernity standards. The clear lines between public and private, leisure and work, productive labor and unproductive labor that existed in early modernity are framed in their hybridized and fluid components of late modernity. This interstice between the worlds of work is embedded into the narrative through the biographies of the female characters whose jobs cannot be sufficiently discussed without the gendered aspect of work and the neoliberal construction of productive work. The place of women in the work community that is becoming highly complex and contingent is importantly portrayed through the characters of Anna, Leah, and Neni. While the female characters in the novel are largely domestic workers or wives of executives, the novel displays the evolving work system where women are entering the work community and taking charge of family incomes. The gender dimension to work itself may not be progressively treated in the novel, but it establishes grounds for engaging the new dimensions and double labor of women both as participants in work communities and caregivers as in the case of traditional families like the Jongas. One can read two major possibilities to the nature of the new world of work as it concerns gender in the novel, *Behold the Dreamers*.

Firstly, the novel fictionalizes the double-work conditions for women as an extant reality of late modernity in the way that echoes Elizabeth Beck-Gernsheim’s claim that “women today are no longer defined as much as they used to be in terms of family life and a male provider, but they still take much more responsibility than do men for family tasks and are still much less protected

by a stable position in the labour market” (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim 2002, 56). Neni’s lived experience as a mother in the Jongas’ household demonstrates this possibility. Her layers of work, in which she incorporates domestic work, her care-job and academic work, are an evident depiction of the multiple workloads that many women in late modernity have to bear. When she has to prepare for one of her tests, the tedious work cycle of juggling her roles as a mother in conventional terms, her daily job, which she also uses to support the family and her academic job, are portrayed in their time-taking and laborious shape: “Midnight, and she still hadn’t started. First, it was Jende’s work clothes she had to iron. Then it was Liomi’s homework she had to help with. After that, she had to cook dinner for the next day because, between work and evening classes, there would be no time to cook and clean the kitchen” (52). In this way, her situation assembles the three layers of hard work that Neni has to perform within a gendered family structure: family management, a part-time job and schoolwork, so that “those aspects of [her] life that are difficult to describe in terms of money or other quantitative values (Mpetsheni 2001, 60) are highlighted as taking significantly from the narrated time.

Neni thus embodies the complexities and incoherence of unified grand narratives of societies in the sense that while she has an income-earning activity – when one considers her student care-job – she still maintains the gendered role of mother-nurturer and in another sense still strives to the meaning-making and self-autonomy characteristics of an individualized late modernity character. For her, then, the talk of feminine individualization and its close link to the rejection of gendered roles has an alternative complex characteristic. For example, through a passage rendered in free indirect discourse, the reader is aware that “she wanted to be in control of her own life” (Mbue 2016, 62), an utterance that exposes her state of mind and will. It is arguable that this passage is linked to her imagination of the American Dream, but when the reader considers it in its context, it can be argued that it pertains to her life goal and the will to deploy her agency. The characterization of Neni thus raises the question as to how gender revolution and norms are perceived across class, race, culture, and educational lines.

The second possibility that the novel depicts is a de-detraditionalized form of female labor. That is, there is a negation of the initial detradditionalized modernity. As a result, there is a re-shaping of the detradditionalized forms of gendered work, which deconstructs the essentialist idea of women as domestic workers. As such, this de-detradditionalized form of work for the female

characters undermines the construction of professional work as white-collar occupations¹³; instead, work comes in various forms that may be considered domestic but require expert knowledge. This new work of de-detraditionalized labor appears to embrace late modernity freedoms that feminists espouse, while on the other hand, they perform some traditional gender roles like home management. The quintessential character that represents this is Cindy Edwards, who combines the labor of managing the home with keeping up with the demands of high society fashion and social image. The value she brings to the family might best be understood when one considers lifestyle in one of the ways Jen Ambrasat et al. conceive the idea, that is, “less as a freely chosen cluster of leisure behaviors or consumption preferences, and more as deeply socialized and embodied practices that are less fluid and less dynamic” (Ambrasat et al 2016, 996). Consequently, as Cindy maintains taste (Bourdieu 1984) and the production of social behaviors (Bourdieu 1990, 53) in order to keep up with the expectations of a wife of a Wall Street executive, her work prospects entail a form of labor that is both time-consuming and involves work on the self with expert knowledge so that she maintains the mythologies of contemporary femininity and celebrity culture. In this way, Cindy can be described in light of Suzanne Leonard’s explication of the “high-profile form of wifedom in contemporary America” (Leonard 2018, 102) whereby the logic of productivity and branding, [turns] this identity quite literally into a job” (103). Cindy’s high-profile lifestyle is work when one considers the aesthetic value it brings into her household and in the performance of expectations of her class.

This lifestyle as work is predicated on how Cindy shapes her biography into what fits into the life she wants, a condition she regards as learning and unlearning, acquiring knowledge and sacrificing in the same mold as other careers; hence she confesses to Neni, “I came away from all that [suffering and parental abuse], as you can see. I worked my way through college, got a job, my own apartment, learned how to carry myself well and fit effortlessly in this new world so I would never be looked down on again, or seen as a piece of shit. Because I know what I am, and no one can ever take away the things I’ve achieved for myself” (124). As such, Cindy’s life story is a consequence of living and understanding life goals as a quilt of fragmented categories and unconventional choices, taking from here and there, and assembling these series of images in working on her self-image and identity so that if she is to be viewed as a high-

¹³ See Betty Frieden (1963) for example.

profile woman, the criteria for freedom is not a generalized coherent definition, instead, it is within a self-defined paradigm, that takes note of individual objectives and life goals.

In addition, Cindy's work involves family management, in the sense that she follows the progress and news of her family. It is her who knows and attends most of her son Mighty's rehearsals and follows her other son Vince's progress (34-35). Here, "family management" is the preferred phrase, instead of home management, in order to signify non-domestic tasks since Cindy's socio-economic class allows her to contract this labor out to other individuals like Neni and Anna. Family management thus entails the labor of administering, monitoring, and investing in the lives of other family members and the home space. This includes following the progress of family members, choosing and deciding domestic matters like the choice and employment of domestic staff.

Both categories entail a break-down of the traditional conventions of gender performance and work, and they both anticipate risk. Early modernity, as has been said, is built on the assumption of a gendered division of labor, industrial economy, and traditional gender norms that involve the 'inferiority' of a sex – female. These aspects also align with societal expectations, whereby, barring some 'deviations', members of the society operate within these norms. In the late modernity world of *Behold the Dreamers*, these norms are depicted in their post-traditional aspects whereby there is a breakdown of known and acknowledged norms in a way that individuals have to select and come up with new ways of carving identities and futures. In mapping these new ways of life, the contradictions and endemic uncertainties implicated in the mélange of early and late modernity epistemologies begin to emerge. As represented in the novel, firstly, the contradictions in gender revolution and domestic labor are thrown into sharp relief. Thus, while middle- and upper-class women withdraw from the domestic labor sphere, it is the low-income and sometimes immigrant characters like Anna and Neni who take over these tasks. This class sanctioned asymmetry is reminiscent of bell hooks' position that the "racism and classism of white women's liberationists was most apparent whenever they discussed work as the liberating force for women. In such discussions, it was always the middle-class 'house-wife' who was depicted as the victim of sexist oppression and not the poor black and non-black women who are most exploited by American economics" (hooks 2015, 146). In the novel, then, the talk of gender revolution is most effective only if one considers it in relation to the paradigm of husband/wife and breadwinner/caregiver binaries; and based on the fact that domestic tasks which were once largely unpaid in early modernity are now paid jobs employing

working-class women. But the feminine gender revolution is further depicted as incomplete since it is women like Anna and Neni who take over these domestic tasks.

The changing world of work and the new forms of tasks and subjectivities that these female characters take are embedded with antinomies, anxieties and risks in their daily experiences. In spite of the seeming liberty and agency of these characters, endemic uncertainties and disappointments seem to be the lifeworld of their work conditions. Strangely, no female character appears to achieve their goals as their lives are either threatened by a sense of unfulfillment, existential insecurities, and male decisions.

If Cindy's fashion savviness is taken as a job, as earlier argued, her work in keeping up the family and her expectations are two contradictory poles that lead to psychological anxieties for her. These contradictions also relate to the professional life she sacrifices in order to keep up with being the wife of a wall street executive while also managing the family. It is thus at the intersection of these contradictions that her life takes a mortal turn when she learns about her husband's extra-marital affair. By examining the biography of Cindy, one may thus ask, rephrasing Betty Friedan (1963, 66): what happens when women try to live according to an image that makes them deny their dreams? For Cindy, it is a schizophrenic condition that leads to death. An event that has already been anticipated when she discusses with her friend, Cheri, on the phone about the marital troubles of their friend June. Cindy tells Cheri, "She doesn't deserve it!... No!... She's been nothing but wonderful to him. Thirty years of marriage, and you wake up one day and say you're in love with someone else? I'd die ... Yes, I'd die! [...] Oh, gosh, that could be me ... I feel like it's going to be me one day, Cher" (Mbue 2016, 87). In this case, Cindy anticipates fatality in the way that she considers that her self-abnegation and beauty standards may in no way forestall the breakdown of her bond and marriage with her husband. Her sense of foreboding of an uncertain future is likewise heightened through the one-sidedness of the phone conversation, which offers an incomplete knowledge of the conversation similar to the "half-life" (Friedan 1963) her biography entails and lack of sufficient knowledge about the future. To counterpose these anxieties, Cindy allays her frustration in a self-destructive way by using drugs, whereby an overdose leads to her death. Hence, the novel gestures towards implying that, in addition to the financialization of the domestic, the interpersonal aspects of female lives are likewise important, especially because Cindy's accumulated trauma and death result from male violence in the person of her father and male neglect in the sense that Mr. Edwards, her husband, neglects his family and domestic while he puts in his time to keep up with his job in the financial market; to compensate for this, he pays

for those services and pays his children instead (134-135). For Neni, Anna, and Leah, Mr. Clark Edwards' secretary, male decisions in the board room have indirect consequences on their existential securities and aborted dreams. For instance, Neni's plight and the truncation of her dream to become a pharmacist is linked to the insider manipulation of Lehman Brothers, which results in Mr. Edwards' personal troubles and marital problems with his wife; in addition, the executive manipulation leads to the sack of Jendi, which prompts them to leave the United States.

6.5 ORGANIZED IRRESPONSIBILITY AND FINANCIAL RISKS

The problematic assumption of neoliberal utopianism as a panacea for global poverty encounters an imaginative criticism in Mbue's novel. In the text, executive decisions and multinational actions are fictionalized as erratic and self-serving so that financial risks and precarious existential conditions are linked to the failures and solipsism of the Wall Street boardroom. This failure is best represented in the breakdown of financial security in the lives of the characters whose worlds are held together by their employment in Mr. Edwards' household. Crucially, it is at the moment of the insolvency of Lehman Brothers that the individual lives of characters like Anna and Leah are terminated in the fabula as if to show how the organized irresponsibility of financial actants result in the conditions of 'normal' people.

Furthermore, the narrative component of phone dialogues in the novel attests to the trivialization and hurriedness of decisions in the financial markets and puts to light the chains of referents like numerical success that denote neoliberal success. Essentially, the phone calls of Mr. Edwards and Phil, and Mr. Edwards and Tom are the two instances where the novel records decisions and market strategies (40, 100). On the two accounts, the phone conversations are laced with banal details, threats, and criminal justification for executive decisions. When Mr. Edwards speaks with Phil, their talk about strategies, careers and financial repercussions are concluded with a discussion on golfing and an ostentatious female escort detail (41). Close to this, when Mr. Edwards and his boss, Tom, speak about the financial situation of Lehman Brothers, their call is interrupted by another call, presumably Tom's wife. In this way, the novel demonstrates the brevity and informality of financial strategies and speculations in the global market. The lack of sufficient attention and the corrupt race for enhancing figures and financial statements as depicted by Tom all point to what Ulrich Beck has discussed as organized irresponsibility and supports claims by Christian Kloeckner of "potential threat that

uncontrolled, globalized financial markets pose for social structures and their consequences for individuals as well as nation-states' political systems" (465).

Released from the structures of strict governmental control, neoliberalism entails an economic ethos subjected to market regimes "because of the reflexive appropriation of information, financial markets tend towards instability – markets can move in unexpected ways, become chaotic, can be influenced by 'bandwagon effects' and herd behavior", Beck argues (1999, 111). Such neoliberal ethos of market-driven individualism and their susceptibility to personal manipulation are embedded in the concerns of Leah, whose proximity to the board members allows her access into the inner workings of the corporations. Leah reveals to Jendi that "there's a lot of dirty shit they're hiding [...] And you know the worst part, [...] one of the VPs I'm friendly with told me there's talk that there may be some Enron-type stuff going on, too" (50). In this case, the neoliberal ethics of a free-market economy are shown to be open to the vagaries of internal collaborations and manipulations like those of the executives of Lehman Brothers and Enron. As a consequence, the ability to operate outside the rein of organized and controlled government sanctions and oversight poses trans-temporal and trans-spatial financial risks for the many employees and investors of these companies and the state in a way that finance becomes political and center of media attention: "no one could tell how long it would take before this avoidable pandemonium that Lehman's fall had caused would end. It could take years, the experts on TV said. Maybe up to five years, some said, especially now that the crisis was spreading around the world and people were losing secure jobs, losing life's savings, losing families, and losing sanities" (184).

For this reason, the life world of the employed in the novel expresses what Beck has argued to be 'reflexive modernization', which is a "second, open, risk-filled modernity characterized by general insecurity" (Beck 2000a, 19). The safety net of a nation-state welfare system flounders and forecloses attempts at ensuring safeguards of the first modernity. The resultant economic crisis from the individualistic neoliberal politics is represented in the novel by a broad category of helpless Americans and immigrants who go "to bed hungry, losing their jobs and houses" (Mbue 2016, 307). Even a chauffeur job like what Jendi had with the Edwards is desirable as "all kinds of people are looking for a job like that" (309). This has a telling effect on the characters. Jendi describes one of the chauffeurs at Lehman who was seen after the crash looking like he last had a meal a year before (310).

The novel's objective stance expands the financial condition on a planetary scale; the extent of the devastation from Lehman's fall is then causally linked to an unknowable future that will result in existential catastrophe. The novel can then be read as a criticism of the neoliberal frame, especially as it puts up the corruption of unbridled neoliberal capitalism for examination as it portrays and concerns itself with the public dissonance with the politization and corruption of bailouts. The reader is aware of the public's protest against the bailout, "[o]n the other side of the park, beneath the arch, a group of young people held placards, chanting and protesting the bailout. Bail us out, not our oppressors! Why are you using our taxes to destroy us? Death to Wall Street! Paulson the antichrist" (234). A representation of the resentment and opposition to the excessive neoliberal lack of ethics and government collusion throws discord into the rhetoric of neoliberal individualism and the possibility of individual success. This points at dissatisfaction and anxious lifestyles so that lives on the edge and limit of financial prosperity sustains the fabula.

The financial risks and corporate irresponsibility do not emerge from a void; instead they are products of sustained interactions between the transnational network of global finance, local legislation, and political economy. In short, the several sub-systems that Beck (Beck 2009b, 8) argues about are at the heart of late modernity's financial situation and are evidenced in the way the executives exemplified by Mr. Edwards can easily migrate across spaces or get access through the technology of informatics or phone calls to teams in France, for example (41). What this implies, then, is that the ease of doing business is facilitated through information technology, which creates a complex of interlocking financial structures whose failures have a ripple effect on global affairs. Thus, financial risk acquires a social, cultural, and political explosive character across spaces. Also, these complex networks imply that single individuals like Mr. Edwards cannot sufficiently halt the financial mess since the aim of his corporation is profit as they race against other monstrous financial institutions. Tom is aware of this transformation in the finance-scape as he uses the symbol of another – automobile – to convey the sense in which he thinks Mr. Edwards financial conscience is outdated: "why don't we all jump into a '75 Buick while everyone is passing us by in '08 models?" (100). Tom and the Lehman Brothers are thus a fictional embodiment of Beck's opinion that

because of the structural dominance of competition in this sector, no player is sufficiently powerful to change the direction of the flows. Nobody controls the global market risks. Because there is no world government, the market risk cannot be curbed on national markets. On the other side, no national market can seal itself off completely from the globalized markets (Beck 2009b, 13).

The fictional Lehman Brothers' failure is thus a consequence of a matrix of corporate greed, neoliberal's profit obsession, transnational competitiveness and information revolution; all these are outcomes of a free laissez-faire market economy.

6.6 HOW TO WRITE A NON-AFROPOLITAN (IM)MIGRANT AFRICAN NOVEL

If earlier narratives of return focus on return in pursuing a true and sincere Africanity, *Behold the Dreamer* portrays a remigration that is both forced and voluntary. Forced because the conditions of living and excessive court cases and health problems prompt Jendi to leave; voluntary because his leaving is precipitated on a decision to terminate the lawsuit and leave. The multiple forms of identity that are now available across the globe allow a frantic look at the dysfunctionalities in the country. The tensions present in a Manichean binary, a linear division between Africa and Western modernity, are here dissolved as a hybrid form of living is highlighted both in Cameroon and for immigrants in the US, many like Winston, Jendi Jonga's cousin who have chosen not to return. To this end, migration from Cameroon can be read as a protest to the excessive dysfunctionality of the postcolonial state; a return recognizes these but seeks ways to subvert them and live around the restrictions.

The celebratory tone of Afropolitanism¹⁴ of successful Africans crossing spaces and several loyalties is truncated and destabilized by these characters whose migratory condition as espoused by Taye Selasi (2005) is worsened by their exclusion from an American system that denies entry to certain bodies. The class dimension and the politics of migration are heightened by the (dis)ease of certain individuals to move across places due to the 'powerlessness' of their passports. The immigrant characters in Mbue's novel, in spite of the success of Winston and Abubakar, are not like the Afropolitans in many contemporary African novels. If many of these novels depict a highly educated group of characters, aware of pan-African politics and social confraternity between Africans in the diaspora, Mbue's novel largely presents an ethnic enclave of Cameroonians. The Nigerian lawyer, Abubakar and the Senegalese, Fatou, both equally largely aware of the immediate politics of their countries of origin, differ from professionally

¹⁴ Selasi and Mbembe have similar points. However, Mbembe's claim also concentrates on emerging ways of being African in contemporary times (2007).

successful (cosmopolitan) characters in *Americanah* (Adichie), *We Need New Names* (Bulawayo), *Open City* (Cole), *So the Path Does Not Die* (Hollist), *Bom Boy* (Omotosho), *Ghana Must Go* (Selasi), and *A Bit of Difference* (Atta). In *Behold the Dreamers*, such epistemological and ontological examination of the subject, identity and belonging are largely left undiscussed. Here an, attention to the Neoliberal consumerist culture is of thematic importance as the characters look forward to the American dream of great wealth, however endlessly deferred.

The fabula resists the valorization of American freedom and individual prosperity; instead, its characterization and thematic concerns espouse precarious lifestyles, heightened by casualization of work and unstable neoliberal financialization. The archetypal Afropolitan protagonist celebrated across contemporary African immigrant literature is mostly absent in the text. It is, in fact, hard to read the novel in light of Afropolitanism that valorizes consumerism, place polygamy, high qualification, and ease of travel. The novel demonstrates the failures of globalized equality in movements and access to space with the intersection of casualization of work; all these are unintended consequences of the globalized finance system and have adverse effects on the immigrant and working class.

The social circumstance in which authors produce their work is important. While this thesis has acknowledged the novel as set in the aftermath of the financial crisis of 2008, the agency of the authors and their choice in selecting narrative materials is important. Here, as a way of drawing the arguments to a close, I intend to briefly engage the reversal of ‘pornification’ of African poverty, trauma, and helplessness in fiction. In his review of NoViolet Bulawayo’s *We Need New Names* (Guardian n.p.), Helon Habila considers certain works and their depiction of Africa to reflect a thematic fixation with poverty put up for the Western gaze. The question remains, how does the African writer proceed to represent a social commentary of extant and ongoing socio-political change, precarity and existential threats. Imbo Mbue reclaims the wretchedness and existential anxiety by creating an agreeable ending for the Jongas. I argue that to totally erase the Afropolitan experience is itself problematic. Achile Mbembe’s position on the Afropolitan novel proves crucial in understanding and represents nuanced African experience. He says of the Afropolitan novel, “it is a way of being in the world, refusing any form of victim identity—which does not mean that it is not aware of the injustices and violence inflicted on the continent and its people by the law of the world (2007, 30) (qtd. in Gehrman 65). To end this, I read Mbue’s fictional depiction as a subversion of the victimhood of African lives that recognizes the challenges. While the Jongas are aware of the differential strata in global

mobility due to their geopolitical positioning, they anticipate a more livable future in Limbe than in New York. Further, an awareness of the possibility of an American dream typified by Winston's success provides an imaginary space for Neni to position her children. She has hopes that "Timba was going to enter Limbe one day as a proud Cameroonian-American returning to see the land of her ancestors, she told herself. Not as a child of failed asylees tossed out of the country like food that had turned sour" (227).

CONCLUSION

In this chapter, I have attempted to situate precarious living in a world risk society by arguing that the unintended consequences of world risk societies that prioritize neoliberal economics and policies produce characters that are in the new precarious class that is perpetually at financial risk. By working with Beck's arguments on a new world of work, it becomes clear that there is an uncontrolled free-market economy that is open to the forces of greed, speculations and manipulations, which results in financial insecurities and existential anxieties. The repercussions from these financial risks traverse spaces and time giving them transnational, political, social and cultural characteristics. The novel further presents a series of risk antagonism in the sense that the culprits of corporate fraud are not in many ways the victims of their financial recklessness; instead, the victimhood is shifted to members of the working class and 'normal' everyday people who, in spite of their dedication to work, are retrenched and pushed into precarious lifestyles while the corporate chiefs like Mr. Clark Edwards bargain new jobs. In this way, the financescape in the novel deals with the acceptance of more risk as a way to keep the corporation afloat. However, financial profits are not based on responsible forms of knowledge but on manufactured figures which materialize in risk scenarios that lead to the immiseration of the average individual and externalized burden to the government in forms of bail-outs and economic protections.

The chapter further emphasized aspects of other 'gendered' works that characters like Cindy perform; the search for self and individualization presents psychological anxieties for this character, whose work is mainly concerned with family management and maintaining her social image. Happiness for her is endlessly deferred until the point of her death. Likewise, the immigrant couple Neni and Jendi are caught in the web of deferred happiness through the route of the American Dream, which is truncated after the financial bust. Continuous uncertainty is then the lifeworld of the couple as they worry in multiple scenes about the possibility of losing

their jobs and being deported. The novel thus seems to suggest that the promise of the ‘good migrant’ is never complete, always deferred, only to the point of citizenship, which is then deferred again in an uncertain world of work. The novel creates material for the analysis of postcolonial failures where the Cameroonian government establishes oppressive rules that stymie growth and adopt economic conditions of impoverishment sanctioned by global neoliberal agents, which has led to uneven developments in Cameroon.

CHAPTER 7: LOOKING FORWARD: CONTEMPORARY AFRICAN LITERATURE AND THE WORLD RISK SOCIETY.

This chapter argues for a broadening of Beck's arguments, highlighting the problematics of an assumed world risk society that insufficiently addresses the issues of power, colonization, neo-imperialism, and the emerging multicultural Western society. The task in this chapter is, firstly, to articulate the inhibitions of the theory of a white-centric world risk society and then to situate the postcolonial and transnational experiences of Africans within this global risk society. In the second section, the chapter traces the origins of the African novel and argues that contemporary novels have taken a different path that narrates their late modernity experience. By drawing standard features in contemporary African novels, the last section will argue that these texts are narratives that fictionalize the world risk.

Furthermore, this chapter expands on the sociological logic of the world risk society in order to situate the arguments in a worldly context. It explains why the arguments dwell a lot on the world risk society. This serves an important purpose. Because the topic has not been broadly discussed in African studies¹⁵, I hope that my arguments will open up more space for discussion in the social sciences and humanities.

7.1 *POSTCOLONIZING* (LATE) MODERNITY?

The discourse on late modernity demands an explication of the ontology of the temporality of 'lateness.' While Chapter one expounded on the key arguments in Beck's exposition of the concept, this section *postcolonizes* the concepts and arguments by concerning itself with the problematics of late modernity and Africa. If it is late modernity, how does one interrogate the artificiality of colonial modernity and self-re-presentation in Africa, given that late modernity in Africa presupposes early modernity? If it was never organic or deriving from an African epistemology, then what premise is there to claim as extant of the second phase of modernity?

¹⁵ Elisio Macamo is a prominent exception. His work has engaged both the risk society and the consequences and definitions of modernity in Africa. See Macamo 2010 for example.

I argue that there are two possibilities; firstly, as a result of the violence of enslavement and colonization, Africa participated in the first modernity as a mining site for enslaved labor, resources and ideas for the industrial revolution and hence modernity. Marx and Engels recognized this when they argued, “colonies were becoming considerable consumers; and after long struggles, the various nations shared out the opening world market among themselves [...] Manufacture was all the time sheltered by protective duties in the home market, by monopolies in the colonial market, and abroad as much as possible by differential duties” (79). Secondly, it is by delinking late modernity from its simplistic linear European modernity origins that we can truly understand late modernity as a global affair and as world risk society.

Yet, it is important to articulate the problematics of such conclusions that equate involuntary participation and exploitative extraction to the modernity of the West. As such, what was obtained in the African colonies were, firstly, an extractive economy that mined mineral resources and transported enslaved persons to Europe and the Americas for the advancement of industrialization and at a long duration, the forceful implementation of modernization through colonialization. Likewise, the intellectual foreground of modernity in Africa was also a violent practice that was established through colonial and missionary education. Thus, my contention that this initial modernity which parallels Beck’s early modernity was a disruptive enterprise that in its attempt to ape and reenact the development of the West in many African countries, engendered social, political and cultural uncertainties with technico-financial risks. There is, likewise, the question of knowledge or relations of definition. Since the developmental process that colonization instituted was supposed to mimic the European notion of ‘progress’, the ideational and ethical frames of reference for this project were unmoored from a cultural and organic source. This further contributed to the ambiguities of modernity on the continent and produced in a series of encounters “violence animated mainly by distinctions crafted in colonial law rather than sprouting from the soil of a commodity economy” (Mahmoud 2001, 651).

If one employs arguments against modernization theory¹⁶, , modernity in Africa was not geared towards the development of Africa but towards the industrialization and opening of its markets and resources to the world market (Matunhu 2011). Given modernity’s promise of industrial advancement, political and civic order, and promotion of self-autonomy, all arguments which highlight modernity’s extractive characteristics and compromised role in the colonization of

¹⁶ See J. Matunhu’s “A critique of modernization and dependency theories in Africa: Critical assessment”, 2011; Lamola’s “African Postmodernism: Its Moment, Nature and Content” 2017; for example.

African countries appear self-contradictory. But if development entails the improvement of the self, then modernity as enshrined during missionary and political colonization presupposes a societal gradation. In this hierarchical scheme, the colonizers occupied subjective positions that were constructed as superior to their indigenous people of the colonies. In his important study on modernity in Africa, Olufemi Taiwo (2010) teases out how modernity took form in the missionary and administrative enterprises of the British during colonization. Taiwo's scholarship is innovative in how it links modernity to early Christianity and in arguing that the political arms of colonization eroded the gains of modernity that were penetrating certain regions.

However, I disagree with one of Taiwo's conclusions, that is, missionaries facilitated the introduction of modernity in Africa (6). I argue that modernity in Africa has always been dogged by levels of ontological contradictions even within the ranks of Christian modernists. My argument is, firstly, by concentrating on Christian modernity, his understanding of modernity precludes non-Christian pre-colonial communities which share the same colonial temporality and national space with the Christian regions. Northern Nigeria, Mali, and the Niger Republic are cases in point. It is thus through colonization, the amalgamation of various ethnic nationalities, the imposed definitions of self-autonomy, governance, rationality, and progress that one may understand Western early modernity as a colonial project. Consequently, considering the flexible, multiple and contradictory enactment of modernity through colonization, one may argue that modernity in Africa was discursively reflexive from inception. Reflexive modernization is evident in the many disquisitions that questioned the civic individual, critiqued Western notion of progress and reason¹⁷, and in the activism against colonial imposition- the African Church, nationalism and pan-African theories in Azikiwe, Hayford and Nkrumah, for example. Secondly, Christianity was one of the traditions that modernity sought to undermine; consequently, it was contradictory for Christian missionaries to herald in modernity. By the end of the 19th century, enlightenment arguments and scientific

¹⁷ See Nnamdi Azikiwe's 1937 published *Renasant Africa* for example. In the book, he draws from African indigenous beliefs and spiritual to argue for the possibility of African morality, ethics and civic responsibility. See Kwame Nkrumah's *Ghana: The Autobiography of Kwame Nkrumah* (1957) and *Conscientism – Philosophy and Ideology for Decolonization and Development with Particular Reference to the African Revolution* (1964), as well. Earlier on, in Casely Hayford's *The Truth About The West African Land Question*, (1971) he had articulated the value system of the Ghanaian system which was tied to land. This was in general terms a critique that anticipated ecocritical discourses from the late 20th century to the present.

achievements were already beginning to undermine the foundations of Christian theology. What is more, modernity's claim to empiricism, the natural light of critical reason, scientific positivism, and individual liberty were at odds with Christianity's providential purpose, the transcendent, thaumatology.

However, Taiwo makes a valid argument when he claims that "the system we [Africans] inherited from or had bequeathed to us by colonialism was only superficially equitable and rigged for justice for all" (ibid 1). Consequently, the spirit of administrative colonialism was in conflict with the spirit of modernity: rationalism, freedom, the rule of law, self-autonomy etc., and in its place, colonialism instituted regimes of torture, inequalities and violence. Indeed, "if colonialists embraced the peculiar modern commitment to subjectivity, they ought to have cultivated African agency with a view to suiting Africans for the business of social transformation in the modern mode" (2010, 25). Thus, colonization and to add, colonial modernity meant through epistemic violence "to organize and transform non-European areas into fundamentally European constructs" (Mudimbe 1988, 14). To undermine this, the social structure of colonial modernity, in consequence, birthed conditions similar to Ulrich Beck's risk society where "apparently independent and autonomous system of industrialism has transgressed its logic and boundaries and has thereby begun a process of self-dissolution. We are witnessing a *dialectics of modernity*: continuity of the principles and discontinuity of basic institutions of nation-state modernity (2008, 2).

In the case of colonial and post-colonial Africa, this dialectic of modernity engendered a localized and appropriated modernity that derives from selective and mongrelized worldviews based on the ideational and coercive apparatus of the state and the interpellative gesture of social actors like cultural and religious elites. It thus suggests that, as John Copans pointed out, "the dominant and so-called hegemonic groups act very vigorously to crush any action or especially any thinking which might promote the double process that constitutes modernity" (1991, 95). Modernity in Africa is hence plagued with an antinomy, which on the one hand argues for the rationality of actions, civic order and responsibility, collective political participation, and individuation, and on the other hand, it has created a hierarchical structure that has bequeathed postcolonial violence, cultural inferiority complex, environmental damage and political upheavals on the continent. These contradictions thus imply that the colonial situation in many African countries was a risk society that predated the West's risk society. In both frames, modernity is questioned, emptied of previous meanings, and filled with newer incoherent meanings and power constellations that are contested amongst tradition and new

hegemonic groups such that the social cohesion of early modernity can no longer hold. Hence the political, cultural, and economic legacies of colonial rule are adverse consequences of modernization. Whether in the conflicts that the hurriedly, ill-considered homogenization of heterogeneous groups has generated or in the way indigenous communities are vulnerable to health and financial risks as a result of multinational extraction in these countries. To this end, postcolonial reflexive modernization entails two levels: firstly, it interrogates the hierarchies of power in global deliberations and, likewise, the global consequences of actions and decisions that may not have been caused by Africans but for which, due to the fact of sharing the same time and globe, African countries also have to bear the consequences.¹⁸

On the second level, postcolonial reflexive modernization is self-reflective as it looks inward to its society to evaluate the consequences of truncated modernity and superficial modernization. An example is the manner in which the legalistic consequences of colonization are discussed in the works of John Copans and Olufemi Taiwo. Taiwo evaluates the discrepancy in the colonial administrative structure in Northern Nigeria. In the Northern parts, the colonial administration favored “as little interference as possible with Native Customs and modes of thought” (Taiwo 2010, 140). Accordingly, this meant that the country retains a conflictual legal code: civil code in the South and penal code in the North. Furthermore, the policy of indirect rule has led to differential juridical interpretations, and there are overlaps between the civic and the customary codes. Thus, the facilitation of modernity remains a hybrid project that intermixes conflictual thoughts and ways of life.

What the remaining parts of this section seek to achieve is to question the premises of late modernity and the place of Africa in it, the novelty of reflexive modernization by examining three elements of Beck’s risk society: gender evolution, environmental risk, and individualization. The sections round off by arguing for a conceptual renovation of the ongoing temporal frame that has been called late modernity, postmodernity, supermodernity, and

¹⁸ In this sense, I am interested in the global damage of the ecosystems mostly caused by the heavy industrialization of Western societies. The threat of nuclear, biological, and chemical weapons of mass destruction are also in contention. The risks from these are not limited to the geographical space where they emanate. Instead, they spread farther than their places of origin and decision.

hypermodernity¹⁹; they propose that the concept of the world risk society best describes the present risk, uncertainties, epistemologies and lifeworld of individuals, societies and nations in the contemporary era.

7.2 GENDER REVOLUTION AND THE WORLD RISK SOCIETY

The notion of the gender revolution, as explicated by Ulrich Beck and Elisabeth Beck-Gernsheim, enlightens more about the Western white gender performance. That is, the object(s) of their analysis and the society they address is Western [white-centric] (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim 1995, 8) and traditionally white. Furthermore, their theory seems to be unsure of its object of investigation as it at different times ambiguously extends its investigation to other countries (1995, 4-5; 2016, 23). The task here is not to criticize their approach or oversight but rather to broaden the analytical frame and examine the viability of a *postcolonizing* gender revolution.

But the postcolonial first needs to define its center of attention given that this cuts across countries and continents. Such a task, for this space, seems unattainable; instead, I will look at how in the Yoruba pre-colonial, colonial, and post-colonial societies, there is a continuous thread of female individualization, comparable to its manifestation in late modernity while also arguing that colonial modernity, in fact, interrupted the female agency by advancing a nuclear family structure. In Beck and Beck-Gernsheim's estimation, three factors have led to gender revolution and the crisis in intimate relations, to wit, the labor market, mobility, and education. Early modernity presupposes a nuclear family that distributes gender roles based on biological sex: the man goes out while the woman is mostly left at home. This has upturned the social and relational dynamics of families and intimate affairs. While the economic, social and political structures that emanated as a result of the industrial revolution may not have been present in the pre-colonial Yoruba community, the social and economic arrangements of the precolonial

¹⁹ Late modernity is the term favored by Ulrich Beck, Elisabeth Beck-Gernsheim and Anthony Giddens; postmodernity's currency is popularized by the work of Jean-Francois Lyotard and Jean Baudrillard. While hypermodernity and supermodernity have been conceptualized by S. Charles, and Mark Auge. Late modernity is the preferred term here because it signifies the continuity of modernity, however in a transformed stage. The other terms signify an end of modernity, or a duration beyond modernity; however, I read forms of continuity between early modernity's precepts and what obtains in contemporary times, however in fragmented and dislocated ways.

and colonial Yoruba world was similar to what Beck and Beck-Gernsheim described in terms of mobility, the freedom to choose, and economic power.

According to Andrew Apter, women in these Yoruba communities were a vital force in the economy because they controlled the markets such that “an active market animates a kingdom, a weak or enervated market represents a kingdom in decline” (Apter 2013, 78). For example, the Iyalode “was to some degree masculinized by her economic and political power, marked by the coral beads of chieftaincy and a man’s hat. In some kingdoms, this position entitled her to a seat on the king’s council” (77-78). This access means that women in these societies could sabotage supposed masculine political powers and consolidate their influence. This lifeworld also included a particular form of mobility that saw women leave the home space for mercantile ventures. As such, the institutional and spatial configuration of the pre-colonial Yoruba world did not support the binarized gendered oppositionality that modernity engendered where the woman and wife are set mostly in private space and the man and husband dominates the public space of work, politics and travel.

However, present reality demonstrates that the condition of many women is similar to those of their peers in the West. This similarity results from the institution of colonial modernity that was mandated through missionary education, the labor market and civil society. In this way, the conditions of modernity meant the adoption of the nuclear family structure. According to Oyewumi, “from the logic of the nuclear family follows a binary opposition that maps as private the world of the wife in contrast to the very public world of the man (not “husband,” for the man is not defined by the family)” (Oyewumi 2000, 1095). Consequently, the imposition of colonial modernity and its epistemologies produced biographies whereby it was “no longer possible to pronounce in some binding way what family, marriage, parenthood, sexuality or love mean, what they should or could be; rather, these vary in substance, exceptions, norms and morality from individual to individual and from relationship to relationship” (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim 1995, 5). It thus follows that in many families, the nuclear family is not truly nuclear as there are interferences from other relatives, and the subsisting polygynous family structure disrupts the husband, wife and children make-up. Navigating the new understanding and family formations means reflexivity, not one that entirely harks back at the individualization of modernity which was heralded by a welfare state and institutional individualism but instead a critique of patriarchy and the novel family structure in African terms. These disrupted and multiple sensibilities to family, gender, love and sexuality thus produce a conflictual frame of

reference, and individuals have to negotiate and choose the most viable options, which itself is constituted with uncertainties and risk.

Furthermore, the present condition of African immigrant women cannot be understood outside of the colonial history and neo-imperial expansion that saw a wave of immigration to countries like the United Kingdom, the United States of America, and France in the 1950s and 1960s. A hallmark of the modern era is the expansion of Europe and the establishment of Euro/American cultural hegemony across the world (Oyewunmi 2002, 1). This expansion is accompanied by the ongoing South to North, North to South immigration paradigm facilitated through new technologies and information systems. The Migration Portal website shows African men and women immigrate at surprisingly comparatively even rates: 53% for men and 47% for women. This fairly even rate has resulted in social and cultural metamorphosis since immigration expands feminine agency and decisions. While they may live in the West, these African immigrants belong to complex family structures that accommodate traditional African families, early modernity's nuclear family structure, and late modernity flexible family structure.

Consequently, this study recognizes and opines that the gender revolution of late modernity may not fully denote the variegated feminine experience's manifestations even in the West. Feminine experience vis-à-vis gender revolution in late modernity enables articulating new living strategies and performances that consider the concepts of gender roles and families of multicultural world of late modernity. This infusion of others enables a category that houses various ways of being a woman. It incorporates the hijab-wearing Muslim immigrant, yoga enthusiastic white German woman, East European immigrant, Sub-Saharan African immigrant, lesbian, and transgender individuals, to name a few. A postcolonial critique of Beck's social theory challenges the absence of multiculturalism in his articulation of social categories and progress. Gender roles and performance in late modernity participate in the multiple identity formation and the supplementary that Homi Bhabha discussed in his book, *The Location of Culture* (1994). To be an immigrant woman would be to contend with the multiple oppressive apparatuses of gender, race, class, and neo-imperial relations. Gender revolution and experience for immigrant women go beyond the European binary of early modernity and late modernity when categories such as class, religion, gender, and nationality are implicated in forming subjective identities. Instead, it entails taking from different sources. Theorizing gender revolution on a nation-state level should, therefore, consider the present conditions of changing national composition, a progressive culture that entails a multiculturalism as immigrants act on and alter the constitution of the nation-state. Third-world immigrant women who constitute a

minority population are expected to pursue a co-existent social performance that was designed without them in mind. It is then pertinent “that the normative division of geopolitical space into the bounded, historically linear entity of the nation has to be opened out in relation to other juxtaposed and co-existent modes of spatialization” (Boehmer 2005, 191). Since the nuclear family is normative in Europe, new forms of immigrant and transnational families enable discussions which recognizes and respect “specificities, diversities and difference” (Kolawole 2002, 97).

7.3 ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE AND LATE MODERNITY

In February, April and December of 1960, the French government conducted nuclear tests at the Tanzeouft near Reggane, Algeria, in its bid to develop compact nuclear devices to arm missiles. The first test, on the 13th of February, was condemned by the government of Ghana, an independent nation, and Morocco. Ghana seized French assets in the country until the full extent of the experiment was known. The test in December would attract more criticism as more African countries had gained independence. Chief amongst them was Nigeria, whose diplomatic response to the testing would be the expulsion of the French ambassador. The testing is an important ground for the examination of the place of African countries in a globalized world as it relates to the power asymmetries, national sovereignty, and postcolonial dimensions of the world. Importantly, the date is significant in that several African countries gained independence around this year, which contributes to the question of colonial alliances in the case of *Francafrique* and the Commonwealth, national sovereignty, modernization and the question of a nation-state. All these have telling effects on the individual whose new identity and ways of understanding are confronted with personal risk as independence does not sufficiently entail independence from a largely Eurocentric education. On the other hand, the emerging elite would validate their elitism in maintaining structures of power and thoughts after the epistemological frames of the departed colonizers. A nation-state also implies the internationalization of these states in the sense that they began to be conscripted into international organizations like the United Nations and Bretton Wood institutions, which would in the future pose stringent conditions for loans and economic policies. Nationhood also entails competition on a global scale and the strengthening of and expansion of ‘modern infrastructure’, heavy mechanization of agriculture, openness to mining for national development, all of which have implications for the environment.

What this French testing demonstrates is that, as France aimed to join the ranks of nuclear powers – the United States, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and the United Kingdom – it exported the hazards of nuclear weaponry to the Sahara in order to build “a stronger and prouder” France in the words of Charles de Gaulle (BBC n.p). Consequently, political independence did not preclude the power asymmetries that were embedded in the Franco-African relationship but instead, through the externalization of pollution, France sought to establish its global nuclear dominance. In another way, this highlights a problem of the world risk society, that is, when one takes the world as an undifferentiated whole. If the risk originated from the desks of French decision-makers and is staged in Algeria with consequences in North, West and Central Africa, then how does one attribute blame, how does insurance work? Who are the victims, and how is compensation calculated and paid, especially because the full extent of the test can only be fully known in the future?

Furthermore, it is important to acknowledge that in the world risk society where risks and catastrophes are global, the clamor for responsibility may be interpreted as an encroachment on national sovereignty. In light of this, the pride of French nationals in testing atomic weapons as a sign of nationalistic progress questions the totalitarianism of the majority rule. If the nation-state still maintains its role as the arbiter of national interest, what roles do the international community and transnational groups play in forestalling risks while they attempt to maintain the sovereignty of countries?

In addition, should countries in the Global South further arm themselves with nuclear and atomic weapons in order to catch up militarily with the Global North, in spite of the rare event of mass extermination? Arundhati Roy, in a case against India’s plan to build nuclear weapons, shows the link between the rush for nuclear power and the preservation of the nation-state: “Every country in the world has a special case to make. Everybody has borders and beliefs” (Roy 2016, 7). Borders and beliefs indicate the construction of risk, the allocation of blame and consequently highlights the permissible extent of state terror, which are usually embedded in symbolic gestures like building nuclear weapons. To add to this, from a cultural approach put forward by scholars like Mary Douglas and Aaron Wildavsky, “people respond to risk according to socio-cultural background and identity as a member of a social group” (Gooby and Zinn 2006, 37). Furthermore, one can argue that the popular acceptance of this risk and the collective support of the security infrastructure of the state is linked to the individual’s urge for ontological security. By ontological security, I mean “the confidence that most humans (sic)

beings have in the continuity of their self-identity and in the constancy of the surrounding social and material environments of action.” (Giddens 1990, 92).

Consequently, fear, risk and national politics are interwoven in a mix to protect the structures of the modern nation-state, and the possibility of a disaster are normal accidents (Perrow 1984) because the systemic composition of the nuclear technology is so complex that all hazards associated with it are unknown. Hence the consequence of a failure or accident is undeterminable in its size and extent. Roy further fleshes out the paradox in the dialectics of the nuclear weapon as ‘protector’ and as a risk object. “From now on it is not dying we must fear, but living.” (7). This is because the risk of a nuclear accident is unknowable, unpredictable, spectacular and global. “Everyone is vulnerable. Accidents happen. There’s safety only in acquiescence.” (10). The risk of nuclear weapons, therefore, leads to uncertain futures, a necessary route to preserving the modernist nation-state in the face of Western military domination. Thus, in spite of popular resistance to this, governments who resort to the populist idea that this is a prerequisite for admission into an advanced community of countries and maintaining national security coopt a discourse of advance modernization.

If there is a national side to technological and environmental risks in the Global South, there is also an international aspect. Many Western multinationals like oil companies, construction companies, and private citizens like tourists have engaged the environment of the Global South in non-sustainable ways. This may be linked to a neo-imperial structure that stems from a colonial relationship with land, resource and control when the environment was, in general, a commercial enterprise and humans on the land are dispensable. Hence the continued devastation of the environment, the militarization of land, the tyranny of the ruling class, and the imbrication of enterprise and politics are continued side effects of modernism. This constitutes the postcolony as an effect and an actor in late modernity. In addition, globalization and the ease of traveling have meant that environmental risk can be dis-embedded; that is, dangers can be removed from their source and exported to other places. It likewise means that wealthy individuals from the postcolony and the collaborators can be lifted out of their communities in the event of dangers and pollution.

On that note, while I acknowledge that the world is presently experiencing an era when the human is a geological force, and that “[t]he Anthropocene [...] has been an unintended consequence of human choices” (Chakrabarty 2009, 210), it is, however important to contextualize and evaluate the proper producers of risk. The question remains, in line with Chakrabarty’s position, “But who is the ‘we’ of this process” since the crisis of climate change

has been mostly produced by the high-energy-consuming models of society that capitalist industrialization has created and promoted” (ibid 217).

It is therefore imperative to interrogate the global connections, fluidity, consumerism, and mass production that have contributed to environmental degradation. Flows of individuals: expatriates, refugees, tourists, has in no little way contributed to or countered the environmental status quo. It, therefore, requires a planetary and postcolonial outlook to understand human agency, decision, and contribution to the global problem. This is also useful because the transnational character of environmental risk derives from the global human demands for resources, energy, mass-produced products, though on a differentiated scale. Because of this, ‘human’ as a bearer of rights should be further broken down to examine into main actors and passive contributors to the challenge of global atmospheric crisis and other environmental crises. To agree with Anthony Vital and Hans-Georg Erney, “[...] ecocritics would have to confront the historical sharing of place and cultural identity that gives our contemporary globalizing world its distinctive features” (Vital and Erney 2006-2007, 5). It is not only ecocritics who have to contend with the disruptive and distinctive features of globalization, but scholars across the board also have to confront the temporal and spatial implications of a changing world. This also means (trans)national environmental threats like deforestation in Northern Nigeria, Indonesia, and the role of the Western powers of domination and capitalistic enterprise should endeavor a reflexive outlook to determine the interface between consumerism, mass production and the ‘global’ threats *bad*s from the wealth-driven modernity.

On these grounds, this project relied on the scholarship of postcolonial and third world scholars whose works have in important ways inflected Beck’s argument of a world risk society that, in spite of its depth and well-reasoned arguments, limits its conception of the ‘world’ to EuroAmerica and in a few cases Latin America. Crucially, Beck’s argument on the world risk society, while seeming to situate his research in a global environmental context, still lacks a truly global vision. His poverty-related risk, which he mentions in *World Risk Society* (1999, 35), neglects the role of Western demand for the palm trees that are felled in Indonesia. On the contrary, Chakrabarty incorporates global economic, militaristic, politico-cultural considerations into his understanding of the climate change crisis and argues that neo-imperial domination and capitalistic expansion are crucial aspects of this, “the burning of fossil fuel, industrialization of animal stock, the clearing of tropical and other forests, and so on are after all part of a larger story: the unfolding of capitalism in the West and the imperial or quasi-imperial domination by the West of the rest of the world” (Chakrabarty 2009, 216). Within this

neo-imperial domination by the West, it is imperative to question what the victories of modernity truly are, whether on the continent or across the world. In this regard, are the ongoing modernization processes that are evident in the increase in the industrial and capitalist economies of many African countries, the political system of citizen participation evinced by the democratic governance in these countries and the infrastructural developments in engineering and technological aspects real successes of modernity? Or are they just indices derived in the West for the hegemonic control of other spaces and homogenization of the world? How have these successes of modernity contributed to the excessive cooption of natural materials, unequal trade relations and improper environmental management of resource-rich countries in Africa?

While one recognizes the unequal power relations in the global finance arena, domineering militaristic hegemony and excessive production of environmental risk of the Western countries and the Global North, it is incumbent on scholars from the postcolony to interrogate the fractional contributions of these spaces to these hierarchies. In fact, the realities of the world risk society demand introspection and reflection on all sides, a dialectical engagement with the contemporary phenomenon that both questions globalization and accepts the fragmentary contributions of all subjects to this.

Our late modernities, if read and differentiated for their peculiarities from late (Western) modernity, also produce unintended consequences. This is evident, for example, in the unexamined industrialization and modernization projects spreading all across Africa, Asia and Latin America. The most obvious consequence is in the environmental aspect. However, other risks like the risk of individualization, the flexibilization of work and the rampant precarious conditions of many citizens point to adverse conditions of late modernity. Furthermore, the presence of Africans on the global economic scene – whether as business owners, investment bankers, chief executive officers or staff and heads of global organizations like the World Trade Organization, World Bank and International Monetary Fund – implies an agency that perpetuates the continued hierarchization of certain subjectivities, discourses, worldviews, and financial policies.

The outlook is thus one that is both outward and inward, local and international. One that contends with both the problematics of postcolonial failures in Africa as a result of colonization and, on the other hand, looks at the chains of powers that have produced the goods and *bad*s of the world risk society. Perhaps, scholars in political science, international relations and related disciplines may engage the ‘failure’ of many African states in the truncated and inorganic

enforcement of colonial modernity and postcolonial modernization. This will entail an examination of regimes of “violence animated mainly by distinctions crafted in colonial law rather than sprouting from the soil of a commodity economy” (Mahmoud 2001, 651). As a result of the vestiges of colonization, the political economies of many African countries are marked by gross inequality, governmental ineptitude, nepotism, amongst other things.

In a similar way, the neo-imperialistic dominance of Western countries, mostly former colonizers, has ensured an eternal dependency of many African countries through treaties and loans, as in the case of former French colonial countries. Many African countries are, therefore, “characterized by a distinctive style of political improvisation, by a tendency to excess and lack of proportion, as well as by distinctive ways identities are multiplied, transformed and put into circulation. But the postcolony is also made up of a series of corporate institutions and a political machinery that, once in place, constitute a distinctive regime of violence” (Mbembe 2001, 102).

In another way, how does one divorce irregular migration from modernity’s claim to individualization? The assumption to mold oneself outside the dominant identities of nationhood and class, the irrefutable desire to have personal dreams in which the actualization is solely one’s responsibilities, aided with the media imagery and narratives of a prosperous Global North, ensures a desire for the ‘safe’ spaces of the West. In light of the power hierarchies of the world, the existential conditions of impoverishment engendered by international policies, individualization becomes a risky affair for those who desire to leave and construct a better life for themselves outside the shores of their ‘home countries’ To this end, individualization enlisted in global biographies as a sign that is constituted with individual freedom, self-fashioning, responsibility for choices, decisions, and unlimited options provided by the neoliberal economy is laden with catastrophic outcomes. This, for example, is at the heart of Fatou Diome’s *Le Ventre de L’Atlantique* (2003). The novel narrates the precarious condition of (im)migrant workers in France in a way that deconstructs the paradisiac myth of Europe. However, back home, many characters that are left behind are poor and thus seek the better life that Europe has been painted to be. This hope of self-actualization and individual success is closely tied to the idea of individualization in which the individual is expected to live their lives in such a way that their failures are theirs.

As Western countries continue to embrace secularity and individualized definitions of morality that are unmoored from traditional religious expectations, many Africans hack bark at this secularization as a sign of Westernization. For example, arguments against gay marriage are

usually hinged on the two poles of the religiosity of Africans and the traditionality of Africans. Two aspects are heavily influenced by colonialism. The first is an effect of years of encounters with the Christianization and Islamization of Africa. The second is the logocentrism and concretization of practices in what Olufemi Taiwo has described as ‘sociocronyism’ (2010). In another vein, the coexistence of multiple religious groups and scriptural exegesis has generated conflicts for different groups in many African states. This, if thought through, results from the enforced amalgamation of distinct, social, cultural and political groups that apes on the Westphalian model of the nation-state. Holding leaders accountable, a sign of democratic government is in this sense undercut by advocates of unity and progress that re-enforces the conservatism of structures and supports the corrupt hegemonical frameworks of late modernity governance in Africa. In recent times, governments deny media exposure to certain voices, citing national concerns; the most contemporary manifestation is in shutting down the internet. What this means is that the nation-state, in its fixedness on keeping the nation united, suspends an important tenet of democratic administration: dissent. Or how does one explain self-autonomy in the highly charged novel of Elnathan John, *Born on a Tuesday*, where apostasy is still grounds for punishment.

Hence the political legacy of colonial rule is a consequence of modernization. Whether in the hurriedly, ill-considered homogenization of heterogenous groups, or in the extractive economy, or settler relations. To this end, postcolonial reflexivity entails two levels: firstly, the reflection and critiquing of the global consequences of actions and decisions that may not have been caused by Africans. On the second level, the consequences of the ill-practised and truncated modernity in Africa with its superficial modernization. Under these two levels, one can read the often-problematic amalgamation of different nations under the rubric of one nation-state – as is the case with Nigeria, where the country practices two legal codes: the civil and Sharia in parts of the North – as a consequence of modernity. This discrepancy is, in fact, a consequence of the colonial rule that promoted indirect rule and ruled through local chiefs and customary laws.

This section has focused on theoretical approaches to understanding the sociological condition of the world risk society and Africa’s place in it. To conclude the section, I would advance that the world risk society, in spite of its origins in the Eurocentric social theory, is a viable concept to categorize and frame the ongoing realities across the world. I find Walter Mignolo’s argument for a decolonial critique (2009, 2) important in understanding the late modernity condition. This critique which questions the Hegelian assumption of linear progress of

modernity destabilizes the Western claims to sole progression. However, my thesis, while it recognizes the imbrication of colonialism and neo-imperialism in world affairs, seeks to go beyond this term in order to situate the problems on the individual, social and political planes. Hence, the world risk society is the tentative terminology of choice.

A postcolonial adaptation of the world risk society acknowledges two important points, firstly, the contestations of colonial modernity as a sign of progress and modernity as a sole European project. That is, one has to question the arguments that modernity emerged from a European temporal frame that was propelled by the ideational and technological forces that were uniquely European. Secondly, while this thesis has relied on reflexive modernization to explain certain contemporary social changes, reflexivity for a postcolonial inquiry possesses an additional layer of meaning that is slightly different from what Beck, Lash and Giddens (1994) have articulated. However, for postcolonial reflexive modernization, scholars interrogate the consequences of a violently imposed colonial modernity and the social changes this imposition engendered. The consequences may be outrightly as a protest to colonial modernity, a result of the conflict of colonial modernity and traditional African societies, or a result of the transnational use of technology and abuse of the environment. In this way, Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*, or Wole Soyinka's *The Lion and the Jewel* (1962), Ayi Kwei Armah's *The Beautiful Ones are not yet Born* (1989) do not engage modernity in its victorious or successful forms; instead, they hack at the root of modernism and enlightenment ideas as contradictory, corrupting, discriminatory and at many times ridiculous. Reflexive modernization from the continent thus entails both a critique of Eurocentric modernity and the deleterious conditions of modernization on the continent.

In spite of these objections, the world is a "global civil society" (Beck 200, 88), with shared risks and uncertainties. The global awareness and perception of these risks imply that decision-making and national politics are politized to favor certain actors. Furthermore, international migration, international borders, environmental policies, terrorism and global finance are concerns that affect every country on earth. In spite of these imbrications, cooperation and international antagonisms and the risks they produce, the politics of world risk society is an extant reality with which African countries have to contend. It is important to note that in spite of the simultaneous temporality of the world risk society, African countries are not equal partners given the colonial legacies and existing neo-imperial engagement. What is more, a number of African countries are negatively impacted with dis-embedded risks, that is, risks that originate from decisions and policies in international development organizations and

consequently do not have consequences for the decision-makers but for African countries for whom these policies are designed. An example is the Structural Adjustment Program of the 80s and the recent talks of fair trade, which often excludes participants from the Global South.

Since the concern of this study is to evaluate modernity in a literary frame tilted towards the postcolonial, it is important to address the archaeology of modernity on the African continent and its diasporic populations. Moreover, literary texts are important sites of hegemonic contestations, especially for discourses on modernity. As a matter of fact, one cannot discuss the entrance of the novel into the African literary scene without noting the series of reflections on Western modernity's claim to rationality, progress and positivism. While these writers, journalists and scholars contested the irrationality of colonialism, they likewise engaged the underlying epistemologies on which these colonial ventures were constructed.

Thus, the writings of early nationalists like Caseley Hayford (1913), Kwame Nkrumah (1964) and Nnamdi Azikiwe (1968), though steeped in enlightenment rationality and empiricism, went further beyond that to modulate the arguments of modernity with the African experience. While their usually Pan-Africanist arguments maintained the binary opposition of race, as Mbembe contends (2001, 15), it held a level of promise for the continent. Jean-Paul Sartre, in his introduction to *Black Orpheus*, understands the hope in the double consciousness that these writers faced when he posits that,

Negritude is dialectical; it is not only nor above all the blossoming of atavistic instincts; it represents "going beyond" a situation defined by free consciences. Negritude is a sad myth full of hope, born of Evil and pregnant with future Good, living like a woman who is born to die and who feels her own death even in the richest moments of her life; it is an unstable rest, an explosive fixity, a pride which renounces itself, an absolute that knows it is transitory: for whereas it is the Announcer of its birth and of its agony, it also remains the existential attitude chose by free men and lived *absolutely*, to the fullest. Because it is tension between a nostalgic Past into which the black man (sic) can no longer enter completely and a future in which it will be replaced by new values [...] (Sartre 1964, 51)

In these works, the task was usually to contest and to dissent to the orthodoxy of Western modernity. It is within this tradition of early modernity's thought which was approaching its dusk, that one may read Es'kia Mphahlele's (1962) and Daniel O. Fagunwa' (1982) work. The stories and didacticism align with Judeo-Christian notions of truth, but the form and subject matters, fantastic in the case of Fagunwa, were derived from the African oral literature and experience. In this way, these writers, through the process of self-writing and by speaking on behalf of their fellow Africans, could be likened to prophets. It is important to draw from Olufemi Taiwo to understand the role of these dissenters as prophets.

Biblical prophets gave stark descriptions of the many sins and transgression prevalent in their community, the corruption and debaucheries of the rulers, the absence of righteousness and upstandingness among their fellows. Secondly, the explanation of the misfortunes of the community was that the people had strayed from the path of righteousness laid out for them by the divine authority. Finally, in the prophecy, there was a warning that unless the divine word was heeded, dire consequences would follow.” (Taiwo 1996, 256).

While these early writers and leaders like Hayford, Azikiwe, and Nkrumah did not have the pretext of a divine calling, their calls for independence and their deconstruction of colonial modernity laid the foundation for the independence project and self-writing. In fact, by the 1950s, the decade Ghana gained its political independence when *Things Fall Apart* (1958) was published, there was a radical shift in how the authority of modernity and enlightenment ideas were questioned and represented. Across the continent, in grand ways, writers were articulating the grand narratives of African cosmology, philosophy and epistemologies independent from the earlier assumptions. This also takes shape in the negation of colonialist discourse in Negritude texts where according to Sartre, the poets adopt subversive art forms like surrealism because of its emancipatory and appropriative powers to contest the dominance of epistemological hegemony (Sartre 1964, 34). Fine arts and its literary cognate could deliver from the taboos and restrictions of thought and expression of colonial modernity and serve as mechanisms for establishing the subjectivity of the ‘modern’ Black man. My argument thus is that from inception, the African novel has been, in content and form, reflexive towards modernity. Writers, as varied as Chinua Achebe, Ama Ata Aidoo, Wole Soyinka, Ngugi wa Thiong’o, Alex La Guma, Flora Nwapa, Bessie Heads and many others in the African Writer Series, had to contend with the irregularities of the modernity’s claim to positivist truth and hegemony. Therefore, their works were infused with traditional African rationality, indigenous notions of morality and ethnophilosophical elements. Most times, when there is a conflict between the traditional African epistemologies and modernity, African worldviews emerge ‘more commonsensical.’²⁰

But, in the form and content of contemporary African novels, they differ from the works of first-generation writers. What Pius Adesanmi claims in the case of Francophone African literature is true across the continent. According to Adesanmi, “what has changed is the interactive scale of the global economy in which the new writers from Francophone Africa function” (Adesanmi 2004, 236-237). Hence, while these writers may deploy similar aesthetics and narrative modes of representation like realism, modernism, and the likes, the contemporary

²⁰ See Ama Ata Aidoo’s *Dilemma of a Ghost* (1964), for example.

condition of international connectedness inflects their works towards a planetary outlook. So, one of the novelties is in the subject matter. In Alastair Niven's article, "Achebe and Okri: Contrasts in the Response to Civil War" he argues, "Okri and his generation will be more introspective, more personal, less historically ambitious, less radical, than Achebe and his peers" (Niven 282) If contemporary authors are turning to self-introspection, disillusionment, non-radical forms of representation it is because they are depicting the substance of their time: an institutionalized, individualized living as Beck and Beck-Gernsheim have argued. However, their works are not completely separated from the political sphere, neither are they oblivious to the collective pains, hazards, uncertainties, and fragilities of their age, instead they consider the whole to narrate the single in a metonymic strategy that valorizes the individual as a subject of a world risk condition. In the same way, their concerns are postcolonial, that is, in their representation and evaluation of the coloniality of power and mental adjustment of colonialization; and also narratives of the world risk society because of the manner in which their writings traverse the boundaries of the nation-state in a way that questions the ontology of modernity.

If the generation of Chinua Achebe, Bessie Heads, Ngugi wa Thiong'o contended with the double consciousness, weights of and schizophrenia of newly/partly acquired modern subjectivities, contemporary writers are concerned with global, national, interpersonal and individual anticipations of catastrophe which characterize the world risk society. Thus,

What is at stake in experiencing deterritorialized culture is not, crucially, level of affluence, but leading a life which, as a result of the various forces of global modernity, is 'lifted off' its connection with locality[...] [I]t is possible to argue that some populations in the contemporary Third World may, precisely because of their positioning within the uneven process of globalization, actually have a sharper, more acute experience of deterritorialization than those in the First World (Tomlinson 199, 137)

The Kenyan writer Ngugi wa Thiong'o agrees with the planetary outlook of contemporary writing when he argues that

At present, the postcolonial is the closest to that Goethian and Marxian conception of world literature because it is a product of different streams and influences from different points of the globe, a diversity of sources, which it reflects in turn. The postcolonial is inherently outward looking, inherently international in its very constitution in terms of themes, language, and the intellectual formation of the writers. It would be quite productive to look at world literature, though not exclusively, through Postcoloniality (2012, 49).

Furthermore, "in reality, the postcolonial is not simply located in the third world. Literally rooted in the intertextuality of products from all the corners of the globe, its universalist

tendency is inherent in its very relationship to historical colonialism and its globe for a theatre” (55).

Going by the thematic concern of many contemporary African writings, the prognosis is that the tensions, uncertainties and risks of late modernity will occupy central places in the subject matter of their texts.²¹

7.4 THE FUTURE OF AFRICAN WRITING AND THE WORLD RISK SOCIETY.

It is crucial to highlight the features that underlie these narratives of risk society. Firstly, the character constellation of contemporary novels depicts characters who are conscious of or participate in risk ventures that are peculiar to late modernity. Secondly, and similar to the first characteristic, these novels take up extant risk as the central themes of their work. In works as varied as Okey Ndibe’s *Foreign Gods* (2014) and Tola Rotimi Abraham’s *Black Sunday* (2020), they thematize the existential anxieties of individuals in late modernity that has shifted from the certainties, assurances and perceived rationality of early modernity and tradition.

Given that risks are in the future, the aesthetics and style of many contemporary African novels are fragmentary, urgent, playful, ironic and provisional. Even in their realist modes, many of these works resort to certain aesthetic choices to construct their story. For instance, I have argued in this study that environmental discourse in many African writings is not neatly delineated into genres. Instead, the concern for the human and non-human and biotic objects and the interaction between these elements structure the narratives. An example is Olumide Popoola’s *When We Speak of Nothing*, which deploys a multi-mode means of narration to situate perceptions of risk in the Niger Delta of Nigeria and London in the United Kingdom. A hybrid of the dystopian and pastoral modes shows an interaction between existing savannah wilderness despoiled by oil and garden cities ‘developed’ by oil. In personifying objects of pollution, Popoola animates risk objects as substantive and potential embodiments of catastrophe. Her aesthetic choice in opting for linguistic diversity informs certain forms of risk

²¹ A survey of annual selection of African works posted on the online literary journal, *Brittle Paper* proves this point. A random selection of any title shows that writers are not primarily concerned about the nations they are originally from, but their works dramatize the uncertainties, possibilities, fears of living in the world risk society. See, for example, <https://brittlepaper.com/50-notable-african-books-of-2021/>

perception in the characters. Signs of the side-effects of modernism or the unintended consequences of modernism are present in the novel both as familiar objects in the case of erratic weather conditions or the totally dystopian as in the case of the oil mess in the Niger Delta. The imminent environmental crisis in both spatial settings outlines an interesting reading through Ulrich Beck's conceptualization of the world risk society. This kind of reading thus incorporates a reading of the environmental crisis with an expansive outlook.

Furthermore, contemporary African novels embrace forms of transnational awareness and place polygamy. In fact, many of these writers have been accused of writing for the West, and some have been described as not sufficiently African. Their transnational awareness emanates from a place of transnational social consciousness and ethics. In addition, globalization has made it difficult to live in isolation; and literature like other "works of imagination are amazingly antinational even where the author may think she or he is espousing national themes. People identify with a good tale and the characters irrespective of the tale's region of origins" (Thiong'o 2012, 58). As such, these novels are in a good place to reflexively interrogate the consequences of modernity by fictionalising the present and demonstrating the threats, risks and hazards of the world risk society. The authors do not only throw into relief the consequences of modernity; they also call to question the hegemonic order of late modernity by continuing in the legacy of counter-discourse. To conclude this chapter, I draw from Erich Auerbach's succinct yet formidable task of philology which manifests in the modern day under various identities like literary criticism, "our philological home is the earth: it can no longer be the nation" (1969, 17). Contemporary African (migration) literatures transcend the local and deliver a global outlook. This global concern is a central argument in this thesis and demonstrates that contemporary African novels should be read as narratives of the world risk society.

CONCLUSION

In March 2020, the World Health Organization declared the acute respiratory syndrome virus, Corona Virus Disease (Covid 19), as a global pandemic. In three months, the virus has touched every continent except for the Antarctic. The planetary implications are dire. As nation-states try to contain the pandemic by embracing national measures like border closure, international and transnational organizations like the World Health Organization and the European Union are taking steps through information dissemination and exchange of research findings to stop the spread of the disease. The postcolonial dimension to the pandemic is also crucial. A Senegalese newspaper writes, *La France coronise le Senegal*. A play on the unforgettable and present condition of colonialization and neo-imperialism. Cyber denizens have pointed at the pessimistic and paternalistic news reports that highlight the seeming low occurrence on the African continent.

Tellingly, for the purposes of this dissertation are the ways in which the pandemic has underlined Beck's articulation of the unintended consequences of the World Risk society. At the time of this writing, eighty-eight couples emerging from quarantine have filed for divorce in China. A state of exception whereby citizens, in a manner of dictatorial degree, have been mandated to stay at home persists. China, Spain, and Italy are totally or partially on lockdown. Others have embraced similar draconian but crisis-tolerable measures. Germany, France, and the United States have closed their borders, barring flights. These measures radically differentiate Beckian late modernity from early modernity: present measures, despite their national inclinations, are aware of the consequences of a nationalistic control à la early modernity modes, hence measures have also included transnational and international collaborations.

The planetary scale of the Covid 19 and its effects on the global economy mark the pandemic as a truly late modernity phenomenon facilitated through globalization. These effects would have been unthinkable in early modernity. This signifies the generational shift from early modernity to late modernity. Furthermore, the pandemic has highlighted the fissures in untamed neoliberal tendencies. The benefits of a universal healthcare system are addressed across media platforms, and many have argued that working-class individuals are important in the creation of global wealth. The arguments to improve the working and financial conditions of the working

class have, however, mostly exempted immigrants, especially undocumented immigrants. Ulrich Beck's explication of the flexible world of work comes to mind as one considers the glaring fact that these important workers are expendable and are so treated by employers.

The implications of the pandemic for literary imagination are still uncertain; however, songs, short films, documentaries, 'infotainment' videos, short stories have been produced as means of disseminating information and entertainment. Conditions of late modernity will occupy cultural productions for a long time. The representation of this is projected to be reflexive as the society will take a critical look at the many victories it has achieved and evaluate the unintended adverse consequences.

This study has analyzed the processes that have led to what Ulrich Beck calls the world risk society by reading *The Maestro*, *The Magistrate & the Mathematician*, *A Bit of Difference*, *When We Speak of Nothing*, *Born on a Tuesday*, and *Behold the Dreamers*. These novels have in several ways depicted movements and displacements and the conditions of world risk society. I have argued that the place polygamy that these novels demonstrate effectively allows an examination of the conditions of the world risk society where uncertainty and risk constitute the lifeworld. The novels, as analyzed, have explored the global power matrix of transnational financial coalitions in the world risk society. The migration novel, that is, novels that thematize migration and have peripatetic characters, have provided a narrative frame in analyzing these phenomena. The study has mostly examined the social individual conditions of the characters to analyze, firstly, the risk awareness of the characters and, secondly, the socio-political world that these characters occupy. However, the analysis does not reduce these novels to mere sociological artefacts. Instead, it recognizes the aesthetics of disruptions, misrepresentation, and narratological novelty that these writers deploy in presenting late modern society as reflexive.

Firstly, these novels show that characters are aware of social transformation because modernity occupies a discursive space in people's imagination and social relations. Secondly, they present the successes of modernity and its 'bads' as characters grapple with creating new biographies and ways of living that are outside of the established traditions of early modernity. This transformation is specifically highlighted in the way the novels use interdiscursivity and dialogism to deconstruct unified, coherent modernity discourse. These texts function as palimpsests because they allow the intersection, re-writing, and multivocality of discourse in narrating the social and political conditions of World risk society. The works espouse

multilinear historical time to point at a supplementary time (Bhabha 1994). In all five novels, place bears historical meanings.

Furthermore, the study shows that individualization disrupts the sense of the self and that ontological certainty steeped in the rigid, known structures and categories of early modernity are perversely discontinued and open up to risk. Early modernity's frames of reference and identity mappings are fraught with anxiety and uncertainty. The immigrant characters' are mostly depicted as adopting innovative redefinitions of the self and identity to cope with the uncertainties of world risk society. Huchu demonstrates these disruptions by creating a temporal frame that is at once in different tenses but simultaneously occurring.

If early modernity predicated rationalizing tradition based on enlightenment principles, late modernity renders indeterminate the assurances of these rationalities. Huchu's novel has shown how living a life of one's own demonstrates the strictures of individualization that is institutionalized. Events and conflicts in the novel are products of an inadvertently existential uncertainty from decisions that do not bear semblance to earlier forms of living. As a novel that largely presents the lives of migrant characters, immigration is firstly disruptive as migrant characters have to contend with the disruptions and uncertainties of migration. On the other hand, migrant characters also more and more depend on themselves than on traditional social support systems. Characters seek to be in total control of their lives, most especially younger characters like Farai, the Maestro, Scott, and Stacy. In the novel, the traditional system of support wanes; unemployment for the Magistrate undermines his ontology; his sense of self and responsibility are irretrievably dislocated as he navigates the juridical system in Edinburgh that does not recognize his magistral training in Zimbabwe. The existential anxieties in a society that gives impetus to individualization are in many ways disruptive and in their uncertainties. *The Maestro, the Magistrate, and the Mathematician* attempts to make new meanings of their lives, sometimes by subverting the institutional process and, for the Magistrate, by also relapsing into a nostalgic past that he valorizes as certain and known.

In her attempt to depict the 'bads' of multinational oil exploration and the resulting degradation in the Niger-Delta, Popoola's text, *When We Speak of Nothing*, depicts the reflexive critique of late modernity. Reflexivity emerges in two ways: firstly, the victories of global interconnectedness allow facility in financial and material movement. The fabula incorporates this mobility through Uncle Tunde, who owns a transnational business. Secondly, the threats of environmental pollution and inequalities that proceed from the victories of global

interconnectedness occupy a discursive dimension through Karl and Nakale's attempt to publish periodicals that report and analyze the degradation of local communities by extractive industries. Importantly, the novel highlights the risk antagonisms by juxtaposing two places, the Niger Delta and London. While the fictional Shell BP oil company has a British interest, the modern developments in London are depicted as architectural and urban development as more roads are constructed; on the other hand, indigenes of the Niger Delta must bear the brunt of environmental pollution. This affect dichotomy shows that individuals in London do not seem fazed and are not adequately aware of the issues in the Niger Delta, although the wealth and oil that drives their development are lifted from the region. This local danger enters the world risk society, I argued, through the collaborative efforts of Nakale and Karl. Their cosmopolitan outlook and transnational discourse coalition elevate a locally produced nightmare accident to an international incident for global attention.

This study discussed *A Bit of Difference* as fictional reportage because it draws heavily from a social frame of reference. The agency of the characters in intimate relationships moves the novel's events. The presence of immigrant and non-immigrant characters in the story world provides a frame for analyzing the ongoing process of gender and sexuality revolution. The nuclear family structure is fictionalized as an oppressive site for women in which they have to negotiate their presence and freedom. Atta's main character, Deola, is aware of the problematics of this arrangement; in this way, she undermines the traditional nuclear system by embracing single, partnership parenthood for their unborn child. For the woman, family, career, and choices constitute an important matrix of freedom. While such choices and freedom may lead to interpersonal risk, the trade-off is important as the female characters define their subjectivities outside of dominant traditional domesticity. The writings of feminist African writers like Oyeronke Oyewumi provide sociological background into understanding the narrative context of gender (non)performance.

In reading Elnathan John's *Born on a Tuesday*, I demonstrated that the nation-state and, in its attempt to construct a cohesive discourse of belonging and authority, produces internal contradictions and conflictual risk definitions. I point at the power relations as characters compete to be recognized as the authoritative constructors of knowledge. This struggle for dominance in defining and mapping the habitus leads to violent antagonisms inscribed in religious conflicts and fundamentalism. To curb this, the national government, through a technique resembling a state of exceptions, adopts discriminatory militaristic mechanisms to tag certain individuals as terrorists. The novel shows local movements as contributory to the

Islamic ethos of knowledge-seeking. Still, the study shows that the risk of terrorist or fundamentalist attack is incalculable and unknowable because of human agency. Through the conscription of dialogisms, John's novel provides the antinomies of religious fundamentalism and pushes for a more open discursive atmosphere.

In chapter six, I demonstrated, through an analysis of Mbue's *Behold the Dreamers*, that the criminalization of undocumented migrants leads to precarity. The chapter examines the work society, which, according to Beck, is a basis for the recognition of individuality in late modernity, but that the novel eventually shows that the world of work is uncertain and casual, what he refers to as *Brazilization* of work. Further, the chapter more broadly examines the vulnerabilities and dispensability that neoliberalism has heralded. By looking at characters across social and economic classes, I show that the urge to make meaning in life is inscribed within the neoliberal ethic of work in which consumerist culture underlies the sense of self. The chapter further examines the global economy and proselytization of neoliberal ethics across the global South. Through an analysis of the characterization of Jendi and Neni, who were compelled to migrate to America due to the economic uncertainties of a post-SAP regime in Cameroon, the novel shows that though the promise of happiness and selfhood embedded in the American dream motivates Jende and Neni's migrations, the dream of comfortable prosperity is continuously deferred. In addition, the financially successful Lehman Brothers executive, Mr. Edwards, faces interpersonal risk as the 2008 financial meltdown results in a broken marriage.

In another dimension, I analyze how these novels appropriate realist poetics to offer a social commentary of the world risk society. Underlying their descriptive and representational aesthetics are existential threats and ontological uncertainties that characters encounter as they make meaning of their biographies in the world risk society. Remarkably, the narratological choices of these writers allay realistic blandness that takes the work of art as a replica of the extra-textual. These works embrace variegated ways of writing that demonstrate their consciousness of the artistic. They pursue styles that display the fictionality of the texts. Sefi Atta's *A Bit of Difference*, for example, utilizes free indirect discourse as a narrative vehicle that interweaves two levels of text and story. As the narrator intrudes into the discourse of the characters, the reader is offered a seemingly objective view and perception of the world of the characters in an illusionary way. Popoola uses, in abundance, stream of consciousness to show the disjuncture of risk perception; as the character, Karl moves within London and Port Harcourt, he encounters other characters whose experiences are also truncated and shaped by

anxieties in the face of environmental and interpersonal risk. In Huchu's *The Maestro, the Magistrate & the Mathematician*, the past, the present, and the future are brought together in a narrative whole that undermines our perception of time. As the individuals opt for personal biographies, their fabulas are written in a timeframe that is simultaneously past, present, and anticipatory of the future. John and Mbue evince a more social realism aesthetics. On the surface, the two texts present fabulas that seem to capture reality with objectivity, but the contradictions of views and the narrative situation of the character bound narrator in John's *Born on a Tuesday* and character bound focalization in Mbue's *Behold, the Dreamers* undermine this objectivity. A unified Bourgeois class in the order of Lukacsian criticism is dispelled by the movement from place to place as immigrants and non-immigrant characters occupy the economic margins. The texts are open-ended, and the futures are uncertain; hence, they do not provide the ameliorative conditions that social realism presents. While the texts recognize alienation and reification from labor, they do not limit their views to the economic determinism proposed in social realism. Instead, the transnational, the split nationalisms, and late modernity conditions create anticipation of catastrophe as reflected in the gender roles, religious fundamentalism, economic precarity and environmental catastrophes that derive from the success of the technology. Further, in bringing these texts together, a universal immigrant group cannot be traced. Sefi Atta's characters are economically prosperous such that their movements across place in the novel are based on lifestyle choices. In Mbue's novel, to immigrate is to search for opportunities and to aspire to human dignity.

What is at stake in these novels is the articulation of multiple discourses of the nation. Multiple subject identities are brought together to undermine the idea of a nation as a given. Instead, the nation as a state of flux, presently constructed by multiple subjects and multiple discourses of belonging, emerges. Elnathan John, for example, shows the strictures between the component ethnic and religious identities that constitute the nation. While their origins may be read as autochthonous to fictional Nigeria, a transnational reworking of subjectivity, influenced by global discourses and media, bring these identities into conflict. Thus, the inherent contradictions of modernity's national identity are thrown into sharp relief. The postcolonial nation-state, with its early nationalistic discourse, seems to be reflected in John's novel as a utopia that disregards pertinent in-group conflicts. Religion plays an important role in his work. Religion is reformulated as a political vehicle, forceful in its will to truth such that a dialogic discursive frame that involves multiple epistemologies is subverted by an attempt to provide an unquestionable religious truth.

In Tendai Huchu's novel, the character Chenai, with her yet to be delivered child, signifies late modernity's multiculturalism. While Atta presents the hyphenated citizen of Nigeria and England as a disruptive gesture to a coherent national identity, the possibility of an open national identity is also thrown into relief with Karl in *When We Speak of Nothing*. The biracial child of a Nigerian and English mother pledges allegiance to these nationalities; this dual citizenship is evident in his awareness of environmental and committed activism in attempting to bring the crisis to light. In *Behold the Dreamers*, the future is pluri-national as Neni and Jendi look forward to the future of their daughter, who, by virtue of being born on American soil, is an American citizen. All these transnational encounters and mobilities demonstrate a world risk society that deserves a cosmopolitan outlook. Suggestively, these novels fictionalize the conflicts, promises of transnational belonging, global connectedness, and transnational discourse coalitions. Crucially, through the awareness and presence in multi-places, these works contribute to the reflexivity of modernity, in that they imaginatively present the world risk society and through the machinery of the novel contribute to a general awareness of the limits of the first modernity. Thus, "what previously appeared 'functional' and 'rational' now becomes and appears to be a threat to life, and therefore produces and legitimates dysfunctionality and irrationality" (Beck 2009, 80).

Because these texts reflect on the self-experience of the world risk society, the inherent risk from the dangers, *bads*, and success of modernity occupies conspicuous thematic positions. The position of the narrator derives from a postcolonial desire to write and inscribe a holistic postcolonial presence into these conditions that have been neglected by many theorists of risk society. But awareness of postcolonial thinking indicates that despite this desire and rewritings, the postcolony occupies a space that involves the dialectics of visibility and invisibility. The importance of postcolonial nations is reflected in a transnational politics that acknowledges nation-states as sovereign typified by Africans and South Asians occupying important boards of international organization and Secretary Generalship. This should not be confused as a postcolonial presence and equal distribution of might; it is in the invisibility of these states in major global economies like the G20 that their invisibility becomes conspicuous. Here, the world risk society and the racial politics of who can belong to certain places is heightened by the body of the immigrant and passport. Migration literature in this way offers a prescriptive frame to understanding the global inequalities and further existential threat that prompts risk antagonism such that the producers of certain risks are not necessarily the victims of its repercussions. The global financial that Popoola's novel highlights through which oil wealth

can be transferred to the global North and the exotic commodities can be imported into the Global South creates a rentier and consumption-based economy that only allows environmental devastation and further economic vulnerability.

This study has taken Mieke Bal's explication of narratology as an important tool for analyzing the text. Bal's terminologies were tentatively adopted to map out aspects and elements of the novels for examination. It is important to note that these writers are only linked through a fabula that concentrates on the world risk society and migration. Additionally, the aesthetics of migration literature is not realistic, as mentioned in the first chapters. Firstly, migration literature reduces the text to a thematic concern. As I have argued and demonstrated, these novels are multi-focal, discussing and putting other human conditions in fiction. The rubric of migration literature falters because in creating a typology of this kind of writing, the variegated experiences of movements are sacrificed for wholeness. This term can only be used provisional, never completely, and it should recognize the limits of generalist assumptions.

Having acknowledged the dangers of submerging these texts under a category, the novels I analyzed in various ways utilize narrative conventions. For example, these novels are aware of the past, both a pre-migration past and a first modernity past. The past is juxtaposed with the present through retroversion. Atta's text that presents the matriarch of the family uses retroversion to demonstrate the metamorphosis from early modernity to late modernity, especially in their social and cultural compositions. In Huchu, this is depicted as a melancholic unrecoverable nostalgia for a past through The Magistrate. His lost patriarchal privilege and occupational security in Zimbabwe are highlighted against his present uncertain condition, as his wife takes on familial responsibility. Through retroversion, Mbue articulates the colonial and neo-imperial past of the Jengas and suggests that such 'legacies' have resulted in the global (im)migration trend. Retroversion in John's novel is employed by the character bound narrator to evaluate the changes in the political and religious formation of his community. Popoola's use of chronological deviation results in a narrative that brings to light the colonial past and historicizes the racial politics and injustice meted on black bodies. In all these texts, events are progressed, stalled through the perception of risk and the future uncertainties of the world risk society. I have avoided the problematics of taking representative illusionary contents as 'real world' coordinates by arguing that these writers are aware of the fictionality of their works by embracing an aesthetics that disrupts time place and defamiliarizes the reader from early modernity concepts and categories that appeared to be 'natural' and given. The artificiality in realist perception engenders hybridized forms and, in some cases, post-structuralist attention to

ironies, existential contradictions. The materiality of risk circumscribed by the representative discourse of migration literature has provided a wider context.

This study attempted to create an outlook on the world risk society from a postcolonial position. It has examined five processes drawn from Beck's typologies to analyze five African writers' preoccupation with the disjuncture, contradictions, and the opportunities of the world risk society. Risk as the anticipation of catastrophe plays an important role in the characters' self-reflexivity. Uncertainty is endemic, and it maps the lifeworld of the characters. Beck's theory is not a grand narrative, but his theoretical sociological articulations provide a frame to reading the lives of the immigrant and non-immigrant characters of these selected texts. This study has likewise taken from the several African writers to counter-act and provide a broader context in understanding the late modernity conditions that these texts fictionalize.

Modernity is not simply a European project emanating from the enlightenment. African history, an object of imperial expansion, slave violence, domination and maltreatment of Black bodies, has been entangled with the Europeans since the 15th century. This has shaped and, in many ways, given shape to the social, political, economic, and artistic forms of modernism. To what extent have these encounters birthed the idea of the European self and its construction of the other concerning itself? Institutions of slavery and colonization have reflected on policies and institutional change brought upon by the encounters. These novels have in some ways pointed at the past and continued denigration and exclusion of African histories and stories from the world. And this study has aimed to achieve two things, firstly, but on a micro-scale, to engage in a provincializing venture that pinpoints artistic attempts to rightly and fully include subaltern selves and voices in Western society; secondly, to show how these texts are equally aware of the world risk society and importantly stretch out the transnational epistemic, economic and socio-cultural contributions to it. Early modernity categories like the nation-state, gender roles, binaries between nature/culture and individual/society wane and give rise to multiple forms of being and belonging.

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Eidesstattliche Erklärung

Ich erkläre dass die vorliegende Arbeit ohne unerlaubte Hilfe angefertigt wurde. Es gibt keine anderen, als die angegebenen Quellen und Hilfsmittel benutzt wurden. Es wurden die den benutzten Werken wörtlich oder inhaltlich entnommenen Stellen als solche kenntlich gemacht.

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