Saving Africa's Children: Transnational Adoption and The New Humanitarian Order

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Abstract

My dissertation explores transnational adoptions of black African children by white Western parents as a site through which to think about global affective relationality and transnational histories within intimate proximities. The image of an interracial, transnational family can seem to be a fulfillment of the potential for transcendent love symbolized by humanitarian fundraisers such as Live Aid— a love that collapses borders and brings together races in multicultural bliss. Furthermore, adoptions of African children can potentially challenge discursive systems of categorization that frame the black body as existing outside the body politic. At the same time, however, we cannot understand transnational adoption without taking into account the histories of power that make possible and potentially limit the contours of these affective orientations. Indeed, representations of a transnational family consisting particularly of black African children and white Western parents not only invoke the logic of white moral motherhood within the context of contemporary globalization; they also point to European philosophical traditions that presuppose the colonizer's right to the black body. In this project, thus, I ask: what are the sociopolitical and cultural motivations behind the desire to express humanitarian love towards African children through the act of adoption? How might these motivations create avenues for exclusion and exploitation even as they create new geographies of belonging? To answer these questions, this project brings the affective domain of contemporary transnational adoption between African children and white American parents into conversation with histories of colonial transnational intimacies and the precarious lived experiences of classed and racialized individuals in the African postcolony. In challenging popular celebratory fictions of the transnational family, it critically examines not only the utopian aspirations and social costs of transnational adoption as a humanitarian project, but also the very affect produced and channeled through adoption as a humanitarian act.

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Global Adoptions: Kinship in a Globalized World – an Introduction

> I went home…and switched on the television. I saw something that placed my worries in a ghastly new perspective. The news report was of famine in Ethiopia. From the first seconds it was clear that this was a horror on a monumental scale…I felt disgusted, enranged and outraged, but more than all those, I felt deep shame…We had allowed this to happen and now we knew it was happening, to allow it to continue would be tantamount to murder.
>
> — Bob Geldof, writer of "Do They Know it's Christmas"

> For Dower (2003), the active global citizen is one who works to produce a better world; yet his examples…figure this action as requiring an Other who needs to be known, understood, and ultimately uplifted or saved. As such, the ethical framework of global citizenship seems to mask the material relationships that produce some as privileged, and hence capable of being active global citizens, and some as in need of support, care, "aid."
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> — David Jefferess, "Global Citizenship" (31)

"I was 14 years old when *We Are the World* filled our television screens," writes Binyavanga Wainaina, now a writer and editor for a magazine publication in Nairobi, Kenya. He is speaking, of course, of the American charity single that closed the 1985 Live Aid concert, a celebrity-driven event designed to raise funds for the international Ethiopia famine relief effort. While invoking, on one hand, images of children dying in the Global South, and on the other, the saving grace of Western aid and its potential to create a "better place" for all the world's inhabitants, *We are the World* did not just become an American national and worldwide manifesto for the protection of Third World children; it stands as a symbol for the reconfigured conceptions of citizenship brought about under contemporary global conditions.

The very title of the song reminds us of Arjun Appadurai's claim that in this present era of modernity characterized by complex networks of people, money, media, information and technology flowing around the world, the nation-state is "only one node of a complex transnational construction of imaginary landscapes" (31). Global flows of capital have re-invented notions of the nation-state, reshaping and circumventing the parameters of its sovereignty through economic deregulation while purporting to 'unite the world' under the mandates of consumer capitalism and liberal democracy (Comaroff and Comaroff, "Millennial Capitalism" 292).

The phrase "we are the world," then, in its invocation of a kind of dissolution of the national borders separating persons around the globe suggests that we have been pulled by the processes of globalization into a worldwide community as global citizens (though the song itself never explicitly mentions a concrete factor for our seemingly mystical connection). Even if underpinned by geopolitical and economic inequities of massive scale, this global community consists of individuals drawn "close" by the immediacy of technology and the dissemination of texts and images through electronic media (Appadurai 33). Indeed, at the same time musicians and actors in London and Philadelphia pleaded with worldwide audiences to help save Africa's children, many of Africa's children were themselves watching and listening to the Western World's stories of their plight.

It is important here to consider Wainaina's personal account of watching the Live Aid concert as a child. Within the humanitarian rhetoric of Live Aid, two figures emerge: "the world," which, despite its expansive connotations conjures up images of the economically underprivileged, racialized children of the Global South and "we," the privileged communities of the Global North able to improve their lives through aid. Theorists have criticized the tendency of Western humanitarian agencies to privilege the figure of the suffering African child in their narratives about the Global South and its sociopolitical turmoil (Comaroff and Comaroff, "On Youth" 2005; Jefferess 2002; Schultheis 2008), a figure that, in performing a "relentless, ahistoric narrative of Third World failure and helplessness," strips African children of subjectivity at the same time as it strips the political and economic contexts in which they are implicated of complexity (Batty 18). As others have argued (Batty 1999; Dogra 2012), songs like *We are the World* and *Do They Know it's Christmas* carry on this lingering, colonial tradition of the Western World producing decontextualized narratives of the racial Other to be consumed by

other Westerners. It is interesting, then, to consider the inspecting, interpreting gaze turned on the West by the Othered African child. In his account, Binyavanga Wainaina reveals how he, as one of the African children sung about in *We Are the World*, interpreted his saviours:

> I was 14 years old when *We Are the World* filled our television screens—and I discovered that we are loved. That was an amazing kind of love: a giant chorus of exotic-looking people coming together as one, and they pouted and gurgled and they agreed. Yeah, yeah. Once in a while one of them would bend forward as if they were retching their love for Ethiopia from a really deep place in their belly, a personal testimony, and I knew it was true the world would be a better place, for you-uu-uu, and for me-ii-ii. […] Then Canada did the same in a weepy song called *Tears Are Not Enough*. Vowels wobbled, words stretched out. Tears, tears, are not Enou-ou-ou-gh. And the French gurgled, L'Ethiopieeeeeeeeee….ohhh! L'Ethiopeeeeee.

After mocking the emotional display of the Live Aid concert, the author goes on to describe the results of their efforts: an influx of resources into his country which he describes as "tens of thousands of 4x4s…tearing the country apart looking for a project to love." In doing so, he aptly ties the politics of humanitarian sentiments and 'love' to colonial and neo-imperial mandates of economic development (Wainaina n.pag). The irony in this account primarily stems from the stark contrast between the image of the African child, forever helpless and waiting as represented in the song, versus the African child's humorous portrayal of the West's 'love' for Ethiopia. In Wainaina's account, the African child de-codes the West's humanitarian sentiment, which he calls "love," as a histrionic display of emotion underscored by the platitude of making the world "a better place."

What I am particularly interested in here—and indeed what I hope to explore in this dissertation—is the sociopolitical and economic dimensions of the transnational "love" to which Wainaina sarcastically refers. Not only are human beings in this modern era of global capitalism tied together via ever quickening exchanges and flows of trade, technology, and culture; we are also bound up in layers of intimacy that often contradict the vastness of the space stretching

between global communities. Indeed, the humanitarian non-governmental organization (NGO) World Vision describes the "humanitarian connection" between African children and Western citizens as being capable of producing a "transcendent love" that ties international strangers via affective bonds (Borstein 598). We see these transnational affective connections between the Western humanitarian and the African child through child sponsorship programs and, increasingly, transnational adoptions; the estimated number of children adopted from Ethiopia alone has risen from 500 in 1998 to nearly 3000 in 2007, with about eighty percent of the children going to the United States, Spain and Italy.[1]

Transnational adoption is a rich discursive and material site through which to think about global affective relationality precisely because of how it codifies transnational histories within intimate proximities. Through the transnational family, we see "we" and the "world" brought into the intimate domestic sphere. The image of an interracial, transnational family can seem to be a fulfillment of the potential for transcendent love symbolized by Live Aid— a love that collapses borders and brings together races in multicultural bliss. Indeed, the kinship made possible through the transnational family challenges articulations of "family" that privilege biological inheritance or mono-racial belonging. Within the transnational family, the racial Other can exist as part of communities of inclusion, rather than being relegated to the abject outside of the body politic.

At the same time, can we understand this transformative potential of transnational adoptions without erasing the histories of power that make possible and potentially limit the contours of these affective orientations? What are the sociopolitical and cultural motivations behind the desire to express humanitarian love towards African children through the act of

[1] Ethiopia has been one of the countries with the highest number of children sent to Western states via international adoptions, along with Russia and Korea (Selman 588).

adoption? How might these motivations create avenues for exclusion and exploitation even as they create new geographies of belonging? As Lauren Berlant tells us, intimate spheres only feel like ethical spheres "based on the sense of capacious emotional continuity they circulate, which seems to derive from an ongoing potential for relief from the hard, cold world" (*The Female Complaint* 6-7). And as Heike Härting suggests, humanitarianism is "epistemologically and historically encumbered" in violent global structures of exploitation, inequality, and domination (62). Therefore, it is imperative that we critically examine not only the utopian aspirations of transnational adoption as a humanitarian project, but also the very affect produced, directed, and channeled through adoption as a humanitarian act, as well as the new forms of kinship it makes possible. In particular, I will interrogate in this dissertation what the intermingling of familial affect and structures of racial, socioeconomic, and political domination can tell us about the parameters of transnational kinship bonds formed between Western parents and African children.

This project considers the transnational family as located within a multiplicity of temporal and spatial sites. By situating the family in a variety of sociopolitical contexts, I peel back its layers, highlighting its complex significations and the multiple perspectives of those involved (the adoptive family, the adopted communities, the adopted children, and the biological family). Ann Laura Stoler's "intimacies of empire" (8) is a helpful conceptualization to bring together these intersections. As she suggests in *Carnal Knowledge and Imperial Power*, European empires consolidated their power and the boundaries of social hierarchies within settler and non-settler colonial spaces through corporeal relations of intimate domains. Colonial politics invaded indigenous conceptions of gendered division of home and labour, as they regulated, permitted, and punished sexual interaction between bodies in colonial space, Europe reproduced its own conceptual frameworks of kinship and familial space, subjugating indigenous intimacies

to the norms and needs of white patriarchal capitalism. Colonial transformations of notions concerning the home, particularly the raising and educating of children, is especially important in this project as I consider its ramifications in contemporary transnational adoption. Within the affective coordinates of adoptive parents and adopted children, bourgeois sentimentality and gendered humanitarian labour intersect with the postcolonial imperial politics of rule in ways that create unstable, but also potentially transformative relationalities.

Taking my cue from Stoler, I consider the transnational family within the historical context of European imperial activity in nineteenth-century colonial Africa, as well as its traces in contemporary American humanitarianism. Because this project analyzes American adoptions of African children, I focus most specifically on the mechanisms of British imperialism. Through their management of public and private domains 'at home' and abroad, the British Empire not only helped to construct the categories of colonized and colonizer, but also crystallized the ultimately unstable boundary between the two. It is also for this reason that I specifically interrogate the model of the transnational family that features black African children with white parents. As Sara Ahmed reminds us in *The Promise of Happiness*, universalizing discourses of happiness have historically privileged whiteness as an epistemological locus. As she suggests, "in a world oriented around whiteness," one does not necessarily need to be white to subjectively invest in its ideals (86). In fact, it is the pressuring of racial minorities (such as transnational adoptees) to orient themselves around ideological objects of whiteness that presents problems for the discursive framework of multiculturalism and its claims of universalism when they do not, cannot, or will not "play the game" (142). So while I focus on white parents and black African children, I also explore the dimensions of whiteness working in the transnational family, and,

particularly, the ways in which racial minorities fit within its parameters as suitable or unsuitable parents and children.

What readings of the transnational family, comprised of white American parents and black African children are possible when we place this form of kinship within the colonial context of imperial sovereignty? We need to think through imperial sovereignty specifically as it is expressed through the bio-political control over African bodies, adults and children alike. Colonial narratives of Africa already overlap with Western discourses of childhood innocence, which itself reifies European capitalist discourses of the rational (European) self (Schultheis 35). Such modernist discourses of liberalism ironically reveal the links that must be made between the violent and exploitative logic of capitalism and imperialism, and the expressions of bourgeoisie humanitarian morality towards colonized peoples (for example, calls to abolish the slave trade or to end violent African traditions against women and children). The freeing of capital from the sovereignty of the state coincided with the discursive freeing of the subject from the pre-determinism of religious dogma and tradition; that is to say that it marked the cultural production of the 'individual,' the 'human'—or, in other words, the self-referring subject, capable of reason and defined by rationality, the ability to discern truths, and the freedom and right to make autonomous choices (Mbembe 2001; Ferry and Renault 1992).

On one hand, as Cheryl Lousley argues, today's modern humanitarian conception of love and sympathy for others developed out of this rationale. Using the example of eighteenth-century sentimental novels, in which adults enter into marriage for love, and nineteenth-century orphan novels, in which individuals choose to adopt children, Lousely argues that the free, autonomous self extending him or herself across geographical and social boundaries to *voluntarily* enter contractual relationships with others is considered altruism by virtue of the act of choosing (9).

On the other hand, modern discourses of humanity and rationality buoyed the institutionalized violence of Western imperialism, acting as implicit justification for the racialized violence of colonialism through its dialectical narratives of foreign lands. Africanist V.Y. Mudimbe writes of the colonial construction of Africa as the ideological Other of the Western modern self: "according to the grid of Western thought and imagination…alterity is a negative category of the Same," which is why "a great number of European representations of Africans, or more generally of the continent, demonstrated this ordering of otherness" (12). In the European imagination, 'Africa' and its inhabitants became "not only the Other who is everyone else except [The European] me, but rather the key which, in its abnormal differences, specifies the identity of the Same" (12). Achilles Mbembe likewise asserts that the very conception of the 'human' as self, under the philosophical and political mandates of the Enlightenment, could not reconcile the existence of the African except as the almost-human Other:

> [Western philosophy] assumed that, although the African possesses a self-referring structure that makes him or her close to 'being human,' he or she belongs, up to a point, to a world [Europe] cannot penetrate. At bottom, he/she is familiar… [and] can even, through a process of domestication and training, [be brought] to where he or she can enjoy a fully human life. In this perspective, Africa is essentially…an object of experimentation. (*Postcolony* 2)

Within this Western philosophical framework, Africa, like the African child, can be trained to enter the world of modernity, the world of 'humanity' as defined by the discourses of civility, liberalism, and consumer capitalism. Indeed, the connection between the conception of childhood, colonialism, and capitalism is evident in the numerous Western texts of the Enlightenment period.[2] Such texts frame the colonial project as a civilizing mission to 'develop'

[2] Edward Said cites André Gide, Rudyard Kipling and Joseph Conrad as among these nineteenth century writers for whom Africa's exoticism and otherness made it a source of European fear and fantasy, but also a site of exploration and possibility. Narratively, Africa was a 'danger' that needed to be tamed through the spirit of colonial enterprise. While Conrad in particular, in his novel *Heart of Darkness*, seems to attempt to demystify to some extent the 'purity' of imperial expansion, as he was still a product of his culture, his articulation of Africa was still tied in many

those regions which, on account of not conforming to a European model of economic, political, and social structure were posited as being behind in the evolution of humanity (or humanity as defined by the West) and thus likened to Europe's 'childhood.' Africa in particular was considered to be "modern man in embryo" (Schultheis 107).

The colonial conception of Africans as children in need of rearing complicates celebratory historical and modern narratives that describe the affective relationship between white Westerners and African children. However, these affective relationships nonetheless reveal the ways in which colonial contact destabilized and complicated the boundaries that delineated colonialism's inside and outside, even if they could not completely subvert them. As we will see in Chapter 1, the work of colonial missions, intertwining affective, humanitarian, and imperial labour, created rationalities that posed challenges to the constitution of the colonizer and the colonized as definitive categories. This produced complex relationships of sovereignty and familial love that suggested transformative possibility, even while supporting racial hierarchies. And while these complex nuances will be explored, we cannot subsume the violent implications of these relations. Certainly, we can draw comparisons between the European nurturing and protecting of African children in colonial Africa to the "humanitarian" removal of Indigenous children in settler countries such as Australia or Canada (Boucher 2014; Jacobs 2009). Both humanitarian acts can be read as part of a larger assertion of imperial sovereignty. How can we read the transnational family, created through contemporary processes of adoption, alongside these histories?

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ways to the language of Western domination. As such the underlying questions within his texts seemed to be: Why is African culture a 'barbarous' experience? What is European civilization and in which sense is it different? (Said xix, 22-31). See also Mudimbe, *The Invention of Africa*.

The intersections of imperial sovereignty and affect as it plays out within the domestic sphere of the family reveals gender and sexuality as scaffolds for institutional power. This project is thus keenly focused on the workings of womanhood and motherhood in the construction and instrumentalization of the transnational family. Indeed, conceptions of the moral capacities of the autonomous individual self were crafted around the domestic space of the British bourgeois home. As the gendered separation of spheres, which coincided with the rise of the Victorian middle-class, normalized the supposed separation of the moral and affective private space from the economic and imperial public space, women, as the biological reproducers of the nation, were tasked with the affective labour of rearing the children who would become the moral citizens of the nation. In giving away their political power to men in the public sphere, Lousley explains, women gained a new kind of "power" by becoming symbols of morality and familial nurture at home and abroad (Lousley 9). And yet as Lauren Berlant reminds us, "embedded in the often sweetly motivated and solidaristic activity of the intimate public of femininity is a white universalist paternalism, sometimes dressed as maternalism" (6). Although the affective space of femininity depoliticizes love, morality, and altruism as existing somehow outside of spaces of power

> [c]ompassionate liberalism is, at best, a kind of sandpaper on the surface of the racist monument whose structural and economic solidity endures: in the intimate sphere of femininity a kind of soft supremacy rooted in compassion and coercive identification wants to dissolve all that structure through the work of good intentionality, while busily exoticizing and diminishing the convenient and the noncompliant. (6)

It is for this reason that this dissertation explores the transnational family specifically through the figures of women and children. The feminized affective economies that enable the performance of maternal altruism may actualize the promise of *We Are the World* in collapsing boundaries and allowing the autonomous European self to affectively extend herself to where

vulnerable African children need love and aid. However, at the same time we can see in colonial and modern examples of humanitarian interventions, such as the removal of Indigenous children from their communities and homes, that this circulation of affect can result in violent exclusions of those figures that do not, or, perhaps, must not, fit into the intimate communities of belonging this affect creates. I am referring to those children "unsuitable" for the salvation narrative, and the classed and racialized mothers deemed unfit for parenthood—including biological African mothers whose own kinship ties to the transnational family presents dangers to its normative subjective investments.

The potential for humanitarian affective economies to create violent exclusions is particularly important when we think of the ways in which the global capitalist economy has affected the political and economic structures of Africa and the lived realities of its inhabitants. The effects of the global capitalist economy has certainly helped feed into how Africa signifies in the Western imagination, which in turn feeds into the understanding of adoption as a humanitarian act. Therefore, to think through the dynamics of the transnational family, we must seriously consider the larger macro-political and macro-economic relations that structure Africa's relation to the West in today's current era of globalization.

James Ferguson suggests in *Global Shadows* that although colonial representational strategies have remained an integral part of the discourses surrounding 'Africa,' these discourses have since been re-shaped to an extent in response to the changing political, social, and economic conditions in the continent brought about by modernity and globalization. As Ferguson states, because discursive strategies framed Africa as being behind the West in terms of economic and political development, it was somehow understood that the continent could eventually join the West in 'civility' and stability. "If you are dissatisfied with your conditions,"

the promise implies, "just wait; your society is moving forward and moving upward" (185-6). Today, however, in the context of neoliberal globalization, global attitudes about these conditions have taken on a more apocalyptic tone. Ferguson writes that the "stark status differentiations of the global social system sit raw and naked, no longer softened by promises of the 'not yet'" (186). Modernity appears, not as an inevitable temporal progression, but as a "rank in a global political economic order" (189). In this sense, Africa, discursively becomes placed outside of modernity altogether, and modernity itself becomes defined as "a standard of living to which some have rights by birth and from which others are simply but unequivocally excluded" (189).

This framework forms the basis of Africa's contemporary transnational relations with the rest of the globe. As African nations gradually achieved, at different times, political 'independence' from European imperial structures, Africa as a whole eventually became a Western symbol of failed modernity for its inability to mimic the West politically, socially, and economically upon its nations' subsequent integration into the newly globalized economy (Ferguson 8). As Mahmood Mamdani asserts, within contemporary frameworks of international humanitarianism, which places the West in the position of 'protector,' the states in whose conflicts Western powers have the 'responsibility' to intervene have come to be defined as 'failed' or 'rogue'—and these states belong primarily to the non-European world, namely Africa and the Middle East (Mamdani, *Saviors* 274). This "new humanitarian order," as Mamdani calls it, has resulted in a "bifurcated system whereby state sovereignty obtains in larger parts of the world but is suspended in more and more countries in Africa and the Middle East" (274). We already see this suspended sovereignty manifest in Africa's place in the global economy. In the 1980s, responsibility for the "problem" of Africa was foisted upon the political "weakness" of its

states. Market forces were seen as the solution. Economic institutions such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank believed that deregulating the market and thus enabling its autonomous operation would "create the conditions for economic growth, while rapid privatization would yield a flood of new private capital investment" (Ferguson 11). These structural-adjustment policies, in encouraging privatization, drastically decreased the state's role in providing public services, undermining the authority of state governments and widening the gap between African states and their citizens, many of whom have become increasingly pessimistic over their government's inability to regulate administratively (Mbembe 49). Despite exacerbating the unstable socioeconomic conditions wrought by the violence of colonialism in novel and destructive ways,[3] economic institutions continue to push for their "right to intervene in Africa" (16).

The supposed 'responsibility' of international lenders to intervene in the affairs of African nation-states echoes the humanitarian undertones of the colonial civilizing mission of development, but, here, this responsibility is reconfigured into a right, a right possessed solely by those international actors deemed sovereign within the framework of neo-imperial capitalist modernity.[4] Indeed, a number of humanitarian agencies engage in practices predicated on the notion that the sovereignty of African states is not only unnecessary, but also a hindrance to their own operations. Alexander de Waal corroborates this in *Famine Crimes*, writing that relief aid charities began with the purpose of fulfilling humanitarian needs that could not be provided for

[3] See Mbembe's "Necropolitics" for a discussion of the linkages between modernity and terror across the terrain of the African postcolony in which "the generalized instrumentalization of human existence and the material destruction of human bodies and populations" (14) is the central biopolitical project of transnational sovereignty in the modern era of global capitalism.

[4] The term 'global neighbours' has been used as a metaphor to describe the duties nation-states, and even municipal governments, have to all those regions deemed to be 'in need.' Vicki Nelson, Executive Director for the Saskatchewan Council for International Cooperation (SCIC), spoke on behalf of the City of Moose Jaw when she declared "We definitely can make a difference. We have to. The world's depending on us" (Nelson qtd. in David n.pag).

by the public service functions of political states. By the end of the Cold War, however, humanitarian agencies unshackled themselves from having to respect the political sovereignty of foreign states altogether (133).

James Ferguson calls this problematic international configuration "transnational governmentality," an emerging, global system of governance in which operations of the African nation-state have increasingly been allotted to international (non-governmental) actors (40).[5] We can tie the affective economies which seek out vulnerable children to the fraught neoliberal political economies that supply them. For example, as we will see in Chapter 3, the fragmentation of state sovereignty that enables African organizations and individuals to exercise power within shadow networks and the corruption of African governments that funnels resources out of the welfare state can create the conditions in which classed and racialized African mothers are exploited as 'reproducing machines,' producing children for global and local circulation.

The fact that Western and African individuals can take advantage of the changing conditions of the African postcolony suggests that we can reconsider transnational governmentality as being exploitable by only institutions, governments, and agencies. In this modern era of interconnectedness and advanced technology, human beings have more power than ever before to affect each other's lives and material conditions. As Anthony K. Appiah writes:

> Only in the past couple of centuries…have we come to a point where each of us can realistically imagine contacting any other of our six billion conspecifics and sending that person something worth having: a radio, an antibiotic, a good idea. Unfortunately, we could also send, through negligence as easily as malice, things that will cause harm: a virus, an airborne pollutant, a bad idea. (xii)

[5] The neoliberal allotting of sovereign power over African peoples to global actors could be considered another version of the phrase 'we are the world,' which implicitly suggests that international individual agents take responsibility for the lives of African children.

While the philosophies of liberal capitalism have enthroned the individual, the economic structures of global capitalism with its production of interconnected networks have invested the individual with the power to affect lives of others across the world. We can send as quickly as we can receive, and the immediacy offered by novel forms of communication has given many people, not only the confidence to effect change on both micro- and macro-socioeconomic levels, but, in some cases, the expectations of change. This becomes clear in cases of internet activism with respect to Africa, like the Stop Kony campaign of 2012 or the Bring Back Our Girls movement of 2014. The Bring Back Our Girls movement began in Nigeria in April 2014. Rallies of Nigerians used the phrase "Bring Back Our Girls" to demand that their Nigerian government, perceived as inept, act quickly in finding the over two hundred girls kidnapped in the North by the political extremist group Boko Haram, presumably to be sold into slavery. This phrase eventually migrated to the internet; concerned (largely Western and English-speaking) citizens, enraged by the lack of Western media coverage on the kidnapping and the perceived lack of sympathy and concern for the kidnapped girls, proliferated an online petition for United States intervention while spreading the hashtag #BringBackOurGirls across the social media platform twitter. Within a week, the hashtag not only entered the purview of Western media coverage; celebrities and entertainers took on the task of spreading awareness, aiding in the movement's public momentum.[6]

And yet, the hashtag and its calls for military American interventionism did not result in effective action regarding the kidnapped girls. This failure, of course, speaks to the ways in which the twitter campaign followed familiar humanitarian patterns of de-contextualizing and

[6] What #BringBackOurGirls means for social media activism has not gone unnoticed by the internet community. On the other hand, it is also hard not to notice how perfectly the kidnappings in Northern Nigeria fit into American discourses of global terrorism that present villainous brown Others to be conquered by American military imperialism (Scott n.pag).

over-simplifying political issues surrounding Africa. It also reminds us of the danger of humanitarian affect feeding into Western military interventionism across the continent.[7] At the same time, it brings into view transnational kinship as a humanitarian strategy that, like sponsorship, offers itself to concerned Westerners as a more direct, privatized mechanism through which to give aid to children in need. As with the example of the Ward family, discussed in Chapter 4, who frame their adoption of an Ethiopian child as a response of sorts to the Ethiopian famine, families can offer kinship to vulnerable children as salvation in lieu of the ability to change the global power structures that contribute to their lived precariousness.

Familial love and nurture as a form of salvation functions much like historical Western "philanthropic" interventions in settler and non-settler colonies. The language of family articulated imperial intervention within the rubrics of compassion and love, and defined the colonized as part of the imperial "family." At the same time, the lived experiences of the transnational adoptee within his or her new family, the "uncomfortable emotions" (Brydon 6) that arise from the adoptee's detachment from her geographical origins, and the uneasy realignments she must make to her adoptive family and nation bring back into focus the affective entanglements that can expose the structures of power at play within the familial intimate space.

Mbembe asserts that during the colonial period of racialized terror, the Western colonizer could 'love' (or perhaps simply sympathize with) the colonized native only as one would a domesticated animal; "thus, one was sad when he/she died because he/she belonged, up to a point, to the familiar world" (27). This conception of sympathy, Mbembe argues, which draws

[7] Tying the movement to a history of European exploitation of Nigeria and Africa, *Compare Afrique* founder Jumoke Balogun critiqued #BringBackOurGirls, a particularly American feminist movement, that their "insistence on urging American power, specifically American military power, to address this issue [would] ultimately hurt the people of Nigeria" by allowing America to "encroach and grow their military presence in Africa" (Balogun qtd in Maxfield 69).

upon Bergsonian traditions of the 'native' as non-human, has also become a feature of the postcolonial period. While I agree that the power structures introduced through the philosophical traditions of colonialism still ghost the international socioeconomic relations between the African postcolonial apparatus and Western international actors, in taking into account all the theoretical considerations that I have discussed up to this point, I wish to complicate Mbembe's configuration of the affective relationships between colonizer and colonized, particularly as these relationships exist in our global contemporary moment. How can we characterize the transnational, transracial relationships that are shaped by, but also transcend representational strategies and postcolonial political realities? How do the spectres of colonialism, along with the violent socioeconomic contexts of globalization, expose the inequities hidden within idealized humanitarian narratives of rescue underlying global adoptions while at the same time revealing their transformative potential? How can we account for the experiences and psychic struggles of the African adoptee, and what do their contradictions of idealized Western narratives tell us about the fantasies and anxieties of their Western parents?

I explore these questions in my dissertation, laying out the gendered, racial, economic, and political dimensions of the transnational family. The intent is to explore the operations of its claims to multicultural universalism while exploring how the everyday lived realities of transnational kinship can complicate this paradigm, posing new modes of ethical engagement with the vulnerable, racialized child in need. In Chapter 1, I trace the modernist configuration of childhood through various political and missionary nineteenth-century texts to examine how the formative culture of capitalist modernity has, along with a history of colonialism, created the conditions for child sponsorship and transnational adoption to act as viable forms of humanitarianism. Lee Edelman would argue that the child, as a symbolic "figure for the

universal value attributed to political futurity," also at once exposes the preoccupation of the politics of futurity with "the vision it hopes to realize," a vision which is paradoxically "rooted in an imaginary past" (19-20). Even during the colonial period, human rights discourses, trumpeted by humanitarian organizations when championing African children, assumed the existence of a universalized childhood that, according to this formation, must be upheld in order for the African child—and all children—to live a full and productive life in the future (Slaughter 328).[8] As Edelman suggests, the politics of futurity bound up in this post-Kantian figure of the universal child reveals the anxieties of dominant Western culture in maintaining its philosophical conception of modernity; the child represents a *tabula rasa* able to be formed into a citizen and properly incorporated, as Joseph Slaughter would say, into the nation-state and the larger global community as a 'fully realized' citizen—'citizen,' that is, as defined by the philosophical traditions of modernity (246-8). As my analysis aligns discourses of childhood alongside the consolidation of empire, an exploration of these texts, and particularly a reading of colonial missionary work in West Africa, will expose the instability of the constructed boundaries thought to separate the Western paternalistic self and the dependent colonized Other. In addition, I seek to offer reasons as to why these imperial structures and discursive formations have persisted nonetheless.

In Chapter 2, I read Olympic mothers, transformed into celebrities through the successes of their athletic children, against celebrity transnational adoption, particularly Angelina Jolie's adoption of her children Maddox, Pax and Zahara, to tease apart the formations of the interracial nuclear family in an era of global capitalism. The chapter explores how discourses of masculinity

[8]Indeed, as stipulated by the Conventions of the Rights of the Child (CRC), the child has access to rights, particularly the kind of rights that would enable them to develop in the 'right' kind of citizen. The CRC argues specifically that children "first and foremost" have the right to be included in "international modernist culture," as well as the right "to identity (conceived in individual, familial, and national terms)" (Stephens qtd.in Schultheis 32).

and motherhood consolidated during the Cold War period have necessitated an instrumentalization of children as a means through which women could achieve the ideal, aspirational white middle-class motherhood imperative to the articulation of American nationalism, humanitarian selflessness, and womanhood. This becomes clear especially upon consideration of racialized celebrity mothers such as actress Salma Hayak and Olympic mothers such as Natalie Hawkins. Unpacking the intersections of Angelina Jolie's global motherhood and model humanitarianism in particular will help demonstrate a specifically American economy of motherhood. This analysis will in turn set the stage for the next chapter, in which I discuss the ramifications of this economy on the construction of those African birth mothers left out of its frame.

David Eng notes the instrumentalization of children in cases of transnational adoption when he argues that, the transnational adoptee can be understood as being a "form of embodied value, a special type of property uneasily straddling both subjecthood and objecthood" (8). The child exists on the edge of subject and object because despite possessing a subjectivity, he or she performs for the parents a consumptive labour. If productive labour in the Marxist sense is structured around wage labour, consumptive labour is affective labour. In the case of a transnational adoptee, for example, "consumptive labor produces and shores up the social and psychic boundaries of the white heterosexual nuclear family, guaranteeing its integrity and the sanctity of its ideals" (12).

Thus upon acquiring a child, a parent partakes in a partially affective transaction in which the procuring of a child psychically and socially gives his/her new parents access to the white, patriarchal kinship model and its ideological implications. As Eng explains, in an era of late capitalism, the 'white Western nuclear family' is integral to articulations of citizenship. To have

a child, "has today become the sign of guarantee not only for family but also for full and robust citizenship—for being a fully realized political, economic, and social subject in American life" (101). This includes an "enjoyment of rights" that "is, of course, ghosted by those queers and diasporic subjects—unacknowledged lovers, illegal immigrants, indentured laborers, infants left behind—consigned to outcast status and confined to the edges of globalization" because "they have attenuated, and often no, legal claims to 'family,' 'home,' or 'nation'" (101).

In Chapter 3, I bring into view these figures, these "ghosts" of globalization. Through the example of Nigerian Baby Factories that operate as part of national and international human trafficking rings, I pay attention to those under-privileged birth mothers, who may give up their children for global or local circulation due to their inability to provide for them. The economy of Northern white maternal affect which shores up white capitalist heterosexual kinship necessitates these Nigerian mothers' erasure from the text of the transnational family. As I examine the structures of power that ease the process of crossing borders for some bodies over others, I explore the ways in which affective motherhood, which is critical to maintaining the transnational family as a symbol of transnational kinship, can in effect work to close down other non-nuclear models of kinship that could trouble hierarchal power relations with their inclusion of more than one mother.

The unequal relations that break down boundaries for some but not others is a key point of interrogation in Chapter 4 as I explore the intimate everyday of the transnational family. As Eng notes, transnational adoption has been "one of the most privileged forms of diaspora and immigration in the late twentieth century" and also in the twenty-first century (1). However, an analysis of the everyday affective coordinates of the adoptee shows that her privileged movement across borders is not entirely free. Here I return to Binyavanga Wainaina's personal

account of watching Live Aid as a child living in Kenya. The gulf separating the representations of Africa and the African child presented to the globe by the West, on the one hand, and the de-coding of that figure (and the Western humanitarian affect it elicits) by an African child witnessing the humanitarian event designed for his benefit, on the other, suggests to us that the figure of the helpless, suffering African child is a reflection of Western fantasy. The affective notion of nurturing that supplies a Western mother's ability to perform white middle-class motherhood requires the adoptee to step into certain racial, gendered fantasy roles as part of the aforementioned affective transaction. However, the adoptee's belonging to multiple emotional geographies (Brydon 2007) means that she cannot easily fit into these passive roles. In evading easy classifications, the transnational adoptee challenges imperial categorization as she reveals in her everyday comforts and discomforts the "affective legacy of racialized histories of genocide, slavery, colonization and migration" (Cvetkovich 464). There is a significant body of work on Korean adoption, often written by Korean adoptees, that prioritizes the adoptee's agency and subjectivity. Making reference to some of these works, the last chapter of the dissertation offers a close reading of *Girl, Adopted* (2013), a PBS documentary documenting the life of an Ethiopian adoptee in order to explore these considerations of race, power, and familial intimacy in the context of adoptions from Africa.

This project contributes to multiple fields through its engagement with the socioeconomic and political participation of marginalized African bodies within and outside of the African continent. Its unpacking of the affective and ideological threads of the transnational adoption of black African children places it among research on diasporic African youth cultures.[9]

[9] Through my analysis of Girl, Adopted in particular, I follow in the footsteps of African Youth Scholarship (Diouf 2003; Cole 2005; Simone 2005) that grapples with youth agency in the face of the sociopolitical and economic uncertainties and potentials opened up by transnational flows in a globalized world.

Furthermore, along with speaking to issues within critical race, gender, and globalization studies, it adds to scholarship on postcolonial affect through its engagement with colonial legacies of interracial, familial intimacies.

Indeed, the philosophical traditions of European modernity has structured boundaries between colonizer and colonized, fixing bodies in temporal, geographical, and social space even as they are drawn into intimate spheres that have the potential to be violent reproducers of this language of domination and productive spheres of resistance. However, we can also think of these intimate spheres as "complicated collectives" (Simone 408) and consider how these lived spaces feature complex entanglements of affective articulations, histories, and experiences that brush up against the structural workings of international states and the uneven circulation of global capital that belie these spaces. This 'brushing up' of multiple historical, affective, social, geographic, and economic positionalities are a feature of transnational adoptions, which, through the resultant tensions, speak to painful histories.

However, in speaking to these painful histories and exposing the inconsistencies inherent in humanitarian representations of the transnational family, stories and experiences of transnational adoption can challenge individuals to confront, not only the problematic constructions of African children, but also the larger networks of power that shape these children's diasporic experiences. It is my hope that in considering these larger questions as they play out in both the public and private sphere, my work will reveal the complex dimensions and potentials of the affective, socioeconomic, and political relations bound up in the literal and metaphoric global adoptions enchaining Africa to the West.

Chapter 1: Needy Children, Colonial Imperialism, and the Victorian Politics of Salvation

> "My dear child," said the old gentleman, moved by the warmth of Oliver's sudden appeal; "you need not be afraid of my deserting you, unless you give me cause."
>
> "I never, never will, sir," interposed Oliver.
>
> "I hope not," rejoined the old gentleman. "I do not think you ever will. I have been deceived, before in the objects whom I have endeavoured to benefit; but I feel strongly disposed to trust you, nevertheless; and I am more interested in your behalf than I can well account for, even to myself.
>
> — Charles Dickens, *Oliver Twist*

> If we can give [Haitian children] literacy, we can give them faith and we can give them a meal. They're ahead of half of Haiti right there.
>
> — Humanitarian Joanna Baumgartner, *Most Magazine* (22)

Though the Bring Back Our Girls and Live Aid movements suggest the possibility of transnational familial bonds, powerfully affective, existing between Western adults and African children, these bonds cannot be naively read outside the historical discourses and violent imperial processes that have already designed the parameters of the relationship between parent and child. The Spring Issue of *Most Magazine*, a Hamilton lifestyles publication, makes this clear. The cover presents what Laura Briggs would call the "finely honed trope" (180) of the transnational family, exposing historical logics shored up in popular conceptions of this relationship. The cover's focus is on Joanna Baumgartner, a blonde white woman whose humanitarian missionary work in Haiti is featured as the magazine's cover story. "The extraordinary altruism of Joanna Baumgartner," the cover's byline reads, underneath the picture of Joanna who stands at the centre of the frame, lifting up a small presumably Haitian baby high into the air with a wide, motherly grin. Joanna and the Haitian child are frozen in this nurturing, maternal gesture meant to symbolize her relationship with the children she works with through the religious ministry organization B The Hope for Haiti.

Joanna's humanitarian narrative features a transnational kinship bond between a white, Western humanitarian and the African diasporic children in her care. According to the cover

story, Joanna has "cared for more than 50 children during the past 16 years." According to Joanna herself, she and her family are "always raising a family of six—they just make regular trade-ins for younger models" (Baumgartner qtd in Kenny 22). On one hand, by framing these transitive arrangements as 'extending her family,' she is symbolically drawing these African diasporic children into her own lineage, creating a quasi-familial bond. On the other hand, Joanna's words characterize the children as exchangeable commodities. Her characterization of the Haitian children as 'trade-ins' and 'models' exposes a logic of commodification that reflects a larger discursive framework arising out of contemporary asymmetrical global power relations: unequal divisions of production and consumption, and the resultant commodification of racialized and gendered bodies in the Third World, or, as Jodi Kim puts it, "the racialized logic of consumption, possession and ownership" (862). As my dissertation will make clear, the affective and political dimensions of the transnational family are entangled, informing each other. Though for the purposes of the structure of my overall analysis, I will elaborate in the next chapter on the affective commitment implied in this kinship configuration, I stress here the objectification (specifically the erasure of subjectivity) of the children resulting from this commodity logic. This logic is further reinforced by the cover's framing strategies. It is only Joanna's face, after all, that we see on the cover. Since the Haitian infant's back is always to the camera, we never see her or his face. The framing suggests that it does not matter whether or not we see the child's face; what is more important is the fact that the child has been saved by Joanna's nurturing, parental care. The cover thus, operating similarly to racist visual framing

strategies in American cinema,[10] reinforces the singularity attributed to Joanna by emphasizing the replaceability and thus anonymity (and transferability) of the faceless infant.[11]

The cover story ascribes a transcendent, spiritual dimension to Joanna's missionary work—and indeed, as Erica Bornstein suggests in her analysis of Christian humanitarian sponsorship, the oft-times religious undertones of certain humanitarian strategies and institutions necessarily exposes the complex dimensions of 'help' with respect to African children as it pertains to affective motives, altruistic aims, and imbedded histories even in secular cases (605). *Most Magazine* describes Joanna as feeling "overwhelmed" and "breaking down," in the face of so many children in need of her help, but soldiering on nonetheless to help those in her charge. Joanna's work is described by the article as "giving [these children] dignity" (20), as if they previously had none, filling up the discursively empty vessels of the Haitain children with the very qualities all children have the right to attain according to the implicitly Western Christian liberal discourses of modernity in the statement from Joanna I have used as an epigraph for this chapter.

There are already certain logics at work when a particular audience demographic is targeted by sponsorship programs like World Vision and asked to take on a parental role, even if

[10] I am referring here to the encirclement trope, which Tom Engelhardt describes as a cinematic technique used in Western films like *Stage Coach* (1939) designed to force an empathetic, subjective connection between the audience and the white protagonists. This identification is encouraged by placing the white body at the centre of a large group of racialized bodies whose numbers strip them of subjectivity, which, in Westerns, enables their construction as threatening as they 'encircle' the white protagonists. Similarly, the cover of the magazine reinforces the singularity of Joanna, while implying, by hiding the child's face, the plurality of Haitian and African children (Shohat and Stam 119-20). We could also apply the trope of encirclement, as it were, to the very figure of the privileged white subject, a potential humanitarian, facing the immense poverty and need of foreign and domestic racialized bodies.

[11] Levinas's theory of the power of the face of the Other provides another avenue through which to think of the de-facing of the black infant on the cover of the magazine. As Levinas argues, as pure expression signifying a sort of naked defenselessness has the potential to elide the ideological discourse that would posit it as an object and instead encourages and ethical engagement. As Levinas writes, "[t]his means concretely: the face speaks to me and invites me to a relation incommensurate with a power exercised, be it enjoyment or knowledge" (qtd in Perpich 96). If the vulnerability of the face has the power to articulate itself as a being with social and political meaning then to hide the face of the black infant reads as a subconscious strategy to emphasize instead the humanity of the white mother.

this role is limited to reading letters and donating capital. Likewise, the frenzied, if momentary, participation in the 2012 Stop Kony campaign, much like the Bring Back Our Girls movement, exposed the humanitarians' sense of "moral certainty," to quote Mamdani (*Saviors and Survivors* 6), but this moral certainty at once betrayed particular modes of Western-thinking that sees as common sense the historical, sociopolitical undertones of the relationship between Africa and the West—even as these undertones are discursively erased. The specific dimensions of the humanitarian transnational family are always already clear; that is to say that despite any idealistic claims to universalism and shared responsibility made possible by the transnational Westerner-African family, the specific roles of each are always already delineated. Who can be the parent and who the child in this family? What kinds of images of the Western-African transnational family make sense to the Western humanitarian imagination, and which racial-cultural configurations of family are less visible? How is the public to gauge the neediness of the child, and what markers are used to measure the improvement of the child's quality of life upon his or her adoption (figurative or literal) by a parental humanitarian?

Most importantly, as I ask in this chapter, what are the ideological assumptions that characterize the transnational family as humanitarian aid, presenting the Western adoption of African children as a logical and legitimate form of 'saving'? Sponsorship programs like those run by World Vision and Christian Children's Fund of Canada (CCFC) operate much like adoption agencies in that they normalize the 'saving' potential of these transnational bonds at the same time that they imply that these international 'transcendent' bonds can be purchased through capital. In Chapter 4, I will examine the implications of this purchasable affect and, specifically, what the capitalist logic at the core of adoption and sponsorship might reveal about the relationship between African children and Western parents—and indeed, the West and Africa.

But for now, I will take a closer look at the historical and sociopolitical configurations of childhood and parenthood that helped turn the transnational Westerner-African family into a common-sense humanitarian strategy for the Western imagination.

In this chapter, I trace the long genealogy of the discourse around Western adoption by excavating the colonial and paternalistic figurations of Africa and African children from nineteenth-century missionary, literary, and colonial texts. More specifically, I focus on the sociopolitical and imperial dimensions of European missionary work and conversion in Africa (using Nigeria as a specific locality) as part of a system of knowledge and power that formed uneasy alignments with administrative colonial sovereignty, ultimately helping to produce knowledge about "Africa" and its inhabitants. As I argue, certain cases of missionary work in nineteenth-century Africa provide examples of how the colonial authority that transforms Africans into a "body-thing" (Mbembe, *On the Postcolony* 27) can become enmeshed in the humanitarian, colonial paternalism underlying 'the mission' in such a way so as to give Western adult figures parental 'right' over African children. Even as such, missionary work, despite functioning as an intervention of power, cannot be easily mapped onto structures of domination. As I interrogate the complicated ideological frameworks within which nineteenth-century missionaries in Africa existed in colonial space with traders, indigenous peoples, and colonial administrations, I will highlight their interweaving and fluctuating relationship with national, imperial, racial, and gendered discourses in order to examine the uneasy relations of power bound up in the Western conception of the right to parent the African child—a conception at once compassionate and violently problematic.

Towards this aim, I have framed my discussion around the Presbyterian missionary Mary Slessor, born in 1848 in Scotland. Slessor is known for her missionary work in the Calabar

province of colonial Nigeria among the Efik people. Most interestingly, because of her gendered and racialized humanitarian efforts in Calabar, she is not only celebrated as a Queen, but also remembered as a 'mother' to the Efik. The way in which her work among the Efik has been taken up in the public sphere by both Europeans and Africans will help tease out the ideological strands of the transnational European-African family.

Contextualizing Calabar

Before discussing Slessor's specific case, it is important to map out some of the colonial and missionary histories in the country. The emergence of the industrial revolution pushed European powers to accelerate their colonization to procure raw materials and exploit new markets. The creation of "Nigeria," coined by colonial administrators, was a result of the Berlin Conference of 1884-1885 which solidified colonial administrational rule of the continent of Africa (Ogunbado 51). And yet, the history of European presence in the region began centuries earlier in the form of missionaries and traders. In Ahamad Faosiy Ogunbado's recounting of Nigeria's colonial history, we see the ideological slipperiness between the religious, humanitarian, imperial, and economic aims of these European entities as they began interacting with Africans, a fraught relationship that my analysis will engage with throughout the chapter. For example, the Portuguese merchants who entered Lagos and Benin to trade spices saw the spiritual conversion of the native inhabitants as key to properly engage in the processes of trade. To be "a good customer," Ogunbado writes, was to be "Christianised and have rudiment Western education" (53).

This question of native pedagogy and economic development lies at the intersection of religious, humanitarian, and economic discourses, their relations shored up in the sociopolitical

dimensions of missionary activities. In Southwestern Nigeria, the Catholics began the first strain of missionary activities in the region in 1515 by establishing a school in Benin for princes and the children of chiefs. In 1842, the first British Christian mission established churches in Badagry dominated by ex-slaves turned traders from Sierra Leon even as they focused much of their attention on establishing educational institutions (Ogunbado 53). In the Southeastern province of Calabar, Scottish Presbyterian missions resisted the colonial government's influence on their establishment of an education system, but as the turn of the century approached and the power of colonial administration in Lagos consolidated, the mission's schools inevitably became absorbed into and central to the government's pedagogical strategies (Taylor 190).

A more extensive examination of the colonial educational system and policies in Nigeria is beyond the purview of this chapter. However, that the 'education' of Nigerians was important to colonial governments and missionaries regardless of whether or not the two institutions pursued their interests independently speaks to the importance of certain discursive frameworks in shaping the contours of European-African relations in the region. Though early Scottish Presbyterian missionary schools in Calabar, also doubling as churches when needed, serviced adults as well as children, the strategic rearing of children was certainly an important aim. As Taylor writes, King Eyamba's letter to Queen Victoria requesting British assistance in resources also asked for "a school to teach our children to saby book," believing this to be key to the facilitation of trade in the region (Eyamba qtd. in Taylor 193).[12] The desire to raise children who could participate in the increasingly European economic structures of the time intersected,

[12] It is important to note here the relationship British colonial administration had with Nigerian rulers. At the time of contact with British traders and merchants, the region was already engaged in a stable commercial system that allowed for more power and agency to stay in the hands of the inhabitants. Decades before the Berlin Conference, commercial alliances existed between Queen Victoria and the rulers of the Calabar. The interplay of power between the British administration and the native rulers of the region was such that the latter waged war in order to hold on to their sovereign rights, though much of this power became compromised as regions began to fall under the control of the southern protectorate (Alamieyeseigha 324-325).

inevitably, with the aim of raising their "moral character," most precisely through Bible study. Ultimately, as Taylor writes, "the implicit and explicit curriculum initiated pupils into the European world" (194).

Though the rearing of these children (and many times their parents) through pedagogy may have been a matter of economic and political concern for local and British rulers, the preoccupation with 'morality' and 'character' adds a domestic dimension of nurture and ethics that deceptively seems to exist outside the public sphere of political economy. This is where it becomes useful to take a closer look at the specific case of Mary Slessor's missionary work in the Calabar region as part of the Presbyterian missions. As an important historical Presbyterian figure in Nigeria, Slessor is particularly known for her work in saving (to use the loaded term) and adopting those children of the Efik made vulnerable by the customs of the community. Indeed, popular visual images of Slessor are often primarily focused on her relationship with her adopted Efik children, showing her surrounded by black children, much like Joanna Baumgartner in *Most Magazine* and other such representations of 'adoptive' white mothers.[13] By examining Mary Slessor as a humanitarian figure, my aim is not to doubt her emotional connection to the children she brought into her care. Her relationship with the Efik people is important, however, precisely because it has been taken up and narrativized within a larger cultural climate that has for the most part decoded her life story and recoded it within a framework of norms that supports the very problematic discourses taken up in this chapter. Because Mary Slessor was a political authority among the Efik people as well as a humanitarian, 'mother' figure, I believe that

[13] A 2015 BBC article, entitled "'The Queen of Okoyong: The Legacy of Mary Slessor" features several such images, though only one singular profile of the missionary, as they celebrate her contributions to Nigeria. The representational politics behind such images, as they are mobilized to narrativize the lives of public figures such as Princess Diana and Angelina Jolie will be examined more thoroughly in the second chapter.

Slessor's life can provide insight into the ways in which certain discourses normalize the 'right' to African children supposedly possessed by Western (and particularly white) adults.

William P. Livingstone, a Scottish writer and traveller, wrote Mary Slessor's biography in 1916.[14] I focus on his work because his biography exists as part of a larger genre that arose after the spread of evangelical revivalism in the 1870s. I am speaking of those books and writings that told the tale of Scottish colonial explorers "celebrat[ing] the lives and achievements of intrepid adventurers who battled against the odds in Africa to bring Christianity to the far flung corners of the earth" (Finlay 160). Considering that books in this genre were used as educational tools for Scottish children, it is important to pay closer attention to his work and how he narrates Slessor's life.

Indeed, the fact that Mary Slessor is Scottish needs to be addressed here as it is significant to the discussion. According to Richard Finlay, despite the various historical conflicts between Scotland and Britain, when discursively positioning itself against the African continent, the Scottish people aligned themselves ideologically with Britain. As he writes, during the colonial missionary project, many Scottish missionaries and colonial explorers identified themselves as belonging to the "'English' nation" (174). Famous explorer David Livingstone reportedly "referred to himself as English and it was to the English prime minister, the English state and the English people that he addressed his pleas for a more active engagement in Africa to suppress the slave trade" (174-5). As Daniel Coleman outlines in *White Civility*, this alignment was generally part of the strategy of Scottish colonials to enmesh themselves into the fabric of

[14] As a traveller, writer, and colonial reporter, William P. Livingstone (related to the famous colonial explorer David Livingstone) spent much of his career in the late nineteenth century writing about African and African diasporic populations, transforming accounts of the everyday lives of the indigenous and religious colonial agents into missionary tales to be consumed by Western audiences. Like many nineteenth-century writings, his work helped to reinforce the imperial discourses already pervading the times (Finley 159-189).

British imperialism. Stressing their connection to 'Englishness' as it existed in proximity to the concept of the British empire,[15] the Scots became central to Britain's economic and military imperial campaign across the world, a point stressed by Scottish historian Tom Nairn when he characterizes Scotland, not as a territory colonized by England, but as a "highly successful partner in the general business enterprise of Anglo-Scots imperialism" (Nairn qtd. in Coleman 90).[16] According to John Mackenzie, Scottish missionaries, and in particular nineteenth-century Presbyterians, were integral to the British imperial project as part of the discursive 'British' terrain, not so much in their role in conversion, but more so in their role of developing educational institutions. In India, Scottish missionaries led the 'Anglicist/Orientalist' education debates that led to the development of schools and colleges that forwarded western education in the land. Similar directives were mobilized in Africa, "and became one of the prime characteristics of the British relationship with Africa during the Partition" (727). Further, Finlay argues that the Scottish penetration of Africa was in part due to the growing anti-Islamic sentiments in Scotland as well as the perception of anti-Christian persecution spreading across Britain. For the Scottish people, Africa became the figurative terrain upon which to express these

[15] Interestingly, as Coleman also notes in discussing 'Englishness' and 'Britishness' as negotiated categories, while claims to 'Englishness' may have served the Scots in becoming crucial to Britain's imperial plot, England's mobilization of the terms were always characterized by a tension between notions of expansion and empire (uniting under their banner not only the ethno-national across the British Isles but also the non-European territories they colonized) and English identity as exceptional. Mobilizing the terms 'Englishness' and 'Britishness' thus, for the English became a way of entrenching the hierarchy that would place English identity as an elite identity within the empire (Coleman 85). I will return to this point later in the chapter upon a closer inspection of the colonial relations in Nigeria.

[16] Drawing on the work of Linda Colley (1992), Peter Marshall (1976), John Ridder (1989) and other historians, John Mackenzie details the prevalence of Scots in the everyday machinery of empire. According to Mackenzie, the assimilation of Scots into the British state came in part due to the mutual identification of France as a trading rival, as well as shared religious and economic interests. Scottish regiments and officers became integral to the British army as early as the 18th century. Mackenzie particularly details the high prevalence of Scottish soldiers in India from at least the mid-eighteenth century, both in royal regiments and in the service of the East India Company. Scots were certainly at the forefront of the East India Company itself, and thus were instrumental in the colonial penetration of India. Invariably, the Scottish negotiation between categories of 'Englishness' and 'Britishness' "became the prime means of cementing the British state" (Mackenzie 715).

anxieties, constructing their missionary work as part of the crusade to 'save' Africa from "the forces of Arab darkness" by bringing the light of Christian civilization (177).

I detail this history here to argue that in order to examine Slessor's missionary work as it is taken up in Scottish literature, we must consider first that the work of Scottish missionaries is part of the larger project of British imperialism, not only politically, economically, and militarily, but also certainly in terms of the discursive frameworks they helped reinforce; and second, that the generic accounts of their lives, which circulated throughout Scotland and Britain, constitute texts belonging, at least discursively in relation to Africa, to the 'British Empire,' and the 'English nation.' Crucial to the examination of Slessor's biography is an analysis of the narrativization of her missionary work along the discursive lines of citizenship, family, and empire fused into the larger cannon of British (and more specifically English) literary texts at the time. Of interest here are the modernist, Western articulations of childhood and orphanhood insofar as they intersect with the religious, economic, and imperial discourses arising out of the late nineteenth century. These articulations appear throughout Slessor's narrative in different contexts, revealing the tensions between humanitarian care and colonial domination. Tracing the figure of the Child and the figure of the Orphaned Child, ever in need of parental care and support, through literary Victorian texts in relation to Slessor's biography, I will reveal the ways in which such a discursive terrain anticipated current articulations of African childhood that make logical, within the Western episteme, the transnational family as a humanitarian act.

Mary Slessor, Orphans, and the Figure of the Child

Lee Edelman's aligning of the figure of the Child with "the politics of futurity" is integral to this section's analysis of Slessor's meager beginnings in Scotland (19-20). Jean and John

Comaroff argue that "industrial capitalist society has been more or less unique in making childhood into a site of self-conscious cultural reproduction" (*Reflections on Youth* 268). In early modern European societies, children participated in economic structures through family work, apprenticeship, and wage labour. This participation, of course, always carried with it the danger of exploitation; for example, in the nineteenth century, the figure of the Child Miner was often mobilized to represent the exploitation and suffering possible within the realm of child work — or 'child labour,' as it is commonly called in global capitalist discourses, a term loaded with negative connotation.[17] However, child work still had value within families and communities, particularly those underprivileged by class. As historian Francis M.L. Thompson explains, despite the sentiment of outrage towards child labour, in less economically prosperous British households and communities, the expectation of parents to nurture their children until a certain age when they would be expected to be capable of earning a wage simply could not feasibly be fulfilled:

> There had been a time when very young children, from the age of five or six, had been widely expected to start contributing towards their keep—in agriculture, textiles, mining, chimney-sweeping, straw-plaiting, and most domestic and cottage industries—even if few had ever been really valuable economic assets. That time may have been coming to an end before legislation took a hand from 1833, with the prohibition of factory work in cotton, woollens, worsteds, flax, and linens, but not in silk mills, for all children under nine years old and limited the work of nine- to thirteen-year-olds to nine hours a day…from the point of view of an imaginary economic parent the prospect of feeding and nurturing a child for ten or eleven years, after which it might begin to earn a few shillings a week, can scarcely have made procreation look like an attractive investment. (Thompson 81)

[17] In 1840, the British Parliament, on the behest of Lord Ashley, set up a Royal Commission of Inquiry into children's employment. The Commission consequently wrote two reports detailing the horrific conditions children faced in the mines. The stories of child miners greatly shook England, spurring the government to produce the 1842 Coal Mines Act, legislation that would strictly limit child-mining work by prohibiting employment of female children and boys under ten (Plener and Freiherr 15-25).

Indeed, though the image of child labourers in factories came to stand for the perception of the industrial revolution as heartless, the number of such children in Britain, though still somewhat large, was actually too low to be considered representative of "child workers, let alone children at large" (23).[18] Furthermore, as Nancy Scheper-Hughes and Carolyn Fishel Sargent assert, those children in society who did work, outside or within the household, in agricultural, domestic, and industrial spaces, were often valued and respected for their economic contributions to the family. Young workers could be considered in many cases social equals.[19] Scheper-Hughes and Sargent hold that "[i]n gaining their 'rights,' in the form of protection from family work, apprenticeship, and wage labor, modern children may have gained their childhoods but lost considerable power and status" (11).

To understand how Slessor's narrative fits within this moment of shifting attitudes towards the role of children, we must tease apart the social, political, and economic dimensions of this cultural shift. The transition to late-modern industrial capitalism saw the nineteenth century transformed by divisions of multiple spaces: "urban and rural, public and private, 'home' and empire… 'nature' and 'civilization'" (Burman 239). As conceptions of the late-modern middle-class nuclear family began to emerge around the mandates of consumption in concert with the rise of the emancipated, private individual and universal rights discourses, child labour shifted from a pragmatic social and economic contribution to a feature of the adult world that children had to be protected from. Lisa Hermine Makman pinpoints the period between the 1860s and 1920s as a time when legislation worked against child labour and, instead, enforced

[18] Within the context of English and Scottish Victorian society, women rather than children actually made up the bulk of the employment in factories. As it has been argued, working-class men, privileged by gender, had more opportunity to turn down jobs considered 'degrading' at the time (Thompson 74-5).
[19] This extends to the present day, where such cases still exist. For example, children of the Zambesi Valley of Zimbabwe occupy positions of "dignity and worth in Tonga society," valued as workers and companions whose opinions are respected in the public sphere such as during court proceedings (Reynolds qtd. in Scheper-Hughes and Sargent 11).

education (119). However, as I will elaborate upon later on in this section, such conceptions and shifts in attitude were largely inflected by middle-class preoccupations. As such, the "instrumental value of children" was replaced by an "expressive value," whereby children, no longer expected to contribute to the income of their parents, became discursively "priceless" (Sargent and Scheper-Hughes 11-12).

Indeed, as Europe began to situate its youth outside of the industrial workplace, dominant narratives recast children within the modernist *telos* of human development, normalizing the conception of the fully realized rational citizen (Comaroff and Comaroff, *Reflections on Youth* 268). In place of their earning power, children gained social significance as 'objects' of affective 'wealth' to be cared for, reared, and protected by their parents, as well as by the sociopolitical and economic institutions of their society. Within this epistemological framework, the protection and rearing offered by parents and society would be crucial to easing the modern child's transition into modern adulthood and full, participatory citizenship. It is precisely for this reason, however, that the figure of the Child also exists as a source of Western anxiety; though modernist frameworks prioritize the potentiality of this figure, the Comaroffs remind us that children are "complex signifiers, the stuff of mythic extremes, simultaneously idealizations and monstrosities, pathologies and panaceas" (268).[20]

The figure of the Orphaned Child in particular, which appears in dominant narratives of Mary Slessor's missionary life through the orphaned Efik children and Slessor herself, serves as

[20] Such complexity can be seen today through the figure of the African child soldier, a figure of anxiety for the Western bourgeois imagination precisely for how it shuttles anxiously between the perceived 'monstrosity' of Africa and the 'innocence' of childhood (under attack from the former). As Alexandra Schultheis argues, child soldiers are depicted as being the result of multiple failures: of the global economy, of the family, of the postcolonial state, and, ultimately, of discourses of modernity (33). As figures, they signify innocence lost, which places them as targets of humanitarian aid. Yet, their characterization as vulnerable is immediately contracted by their visible integration into systems of extreme violence antithetical to Western paternalist conceptions of childhood—violence they are complicit in, despite the vastly unequal power structures limiting their choices. For more on the cultural and political work of the African child soldier, see, for instance, Mackey, "Troubling Humanitarian Consumption."

an example of the juxtaposition of the mythic extremes bound up in contemporary capitalist discourses of childhood. Indeed, the Orphan as a figure reveals the ways in which the modern Child is always already fraught with competing potentialities. As Catherine Panter-Brick writes, in the Western contemporary imagination, the production of orphans is tied to parental and societal atrophy. The term 'orphan' itself denotes, simply, children without parents, but within the epistemological framework that figures children as precious objects of care (care, here, signifying the provision of both affect and economic material resources), 'orphan,' as an over-determined semiological category, carries with it the heavier, and far more damning undertones of abandonment. Panter-Brick argues that the concept of abandonment thus widens the boundaries of the 'orphan' as a social category beyond its immediate definition:

> To a casual observer, children who languish in foundling institutions, sleep rough on the streets of crowded urban centres or find themselves confined to refugee camps appear to all intents and purposes abandoned, either by their parents or by society. They appear to be 'nobody's children': in limbo, denied their proper place in the family or society and deprived of a proper childhood. (Panter-Brick 1)

As Panter-Brick asserts, this framing strategically erases the particularities of the children's personal and socioeconomic contexts; these children might indeed have parents. But, as Panter-Brick insinuates, the 'casual observer,' formed within a Western episteme that champions certain modes of childhood over others, can already recognize what proper childhood 'looks like.' In the nineteenth century, as children moved out of the industrial space, the middle-class home increasingly represented the primary nurturing environment for the Child. Material wealth and goods became the markers by which to measure the home space's child-nurturing capacity as safety and morality became discursively tied to the middle-class family's ability to engage in conspicuous consumption. In the words of Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall:

"[t]he goal of all the bustle of the market place was to provide a proper moral and religious life for the family" (qtd. in O'Malley 10).

This image of proper childhood also coincides with the rise of medical discourses that have, since the nineteenth century, aided in the establishment of standards of normality, including normal human development. The 1842 Royal Commission's Report into the conditions of coal mines and child labour reveals how these social and medical discourses intertwine seamlessly, providing a language with which to articulate the Victorian bourgeois anxiety over the rearing and care of children. The report provides several observations into the lives of children working in the mines, and the horrific picture it paints of their socioeconomic circumstances is wedded with panic surrounding the effect such work will have on their physical development. Among the twenty-seven observations detailed in the report, the Children's Employment Commission wrote that:

> [I]n many cases, more especially in some parts of Yorkshire, in Derbyshire, in South Gloucestershire, and very generally in the East of Scotland, the food [provided in the mines] is poor in quality and insufficient in quantity; the children themselves say that they have not enough to eat; and the Sub-commissioners describe them as covered with rags, and state that the common excuse they make for confining themselves to their homes on the Sundays, instead of taking recreation in the fresh air, or attending a place of worship, is that they have no clothes to go in; so that in these cases, notwithstanding the intense labour performed by these children, they do not procure even sufficient food and raiment. (qtd. in Vane 19)

Though it is not clear if the child-workers described in this report are precisely starving, the report depicts them as being deprived of 'sufficient' food in both quantity and quality. Their emphasis on quality as well as quantity implies that there is a certain standard that the food given to children must meet. Further, the ambiguousness of the word 'quality' lends itself to different interpretations: nutritional value and pleasing taste. Though the former refers to preoccupation with health and bodily development, the latter is a purely emotional category more firmly tied to

the notion of care. Thus, not only must children be well-fed with healthy food (to aid in their physical development), but it is implied that they must also be fed with food that meets the requirement of nurturing and care owed to the children by virtue of them being children, according to the middle-class discourse that reifies children as 'priceless' objects.

As the pricelessness of children is also defined within this framework by material goods, the lack of material goods becomes a visible sign of child abandonment and maltreatment. The report notes that the children are "covered with rags" (19). That is, the child miners, despite their earning power, do not have enough money to participate in consumer culture as sufficiently as the capital earning adults of the middle class. These adults can then (and are expected to) use their capital to buy for their own offspring the kind of clothes that would typically mark the well-fed children of the Victorian bourgeoisie who could participate in leisure "recreation" and institutionalized religious activities.[21] In this report, the very image of a child in 'rags' becomes a symbol for a destitute childhood; however, the report does not frame child-labour as its sole cause; it places the blame at the feet of parents: "in general," it writes, "the children who are in this unhappy case, are the children of idle and dissolute parents, who spend the heard-earned wages of their offspring at the public house" (qtd. in Vane 19).

Buried within this indictment is the narrative of an improper childhood marked by parents who have failed in their duties to care for their child; within the parameters of this narrative, parents who send their children to work in the mines are parents who would use capital (even that earned by their own children) for their own 'selfish' or even 'immoral' pursuits, rather than exchanging that capital for their children's survival, comfort, and thus 'happiness.' The

[21] As I have described earlier, though conditions faced by the working class made it sometimes unreasonable to ascribe to the ideology of the middle class in practice, middle class values became normalized within British culture—a benchmark for others to be judged against, regardless of socioeconomic status.

Children's Employment Commission thus constructs the mines as a site that is not so dissimilar from those often narrativized in connection with orphans and needy children: to recall Panter-Brick, "the foundling institutions […] the streets of crowded urban centres," and the "refugee camps" where, in the Western imagination, children languish, denied a stable position in the social, familial order of late capitalism (symbolized by the stable bourgeois home) and thus "deprived of a proper childhood" (Panter-Brick 1).

In Livingstone's book, Mary Slessor's biographical information seems to paint the picture of a woman who grew up as a child much like those lamented over in the Children's Employment Commission report. Livingstone describes young Mary Slessor as a child in the mid-nineteenth century forced by the irresponsibility of a failed patriarch to do the kind of work Livingstone suggests is unsuitable for children. According to Livingstone, Mr. Slessor's unreliability in the work place caused Slessor and her mother to find work in the textile mills. However, because Slessor's father often spent the money they made on alcohol, she had no choice but to continue her labour in the mills, even at times resorting to other 'unsavory' methods to make money. As Livingstone writes:

> Not infrequently, Mary had to perform a duty repugnant to her sensitive nature. She would leave the factory after her long toil, and run home, pick up a parcel which her mother had prepared, and fly like a hunted thing along the shadiest and quietest streets, making many a turning in order to avoid her friends, to the nearest pawnbroker's. (Livingstone 6)

Here, we see the figure of the Child appear in the text. Livingstone echoes the Victorian anxieties over children in urban spaces and the logic that identified 'dangerous' spaces 'unfit' for the modern child. Because Livingstone does not further describe the street, nor explain the kind of activities that occur there, the reader is left to associate the 'shadiness' of that abjected space with the act of pawning her belongings simply to make ends meet.

The plotting of Slessor's life from an almost 'abandoned' child to a prominent missionary, I think, exposes the biography's fictional elementals. Livingstone strategically frames Mary Slessor's saviour narrative, presenting her as a precious child figuratively abandoned by her father and forced into work and spaces unsuitable for her "sensitive nature," praying "ceaselessly with utter simplicity of belief" for a better life, and hoping, much like the American fictional character Little Orphan Annie, for a better tomorrow (Livingstone 6-7).[22] Within the narrative framing employed by authors like Livingstone, Slessor is the abandoned, needy child who, upon realizing her calling as a "disciple" tasked with "spread[ing] His Gospel throughout the world," went on to save those children who were needy in a different way, having come from a land where "millions […] knew no more of the redemptive power of Christ than did the beasts of the field" (Livingstone 16-17). The textual celebration of Slessor as a needy child who went on to save other needy children serves a pedagogical function. Underneath the explicit biographical detailing of her life is the more covert mobilization of childhood discourses that ultimately consolidate the meaning of empire, not only by reinforcing children's place within the imperial structure, but carefully limiting and defining the spaces of alterity within which children can negotiate their socioeconomic and political circumstances.

If social order requires the dependence of children on parents and society, then orphans represent the "neediest members of a [societal] family" (Dahl 25) since they have no parents at all. They appear in much of Victorian children's literature, the narratives acting, as Andrew O'Malley writes, as "one of the crucial mechanisms of disseminating and consolidating middle-class ideology" (11). Charles Dickens' *Oliver Twist*, for example, features a young orphan

[22] This is in reference to "Tomorrow," the famous song from the musical *Annie* published in 1977. In the song, Annie, a destitute orphan, maintains her optimism despite her circumstances deciding to hang on for the sake of a better future.

named Jack Dawkins, otherwise known as the Artful Dodger, whose status as a thief and leader of a criminal gang of children bestows upon him a certain level of power and autonomy. This consequently relegates him to society's margins and thus increasingly subject to legal and social disciplinary forces. However, despite his ties to a pathological Other-ed existence that challenges the Victorian social order, Dickens recovers him for the modernist epistemic frame by positioning him as victim of society, a consequence of the adult world's failure to care for him. For example, in one scene, the Artful Dodger is dragged to a courthouse to answer for his crimes. In front of a jury, he cries, "I'm an Englishman, ain't I? […] Where are my priwileges [sic]" (351). In lieu of his implicit claims to the rights and freedoms promised by modern political discourses, his jailer replies, dismissively, "You'll get your privileges soon enough," but as Marah Gubar suggests in "Reconceiving the Golden Age of Children's Literature," this never really happens: "As Dickens's description of his trial reveals, the Dodger's skill with language does not enable him to resist the power of the adults who surround him. Transported for life, he disappears entirely from the narrative." The fact that he is never mentioned again further suggests his victimization at the hands of adult society (3).

The Dodger serves as much as a cautionary tale as the embodiment of the modernist disavowal of orphans' potential agency and capacity to provide for themselves and others, as well as the potential to articulate their own lives. His excision from the narrative haunts Oliver's adoption by his mentor Mr. Brownlow and subsequent happily-ever-after ending presenting a 'what-if' scenario that is invalidated by its own unhappy ending. Mary Zaborskis, influenced by theoretical work on child queerness, offers an explanation of the ideological work of such narratives in her analysis of *Anne of Green Gables*. As she writes, though the orphaned child lives in a world of possibilities that opens up an array of alternate identifications, many of the

late-modern texts narrativizing the figure of the Orphan "attempt to transform these possibilities into impossibilities; they both demonstrate and manage an anxiety over how [children] can find their way to normative adulthood without parents" (5). In considering the Dickensian orphans who, as the Comaroffs write, may exist simultaneously as "artful dodgers," but also as "bearers of Great Expectations," we see that the dominant hegemonic narrative of orphans during this time outlines the bourgeoisie anxiety towards the potential ability of children to invent possibilities for themselves within their limiting socioeconomic circumstances while suggesting salvation in the form of the embrace of family and society (268).[23]

Slessor's progression from a working child with an absent, alcoholic father to a female missionary working in Africa does point towards these possibilities for alternate identifications; that is to say that her missionary work helps to situate her outside of normative gender roles and the expectations of domesticity to an extent. As Alison Blunt describes in her analysis of Mary Kingsley's travel writing, nineteenth-century British female travelers, in their economic privilege and gendered marginalization, constantly needed to resolve the tensions brought about by their ability to travel and thus participate in activities conceived of primarily as masculine. This resolution was possible "because [the female traveler's] behavior was seen as spatially and temporally differentiated. Her potentially masculine traits were distanced in space and time, but

[23] I would like to stress that the figure of the orphan, in my estimation, is unique from the figure of the Child in that its implicit plea for parental guidance exists in a much more naked form. I will use here, as an example, Edelman's brief examination of Little Orphan Annie. I agree with Edelman in that Annie, as a Child figure, represents a continual deferral to the hope of a 'bright' future, the "iridescent promise of Noah's rainbow, serving like the rainbow as the pledge of a covenant that shields us against the persistent threat of apocalypse now—or later." This hope is most symbolically represented through her song "Tomorrow," which she stipulates is "always/A day/Away," a frozen future that must be perpetually safeguarded. And yet, Annie's "limitless funds of pluck" and hope for the future explicitly exists in lieu of her destitute life as an orphan, a life, as she describes through the song "Hard Knock Life," which is deprived of fair treatment and 'kisses' from parental figures. Much like the Artful Dodger who, in front of a dismissive audience of 'failed' adults, pleads for the rights and freedoms supposedly owed to him by society, Annie, as the figure of an orphan, reformulates the "promise of Noah's rainbow" as a desperate plea that, within the modernist imagination, can only be answered by the direct intervention of responsible, compassionate adults (see Edelman chapter 1).

her femininity was reasserted on her return 'home'" (162). Though Slessor's mythologizing by Livingstone was inflected by the 'female-ness' of mothering and nurturing, she was invariably celebrated for her power and authority, and explicitly named as being integral to the building of the British Empire, framing typically reserved for male missionaries (Breitenbach and Abrams 31). Likewise, in accounts of Slessor's missionary work, there is a need to stress and celebrate, rather than negotiate, her colonial authoritative power, her earlier existence as an 'abandoned' child only amplifying her status. In his 1958 account, *She Had Magic*, Albert Hayward Young-O'Brien narrates Slessor in a way that follows this trajectory: "Born in a slum, she became the Queen of Okoyong. Victim, from the age of eleven, of Britain's brutal child labour system, she became an efficient organizer and leader over thousands of savages who feared her because she did not fear them" (6). The celebratory tone of her transition from childhood to adulthood, however, only brings to the fore the careful construction of her development narrative: despite transgressing normative gender roles and being celebrated for her work in the public domain, Slessor's framing as heroic largely stems from the imperial nature of her work. Indeed, Slessor and her missionary contemporaries were constructed by Livingstone and other biographers as icons of Scottish identity precisely because of their successful efforts in consolidating Scotland's positioning with respect to the British empire (Breitenbach and Abrams 31). These hegemonic, imperial imperatives are clear in the following passage in which Livingstone depicts Slessor just as she is about to embark on her journey to Africa:

> Miss Slessor was now twenty-eight years of age, a type of nature, peculiarly characteristic of Scotland, the result of its godly motherhood, the severe discipline of its social conditions, its stern toil, its warm church life, its missionary enthusiasm. Mature in mind and body, she retained the freshness of girlhood…What specially distinguished her, says one who knew her well, were her humility and the width and depth of her love. With diffidence, but in high hope, she went forward to weave the pattern of her service in the Mission Field. (Livingstone 20)

Despite her transgressing gendered boundaries, Slessor appears in this passage as the child who matured properly within Scotland specifically and the British Empire more generally, 'nurtured' by its religious and social civil order, to which Livingstone ascribes the quality of motherhood. And indeed it is, as Livingstone suggests, because of this rearing that she was able to attain her exceptional sociopolitical power in Africa. Remembering that the missionary tale genre has served as a pedagogical tool for children,[24] this construction of Slessor's early life indicates a decision, conscious or unconscious, to mobilize nineteenth-century social codes in a way that anticipates her future dealings with indigenous Africans and prepares the reader for a narrative in which Mary Slessor can be accepted as a 'mother' to the Efik people.

This critical framework of childhood and orphanhood thus is integral for understanding the adoption (literal or figurative) of racialized children by Western parental figures in both nineteenth century and contemporary contexts. As Europe sought to remake the world in its own image, political and missionary institutions instrumentalized, in the colonial world, the dominant social theories aimed at regulating the lives of white European children. Meanwhile, discourses of childhood and paternalism served to affirm for European citizens the legitimacy of these frameworks as they played out in colonial spaces. This legitimization often resulted in the movement of children out of indigenous communities or indigenous guardianship and into Western care, and the dominant conception of these movements as legitimate and necessary. In the following sections, I will examine Slessor's 'saving' of vulnerable members of the Efik

[24] Slessor herself was inspired to become a missionary in West Africa's Caliber after reading of the exploits of missionaries through the tales spread by missionaries, writers and travellers. In W.P. Livingstone's own words: "[t]he story of Calabar had impressed her imagination when a child, and all through the years her eyes had been fixed on the great struggle going on between the forces of light and darkness and the sphere of heathenism" (13). It is therefore important to consider the pedagogical influence of these missionary narratives on future European generations, considering the framing devices and literary flourishes designed to flatten the experiences and socio-political dimension of missionary work. The legacy of these tales continues in contemporary humanitarian discourses.

community along the lines of what it reveals about the complex alignments of bourgeois discourses—of childhood, rights, and imperial sovereignty—as they were articulated within colonial spaces. What Slessor's case makes clear is that the humanitarian desire to ensure the 'rights' of African children must be unpacked in ways that acknowledge how the vulnerable come to be constructed as such, and how the ideological limitations of this construction exposes the interrelatedness of lived precarity, humanitarian sympathy, and imperial sovereignty.

Mary Slessor: Celebrated Missionary and Saviour of the Vulnerable

I have argued that Slessor's celebrated narrative of humanitarianism functions as an imperial pedagogical text in part due to its adherence to bourgeois discourses of childhood. Livingstone's narration of Slessor's working-class life in the factories and eventual rise to the 'higher' calling of missionary work reifies the mines, the factories, and the urban streets as sites of alterity for children that contest middle-class, bourgeois ideals of the adult Western world. The framing of Livingstone's development narrative also makes clear that the validity of empire is at stake in the contestation of the meaning of childhood—or at least what empire signifies. Within colonial spaces, this panic surrounding the meaning of empire is further complicated by the "absolute otherness" that indigeneity represents, particularly in Africa where, as Mbembe asserts, this concept of otherness "has been taken farthest" (*On the Postcolony* 2).

Given that child-rescue and humanitarian work is crucial to Slessor's positioning as a heroic missionary figure, we must consider the ways in which discourses of childhood were mobilized and transformed in the context of colonial conquest and missionary initiative. Slessor's Presbyterian mission in Calabar supported larger missionary assertions of indigenous rights and yet the affective and political energies channeled into improving the conditions of

those most vulnerable among the Efik were in turn inextricable from the cultural framework of the British empire, at the core of which was a powerful assertion of Scottish national identity. What kind of ideological work is performed, for example, when Slessor is celebrated by the Efik as "*eka kpukpru owo* (everybody's mother)" (Hardage 178, emphasis original), while at the same time celebrated by Mary Kingsley as the "veritable white chief over the entire [Okoyong] district" whose "great abilities, both physical and intellectual, have given her among the savage tribe an unequal position, and won her, from white and black who know her, a profound esteem" (Kinglsey qtd. in Hardage 180)? In Slessor's missionary work we see uneasy collaborations, between the missionaries and native inhabitants, and between missionaries and colonial administrations, making clear the link between humanitarianism and domination.

We must consider these collaborations, for example, for what they can tell us about the affective and political entanglements that exist in the postcolony, muddying the contours of relationships between the inhabitants in spite of the existence of oppressive power structures. Despite the absolute separation implied by the discourses naturalizing the categories of colonizer/colonized, according to Mbembe, the very fact that subjects in the postcolony live in overlapping spaces creates a postcolonial relationship that is far more complex in practice. The proximity of subjects in these shared colonial spaces results in an entanglement of desire and affiliation and as such, both the colonizer and colonized "have to have the ability to manage not just a single identity, but several—flexible enough to negotiate as and when necessary" (*On the Postcolony* 104). As Mbembe writes, this relationship has inevitably "resulted in the mutual 'zombification' of both the dominant and those apparently dominated," rendering both "impotent" (104). We must read Slessor as inhabiting this kind of textured complexity. On one hand, as Mbembe writes, European "discourse on Africa is almost always deployed in the

framework (or on the fringes) of a meta-text about the *animal*—to be exact, about the *beast*: its experience, its world and its spectacle" (1). Therefore, according to Western logic, while "the African possesses a self-referring structure that makes him or her close to 'being human,' he or she belongs, up to a point, to a world [the European] cannot penetrate" (2). However, on the other hand, the intimacy made possible in the shared space of the colonial world troubles the solid, discursive separation of Self and colonial Other, jeopardizing the supposedly inherent logic of the Enlightenment discourse used to validate Europe's violent imperial directives: I am referring of course to the notion of progress that offered an almost Darwinian explanation for the emergence of Western capitalist civilization, positing the free, rational European as the pinnacle of mankind and the indigenous Other as his primitive beginnings (10). Widely circulated colonial tales of white Westerners losing hold of their rationality and "going native" thus ultimately reflected this anxiety, mired in the ambivalent preoccupation with 'exotic' native cultures and landscapes as sites of pleasure and danger for white travellers. The sinister transformative ability of colonial space, capable of twisting white adults and children alike into something irrational, grotesque or bestial, was a fantasy that traded as much in fear as excitement, and ultimately served Europe's philosophical attempts to maintain racialized, ideological boundaries (Sharma and Sharma 305). Considering this in the context of child development narratives, the possibility of the 'feral' transformation of even fully developed, rational adult Westerners in non-Western spaces poses the question: if there truly is an inherent quality of the white European that positions him to be master over the 'savage' races of the world, then how can a European child be transformed and converted so easily by simply being raised in 'savage' spaces?[25] What are the

[25] The eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries often featured narratives of the 'wild-child,' the colonial child lost in nature, "radically orphaned," as Jane Hotchkiss puts it. Such narratives reified within the figure of the Child its "brutalizing 'state of nature'" while at the same time connecting this characterization to the 'feral' colonial world as a whole (435). If in the Western imagination, parents are charged with inscribing upon the *tabula rasa* of children

mechanisms through which an adult Slessor can inhabit the complex space of the postcolony and still emerge as a 'mother' and 'queen' of the Efik people? Her heroic imperial framing, when read against her placement within the affective realm of motherhood by even African narratives exposes the uneasy alignment between lived proximity and discursive distance—and as I argue here, the latter can be corralled in service of managing the former.

Georges Canguilhem writes of the monster that it "is not simply a living being of diminished value; it is a living being whose value is that of a foil […] monstrosity is the accidental and conditional threat of incompletion or distortion in the formation of form; it is the limitation from inside, the negation of the living by the non-viable" (188). Monsters are birthed by the anxieties of dominant social order, working as a constant reminder of the precariousness of the internalized logic that validates it. Within the adult imagination, however, the danger of indigeneity and the alterity it represents can indeed be contained as with figurative cases of orphanhood, through the ideological power of paternal salvation narratives. By discussing Slessor's missionary work as part of a larger narrative of civilizing, I argue here that colonial missionaries in particular mobilized the discursive framework underlying the Western figure of the Child, blurring it with religious and colonial philosophies as part of their messianic narrative of Western salvation. In placing Slessor within the context and politics of Christian missions in Africa, I show that this narrative not only ideologically legitimized various kinds of claims on indigenous children; it served as a technology of race designed to uphold the coherence of Western patriarchal social order and white European superiority.

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those principles and beliefs that would help them develop into the full modern citizens of the 'human' world, the wolf-child presents the results of alternative parenting.

As a missionary, Mary Slessor continues to be celebrated in European and Nigerian texts even to this day.[26] Her moniker of the "White Mother" of Africa (Young-O'Brien 1958; Livingstone 1917) stemmed in part due to her work in changing the Efik cultural tradition relating to the killing of twins.[27] According to folklorist D.C. Simmons, the Efik people considered twins to be a product of occultic forces, not only twin children borne of human beings, but also those borne of animals. The Efik's response to the appearance of twins would almost always be to kill the twin children, both human and animal, and socially ostracize the human mothers in order to protect the larger community (421).[28] Slessor fought through political and religious means to eradicate this tradition, to the extent that she was celebrated by colonial officials as aiding in the 'civilizing process.' According to a 1907 British Government report, the growing harmony between husbands and their twin-bearing wives was due to "the civilizing influence worked through this Court by that admirable lady, Miss Slessor'" (qtd in Proctor 50). She saved hundreds of babies, converting and adopting many of those whom she saved. Her humanitarian work also extended to women. Calabar was a heavily patriarchal society that dealt out crime and punishment differentially and disproportionately. Women could be punished or even killed for delivering undesirable infants in general. Even those women considered of a higher social status were made vulnerable by certain practices; for example, the wives and slaves of the Efik King, as part of tradition, would be buried alive with him upon his death, in many cases against their will (Adesina and Obinna 213-4). Furthermore, Slessor was also a powerful

[26] For contemporary texts celebrating what many call Slessor's groundbreaking missionary role, see Hardage 2008; MacDonald 2000; Young-O'Brien 1958.

[27] As we see in Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*, some Nigerian communities, such as the Efik and the related Igbo communities of Eastern Nigeria feared twins as they were often seen as malevolent omens sent by the lesser gods. However, in other communities, such as the Yoruba people of Western Nigeria, twins were regarded with ambivalence as sources of both fear and wonder, and in some cases, parents feared the divine retribution that could result from the neglect of such twins, which inspired celebratory rituals (Oruene 212).

[28] The Efik's cultural fear towards the existence of twins underlies the following Efik proverb: *abasi iyakkee enan aman iba* or, "God does not let (the) cow bear twins" (Simmons 421).

agent in the promotion of education and the building of schools in Nigeria. As W.H. Taylor writes, "[h]er four-pronged attack—opening new bush village schools, providing elementary industrial training, devising special opportunities for girls and women, developing a sense of civic responsibility—was complex and daring. Slessor probably opened more schools than any other individual in Nigerian history" (Taylor 200). She was celebrated in Scotland and Nigeria, then and now, precisely because she fought for the 'rights' of the Efik, particularly women and children.

We can consider Slessor's championing of human rights for the vulnerable among the Efik and her efforts to promote their education as part of a larger strategy of Christian conversion, which brings together discourses of religion and empire. Peter van deer Veer places the rise of evangelism at the center of Britain's consolidation as a nation-state in the nineteenth century. Occurring in concert with the industrial revolution, the energies of mainstream evangelism funneled into public activity and sought to spread itself across the world. Tying together middle-class values and the philosophies that extoled the rational Self to religious feeling, evangelism centered on the possibility of conversion, not only of one's self, but of others, but as part of an implicitly national movement. In this sociopolitical moment, we see a shift from the early modern conception of the 'public church' to "the moral nation state," in which the morality of the nation became part and parcel of its overt politics (37). This concept of 'moral universalism' was essential to England's defining of the British Empire, and indeed an integral part of the language of its civilizing mission. As van deer Veer writes, "[t]he evangelical project was to convert people to a morally inspired existence in which individual conscience of sins and atonement are catchwords, within a nation with a colonizing mission that is interpreted as liberating" (36). Missionaries were certainly active in this endeavour. Other theorists

(Comaroff and Comaroff 1991; Mudimbe 1988) have identified colonial missions as agents of globalization, linking the "nineteenth century Protestant project to remake the world," to "colonialism, […] contemporary globalization" and to "the emergence of capitalism" (Elbourne 435-6). Religious philosophy has in many ways reified—or perhaps 'messianized'—the Enlightenment discourses that posit the native as almost-human, in need of a (white) messiah. The ideological work of missions not only elevated the humanitarian justifications for Western imperialism to the realm of spiritual salvation; it also helped to entrench the discursive framework of modernity as the parameters of this salvation.

On one hand, we could take this concept of moral universalism as a vehicle for empire; in doing so we would thus affirm what Bianca Dahl, following in the work of earlier postcolonial theorists (Comaroff and Comaroff 1991; Gifford 1994), writes about the mobilization of religion in colonial spaces. As she asserts, particularly through the efforts of colonial missionary agents, religion has prevalently been held as "a corrective to [indigenous] culture," and even in present day this has "been an integral part of the spread of Christianity across the continent, from its introduction through mission churches to the more recent popularity of Pentecostal churches" (6). Within this theoretical framework, one cannot read the religious conversion of the native outside the unequal relations of power that make possible the West's cultural, political, and military conquests across the African continent. Mbembe argues that conversion is intrinsically tied to "the destruction of worlds" (236). As he writes: "To convert the other is to incite him or her to give up what he or she believed. […] Further it is also assumed that the person who is converted agrees to accept, in every day life, the practical consequence of his submission and of this transfer of allegiance" (236). This suggests that there is always already a violent objective behind conversion, despite whatever benevolent trappings are given to it by idealist missionaries.

Conversion covertly requires the native to 'give up' an important part of him or herself, to cast it aside and surrender to a new order. This 'surrender' may not always be efficiently or uniformly carried out in practice, but regardless, the aims of colonial missions always at least partially involved a political, cultural and psychological disavowal, one characterized by a partial destruction of the native's self. In the case of Slessor's education of the Efik people and her role in abolishing indigenous traditions, one could say that as a strategy of conversion in the colonial world, it theoretically demanded "a fundamental change in modes of thought and conduct on the part of the convert. From this point of view, it is implicit that the act of conversion should be accompanied by the abandonment of familiar landmarks, cultural and symbolic. This act means, therefore, stripping down to the skin" (236).

On the other hand, it is important to note that such critiques of missionary work can simplistically cast Africans as the unsuspecting victims to the imperialistic undertones of Christianity. Such a reductive understanding of the spreading of Christianity risks missing the ways in which the humanistic ideals of missionary work and the mandates of colonial conquest align and contradict, just as they may miss the complex assemblages of indigenous, missionary, and administrative persons in colonial space. We must take seriously their simultaneously confrontational and mutual participation in Western expansion. In contradiction to the traditions of postcolonial theorists such as Mbembe and the Comaroffs, African theologian and evangelical Kwame Bediako argues that the success of evangelical conversion across the African continent is not a marker of the violence of imperial domination; it is rather indicative, as he argues, of the purity of the gospel, the purity of the Word of God that allows it to be heard across different cultures and different peoples (20). Lamin Sanneh likewise argues for the fundamental translatability of the gospel, decentering missionary and colonial power from the work of

conversion and reinforcing the connection between African Christians and the messages of the gospel. This perspective views as integral to the process of conversion "the regenerative capacity of African perception," owing its translatability in part to the productive alignment between Christianity and the traditional religions of African cultures "in a way that advertises their Christian intentions without undervaluing their African credentials" (36).

I would argue that this is particularly important in the case of Slessor's work in West Africa considering that indirect rule, which was practiced in many African colonies at one time or another, stressed the importance of using "existing 'tribal' political, social and economic systems," and thus expressing "a fundamentally preservative rather than a developmental paternalism" (Schuknecht 13). Slessor herself participated in the native court of Ikot Obong among the Ibibio people with three chiefs and held many discussions with the Okoyong over how to adapt their traditions (Proctor 49, 51).[29] Viewing missionary work as a kind of collaboration between colonizer and colonized, however unequal, requires us to consider the nuances of Slessor's protection of the vulnerable indigenous community, particularly her work against the killing of twins and her introduction of the language of rights through missionary conversion. As Bonny Ibhawoh claims, rights discourses, most powerfully buoyed by the anti-slavery campaign in Africa, became integral to the protection of certain peoples rendered vulnerable by the power structures of their society. As Ibhawoh writes,

> [m]issionaries also taught new ideas about the individual and humanist rights, and these were critically important in attracting slaves, women and other subaltern groups to the alternative legal and social programs of the missions…The Christian church was seen as

[29] Indeed, as Michael Banton explains, "in the paternalist order of the non-settler colonies, European behaviour and attitudes towards Africans were not patterned by any such simple opposition as that engendered by a colour line. They varied more" (278). When Chloe Campbell uses the extreme settler violence in Kenya's colonial history as an example of the kind of patterns of domination typically "non-settler territories avoided" (5), it is not to disavow the existing forms of colonial violence and domination in the postcolony. Instead, we can take these considerations as drawing attention to the adaptations European imperial efforts made in response to indigenous sociopolitical systems, to its own paternalistic humanistic ideologies as they were taken up and practiced, and to the intricate power dynamics between different agents operating in colonial spaces.

> a source of security and refuge for communities that had endured the stress of conquest and the social disruption that accompanied early colonial rule. (39)[30]

In fact, the humanitarian aims of missionary work, as well as the discursive framing of the colonized as members of a "global Christian community" (Ibhawoh 41) often placed them in conflict with colonial administrations, which were often times more preoccupied with maintaining political control over territory.[31] However, as Ibhawoh also reminds us, the language of rights at the center of such campaigns has been constructed within the modernist model of unfettered enterprise, which was to be engaged in by free individuals. Though not entirely synonymous, Christian and secular legal discourses intertwined rights as goods and properties, and as moral Good—rights as subjected to laws of 'civilization' and to the divine laws of God (38). One cannot, then, ignore the paternalistic, Eurocentric framing of rights nor its explicit aims to 'civilize' the so-called 'backwards' races, especially considering that such rights campaigns functioned pedagogically for the British public, strengthening their conception of British imperialism by reinforcing Britain's larger role in the world (van deer Veer 42).

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[30] In his novel, *Things Fall Apart* (1958), Nigerian author Chinua Achebe features this figuration of the Christian Church when Nwoye, a young clansmen disillusioned by his Igbo cultural practices and laws (particularly the abandonment of twin newborns), finds himself drawn towards Christianity. Here the church becomes a refuge for those marginalized in society, which spurs some fears within the community that the Christian Church is separating, particularly young people from their families and from the dominant cultural order (See Achebe Chapters 17 – 19). As we will see in my analysis of Slessor's work in Calabar, the killing of twins—and particularly, the missionary thrust to end this cultural tradition in Nigeria—has become a focal point in the discursive framing of Slessor as humanitarian and mother.

[31] For example, in colonial Uganda, even with the integration of chiefs into the administrative apparatus, the colonial government was wary of the growing power of the church, concerned that it "would mean a dual system of authority, and the Christian apparatus would in that case constitute another state within the colonial state" to rival colonial administration and chief hierarchy (Hansen 66). In the East African colony of Eritrea, Governor Martini, appointed in 1897, saw the Italian Cappucchin mission as disruptive to the maintenance of Italian rule and their attempts to pacify the region (Miran 124).[31] As with Blyden, many African missionaries "shared the idea that the 'native' Christian, as a member of a global Christian community was entitled to certain basic rights," and promoted this notion in journals and (paternalistically-framed) editorial pieces run by African elites who saw organizations such as the Antislavery and Aborigines Protection Society (AS-APS), founded in 1837,[31] "as effective champions of 'native' rights" (Ibhawoh 43).

Slessor is celebrated by many Nigerians for her protection of a community of children vulnerable to violent patriarchal practices. However, we must consider how her saving of children and her education/conversion of indigenous communities fits readily within discourses of childhood and more specifically the conception of the colonial world as bearing 'wild children.' Part of what strengthens the ideological power of salvation as a religious imperial rhetoric and therefore buries the violence of its logic is the conception of childhood projected by Westerners onto Africa and its people. In Africa, religious philosophies carried by colonial missionaries found many ideological parallels in nineteenth-century discourses of modernity that saw Africa as Europe's primitive childhood, "modern man in embryo" (Schultheis 107). Thus, despite the participation of Africans themselves in some cases of colonial administration and missionary work, the ideologies buoyed by religious missionary initiatives tend to normalize the infantilization of Africa and its citizens, reinforcing the logic that would discursively lock Africa in a child-like dependent relationship with the West.[32] African peoples, then, collectively become the wild-child[33] of nature, the categorical opposite of fully developed rational citizen of the Western world whose evolution is marked by Christian 'goodness' and those socioeconomic structures that mark civilization.[34] Within this paradigm, conversion becomes the technology

[32] Mudimbe analysis this relationship through his ideological model of conversion under colonial rule. According this model, if Africa's figurative primitivism is visibly marked by those practices construed by Christian modernity as evil (paganism) and beast-like (cannibalism), then within this framework, Africa can also be understood as a child, signified by the comparative 'nakedness' of its people (50).

[33] See Footnote 19.

[34] Mudimbe also analyzes Samuel Ajayi Crowther, a former slave and Yoruba missionary in the nineteenth century. Despite believing that Africa could "regenerate itself" without relying upon Western aid, Crowther still decoded the characteristics of African indigenous communities, however unrelated these qualities were, within a Western episteme, according to which these qualities "indicate the necessity of a regeneration through both a cultural and spiritual conversion" (Mudimbe 49). In his 1854 expedition to the Niger region, he describes an enslaved group from the Gomkoi tribe so as to point out "paganism, nakedness and cannibalism" as markers of primitivism, which then come to signify "the syndrome of savagery" for the entire African continent. Thus, when Crowther goes on to refer to them as "poor unfortunate sufferers," (Crowther qtd in Mudimbe 129), their 'suffering' takes on a different layer beyond their status as slaves. Indeed, within this framework, the characteristics that mark their difference from Christian Western modernity become part of the basis of their supposed victimhood.

through which the 'native' can be transformed— conversion, according to Mudimbe's ideological model, by Christianity just as much as by education and economic transformation (50). Like the child miners in the Children's Employment Commission's Report, the orphans of Dickensian London, and the wild-children of late-nineteenth century literature, modernist and Christian discourses together help to construct the people of Africa as an "unhappy case," to borrow words from the Commission's Report. They are children in need of salvation through conversion. More specifically, the infantalized Africans are not simply children, but children without guidance—children abandoned. Much as with the case of the orphan, their alterity contradicts the conception of modernity as common sense, universal logic, presenting difference that could potentially threaten the internal coherency of the 'normal,' but this threat is always already tempered through those discourses that figure the 'savage' as the child, the child 'savage' as being convertible, and conversion as the responsibility of extra-familial Western figures whose paternal, humanitarian drives can incorporate the 'orphan' into Western structures and Western social order.

Of course, tackling Slessor's act of saving twins and adopting African orphans necessarily requires acknowledgement of its affective dimensions, and the acknowledgement of the possibility that underlying the problematic episteme that racializes and dehumanizes indigenous Africans may very well be a legitimate desire to save children from being killed and to give them what she believed to be a 'better' life. Certainly, I will take this possibility up in the later chapters, when I begin to delve more deeply into the affective dimensions of Western-African transnational adoptions. However, for now, I believe it is integral to take up first the question of power always already entangled in her humanitarian acts, which can be buried by an overindulgence in the affective and altruistic dimensions of her work, and second, the ways in

which these acts become part of the narrative mythologizing of Mary Slessor, joining the terrain of symbolic representation working to produce knowledge about African bodies. The saving of twins can easily be read as an act of saving Africans from their own cultural environment of "dense spiritual darkness" (Livingstone iv), protecting the future of their children by saving them from whatever dark fate may befall them in this site of the "strange and […] monstrous" alterity (Mbembe 1).

This discussion, then, points towards the conundrum of the humanitarian aims of salvation, at once enmeshed in violent Eurocentric language and the potentially beneficial aims of improving quality of life. But I stress here, that these two frameworks cannot be separated from each other. And indeed, the inequality and hierarchy of colonial societies, vigorously maintained by the interplay of missionaries, traders, colonial administrators, and even members of the indigenous communities requires us to take seriously the implications of such discourses in creating the unequal global order we face today. As Jeffrey Haynes writes, "[w]hile the missionaries were rarely the tools of secular rule alone, and indeed often earned the opprobrium of government administrators and white settlers for siding with 'natives' against the latter on land issues, manifestations of non-compliance with the imperial will were one of degree rather than anything more fundamental" (90). Even the members of international human rights organizations such as AS-APS, its origins in Quaker missionary work and abolitionism, did not consider themselves opponents of British imperialism, even though their work in naming and asserting African rights often placed them in opposition to the colonial government. As Ibhawoh writes, "[t]heir main concern was to promote the rights and welfare of Africans under British colonial rule, not necessarily to abrogate that rule or change existing power structures" (43).

Because the humanistic ideals of the Enlightenment can coexist with and indeed even support education and religious conversion for social and political control, we must consider the overlap of the conception of rights and salvation with economic, liberalist discourses that present colonial regions to the European public as a reserve of resources and a land of 'wild' inhabitants in need of proper European rearing. Within the context of Nigeria, Ibhawoh writes that the many denominations of Christian missionaries (as in many other areas in Africa), often had to contend with European settlers, sometimes collaborating with traders and consuls and sometimes struggling against such secular forces. However, they generally did not question

> the theory that 'Christianity, Commerce, and Civilization' would work together for the great benefit of Africans...they emphasize[d] their own philanthropy and how much it set them apart…from their profit-seeking countrymen who came for trade and political power…The truth, however, was that missionaries, traders and British consuls were all interdependent. The Christian missions made a considerable impact both on the trading situation and the process of British political conquest and control. (38)[35]

Colonial sovereignty, according to Mbembe, depended upon the violence of law and politics, carried out by the colonial sovereign and the everyday spread and maintenance of colonial authority (*On the Postcolony* 25). Keeping this in mind, if we consider the Comaroffs' argument that power, "the capacity to impose the condition of being on others" existed in both palpable and subtle forms ("Christianity and Colonialism" 2), it becomes clear that the introduction and enforcement of Christianity, despite whatever benefits it might have provided the indigenous people in any given local cultural context,[36] is still part of the processes whereby colonial sovereign rule justifies its own existence.

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[35] Indeed, when the Comaroffs write that colonial missionary agency involved "the capacity to act in the domain normally defined as 'the political,' the arena of concrete institutionalized power relations" and "the ability to exert power over the common-sense meanings and routine activities diffused in the everyday world," they are suggesting that we cannot erase the connection between colonial missionary work and the authoritative, ideological imperatives of Western colonialism as a cultural, political, and economic project. ("Christianity and Colonialism" 2).

[36] David Lindenfeld cites Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* to explain the ways in which Christianity appealed to those in African communities marginalized by the internal, patriarchal structures of power. Within Yoruba

It is within this framework that we can return to the missionary work of Mary Slessor and analyze her political and humanitarian role within the Efik community, particularly as regards to her reception as, specifically, a mother. The championing of African rights seems to suggest an acknowledgement of their humanity, and yet these discourses, even as they were taken up in different communities and social contexts, echoed the paternalistic, modernist framework that implicitly reinforced the logics of racialized evolutionary hierarchy. The entanglement of exclusionary politics and the inclusionary politics of moral universalism complicates the celebratory narrativizing of Slessor's work in Nigeria.

Mary Slessor: Mother, Humanitarian, and Queen

Slessor's missionary work in Nigeria earned her the status of maternal role model for decades to come. Indeed, back in Scotland, among the local and regional press of the time, Mary Slessor was considered to be "very much the Dundonian matriarch transferred to Africa where she ran a tight ship and kept her 'bairns' [children] safe and was not afraid to administer her rough justice of a swift clout on the ear to any transgressor, including burly Africans" (Finlay 174). It is little wonder, given her role in saving, converting, and teaching the Efik, as well as adopting those Efik children who had been abandoned by their parents and society, why she was widely considered "everybody's mother" (Hardage 157). There is a kind of violence, however, implicit in such a statement, which aligns Slessor's white motherhood with her sovereignty over the indigenous, 'savage' population.

The discursive system that would posit indigenous peoples as 'savage' and evolutionarily inferior gains expression in different colonial contexts. Margaret Jacobs argues in *White Mother*

communities, women made up the large majority of those who sought refuge in missions to escape violent persecution (359).

to a Dark Race that in Australia and the United States, framing strategies of the racialized body shifted from early stages of colonialism, in which indigenous communities operated as sexual and physical threats to white women especially, to colonialism in the nineteenth century in which indigenous children and women were considered in need of protection from their 'savage' communities (xxxi).[37] As I have laid out in this chapter, the turn towards an intensified focus on maternalism in indigenous communities corresponded to the reification of gendered space of the bourgeois home, the separation of public (political) and private (domestic) life, and the consolidation of the British empire and its perceived role in the world.[38] And yet, as Jacob asserts, the colonial project in many settler-nations aimed not only to extract resources and labour as with non-settler nations, but also to effectively replace indigenous communities with a new, white European populace. Therefore, such paternalist discourses have been taken up by indigenous child removal policies, which sought to achieve this implicit goal. As Jacobs writes, in America and Australia, for example, the indigenous populations were not necessarily desired as labourers (as labour was imported through slavery and indentured service). Thus, while "policies of exclusion and segregation became central to the development and administration of settler colonies, at least in the first phase of colonization…indigenous child removal constituted another crucial way to eliminate indigenous people, both in a cultural and a biological sense" (4). This was particularly important for America after the Civil War, and for Australia after its federation at the turn of the twentieth century as both countries sought to solidify their ideological boundaries and meanings as nations (xxx). We could also extend this to the Canadian

[37] This brings to mind Guyatri Spivak's articulation of colonial feminism as "white men saving brown women from brown men" (297).

[38] Of course, despite a newly intensified focus on paternalism, representations of indigenous bodies as threatening, particularly to white women (and white patriarchal order) certainly did not disappear. It has continuously found new expressions in different temporal and social contexts. See Koshy 1-25; Smith 72-85.

context, considering the "aggressive, paternalistic policy of assimilation" underlying educational treaties negotiated with indigenous communities less than a decade after Confederation. As with the child removal policies in the United States and Australia, missionaries aided government officials and indigenous negotiators in the treaty-making process, encouraging indigenous communities to sign the treaties (Regan 98).[39] Nevertheless, while indigenous leaders signed the treaties under the impression that, as stipulated in the documents, native schooling would be located on their reserves, Ottawa very quickly violated these commitments. As historian J.R. Miller writes,

> [m]issionaries and bureaucrats alike were disillusioned with the day schools that existed in Indian communities, arguing that…a continuing influence of home and community that worked to preserve Aboriginal identity rendered the day schools largely useless…By the time Ottawa was ready to announce a new educational policy in 1883, Indian Affairs had come out firmly in favour of residential institutions run by Christian missionaries for both pedagogical and assimilative reasons (qtd. in Regan 98-99).

The perceived necessity of culturally influencing the native has been taken up in multiple settler and non-settler colonial contexts.[40] But despite the differences one might find between these examples, in the case of Mary Slessor's adoption of Efik children and 'mothering' in the community, we can indeed still see, in Ann Laura Stoler's words, an example of "colonizing bodies and minds [as] a sustained, systemic, and incomplete political project" (qtd. in Jacobs xxxii). This is the connection that must be made between the concept of nurturing African minds, and the supposed right to possess and control African bodies—a connection that brings humanitarianism and colonial authority into intimate proximity. In the estimation of many writers, Mary Slessor assigned herself the parental task of rearing and disciplining Africans.

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[39] Although as Regan notes their motives for doing so are still a subject of ongoing debate (98).

[40] I have discussed briefly educational discourses in Nigeria. For similar discourses as they framed the educational reforms pushed in colonial India, see for instance Zastoupil, Lynn and Martin Moir, "The Great Indian Education Debate," and Sugirtharajah Sharada, *Imagining Hinduism*.

Young-O'Brien depicts Slessor as a missionary who "saved the soul of the bloodiest cannibal on the Cross River," sometimes reprimanding those 'precocious' enough to challenge her authority by "beat[ing] them back with her umbrella" (5, 47). This paints the picture of both a messianic figure of salvation and a scolding parent. However, this account also makes clear her colonial sovereignty. Throughout the years, many writers (Livingston 1917, Young-O'Brien 1958, Proctor 2000), while noting Slessor's status as a mother and a teacher also celebrate her political role in managing the affairs of the indigenous community and helping Britain to establish colonial rule in regions otherwise difficult to enter, let alone manage. Slessor and her hero-predecessor David Livingstone were very much considered part of the establishment of Scottish national identity and Scotland's role in the sociopolitical and economic dimensions of British imperialism. Even today this relationship is implicitly celebrated in Scotland: Livingstone and Slessor both featured in bank notes printed by Scotland's Cydesdale Bank in 1971 and 1997 respectively. "The importance of these notes," Adogame and Lawrence write, "go beyond any aesthetic value…[it] underscores a complex relationship, serving as both reminders of Britain's imperial-financial nexus as well as of Scotland's subordinate role therein" (6). Slessor's commemorative note celebrates both her participation in a violent economic project and her relationship with the people whose lives were forever altered by it.

This dual identity of 'queen' and 'mother' makes explicit the violent dimensions of power always already ghosting her surrogate motherhood, regardless of how well-intentioned her humanitarian aims. Mbembe describes the violent establishment of colonial rule as phallic:

> During the colonial era and its aftermath, phallic domination has been all the more strategic in power relationships, not only because it is based on a mobilization of the subjective foundations of masculinity and femininity but also because it has direct, close connections with the general economy of sexuality […] Male domination derives in large measure from the power and the spectacle of the phallus—not so much from the threat to

> life during war as from the individual male's ability to demonstrate his virility at the expense of a woman and to obtain its validation from the subjugated woman herself. (13)

Colonial military conquest and enterprise is thought of as a masculine pursuit, necessitating the penetration and subjugation of a discursively feminized Africa (Dyer 147).[41] As I have alluded to earlier in relation to Mary Kingsley and the gendered dimensions of her power at 'home' and 'abroad,' Slessor's female maternal power in Calabar, through her participation in the 'masculine pursuit' of colonialism, can be seen as going beyond the confines of women's roles in European domestic space—and yet in many ways it also reinforced the logics that would divide public and private space into the political and domestic spheres respectively. Jacob argues that at the end of the nineteenth century and turn of the twentieth, women's association with motherhood became a political tool through which they could practice political life and gain political legitimacy. As Jacob continues, this perhaps explains why white women in the United States, for example, were vocally supportive of assimilationist child-removal policies targeted at local indigenous communities, "upholding motherhood as a sacred institution while simultaneously supporting the sundering of these bonds between indigenous women and their children" (xxix-xxx). Though Slessor's surrogate motherhood enables her colonial work to be rearticulated within adoring texts as nurturing,[42] this narrative insistence upon her parental benevolence only effaces its internal logic of colonial biopolitical sovereignty, sovereignty which ascribes European authority figures, on one hand, the right to instruct, reprimand, and rule the

[41] In the chapter "The White Man's Muscles," in his book, *White*, Richard Dyer speaks of the white man's built body as a signifier within filmic narratives of colonial adventure. He argues that the built white male body represents the assertion of Western colonial discourses of modernity, progress, enterprise and ingenuity, while also exposing an underlying, patriarchal anxiety that discourses of rationality and spirit may delegitimize the supposed physical, biological supremacy of white men: "the build body in colonial adventures is a formula that speaks to the need for an affirmation of the white male body without the loss of legitimacy that is always risked by its exposure, while also replaying the notion that white men are distinguished above all by their spirit and enterprise" (147).

[42] Livingstone goes through great lengths to describe Slessor's "compassionate care" in helping to govern the affairs with the Efik people who, as Livingstone writes, would "look upon her as a mother" (54).

native, but also, on the other hand, the right to enact the use of overt violence and brutality to validate and maintain the permanence of their sovereign power.[43] The logic of colonial sovereignty, as Mbembe writes, "permits power to be exercised as a right to kill and invest Africa with deaths at once at the heart of every age and above time" (13). Considering this, despite whatever love Slessor might have had for the children in her care, and more generally, the Efik people, it is necessary to be critical of Livingstone's blurring of Slessor's sovereign power with maternal nurturing even as he figuratively naturalizes the latter. In one instance, as an example, he compares Slessor's mothering love with that of an indigenous mother, stating that "the mother-heart is much the same all the world over" (30). However, while he normalizes and universalizes the Victorian ideal of motherhood and in doing so draws, at least for that moment, a humble equivalence between the two, one cannot ignore the obvious relations of power between Slessor, who is backed by a larger colonial, religious political structure and the Efik mother. Mbembe reminds us that at the heart of the colonial relationship, colonized Africans could be seen and treated "as the property and *thing* of power" (27). He goes on to write:

> He/she was a tool subordinated to the one who fashioned, and could now use and alter him/her at will. As such, he/she belonged to the sphere of objects. They could be destroyed, as one may kill an animal, cut it up, cook it, and, if need be, eat it. It is in this respect that, in the colony, the body of the colonized was, in its profanity, assimilated to all other things. (27)

[43] We must remember that the contradiction that arises within the framework of 'educating' the native child is negotiated through the very idea of the British empire. As Daniel Coleman writes in *White, Civility*, conceptions of Englishness and Britishness were not equivalent, and indeed those two categories were used to maintain the ideological boundaries between England and the other global 'children of the British empire' that became part of the empire through colonial conquest. Thus, even if children in Africa or India could be educated in the ways of British manner and Christianity, they were still only 'wards' of Britain; the ideological investments of the Enlightenment could not allow the indigenes total equivalency with white Christian England (255).

Slessor's actual love for her adopted children and affection for the indigenous around her can not subvert the larger order of sovereign power, of which she is a part, that interpolates her 'wards' into the sphere of 'things.'[44]

The instrumentalization of discourses pertaining to childhood serves both the effacement of these contradictions and the normalization of Slessor's power—first, in the Victorian concern over the Child. Recall Samuel Crowther's writings, which Mudimbe uses to develop his ideological model of conversion. If, as Jane Hotchkiss argues, the wild-child, in its over-determined, representational form, "suggested to the imaginations of [European travellers] and the[ir] reading public an integral connection between the landscape and the developing psyche and body of the child" (457), and if indeed the culture and customs of the native are at fault for transforming the African child (or the African adult-as-child) into a godless 'heathen,' then within this epistemological frame, Slessor's biopolitical, colonial power over the bodies of Africans—her ability to rule them, teach them, reprimand them or even take possession of their children—becomes both colonial necessity and a parental right. Her power thus becomes an expression of her maternal desire to rear them into 'proper' development, consequently bestowing upon them the gift of civilization and the comfort to be found in the Western social order.

Furthermore, as I mentioned earlier, Victorian codes of childhood structure Slessor's own early history, at least as it is narrativized in such accounts, so as to further make legible the

[44] In fact Slessor was quite aware of the connection between humanitarian missionary work and violent, military rule. In her estimation, both were seen necessary in the great 'mission' to civilize the 'heathen,' though she often insisted that without the seemingly more benign humanitarian and religious elements of the mission, "the white man will never keep or rule what he is trying to snatch." Indeed, she once told a government official that "the very men you are educating with gun and motor and telegraph will turn you all out and keep Africa for the Africans. Only Xianity will give them a motive for loyalty and good living and obedience to law….I know the gospel would hold them." Her words clearly suggest that she not only willingly supported colonial sovereignty but also identified religion as the benign alternative to more explicit modes of violence (47).

relations of power always underlying Slessor's relationship with the indigenous Africans and their children. These accounts present Slessor, a partially 'abandoned' child herself, as a courageous woman who, through her hard work and piety, was able to brave a land "where twins were done to death, and the mother banished to the bush; where semi-nakedness was compulsory, and girls were sent to farms to be fattened for marriage. A land […] of disease and fever and white graves" (Livingstone 24). This Conradian description of Africa, which certainly would have conformed to the imaginations of a Victorian audience, suits the abandoned child-hero narrative, which John M. Neary ascribes to Dickens' child protagonists as well as those that figure in classical literature. As he writes in an argument that calls up Edelman's work, the child-hero in both classical and modern literature can be read as representing both a drive towards the future and a preoccupation with the past. Citing Freudian theorists, Neary remarks of the journey the child hero must take as representing a kind of return to the symbolic order of the adult world even as it anticipates the child's potential future (6).

This may help explain Joseph Slaughter's reflections on the *Bildungsroman* genre, which features its own version of the child hero's journey. It is a genre that, according to Slaughter, features the "teleological plot of human personality development—the enabling story that the humanistic notion of *Bildung* prefigures as the *history* of human liberation" (123). Interestingly, Slaughter notes that stories in the *Bildungsroman* genre, including *Jane Eyre* and *Great Expectations*, were often carried to the colonial global South by Western hands, "a conspicuous literary companion on those itineraries, traveling with missionaries, merchants, militaries, colonial administrators, and technical advisors" (123). This only further speaks to the pedagogical importance of such stories in establishing rule in the colonial world with each of the

groups Slaughter mentions carrying out their self-professed civilizing mission through their own methods (123).

So the child-hero story defines the modernist trajectory of human development in which a child, through trials and tribulations, mistakes and harrowing experiences, eventually becomes a full citizen of the late-capitalist modern Western world, but only by returning, figuratively, to the larger socioeconomic structures and cultural codes that define that world. It is for this reason that, despite Livingstone's insistence upon Slessor's unique 'alterity' as a woman who "had passed through […] experiences such as no other woman had undergone" (v), Slessor's narrative arc—from a victimized, abandoned child forced to work in places deemed unsafe for children by the anxious bourgeois imagination, to a mother of orphans and colonial sovereign—depicts the child Slessor's eventual incorporation into a Western patriarchal imperial hegemony as an adult. Like Oliver Twist who "arises to leave his dark world and to find the land of his benevolent parents," Slessor herself, as she exists in these popular narratives, belongs to a "mythical land of child-heroes" who, in becoming lost, find their true selves and return home (Neary 6). If the subjugation of African peoples (in its violent and seemingly benign forms) and Slessor's ability to claim authority over their lives and ownership of their children is part of this journey, then, as I argue, the framing of this modernist model of development would only facilitate the Victorian imagination in decoding these relations of power along the lines of the problematic hegemonic ideologies that presuppose the 'primitive' African's need of Western parental guidance. Within this episteme, the ruling of the native—the exercise of power that transforms his/her customs and lays claim to his/her body—is just a natural part of the white Western citizen stepping into the roles given to him or her by the 'normal order of things.'

Livingstone certainly uses her impact on the Efik as part of her hero narrative. “Africa is slow to change,” he laments at the start of the thirtieth chapter. “[T]he centuries roll over it, leaving scarcely a trace of their passing: the years come and go, and the people remain the same: all effort seems in vain. Could one weak woman affect the conditions even in a small district of the mighty continent?” (157).

Livingstone is clearly parroting the modernist discourse that figures Africa as behind time and stagnant, incapable of the social, economic, and political progress that supposedly marks the evolution of mankind and characterizes European civilization. However, he also sets up Slessor as the agent of this change—and indeed, Livingstone depicts the Efik people as wild-children in need of change, writing that they “were volatile, quick as fire to resent, and quick to forgive and forget” (157). In instigating social, economic, and political change, Slessor brought, according to this narrative, “rays of sunshine into the dark lives of the people, and securing for the children better conditions than their fathers had” (157).

Slessor herself saw no ideological contradiction between her Protestant missionary work to ‘save the souls’ of the Efik through religious education and the economic project of colonialism. In her view, both were deemed as doing the work of God. Indeed, she once described a military campaign to pacify and seize control of the resources in Eastern Nigeria as being “the next chapter in the history of the mission” (Proctor 46). In her own words, “God has had to employ the British Government to do what we [the missionary] could not do” (46). Like many of her contemporaries, she re-interpreted the restructuring of the economic and political infrastructure of African communities as a righteous cause, upholding the universal right to the liberties and protections that Enlightenment philosophies afforded all. As J.H. Proctor notes, Slessor “rejoiced that roads were being built, courts opened, and administrative offices

established in the interior 'so that the rights of [the] poor erstwhile scum of society may be safeguarded, and that they may have guidance of the right kind'" (Slessor qtd. in Proctor 46). She celebrated the economic and political transformation of the region, looking upon the roads being built and stating that British rule had "made out of the roughest material a lot of 'self-respecting men" (Slessor qtd. in 46). As she states in one of her missions reports: "All this points to an improvement in the condition of the people generally. They are eager for education […] and there is a disposition to be friendly to any one who will help them towards a higher plane of living" (Slessor qtd. in Livingstone 161).

Missionaries, then, mobilize the figure of the Child through their religious discourse of salvation and through the texts they take with them as teaching tools. In doing so, they normalize the relations of power that support the conception of Western sovereign right. But the stories of missionary exploits can also themselves become texts which, through dissolving the psychic preoccupations and anxieties underlying modernist childhood, work to further naturalize these violent dimensions, entrenching for decades to come Western perceptions of the relationship between the West and Africa—and even what this relationship looks like visually. The narrative strategies that frame Joanna Baumgartner and her adopted Haitian child on the cover of *Most* magazine speak to the power and perseverance of these particular narratives. An awareness of the persistence of these strategies, I believe, is crucial for understanding contemporary instances of Western humanitarian adoption of African children. In the final section of this chapter, I will outline how the modernist discourses underlying the Figure of the Child anticipate the contemporary humanitarian acts of saving African children in an era of global capitalism.

Global Madonnas: Child Sponsorship and Calls to Parenthood

When watching World Vision commercials, charity programs like *Idol Gives Back*, and humanitarian fundraising concerts like *Live Aid*, and when listening to the usual rhetoric of saving, protection, and global citizenship, we must ask, as Mamdani does: "Who has the responsibility to protect whom under what conditions and toward what end" (*Saviors* 276). Many theorists (Slaughter 2007; Härting 2008, Cheah 2006) have argued that the discourse of universal human rights has become, particularly in this present era of modernity, the driving ideological force behind Western humanitarian intervention, at least discursively. What Mamdani calls the "new humanitarian order" describes "as 'humanitarian' the crisis [vulnerable populations] suffer from, the intervention that promises to rescue them and the agencies that seek to carry out the intervention" (*Saviors* 274). Of course, humanitarian intervention can take on different forms. It can involve military action and indeed such violence often involves the mass slaughter of civilian populations. "War has long since ceased to be a direct confrontation between the armed forces of two states," asserts Mamdani:

> As became clear during the clash between the Allied and the Axis powers in World War II, in America's Indochina War in the 1960s and 1970s, in its Iraq War in 1991, and then again in its 2003 invasion of Iraq, states do not target just the armed forces of adversary states, they target society itself: war-related industry and infrastructure, economy and workforce, and sometimes, as in the aerial bombardment of cities, the civilian population in general. The old distinctions enshrined in international law, especially the Geneva Conventions, are fading away. Few take these seriously as realistic. The trend is for political violence to become generalized and indiscriminate. Modern war is total war. ("Political Violence" 278)

And yet, when such extreme violence is said to be waged for humanitarian purposes, it can often be excused and legitimated as 'sensible.' On the other hand, as Mamdani argues, instances of violent conflict in Africa, as with the political turmoil in Darfur, become unintelligible within a Western episteme that has already relegated the African Other to the

symbolic realm of the 'strange.' According to Mamdani, the language of political and social responsibility that characterizes humanitarianism in the present day is still tied to the old colonial notion of salvation. However, because of this link, despite the implicit overtures to a kind of global citizenship that necessitates 'shared responsibility' among the inhabitants of the world, those in Africa and the Middle East are treated, "not as bearers of rights—and thus active agents in their own emancipation—but as passive beneficiaries" of humanitarian aid. They are wards whose human rights act as the driving factor for different and potentially destructive forms of humanitarian intervention in which the human rights of the victims of violence translate essentially and apolitically to mere survival. Keeping vulnerable populations alive becomes the rhetorical aim of humanitarian intervention and consequently acts as validation for the violence of Western powers—even when, as in the case of Kosovo, the War in Iraq, and many other interventions, such military violence can result in the slaughter of the very same civilians they claim to protect.[45]

It seems that American brutality becomes acceptable when read as a pre-emptive, protective measure. The invasion of Iraq, which was initially called Operation Iraqi Freedom, was classified as a counterinsurgency, while the Darfuri conflict, which was also a government operation to quell insurgent forces, was commonly accepted as genocide.[46] This inconsistency speaks to the ways in which Western fantasies of Africa have presented for a Western public,

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[45] Humanitarian validation might explain how the Save Darfur movement could occur against the backdrop of the War on Terror. The number of deaths in Iraq far exceeds those in Darfur. According to Mamdani, from 2003 to 2004, the number of excess deaths in Darfur ranged from 70,000 to 400,000. Also, while 38 percent of the total excess mortality in Darfur can be classified as violent deaths, such deaths made up around 92 percent of the total excess mortality in Iraq. Yet, as Mamdani asserts, activists of the Save Darfur movement seemed more horrified by the conflict in Darfur than in Iraq, calling for international powers to stop the horrific brutality in Darfur perpetrated by the Sudanese while "keeping mum" about the horrific brutality in the Middle East perpetrated by Americans (*Saviors and Survivors* 5-6, 279).

[46] On the official Save Darfur website, calling the White House is listed as one of the primary methods for taking action to stop the violence. The administrators have set up a phone number that when dialled, will be rerouted to the White House's phone line. The number: 1-800-GENOCIDE.

who may become humanitarian actors in their own right, African social contexts devoid of complexity. Famine, violence, poverty and other experiences that tend to act as markers for the African continent's seemingly unyielding destitution, though engendered in part due to the dual impact of colonial legacy and violent global capitalist processes, are instead flattened and depoliticized. In a contemporary moment, they become that which renders Africa a land of "dense spiritual darkness,"(iv) to borrow Livingstone's phrase, an environment from which particularly the children of Africa must be saved lest they become corrupted by its influence.

In light of this imagined geography, I return to Live Aid and *We Are the World*'s plea to the citizens of the Western world to save African children under the mandate of making the world a better place. According to the logic of Live Aid (and other such fundraising benefits), the solution to the complex socioeconomic and political problems endangering many African children is the exchange of capital. The commercials produced by the Christian Children's Fund of Canada provide an example of this logic at work. During one commercial, images of seemingly destitute (mostly black) African children flash across the screen to the background music of John Lennon's "So This is Christmas," a song that seems to pick at the conscience of the viewer with an indictment: "So this is Christmas/ And what have you done?/ Another year over/ And a new one's just begun." The commercial does not continue to the chorus, but rather keeps the background music, replacing Lennon's vocals with a plea to the viewer to become involved in the CCFC's child sponsorship program:

> For so little you can give so much to a child who needs you […] For little more than a dollar a day, a child who has nothing will get the chance to go to school, have enough to eat, medical care, and clean drinking water. Reach out to a child who needs you. Tell them that this holiday season, they won't be forgotten and they won't be alone.

The visual framing strategies reinforce the ideological undertones in this plea. Adults are conspicuously absent from the commercial, save for a brief shot of a male doctor who appears

when the commentary, delivered by the soothing voice of a middle-aged British female, tells the viewer that sponsorship can give a needy child access to medical care. Though the doctor reads as a provider of care (in the medical sense), because he is clearly framed as a service provided by a hypothetical sponsor's capital, viewers would most likely not read him as a parental figure who, according to Western discourses of childhood, provides care and comfort in the more intimate sense.[47]

Where, then, are the children's parents? The (audio)visual representational strategies work together to bury them beneath an unrelenting focus on the viewer. John Lennon's song asks the viewer, "what have *you* done" this Christmas, a holiday associated by Christians with selfless love (symbolized, as it were, by the figure of a child destined to be the ultimate Saviour) characterizing Christian charity. Likewise, the commentary addresses the viewer as 'you,' its soothing and maternal voice a vague reminder of the ideals of parenthood and parental care. Through these techniques, the commercial pulls the viewer into the role of parent in place of the actual indigenous parents and guardian figures strategically left out of the frame. The children are, after all, "alone" and "forgotten" as the commercial tells us, and each shot makes sure to remind the viewer of this; almost every child in the commercial is always on the verge of tears, if not already shedding tears. The figurative orphaning of the African children on screen represents the shadow of the legacy of colonial discourses that have always called into question the parenting capabilities of those indigenous parents who themselves are configured within the Western imagination as children. The emphasis on parenting African children through monetary

[47] Bianca Dahl writes of the affects of Christian missionary work and the spreading of Western ideals on conceptions of caregiving in Botswana. According to her, these communities largely interpreted child care-giving as a form of labour. In this sense, care-giving was conceived as providing immediate needs for dependents in the form of resources. On the other hand, "Christian morality [sought] to provide the corrective with a different set of motivations for the provision of resources (e.g., love, goodwill, Christian charity)" (33).

donation further defines the targeted viewer as a member of at least the middle class – someone with the capital to spend on affective pursuits. Charged, thus, with the bourgeois ideologies of family, the commercial is poised to stir the humanitarian affect in the targeted viewer. "Little more than one dollar a day," the commentary assures the audience: the spare capital of the would-be surrogate parent is all it takes to 'save' a child and guide his or her future.

Mamdani warns us of such reductive strategies in dealing with the complex economic and sociopolitical factors—at once global and local—contributing to the precarity of those across the African continent who qualify as vulnerable. As he writes, it is the sense of moral certainty that inspires the viewer to take such action: "[r]ather than a call to act in the face of moral certainty," he writes, "[his theoretical work] is an argument against those who substitute moral certainty for knowledge, and who feel virtuous even when acting on the basis of total ignorance" (*Saviors and Survivors* 6). In following with my line of analysis, I would assert here that we can further classify the ignorance producing this sense of moral certainty as a direct result of those nineteenth-century religious and social discourses—of salvation, of childhood, and of colonial sovereignty over 'the native'—that form a Western subject assured of both the native's need of their parental aid and their own right to give it, whether this aid manifests as simple sponsorship or (il)legal adoption.[48]

Likewise, the reduction of African socioeconomic and political contexts, which spurs Western affect towards the African child, also arises out of the same modernist discourses that align the bourgeois middle-class home and the economic wealth it symbolizes with comfort and

[48] One must draw parallels between the disavowal of African parenthood and the state-sanctioned removal of indigenous children in Canada, America and Australia, a feature of colonialism that has continued to the present era, often in the form of child welfare practices (which delivers indigenous children into the hands of predominantly white parents). See: Jacobs chapters 2, 3; Regan chapters 1 ad 2.

care for the child. According to Erica Bornstein, World Vision's promotional materials for their sponsorship program declare that the economic act of sponsorship "manifests transcendent love for a stranger" (598). We can interrogate the parameters of this love, then, in light of David Jefferess' extrapolation of Homi Bhabha's theory of colonial mimicry. For the Western parent:

> the child in need of sponsorship reminds us of our own children…they are almost the same but not quite. Their 'difference' is signified by a 'lack': for instance, the lack of a nutritious diet, clean water or the opportunity for formal schooling. While sometimes 'differences' between the project country child and the Canadian viewer are constituted by the 'lack' of the requirements of sustenance, these children are presented to the viewer through structures of identification that ignore the possibility of social or cultural difference. (12)

The colonial missions and the case of Mary Slessor enables an examination of how the nineteenth-century figure of the Child—and the bourgeois perceptions of what a cared-for child looks like—has long normalized the Western economic model of familial love. We cannot discount that through her missionary and administrative work, Slessor played an important role in the establishment and maintenance of British colonial rule and the structural transformation of the Efik community. It is furthermore important that narratives depict her role in the changes that would elevate the soul of the native as part of her propensity for Christian love. "Her immediate and primary concern," writes Proctor, "was to help the Africans who were in greatest need, to protect those who were most vulnerable, and to reduce injustice, cruelty, and suffering; and it was that concern that prompted her to serve both God and the Empire" (59). In his opinion essay for the *Mail & Guardian*, Binyavanga Wainaina humorously depicts the legacy of this colonial framework in his own city of Nairobi, writing that the near-ecclesiastic expressions of love celebrated throughout the Live Aid concert and symbolized by *We Are the World* manifested in the violent upheaval of his city's infrastructure:

> The resources poured in have been incredible: tens of thousands of 4x4s are tearing the country apart looking for a project to love. It used to be that big expensive cars were

> needed by the Fathers of Our Nations, so they could Develop Our Nations. Now, the Lovers of Our Nations are here to Develop Our Nations, and of course, they need cars to be efficient. Standards must be maintained. Things need to be run with International Standards. ("The Power of Love" n.pag)

These international standards are set by the Eurocentric discourses of universality that encourage the potential Western humanitarian to believe that "the sponsored child will be better off by becoming more like the sponsor parent…validat[ing] the sponsor's lifestyle and identity" (Jefferess 13). And of course, as the Comaroffs argue, the Christian notions of selfless love and giving have themselves transformed under the formative culture of global capitalism. As they assert, during the era of industrial capitalism, the Christian message of salvation for the individual was "cast in the factory and the foundry, and its model of orderly process was that of the self-regulating market" ("Christianity and Colonialism in South Africa" 12). The soul was a malleable, private property that could be reconstructed with the individual's effort. Underlying this language is the transcendent quality of capital, praised by eighteenth-century Protestant theologian John Wesley as "unspeakably precious, if we are wise and faithful stewards of it; if we employ every part of it for such purposes as our blessed Lord has commanded us to do" (Wesley 450).[49] It follows from this that the contemporary perception of capital as being capable of uplifting the lives of the vulnerable populations of Africa counts as part of the "impact of missionaries and their African catechists on the cultural imagination of Africa" (Ranger qtd in Comaroff and Comaroff 1).

Despite the supposed universalism of these modernist discourses of civil society, precious childhood, capitalism, and salvation, and despite its calls for the Western World, even in this era

[49] John Wesley was, however, an abolitionist and against slavery. As I've explained earlier, even abolitionist associations such as the Anti-Slavery and Aborigines Protection Society were not necessarily against the framework of British empire, but simply wanted to promote the rights of racial minorities under empire (Ibhawoh 43). Yet, the fact that Wesley was an abolitionist does show that his views on an unfettered market had limitations.

of global capitalism, to safeguard the rights of African populations, the unequal relations of power engendering and sustaining these discourses in both philosophy and practice signal contradictions. According to black theologian James Cone, despite their philosophical aims to make freedom and equality "an empirical reality for all," the racial assumptions that justify racialized forms of violence in colonial and postcolonial spaces suggest that modernist philosophy aims to "affirm whiteness and humanity at the same time" (Cone qtd. in Hooks 11). The potential Western humanitarian may indeed sponsor or adopt an African child out of altruistic motives, but it does not change the fact that the African child still exists within larger, historical structures of signification that hold as precious the possibility of their humanity while simultaneously disavowing it. In the next chapter, I will consider what this means for the adopted and sponsored child, especially as he or she is interpolated in the global capitalist political economy. The ability of economic exchange to manifest 'transcendent love' between a Western parent and 'adopted' (figuratively or literary) African child must be read alongside the processes of globalization that exploit African communities and African bodies, freely harvesting their labour and resources for Western consumption.

Chapter 2: Madonnas, Whores, and Transnational Motherhood

> I wanted to go into a third world country – I wasn't sure where – and give a life to a child who might not otherwise have one.
>
> — Madonna, *The Oprah Winfrey Show*

> I love babies, but I especially love getting babies from crazy places.
>
> — Kristen Wiig playing Madonna, *Saturday Night Live*

The economic logic behind humanitarian projects aimed at 'saving' impoverished, needy children in Africa was revealed at the end of the previous chapter. I have also argued that Victorian conceptions of family are always already belied by capitalist logic that depends upon discourses of parenthood and childhood as they relate to modern citizenship. Brought together, these notions suggest that feelings of altruism bound up in humanitarian action such as adoption cannot erase the unequal contexts that already frame the relationship between Western adoptive parents and adopted black African children; and indeed, the humanitarian claim of 'transcendent love through capital' can itself fix children into particular narratives of kinship erased of their violent imperial undertones by sentimentalization.

As I move more firmly into the realm of contemporary interracial, transnational adoption in this chapter, my goal is not to dismiss adoption itself as problematic, but to instead explore the popular discursive realm within which contemporary transnational adoption must be situated, a discursive realm that reproduces certain imperial logics that tie kinship to imperial aims. It becomes increasingly important to interrogate popular narratives when one considers ABC News' claims that Angelina Jolie's adoption of her child, Zahara, from Ethiopia in 2004 inspired a doubling of American interest in Ethiopian adoptions just one year later (*ABC News* n.pag). What kind of ideological work is being performed by such narratives of transnational adoption, as they circulate globally, such that they stir within men and women—civilian and celebrity

alike[50]—the desire to adopt black children from Africa? This chapter responds to this question through an analysis of celebrated mothers that represent a globalized white American economy of motherhood. Reading Olympic mothers, who are transformed through the success of their children into celebrities of sorts, alongside celebrity mothers such as Angelina Jolie, I interrogate the ways in which representations of the interracial, transnational family operate within a contemporary cultural arena that takes as common sense the framing of kinship relations within a framework that, much as with sponsorship, blends the boundaries between that which has economic value and that which is "priceless."

To begin to investigate the ideological and political dimensions of the transnational family as a representational strategy, we must consider the question: which images have come to represent need in Western culture and which logics must they reproduce to transform humanitarian ideology into action? As I have discussed in the previous chapter, the British Empire historically consolidated its ideological meaning through its perceived humanitarian role in colonial spaces. Colonial representations of Western paternalism persisted even as American imperialism replaced the British Empire in the aftermath of World War II, though these representations took on new contexts. In her work on humanitarianism, Laura Briggs has explored the visual humanitarian trope she refers to as the "iconography of rescue" (179). Documenting the post-World War I history of humanitarian organizations soliciting donations from Western audiences, Briggs highlights the specific trope of the secularized Madonna-and-waif that often appeared in the promotional materials of humanitarian organizations. The trope predates America's establishment as a world power. However, it gained particular importance

[50] Indeed, in 2010 after visiting Haiti, then ravaged by the earthquake, Robbie Williams told *The Sunday Mirror* that his then newfound desire to adopt children was inspired by Jolie: "I'll probably have a couple and then adopt a couple too. I want one. Like Angelina's doing, I want one of them" (Williams qtd. in *The Sunday Mirror* n.pag)

during the Cold War, an era in which America took over "responsibility from England for steering international policy with respect to the lands once part of the British Empire…newly classified as the…Third World" (182). During the Cold War, the conservative ideal of the nuclear family and the increased prominence of American interventionism helped to construct the ideological meaning of the nation both domestically and abroad (182, 188).

According to Briggs, UNICEF utilized the mother-child dyad more prevalently than almost any other humanitarian organization in the West during the Cold War, using it successfully to "raise money and build support for their mother-and-child health and child feeding programs" (191). While the organization began raising funds for European orphans as well as those 'vulnerable children' in non-Western lands, their repetitive use of the trope with respect to the poverty and malnutrition in the global South facilitated its powerful association with the Western imaginary of the Third World in general (191). These images functioned by evoking the logic of liberal universalism to stress "the essential interchangeability of children and mothers" (191). The image of a destitute mother holding her starving child suggests to its target consumer that Third World mothers and their children are not so unlike 'us' if not for the effects of malnutrition and poverty (193).

By being able to "so perfectly embod[y] the ideals of post-war liberalism," UNICEF succeeded in making itself omnipresent in 1950s America, working itself into the very crevices of suburban life, not in the least by becoming an intrinsic part of those suburban practices revolving around the nuclear family. Briggs quotes an article published by *Parents Magazine* in 1955, urging parents to allow their children to participate in collecting donations every Halloween: "perhaps your youngster will join millions of boys and girls who will ring doorbells to collect pennies and dimes for the United Nations Children's Fund. This new style Halloween

gives our children an opportunity to aid sick and starving children in other lands" (qtd. in Briggs 192). We see with this example, not only the conflation of economic wealth with child-nurturing, but also the power of a visual trope, with representations of mothers and children at its core, tapping into poignant cultural logics, to shrink geopolitical concerns into the domestic realm.

If we take into account Barbara Yngvesson's assertion that the mother-child dyadic unit represents an "emotionally charged connection that 'can never be severed, whatever its legal position," then we can understand how the image operates as a powerful, universal symbol of "the way things are in nature" ("Negotiating Motherhood" 37). This symbol not only works to draw privatized capitalist humanitarian efforts within the realm of the domestic sphere by calling up associations between 'their' children and 'our children'; it also, in mobilizing the cultural logics of motherhood, cultivates a sense of familial responsibility specifically towards the children. As Wendy Kozol argues, "The Madonna is an effective and privileged image … because it draws so strongly upon cultural values associated with familial and social stability. […] The call for welfare underlying these images is, therefore, a call to assist individual mothers in preserving their families" (Kozol qtd. in Briggs 184). The mother is thus also a target of humanitarian aid and considered part of the population constructed as vulnerable within humanitarian discourse, but it is precisely because of the Western cultural notions of motherhood—the mother's 'natural duty' to protect and nurture the child and the social meaning of maternal care as being "necessary for a family to survive"—that the well-being of the struggling children specifically becomes the focal point of the sense of duty and responsibility elicited from the American nuclear family (184).

Understanding the Cold War context of such images of mothers, children, and nuclear family is one facet I explore in this chapter as I deconstruct popular representations of

motherhood and childhood and explore what they can tell us about the ways in which narratives of transnational adoption circulate to reproduce certain logics in spite of the complex affective contours that nuance the lived realities of adoption. Building upon my discussion of the relations of power and discourses of childhood discussed in the previous chapter, I examine the ideological configurations of parental care in contemporary interracial, transnational adoption. I ask in this chapter: how might socioeconomic and political frameworks of childhood and parenthood (especially motherhood), particularly as they operate in popular culture texts, shape and limit public perception of transnational adoption—what it suggests about the liberal possibilities of contemporary Western capitalist society in an era of globalization and what it suggests about the boundaries of 'family' (which inevitably also includes implicit suggestions of which kind of parents and which kind of mothers are suitable to participate in this process).

I use the popular culture texts of transnationally celebrated Olympic motherhood and celebrity transnational motherhood to explore these questions. My analysis of Natalie Hawkins, the black mother of an Olympic champion, and celebrity mother Angelina Jolie will bring together the considerations brought up by both forms of motherhood, which share ideological investments even as they diverge in some key areas. Sports theorists Mary G. McDonald and Susan Birrell have argued that celebrities, being central to mass culture and thus central to public discourse, "provide relatively open vantage points from which to observe, critique, and intervene in the complex and contradictory interactions of the power lines of ability, age, race, class, nationality, gender, and sexuality" (296). Indeed, Richard Dyer's work in celebrity studies has long exposed the relationship between the star image and the complex network of ideological discourses within which it is implicated. Therefore, after mapping out a sociohistorical context behind representations of motherhood, kinship, and transnational kinship as they have operated

in the latter half of the twentieth century to present day, I turn to such figures to examine how their mobilization within popular culture supports and, perhaps, transforms particular iterations of kinship that have survived, though not without adaptation, from the Victorian era.

Gold Medal Moms

In *Heavenly Bodies*, Dyer tells us that a star's capital within the economy of the industry depends on consumption, not only as part of the film or music product, but as citizens that seem to exist outside the star text. "Stars represent typical ways of behaving, feeling and thinking in contemporary society," Dyer writes, "ways that have been socially, culturally, historically constructed. Much of the ideological investment of the star phenomenon is in the stars seen as individuals, their qualities seen as natural" (*Heavenly Bodies* 16). For this reason it is important to examine celebrity figures of transnational motherhood as "embodiments of the social categories in which people are placed and through which they have to make sense of their lives, and indeed through which we make our lives—categories of class, gender, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, and so on" (16-17). In particular, their status as mothers of multiracial children speaks to specific categories of motherhood always already inflected by relations of gender, race, and class in which the consumers of these images are situated. What are these categories of motherhood, and how might their social, economic, and legal framing within North American culture construct the uncritical consumer of the celebrity as transnational mother along with dominant narratives of transnational adoption?

In contrast to UNICEF's mobilization of a kind of 'universal' motherhood defined through a private, intimate relationship between mother and child, many theorists (Apple and Golden 1997; Collins 1994; Stack and Burton 1993) have noted that the frameworks and

practices of mothering are, of course, historically derived, situated within cultural and economic contexts. Cold War ideology in particular forms an important foundation for my analysis of contemporary celebrity motherhood since this period saw the consolidation of the nuclear family and its corresponding ideals of motherhood. If we consider various contemporary celebrities' transnational motherhood as part of their star image, then it is crucial to articulate the power relations bound up in the construction of the Cold War nuclear family and how these relations have adapted over time in order to understand the contemporary *global* consumer of these star images: those who are most likely to buy into the subjective investments the images sell.

The collective psychic wounds torn open by the international violence and domestic disruptions of World War II (exacerbating the traumatic domestic contexts brought about by the Depression) conflated "ideals of national security and family security," leading to a "willed denial" of the international, political, and socioeconomic pressures underlying the resultant domestic configuration (Briggs 188). As Joseph Adelson writes, following World War II, Americans sought to "replenish [them]selves in goods in spirit [sic], to undo, by exercise of the collective will, the psychic disruptions of the immediate past" (Adelson qtd. in Briggs 188). By dramatizing nationalist ideals of capitalist domesticity, American men and women could "achieve the serenity that had eluded the lives of [their] parents, the men would be secure in stable careers, the women in comfortable homes, and together they would raise perfect children" (Adelson qtd in Briggs 1888). The raising of 'perfect children' places a unique kind of pressure on the mother beyond the scope of 'nurturing,' particularly during an era in which child rearing became explicitly tied to American patriotism. As historian Elaine Tyler May notes in *Barren in the Promised Land*, World War II propaganda's calls for women "to turn their postwar energies to marriage and child rearing" took on a shaper tone with the dropping of the atomic bomb on

Hiroshima and the advent of Cold War nuclear fears in America (131-132). The role of mother became a national duty for women as important to the security of the nation as the men who fought overseas. Educated, middle-class women were now cast as "the potential mothers of the nation's future leaders," leaders who would bring peace to the American nation at a time of turmoil (132). Indeed, as May notes, FBI director J. Edgar Hoover himself addressed mothers as career women: "I say 'career' women because I feel there are no careers so important as those of the homemaker and mother" who now, in their patriotic roles, must fight "the twin enemies of freedom—crime and communism," thus safeguarding the security of America, its people and its ideological meaning as a capitalist superpower (Hoover qtd. in May 133).[51] Various sociopolitical pressures may have shifted, in some ways, conceptions of men and women's roles in society during the periods immediately following the end of the Cold War in 1989 and the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991. However, such women-centered discourses and their ties to national and familial stability continue to persist.[52] Not only did the post-Cold War period maintain a focus on such delineated gender roles, but the American government's mobilization of cultural soft power and popular culture as "quasi-official instruments of Americanization, the advance guard of a global market" since the start of the Cold War made possible the

[51] While the collective psychic anxiety that punctuated the nuclear age resulted in the exaltation of homemaker as synonymous with motherhood and patriotism, fatherhood became "the measure of responsibility and respectability for men" (132). Arthur M. Schlesinger Jr.'s seminal 1949 anti-communist manifest, *The Vital Center*, powerfully demonstrates the anxieties surrounding masculinity, particularly tying the success and virility of masculinity to the success of capitalism, and both to the proper practice of motherhood (Cuordileone 518-9).

[52] Despite the numerous "eruptions," as Kaplan refers to them, since the Cold War that have shaken the stability of the ideological foundations of the fifties, the nuclear family continues to hold power. It is a mistake to believe uncritically in the Eurocentric conception of teleological history and progress that brings about irreversible change as time passes; the post 9/11 period, for example, saw a return of Cold War politics and ideology—the suppression of dissent, intellectualism, and debate; the forcing of conformism; the proliferation of marriage and the turn towards family. As May notes, a renewed focus on the possibility of the enemy outside being inside national borders also reinvigorated a need for masculine heroism, which itself necessitated the domesticity of women and children, and the narrative relegation of women, despite their prominence in the work force, politics, and the military, to their mythic supportive and docile roles (221-7).

transnationalization of the figure of the nuclear family and the investments bound up in its power relations (Douglas 80).[53]

Today, we certainly see these investments at work on a large scale every Olympics season. Given that the Olympic Games so clearly represent for the participating nations their economic strength, as well as their political roles as part of an international community (Mishra 2013; Chisholm 1999; Nagel 1998), the palpable jingoism associated with the Olympics during the stretch of the event often finds expression in the media. Certainly anyone with access to a television during the Olympics has been exposed to the many commercials and advertisements targeted towards the proud nationalist consumer by celebrating their athletes while implicitly (or not so implicitly) disseminating the cultural values most readily coveted by the nation. In such advertisements, articles and other pieces produced by mass media, public discourse surrounding motherhood certainly finds expression. Procter and Gamble's massive ad campaign, aptly titled "Thank You, Mom," provides one of the more widely known examples. The campaign, which the company created ahead of the Sochi Winter Olympics in conjunction with the International Olympic Committee, began as a film series in October of 2013, "Raising an Olympian," which detailed the journeys of various Olympic athletes through the eyes of their mothers. It then launched as a series of television spots as early as January 2014 finding success immediately; its premier on Youtube garnered over 1.5 million views in two days (Bazilian n.pag). These stories are constructed around the idea of perfect mothers, or, in the words of CNN, "Gold Medal Moms" (Wallace n.pag). The details of the athletes' journeys are edited out in favour of an

[53] National Geographic's documentary series, *The 80s: The Decade That Made Us*, explicitly lists American popular culture as being a "secret weapon" of the Cold War; film, TV, music and the cult of celebrity leaked through illegal radios, black marketed pirated videos through the Berlin Wall and into the Soviet space carrying with them American capitalist ideals of freedom and individuality voraciously consumed by Russian youth. Immortalized by the famous imagery of actor David Hasselhoff performing "Looking for Freedom" at the Berlin Wall on New Year's Eve 1989 in front of adoring crowd of East Germans.

emotional appeal to the viewer who watches gold medal motherhood demonstrated across the various stages of the athletes' lives: first, the athlete's first steps as an infant encouraged by the mother who picks her up when she falls, then, the athlete's first foray into sports as a small child. Throughout it all, the mother is there, never tired, never frustrated, forever available to the child and ready to charge to the rescue at the slightest hint of a sniffle, a tear, or trembling knee. The emotional pay off comes towards the end of the commercial where the viewer gets to witness the fruits of the mother's labour: the athlete, fully grown, competing in front of millions on an international stage, winning gold and thus bringing pride and honour to the country while 'mom' stands watch ever still, this time cheering among the crowd of spectators. This is the mother's work completed, the fulfillment of the post-World War II American dictum of the mother as bearing and rearing the future of the nation.

What's interesting, of course, is that these commercials never position the mothers as specifically American. In one "Thank You, Mom" commercial subtitled "Pick Them Back Up," the very first mother featured is Russian,[54] her encouragements, "Come along…Oops! Up you go," subtitled into English as she lovingly monitors her infant's first steps. Procter and Gamble is a Midwestern American retailer, a global brand that sells consumer domestic goods across the world. Here, as with UNICEF's employment of the Third World Madonna-waif, we see a

[54] This positive depiction of Russian motherhood would not have occurred during the Cold War before the Berlin Wall fell. Then Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev said it himself during an exchange with then Vice President Nixon during The Kitchen Debate in 1958. In response to Nixon's discussion of the role of women in capitalist society, which stressed the importance of consumerism and domestic comfort, Khrushchev replied, "[y]our capitalistic attitude towards women does not occur under Communism." Indeed, athletes were not seen as the children of individual mothers, but products of and beholden to the state. While observing the Moscow soccer team in 1947, Colonel P.W. Scharroo, executive member of the International Olympic Committee wrote in a letter that "[i]n Soviet Russia physical culture is obligatory for the whole populace…the government uses it to increase the military and economic strength of the Russians…In Russia nobody is free and independent. Individuals are only numbers in the state" (Scharroo qtd. in Riordan 28). Tellingly, Nixon's response to Khrushchev during the Kitchen Debate seems to imply the implicit aim to globalize America's ideological positioning of women. As he replied, "I think that this attitude towards women is universal. What we want to do, is make life more easy for our housewives." (Cia.gov, "The Kitchen Debate" n.pag)

universalizing of the ideals of motherhood, a sense that motherhood is the same around the world. From an economic perspective, we can see that as a strategy of a corporation tasked with selling goods in different parts of the world. But the fact that the commercial's implicit capitalist functions hinge upon selling a conservative American cultural ideal of motherhood (evolved from its Western, Victorian cultural beginnings) speaks to the power of these representations domestically and overseas. Within these Western frameworks, the gold medal mother's duty to her children is also a duty to her nation, and as a CNN article's title "Raising an Olympian was no sacrifice" (Wallace n.pag) suggests, her dual work as a mother and national citizen comes at no cost to herself. Susan Jeanne Douglas and Meredith W. Michaels speak to the violence inherent in the naturalization of this role in their book, *The Mommy Myth*: "Intensive mothering is the ultimate female Olympics: we are all in powerful competition with each other, in constant danger of being trumped by the mom down the street, or in the magazine we're reading. The competition isn't just over who's a good mother—it's over who's the best" (6). Indeed, the violence of the competition manifests as a need to continually police themselves, their behaviours, their emotions, and their bodies to maintain these ideals of motherhood that require that they perform motherhood without experiencing, or at least showing, the physical and emotional costs of mothering: "The best mothers always put their kids' needs before their own, period...The best mothers always smile…They are never tired…They never say, 'Go to the neighbor's house and play while Mommy has a beer.' … Mothers today cannot just respond to their kids' needs, they must predict them" (6).

In a later chapter, Douglas and Michael juxtapose this image of the mom whose love and ability to care for her children is "boundless, unflagging, flawless and total" (6) with the increased prevalence of career mothers in the 1980s, exposing the ideological tension between

the fantasy of Cold War motherhood and the reality of motherhood as labour. Despite the 80s career woman posing challenges to the structure of the nuclear family (Kaplan 18), the old idealizations of motherhood were socially recouped through the repudiation of those mothers who showed the physical, emotional, and psychological costs of their mothering: "By the mid-1980s, if the working mother was stressed out…it was her own pathetic syndrome, and one she had to cure by herself" (Douglas and Michaels 109). Celebrity mothers, in their estimation, increasingly in the 1980s became the romantic symbol of the resolution of the conflict between the labour and ideal of mothering, "an inescapable model of motherhood, the always gorgeous, always sexy, always devoted celebrity mom" (109). However, while Douglas and Michaels use celebrity figures to focus on the conflict between the ideal of 'intensive mothering' and 'working' in the traditional sense of working in a profession outside the home, in light of the post-World War II configuration of motherhood as a national duty—J. Edgar Hoover's conflation of raising a child with strengthening the American home and strengthening the American home with ensuring the future and safety of the nation—we can complicate the tensions underlying the romantic resolution between work and motherhood, embodied by the celebrity mother, by considering the work of 'securing' the nation both politically and ideologically. What is the mother really 'securing' when she secures the nation? And what does the notion of securing the nation reveal about the limitations of who, within this dominant discursive framework, can be the perfect mother and who can be (or deserves to be) the recipient of her perfect love? In the following section, I will delve deeper into the construct of unfit motherhood by discussing how the construction of this fifties ideal of motherhood creates violent racial and class exclusions that situate the figure of the mother at the centre of anxieties surrounding citizenship within the American nation-state, and indeed the ideological meaning

and sociopolitical practices of America as a liberal capitalist democracy. By analyzing more closely those mothers who secure or threaten the nation socially, economically, politically, and ideologically, we can begin to reveal the hegemonic work of the Western transnational mother along with the role of celebrity figures in maintaining its circulation in mass culture.

Dangerous Mothers

In probing the public discourse of motherhood mobilized by the media during the recent Olympic Games, it becomes clear that despite the supposed internationality and universality of the Gold Medal Mom, not everyone is included in these distinctly American definitions of ideal motherhood and not every mother's child is considered the true bearer of the security of America as a liberal, capitalist democracy. During the 2012 Summer Olympics in London, *The Christian Science Monitor* published an article discussing gymnast Gabby Douglas's success in the Games. As the first African American to win the Olympic women's all-around gymnastic event, Gabby Douglas has been heralded as an example of America's racial progress, or, in Bob Costas' estimation, evidence that America's racial barriers "have long since been down" (Costas qtd. in Norton, *USA Today* 2012). Though Gabby's 'post-racial' success is begrudgingly celebrated in the article published by the *Christian Science Monitor*, there is a not so subtle undercurrent of disapproval of the methods by which Gabby's mother, Natalie Hawkins, helped groom her child for success. As Lisa Suhay, writer of the article, explains, Natalie Hawkins, mother of four, gave Gabby, her youngest, to the care of Liang Chow, a gymnastics coach who had achieved success in the past with Shawn Johnson, who won gold in the same category during the 2008 Beijing Games.[55] Procter and Gamble's "Thank You, Mom," campaign reminds us that the Gold Medal

[55] Despite Chow's 'rearing' of Gabby Douglas as an Olympian, Suhay never discusses him in any capacity in the article. She remains focused on Hawkins' motherhood, implying through these preoccupations the power of the

Mom's work in raising an Olympian is something she accepts readily; and so it can hardly be considered a sacrifice, because within this discursive framework, it is a mother's natural duty. However, in the case of Natalie Hawkins and Gabby Douglas, the naturalization and thus erasure of maternal sacrifice is made explicit through the story of Gabby Douglas, which, in Suhay's article, becomes the story of failed mothering. Indeed, Suhay is quick to express shock and dismay at the idea that Hawkins would let her youngest child move to Iowa without her and the rest of her children, in a sense 'giving up' her child in the pursuit of Olympic success: "It's something I can't fathom doing. I would like to think I would move to Iowa and pick corn for a living before letting my teen move in with a host family and entrust them with their body, mind, and education." Suhay's pearl-clutching over the very notion of letting a child leave the care of her parents, even if just temporarily, is of course in line with the subjective investments of Procter and Gamble's campaign: that the 'proper' rearing of a child into the nation's future depends upon the seemingly natural, magical, and unbreakable bond between the birth mother and child, universal even for those Third World mothers and children immortalized in UNICEF's promotional images.

In a sudden moment of discursive rupture, Suhay does seem to recognize that the economic realities of child rearing (and in particular the expenses of raising an Olympic athlete) may have played a part in Natalie's decision. As she writes, "[o]f course, life is always easy from the cheap seats and her daughter is an Olympian. My finances would never allow such a move and then I would be uprooting three other kids in favour of one hopeful, so again, I should lob

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myth of Olympic gold medal motherhood. Popular media has not represented Chow as a powerful paternal figure either, keeping him within the frame of a successful coach. This could be because of Chow being male, or perhaps because Douglas did not stay with him for too long (she split with him in 2013 and then again in 2014 after a short reunion). Although one wonders if racial readings made some hesitant to imagine a parent-child familial link between an Asian man and a young black girl.

Nerf balls and not stones here." And yet, she seems reluctant to forgive Natalie (indeed, as she still feels the need to lob *something* at her). She frames her discussion of Gabby Douglas by first discussing the case of Nadia Comaneci, a gold medal gymnast in the 1976 Olympics. According to Suhay, she and the girls of her Romanian team were also 'sacrificed' at an early age, placed in a residential gymnastics school where they had to live away from their families.[56] However, she later points to the oppressive Romanian state as the culprit behind forcing the budding gymnasts out of their homes, resulting in, as she implies, the 'tearing apart' of their home lives.[57] She makes sure to make this distinction in order to frame Hawkin's decisions concerning Gabby. "While Comaneci was the product of a state system," Suhay asserts, "Ms. Douglas is part of a social system that should perhaps be the next reality show right after Dance Moms." The distinction here is clear: between the state and the individual, the political and the personal. With Hawkins, Suhay paints the picture of a selfish mom, as selfish and irrational as the mothers (as they are portrayed) starring in TLC's aforementioned reality show, those failed mothers who seemingly disregard their duty to nurture their children, and push their children to success for their own personal and implicitly economic gain. Suhay then goes on to break down Hawkins' mothering further, suggesting that her failed mothering is not simply a result of her voluntarily giving up her child, but a seemingly natural side-effect of her socioeconomic status: "[p]erhaps the stability and not just the coaching is what [Gabby] really needed coming from a home where her mother, who according to the Virginian-Pilot [sic] divorced the same man twice and has

[56] In actuality, since Nadia lived in the same town as the gymnastics academy, unlike other members of her team, she was able to commute from home. One could consider, however, this error as an accidental (or non-accidental) slip on the part of Suhay in the pursuit of the narrative she was trying to construct around Natalie's failed gold medal motherhood ("Human to Hero" n.pag).

[57] In an echo of Colonel P.W. Scharroo's framing of the Moscow soccer team in 1947, she implicitly invokes the Cold War-era categorizing of athletes as being products of the state, where the Communist state interferes in the development of the individuality, freedom, and proper citizenship that can only take place within the nuclear family home.

struggled on disability to provide for her needs." While public discourses attribute the Olympic athlete's success to the Gold Medal Mom's proper nurturing, Suhay offers up a contrasting image in Natalie Hawkins. When Suhay goes on to note that Hawkins "by all accounts, is thrilled with the result as she and her other three children cheer on the family member they have seldom seen in close to two years," she is figuring Gabby Douglas's achievements as being *in spite of* her mother's actions, almost as if her mother, as a divorced and disabled woman on welfare who gave up her child for several months, is unfit to be considered the mother who nurtured this Olympic success, a symbol of the (post-racial) nation.[58]

The discourse of motherhood palpable in this article's indictment of Hawkin's mothering exposes various power relations bound up in the figure of the ideal American mother. Barbara Yngvesson notes that the ideal of motherhood arising out of 1950s America has always been defined by the privilege of the white middle class and the legal legitimacy of marriage ("Negotiating Motherhood" 37-41). Suhay ends her piece by celebrating "[t]he kind of Olympic mom who is up at 5 a.m. making toast and hugging her child and whispering, 'you can do this,' in her ear before the event," the kind who "would not be able to give that responsibility to a stranger because those are the golden moments all parents treasure—win or lose." It is the competition Douglas and Michaels speak of in the *Mommy Myth*, a competition in which middle-class mothers have the advantage, having the resources to raise their children (Olympic and otherwise), the financial luxury of being able to wake up at 5a.m. to cook breakfast and encourage their children because they do not have to work two or three jobs throughout the day.

[5858] Interestingly, Suhay is fixated on these two years that Gabby Douglas spent away from her mother, ignoring the years they were together. One wonders if she would have the same visceral reaction towards a white mother sending her child off to boarding school for the same period of time. However, as I will show in my analysis, Suhay's reading of Hawkins' motherhood is very much filtered through the lens of race and class.

Though Suhay recognizes that she herself would not have this luxury, the subjective investments in the myth of the ideal mother are clearly too strong for her to ignore.

By judging what she sees as an example of failed motherhood against this fantasy ideal of true motherhood, and by centering this around the notion of the "unbreakable" mother-child dyad (which, she implies, should never be broken for any reason), Suhay unknowingly exposes the ways in which the American anxiety over motherhood is inextricably tied to questions of 'proper' citizenship. Just as the 1958 magazine series "The Decline of the American Male" blamed 'parasitic women' and 'overbearing mothers' for the potential downfall of masculinity in the 1950s (Cuordileone 523), liberal feminist Betty Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique*, published in the 1960s, positioned mothers as potentially producing similar failed citizens even as it called for women's liberation—and indeed, presented failed motherhood as a barrier to national feminism (Feldstein 142, 152). Proper American citizenship thus depends upon the presence and role of women and children within the nuclear family. Much in the same vein as David Eng, who analyzes the social capital of the adopted child (Eng 2003), Yngvesson argues that the presence of children within the domestic sphere has always been crucial to the completion of American capitalist citizenship: "in this vision of family life…parental roles are central to identity, for both men and women, and heterosexual, two-parent marriage is the foundation of family life" ("Negotiating Motherhood" 38). The moral panic surrounding the rising number of single mothers such as Hawkins in the country thus exists alongside the social use of their labour. As post-World War II America framed unwed mothers as being unfit to raise their children, the body of the unwed mother began to hold a special kind of capital for its ability to produce babies "whose need for a family could only be provided elsewhere" (38). Particularly white, unmarried lower-middle-class mothers, then, perhaps on welfare, perhaps homeless, and unable to take care

of their children became a source through which "white, childless, middle-class couples" could "fulfill…the 'postwar family imperative'" (38).

Unmarried birth-mothers usually of a lower economic class could provide middle-class, white mothers the means through which they could obtain wholeness as complete and legally recognized citizens of America. That society continues to pathologize such birth mothers as "chaotic, disruptive, [and] asocial" due to their socioeconomic status speaks to the violent hierarchies defining the boundaries delineating full citizenship and ideal motherhood in the United States (Yngvesson, "Negotiating Motherhood" 37). Only in taking into account these violent hierarchies, can we begin to understand how the social positioning of children and mothers within and outside of the American nation is differentially associated within these frameworks as threatening to or supporting of the American social order.

As with white unwed mothers, Hawkins, as a black divorced mother on welfare, occupies an abject position outside the patriarchal, institutional structures of married motherhood that figures her within the article as a social and economic problem that needs to be solved. Here we can consider, as Feldstein does in *Motherhood in Black and White*, how the unequal racial and economic power relations differentially sacrifice black and white 'unfit' mothers in service of a heteronormative, patriarchal capitalist regime. Feldstein traces discourses surrounding the 'unfit mother' through the Depression Era to the 1960s, arguing that the mother-blaming that characterized Republican and Democratic welfare policy in the 1980s and 90s has in fact been a part of America's liberal political tradition for decades, despite such regressive politics being commonly associated with conservatism. In the 1930s, 'bad mothers,' both black and white, acted as a scapegoat for the challenges to masculinity brought about by the welfare state (particularly men's inability to find work and provide for their families). New Deal liberal

discourse, while positing that social problems such as economic destitution and racial 'inferiority' could be solved through progress, located such problems within the family. As Feldstein writes, "[i]t was primarily women (their personality disorders or their strengths) who prevented or enabled families to respond to the external stresses of the Depression" (25). And yet, while the 'unfit mother,' written about by liberal scholars and sociologists, cut across racial lines, these liberal thinkers, in implying the whiteness of the 'normal family' were in actuality "producing ideas about who and what was an acceptable or normal family and who and what was a healthy citizen" (24). Referencing sociologists John Dollard and E. Franklin Frazier, Feldstein suggests that even the scholarship aimed at challenging the idea of black biological inferiority positioned black women uniquely in terms of their 'promiscuity' and their imagined ability to transmit 'loose behavior' through generations, constructing their sexuality against white femininity and suggesting that "black women's bodies and behavior required regulation for race relations to improve" (31).

The sexualization and demonization of black female bodies and black motherhood have, of course, been a feature of American culture since the colonial period. As Ange-Marie Hancock explains in *The Politics of Disgust: The Public Identity of the Welfare Queen*, representations of black female slaves as 'bad mothers' oscillated between the sexual 'Jezebel,' who prioritized sex over raising her children and the 'Mammy,' who neglected her own children in order to raise the children of her white master. It is this specific discourse surrounding black motherhood, "emanating from slavery [that] became a part of the assumptions undergirding the implementation of New Deal programs, as the state sought to regulate maternal behavior" (Hancock 27). As America moved into the postwar period and the 'unfit mother' transitioned from a social scapegoat to a threat to American empire, images of 'good' black motherhood were

mobilized to ease anxieties surrounding racism and its potential domestic consequences in light of witnessing the horrors of Nazi Germany and the rise of Communism (Feldstein 43-7). And yet, black mothers continued to be differentially framed from their white counterparts primarily through discourses of race and sexuality. Feldstein explains, firstly, that:

> Even when 'matriarchs' and 'moms' appeared to be most similar, race shaped indictments of mothers. Female sexuality, for example, was crucial to assessment of motherhood across lines of race… Liberal scholars, however, were more likely to associate white women with frigidity and black women with promiscuity… "Good" mothers had to achieve a balance between stereotypes and extremes that were historically racially specific and that continued to be evoked in racialized ways... [However] [a]lthough race and gender intersected in images of all women, gender remained the point of entry and the lens through which experts saw white maternal failure, while race remained the point of entry and the lens through which experts saw black maternal failure.

Both white and black women were under pressure of meeting the unattainable ideal of white, middle class, married motherhood. However, black women, as Feldstein argues, were marginalized within liberal discourses concerned with motherhood. In the 1940s and 50s, "African American motherhood was far more fraught with potential pitfalls," Feldstein writes, and not only those scholars who professed to dismantle racial biological determinism, but also the "liberal welfare state itself consolidated assumptions that black women were suspect," reinforcing powerful associations between motherhood and black pathology (91). The Moynihan Report, a 1965 report on black families written by Daniel Patrick Moynihan, Assistant Secretary of Labor of the Office of Policy Planning and Research under President Lyndon B. Johnson, has become a seminal work in the consolidation of the figure of the unfit black mother. Ironically committed to the racial progress of black families, the report, also known as *The Negro Family: The Case for National Action*, argues that the crisis of the black family centers on working black mothers who failed in their duties to their children and in their ability to earn a wage. Black women were guilty if they were too sexual and had too many children, or if they were too

focused on outside work to give their children proper maternal care, which Moynihan considered to be a standard set by (white) middle-class domestic upbringing (143). Explicitly concerned with restoring black male authority and thus stability to black homes, the report argues the dangers of welfare as potentially destabilizing homes by producing welfare dependency, which could lead to unemployed men and women's dominance in the home. In advocating for welfare that only empowered men even at the expense of women, the report reaffirmed a particular representation of black women that has survived through decades:

> As the report depicted them, black women signaled why a liberal welfare state was needed and what it could accomplish; but they also established what was most dangerous in and to that state. This paradox had shaped New Deal liberalism, and it had become even more pronounced in the postwar expansion of social insurance amidst simultaneous critiques of welfare. The Moynihan report followed and brought to the fore a well-established pattern within liberalism that made black women a repository for deviance and a symbol for all that could go wrong in American society. The terms of possibilities of inclusion had changed from the 1930s to the1960s, but claims to African American citizenship continued to hinge on constructing black women as a problem. (146)

This discussion of welfare certainly resonates with Suhay's piece on Natalie Hawkins and Gabby Douglas. Returning to the comparison of Gabby Douglas's temporary adoption by her coach in Iowa to the removal of Romanian gymnasts from their homes by the communist Romanian state, we can see the various racial and class dimensions at work in Suhay's piece as she situates Natalie Hawkins and her mothering outside the realm of liberal American democracy. Hawkins appears within Suhay's narrative as the embodiment of the Welfare Queen popularized in the neoconservative Reagan era, though the roots of which can certainly be seen in the supposedly liberal Moynihan Report. The Welfare Queen, of course, is just one of many stereotypes that work to pathologize black life, this time those poor, unwed black mothers whose reliance upon the social state for economic stability became figured within the conservative, neoliberal culture of the 1980s as pathological leaches upon the system (Feder 2007; Cannon

1991; Hancock 2004). And as Feldstein suggests, racialized discourses of mother blaming and woman shaming continued to find expression in the American political culture following the end of the Cold War. The anxiety surrounding unwed mothers became the rhetorical engine powering the congressional debates that inevitably ended in the formation of the 1996 welfare reform act, or the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA), which sought to slash government support for dependent parents and children. By rewarding married families and penalizing single parents, welfare reform was most certainly an effort to deter those unwed methods who, through their inability to adhere to the institution of legal marriage, threatened the traditions and cultural ideologies that marked not only proper citizenship, but the overall social, economic, and moral health of the nation (Yngvesson 1997; Usdansky 1996; Roberts 1997).[59] Indeed, Charles Murray made this connection between unwed mothers and national 'health' clear in his 1993 opinion piece, "The Coming White Underclass," written for the *Wall Street Journal*. In the article he, in the same vein as other right-wing intellectuals such as George Gilder and Robert Rector, mobilizes what Martin Schuldes calls the logic of "reversed causality," in which welfare is rhetorically positioned as the source of economic dependence and thus illegitimacy, which in turn causes crime and poverty (516). In line with the misogynistic conservative discourses of the time forever concerned with controlling and policing women's reproductive capacities, he targets both lower class black and white single women as "threaten[ing] the U.S." and yet frames his discussion of 'white illegitimacy' by discussing, and then dismissing "the black story" as "old news" (Murray n.pag). He writes:

[59] Dorothy Roberts has discussed the consequences of sacrificing the economic well-being of single mothers in pursuit of upholding the institution of marriage and the confluence of two-parent families with legal citizenship in liberal capitalist America. She's noted in particular that the postwar construction of the proper American family forces women into a position of economic dependence onto men, and thus the disappearance of welfare support for unmarried mothers has increasingly compelled victims of domestic abuse to remain trapped in violent households "out of economic desperation" (Roberts 223).

> The 1991 story for blacks is that illegitimacy has now reached 68% of births to black women. In inner cities, the figure is typically in excess of 80%. Many of us have heard these numbers so often that we are inured….if the proportion of fatherless boys in a given community were to reach such levels, surely the culture must be "Lord of the Flies" writ large, the values of unsocialized male adolescents made norms—physical violence, immediate gratification and predatory sex. That is the culture now taking over the black inner city. (Murray n.pag)

The difference between Murray's dismissal of black illegitimacy as common place and his comparatively more urgent call to stop white communities from following the same brutal patterns once again calls attention back to the contrasting representations of white and black female unwed mothers. In line with Feldstein's study on black and white motherhood, Yngvesson argues that "the kind of chaos [the unwed mother] represents differs according to her race, her class, and her age; and the solutions proposed are shaped by social, cultural, and economic concerns that are specific to the particular historical moment" ("Negotiating Motherhood" 37). As media in the 1980s and 1990s, under the conservative Reagan government, began to churn out an increasing number of news reports panicked over the increase of crime endangering the nation from within, and as crime became increasingly naturalized as a product of those fatherless poor, male black 'youth' whose supposed predilection towards "physical violence, immediate gratification and predatory sex" turned their own communities into (as Murray so creatively framed it) "'Lord of the Flies writ large," attention turned towards the mothers responsible for burdening the nation with these 'problem' children.

Ellen K. Feder highlights the racial suspicions surrounding black female reproduction in the 80s and 90s when she discusses the 1992 Violence Initiative, a government program aimed at fighting violence in inner-city communities. That the program was headed by Frederick Goodwin, the director of America's Alcohol, Drug Abuse and Mental Health Administration (ADAMHA) speaks to the ways in which the socioeconomic issues challenging American black

communities have often been de-historicized and naturalized. To Goodwin, inner-city violence was "a public health issue, requiring the combined efforts of governmental agencies and the apparatus they support to combat it" (Feder 65). With violence figured as a 'disease' threatening the security of the nation, black males became the main agents and natural carriers, violence naturalized as a very function of their biological makeup. In his address to the National Institute of Mental Health's National Advisory Mental Health Council, Goodwin cited biological research to compare black male behaviour to that of male monkeys in the wild, asserting a kind of biological similarity. Referring to male monkeys, he noted that only half survive to adulthood whereas the other half die at the hands of other male monkeys: "That is the natural way of it for males, to knock each other off and, in fact, there are some interesting evolutionary implications of that because the same hyper-aggressive monkeys who kill each other are also hypersexual, so they copulate more and therefore they reproduce more to offset the fact that half of them are dying" (Goodwin qtd. in Feder 65). While Goodwin supposedly did not anticipate that his words would be characterized as racist, the racial undertones of his speech are laid bare when he, after discussing the biological aggression and pathological sexual impulses of monkeys, continued to note that: "if some of the loss of social structure in this society, and particularly within the high impact inner-city areas, has removed some of the civilizing evolutionary things that we have built up… maybe it isn't just the careless use of the word when people call certain areas of certain cities jungles" (Goodwin qtd in Feder 65). Haunting his speech is the spectre of the poor black mother, the biological origins of the violent black male who threatens society.[60] These

[60] The naturalization of challenging socioeconomic conditions such as crime and poverty has of course been a feature of conservative American discourse before the 80s. In the 1960s, anthropologist Oscar Lewis described poverty as self-perpetuating and explicitly generational in an argument that exposed the easy slippage between the cultural and the biological: "poverty in modern nations is not only a state of economic deprivation…it is a way of life…passed down from generation to generation among family lines" (Briggs and Oritz 42).

black mothers are the "background-body," the body "behind the abnormal body" and thus the source of the crime and violence threatening the health of the population (Foucault qtd. in Feder 67). The poor black mother is the irresponsible mother whose inability to perform proper motherhood as defined by white supremacist capitalist patriarchy burdens the nation. The powerful association made between poverty, violence, and race, and indeed the naturalization of crime as a biological feature of blackness, adds another layer, then, to Lisa Suhay's framing of Natalie Hawkin's 'failed' motherhood of Gabby Douglas. Suhay's tone throughout the essay carries with it a hint of disbelief that an Olympic champion, a symbol of pride for the nation, could have been produced by a single, African American woman on disability who would 'irresponsibly' voluntarily give up her child to someone else's care.

The representation of black male violence as a health hazard birthed by poor black female bodies can explain Charles Murray's flippancy with regards to 'black illegitimacy.' These debates are situated within the lingering nineteenth-century cultural apparatus that, through scientific knowledge production and classificatory discourses, mark the 'otherness' of the African body as proof of their social pathology (hooks 1992; Hall 1997; Gilman 1985).[61] Such dominant frameworks, thus, have historically positioned black bodies as the abject outside of (and threat to) liberal, American capitalist democracy. African Americans, thus, "were seen not as non-citizens, but rather explicitly as *anti-citizens*" whose pathological blackness worked not only to construct the American capitalist citizen as white but further entrenched their status as enemies, threats working against the "social compact" (Joo 173). For Murray, thus, the

[61] As Ruth Feldstein makes clear in *Motherhood*, liberal studies that have attempted to dismantle biological determinism in their studies of racial difference can be just as problematic. That many of these studies, such as the Mohiyan Report still rest on racist frameworks may also suggest an answer as to how the older, more explicitly racist colonial theory of biological determinism has survived through the ages, reappearing in the works of progressives and conservatives alike.

pathology of the black community is not notable in itself, but the danger comes from its ability to spread almost pathogenically to white communities. He ends his piece for the *Wall Street Journal* by expressing this exact fear:

> Three decades after that consensus disappeared, we face an emerging crisis. The long, steep climb in black illegitimacy has been calamitous for black communities and painful for the nation. The reforms I have described will work for blacks as for whites, and have been needed for years. But the brutal truth is that American society as a whole could survive when illegitimacy became epidemic within a comparatively small ethnic minority. It cannot survive the same epidemic among whites. (Murray n.pag)

As the black body has been used historically to construct the white body, so too have black unwed mothers been used to construct the white, middle-class married mother whose 'legitimate motherhood' was synonymous with the cultivation and rearing of 'good children' who could become normative, non-disruptive members of society. Such racialized ideologies have helped re-inscribe the "legal and cultural boundaries" that separate not only "legitimate from illegitimate families," but also "'birth' from 'adoptive' mothers" (Yngvesson, "Negotiating Motherhood" 38). The conservative patriarchal framework of welfare reform stipulated that it is the preservation of the white middle-class family that will stem the social problems of crime, violence, poverty, and homelessness, and so adoption became a primary mechanism through which the white middle-class family could survive through generations. Even the 'problem' of fatherless African American children seemingly destined to endanger the nation could be solved through their adoption by white families.[62] In 1996, President Clinton signed legislation ensuring tax credits for adoptive families and fining states that delayed interracial adoptions (primarily of African American children) in favour of waiting for a same-race placement to become available

[62] Indeed, since the nineteenth century, adoption laws in America have linked the well-being of the child to the parents' ability to "bring up the child" within a home that would provide "the appropriate moral and material environment for their children." Such laws placed increased pressures on birth parents, who increasingly faced the forced removal of their children if their "parental worthiness," as defined by their socioeconomic conditions was determined to be lacking (May 40).

however long it took (Yngvesson 40).[63] While theories of biological determinism ghosts Murray's address, in an effort to promote adoption as a crucial part of reform, he stresses the possibility of cultural rehabilitation of the African American 'youth,' through the structures and practices that characterize the implicitly white legal family:

> [T]here is reason to believe that some extremely large proportion of infants given up by their mothers will be adopted into good homes. This is true not just for flawless blue-eyed blond infants but for babies of all colors and conditions…In 1993, we know a lot about how to provide a warm, nurturing environment for children, and getting rid of the welfare system frees up lots of money to do it…Those who prattle on about the importance of keeping children with their biological mothers may wish to spend some time in a patrol car. (Murray n.pag)

The metonymic slippage from Murray's Aryan conception of the "flawless blue-eyed blond" child to "babies of all colors and conditions" to those children destined for the inside of a patrol car highlights the racial anxieties surrounding the biological mothers he indicts; that these predominantly black birth-mothers act, to the conservative imagination, as the biological and cultural origins of the epidemic Murray fears will spread to white communities underscores both the derision and disregard of single black motherhood. This derision is nothing new; it derives from a long history of disciplinary measures aimed at controlling the reproductive freedoms and denying the parental rights and functions of black women, who during the period of slavery underwent a process of de-gendering— a discursive separation from the Western conceptions of womanhood, which reduced them to the reproductive capabilities of their bodies to produce more property for the slave owner (Spillers 1987; Hooks 1992; Joo 2008). But in the context of the adoption reforms brought about in the 1990s, the impulse to fear and control black reproductive

[63] According to Carla M. Curtis, many black social workers fiercely opposed the interracial placement of African American children and have as early as the 1960s. In particular, the National Association of Black Social Workers (NABSW) spoke of the adoption of black children by white parents as being potential harmful to the black children who were seen as being taken and disassociated from their culture. These proponents of interracial adoption argued that such adoption practices were no less than cultural genocide (Curtis 156-7).

faculties was part and parcel of the biopolitical strategies aimed at "transform[ing] the poor into productive citizens by taking away their children" (Briggs and Ortiz 40). Placement into white families became integral to this transformation. Between 1994 and 1996, President Clinton signed The Howard M. Metzenbaum MultiEthnic Placement Act (MEPA) and the "Removal of Barriers to Interethnic Adoption" section of the "Small Business Job Protection Act of 1996" to prevent any state from considering race in the placement of children (Howe 684). At the same time in 1995, then Congressmen Newt Gingrich, along with other Republican legislators stressed the importance of placing the children of welfare mothers into orphanages to wait for white adoptive homes (Briggs and Ortiz 41). According to their proposal, those often African American women on welfare who refused to place their children voluntarily up for adoption should have their children forcibly taken from them (Yngvesson 41), further stressing their anxiety towards the effects of poor African American women rearing children.[64] The pathologizing and criminalizing of poor, black motherhood by conservative thinkers and policymakers occurred against the backdrop of social studies conducted during the late 1970s and 1980s working to dispel any lingering anxiety towards white families raising black children. By conducting interviews of the adopted black children, as well as their families and teachers, and by administering personality tests to prove that the children had adjusted 'well' to society, researchers sought to prove that white families can be, and perhaps were, ideal for effectively raising emotionally 'healthy' African American children (Curtis 159).[65]

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[64] In discussing the importance off the black 'crack baby' to the Reagan-Bush criminalization of poverty and welfare, Briggs and Ortiz discuss the dominant media representations of these black children and their (largely) white foster parents that became integral to the rhetorical strategies of policymakers: "Foster parents of these so-called crack babies…were caring for 'babies in pain,' who disrupted families and would never be normal." Despite the racial logics that disproportionately forced testing on pregnant black mothers, "there was also profound popular opposition to 'crack mothers' getting their children back" (Briggs and Ortiz 47).

[65] In contrast, despite the prevalence of African American parents and mothers serving foster roles for white children (a historical role black women have played to white children since the early periods of American slavery), there have been incredibly few documented cases of African Americans or any non-white parents adopting white children.

If notions of 'parental worthiness' that dominate discourses of adoption (May 40) are implicitly racialized, then the parameters of 'gold medal motherhood' celebrated in popular discourses of mothering and implicitly exclusive to white, middle-class married women create a cultural paradigm of adoptive motherhood in which white, middle-class mothers become, symbolically, the main agents behind the potential transformation of the adopted black child into the productive citizen even in the face of colourblind U.S. adoption legislation that legally prohibits the denial of any parent adoptive rights on the basis of race. The role of transforming the black child, then, becomes part of the ideological labour demanded of the white, middle-class adopted mother who, given the naturalization and romanticization of the mother-child dyadic relationship in dominant discourse, is expected to perform this flawlessly. As dominant discourses figure the white, middle-class mother who adopts a wayward black child as performing a kind of duty in safeguarding the American nation through her performance of white capitalist motherhood, against the epidemic of crime, poverty, and overall moral degradation birthed largely by the black community, white women come to signify as protectors of the American nation—or at least, the ideological meaning of the nation as a white capitalist patriarchy. This is where the 'gold medal motherhood' of Olympic mothers and celebrities like Angelina Jolie diverge. For the celebrated mothers of Olympic athletes, the success of their children is what makes them readable through the rubrics of nationally (and internationally) celebrated, white American motherhood. The physical exceptionalness and achievements of these athletes overwrite the mothers' physical, material, and emotional labour, constructing

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However in the case of African Americans, part of this, as Yngvesson argues, is due to the culturally-derived reluctance of many African Americans to relinquish their children in the care of strangers; more so than white parents, black women are more likely to desire instead to release their children to the care of family members, or people within their communities (Bradley and Hawkins-Leon 1233). See also Yngvesson, "Negotiating Motherhood" 41.

everyday mothers as the superhuman moms Douglas and Michaels discuss. For celebrities such as Jolie, it is their adoption of children, and thus their surrogate mothering, that not only confers upon them the mantle of ideal motherhood, but also constructs them within the logics of the humanitarian ideal.

Indeed, in the case of celebrity transnational adoptions, we can see transnational mothers, particularly and popularly represented as white, middle class mothers (and performing those logics of motherhood) as carrying the white adoptive mother's duty to the nation further. Recall that the fifties paradigm of the American family—the mother, father, children, and dog—became synonymous with the American capitalist way of life such that J. Edgar Hoover could posit the married (white) American mother as, through her married, middle-class motherhood, capable of securing the nation against "the twin enemies of freedom," which he names specifically as "crime and communism" (Hoover qtd. in May 133). As conceptions of American identity arose in the fifties alongside conceptions of American imperialism, the American family home became critical to U.S. imperialism. As I will argue in the following section, the transnational mother thus becomes a kind of ideological weapon whose motherhood, always considered existing within "the order of nature" and separated from the patriarchal order of law and government (Yngvesson 37), acts the affective double to U.S. political and military intervention in developing countries. The transnational mother draws humanitarianism within the maternal 'order of nature' and celebrity figures in particular, through their execution of (ideological and economic) labour and mothering in the public eye, help to resolve the ideological contradictions for an audience of potential adoptive mothers susceptible to the subjective investments they represent.

Celebrity Moms and Transnational Motherhood

I focus on celebrities, and in particular celebrity mothers, in this section because of what Foucault would call the biopolitical disciplinary power promoted through the carefully cultivated images of celebrities and enacted upon those women who consume their images. If American women are indeed driven through a particularly North Atlantic patriarchal policing apparatus into a competition not only against "the mom down the street" but also "in the magazine we're reading" (Douglas and Michaels 6), then we must consider the semiotic power of celebrity images in promoting the seductive ideologies and narrative frameworks that I argue make possible the kind of humanitarian efforts and interventions that affect lives overseas.[66]

While attributing such biopolitical, normalizing power to the images of celebrity mothers could be criticized as running the risk of unfairly characterizing the consumer as a passive subject, we must consider the sheer strength and economic effectiveness of the image of the celebrity mother. According to Susan Jeanne Douglas and Meredith Michaels, celebrity mothers became a dominant trope for women's and entertainment magazines in the 1980s (113). Celebrity mothers sold millions of magazines, and, as I will elaborate later through my analysis of Angelina Jolie, launched and transformed careers (114). As Ann Kaplan argues, this era saw the ideal of Cold War nuclear motherhood facing challenges from not only new feminists' notions of motherhood still lingering in the cultural milieu from the work of sixties liberal movements, but also from those socioeconomic changes that saw more women entering the workforce (221-7). Normative frameworks of motherhood adapted to these new challenges, demanding of American women the ability to 'do it all'—to engage in intensive, unceasing

[66] Indeed, remembering the earlier mentioned role of celebrity and pop culture played in America's 'winning' of the Cold War, it becomes clear that pop culture remains an important lens through which to think through the ways in which specific contradictory ideologies are negotiated at any specific cultural moment.

mothering, to love their children unconditionally, and for those working mothers, to also hold a job, all without complaint, without exhaustion, and without any indication of the costs of their labour (Douglas and Michaels 108-9). If to J. Edgar Hoover mothering was a career, then mothers couldn't show it; for mothers to show any indication of mothering as labour could risk shaming (120).

The figure of the celebrity mother within popular 1980s media attempted to ideologically resolve the tensions between nurturing motherhood and labour by serving women the fantasy of the working mom who 'has it all' because she can 'do it all,' erasing the contradictions and costs in effect through glamorizing its semiotic appeal. "Celebrity moms," Douglas and Michaels explain, on one hand "exemplified the unbridled materialism and elitism of the Reagan era. On the other, they represented the feminist dream of women being able to have a family and a job outside the home without being branded traitors to true womanhood" (118). As celebrities, their economic status was flaunted on every magazine cover as the mothers expressed through interviews how "supremely contented" they were with family life, how it never interfered with their work life (indeed not only could they bring their children to work without any disruptions, but in many cases these children brought joy and delight to the very process of working), and how at the end of the day their work lives never mattered as much as their mothering (114). Interviews of celebrity moms in magazines and talk shows "equated motherhood with winning the Nobel Prize, climbing Mount Everest, and experiencing a transforming religious experience, all at once…once you get pregnant and have a child, some special, previously untapped feminine eau de mama gets released throughout your entire body and mind and … energizes you!" (116).

A quick perusal through the *Moms&Babies* online feature of *People* Magazine indicates that these tropes have indeed become a dominant fixture of contemporary mainstream media.

The feature presents article after article of joyous celebrity mothers. One article assures its readers of how "happy" Chelsea Clinton is after giving birth to her first child: "It's even better than everyone had said it would be…I understand all the things that people say about their children. It's just magical" ("Chelsea Clinton Steps Out" n.pag). In another article, actress Debbie Matenopoulos tells the magazine, "[My husband] Jon [Falcone] and I are having such a great time getting to know our little Alexandra more and more each day." The actress "has been settling into her new life as a mom—and loving it," the article assures us and reinforces this message with a photo of Matenopoulos in a beautifully decorated home space, smiling down at the infant in her arms ("Debbie Matenopoulos Introduces Daughter" n.pag). The celebration of an idealized norm of the female form accompanies this celebration of motherhood with yet more articles congratulating the likes of singer Christina Aguilera and Spanish actress Elsa Pataky for being able to regain their "jaw-dropping" and "fit" figures mere months after giving birth ("Wow! Elsa Pataky Shows Off Body" n.pag). If the phenomenon of the new celebrity mom's amazing reclamation of her figure visually works to re-inscribe the modern body as the healthy body, reiterating for the modern capitalist subject the expectation and results[67] of carefully cultivated femininity, then this visual trope becomes part of the cultural apparatus that erases the physical and emotional stress of child bearing, birthing, and rearing.

The celebrity mother brings the opulence of celebrity into an uncomfortable proximity with these impossible ideals. The lower- to middle-class American mother taking an issue of *People* off of the magazine rack would not have the resources a celebrity mother has to raise her children with minimal stress and conflict with her work life, but the efficiency of the celebrity trope stemmed from appeals to the 'universality' of the mother-child experience is carefully

[67] The results of cultivated femininity are meant to be as emotional as they are physical; the articles certainly imply that Aguilera and Pataky's post-birthing fitness success is key to their happiness as mothers and as women.

constructed to make them relatable. The key is to assert that despite being celebrities they are 'just like any other American mom.' Today social media is inundated with images of celebrity mothers taking their children for walks or pushing them in strollers ("Role Model Mommy!" n.pag). In interviews, celebrity mothers talk about their own experiences in taking care of their children, feeding them, toilet training them, even giving other celebrity mothers advice the way presumably 'regular' American mothers would ("Beyonce Got Parenting Tips" n.pag). By talking about the mundane activities of ideal motherhood, celebrity mothers position themselves as between fantasy and reality: "[c]elebrity mom profiles are carefully packaged fantasies, but they ask readers to approach them as if they were real. In fact, they deliberately blur the lines between reality and daydreams: The lives they show aren't really authentic, but they aren't completely counterfeit either" (Douglas and Michaels 123).

I want to explore this idea of authenticity and reality particularly as it comes to the construction of Angelina Jolie, not only as a celebrity mother, but as a celebrity mother whose adoption of children from different parts of the Third World elevates her to a higher order of celebrity motherhood. The discourse surrounding Angelina Jolie's motherhood certainly fits within the carefully honed trope of the celebrity mom. Angelina Jolie, of course, made up one half of the A-list celebrity power couple known as Brangelina with ex-husband and actor Brad Pitt.[68] During their marriage, the two balanced being Hollywood royalty and parents to six children: Shiloh, Knox and Vivienne, their biological children, and Madoxx, Pax and Zahara, who were adopted from Cambodia, Vietnam, and Ethiopia respectively. Despite the fact that the couple have spent ten million dollars on child care, including providing each child with personal nannies and tutors and ensuring that their inter/intra continental travel remains via private jet,

[68] This dissertation was completed just before Jolie sued for divorce on September 19, 2016, and so the analysis has not been adjusted in light of this development.

Jolie is always sure to stress her ties to normal 'motherhood.' In a 2011 interview, Jolie told *The Telegraph*: "When Brad and I decided to have a large family we decided we'd only do it if we could be really hands-on and take the kids with us, seeing them every day." As she goes on, Jolie frames herself, like so many celebrity mothers before her, as a 'working mom' who doesn't let her job get in the way of her maternal duties. As she told the magazine, "I am always there on weekends. I only ever work a five-day week, and I am often there for breakfast or dinner. When I'm working they come up at lunch" (Jolie qtd. in Lawrence n.pag).

Of course, Angelina Jolie is not simply a celebrity mother; as an adoptive mother of children from countries characterized, within the Western imagination, as failed or developing states, Angelina Jolie serves as both a mother and humanitarian whose own life is an example of the American capitalist ideals of liberal democracy and global citizenship. In this sense, Brad Pitt, though one-half of the power couple and second parent to the adopted children, seems to disappear from the narrative of Jolie as humanitarian saviour—though, as I will argue later, his shadowy presence within Jolie's narrative is still integral to how she is read.

Nevertheless, Jolie's role in political international affairs infuses the public discourse surrounding her parenthood. In 2001, she became the Goodwill Ambassador for the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), only to be elevated to the title of UNHCR Special Envoy by the High Commissioner in 2012 ("UNHCR Special Envoy" n.pag). Not only has she been celebrated in the media for her work in ravaged countries, but she has also received high honours for her work.[69] And yet, despite this, Jolie continues to be framed for the public as a working American mother. Legendary photographer Mario Testino, who shot Jolie

[69] In 2013, Jolie received the Jean Hersholt Humanitarian Award from the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences at an Academy Awards, demonstrating how her image as a Hollywood star and her status as a humanitarian are intimately tied. In particular, according to the Academy itself, the award is given to those actors "whose humanitarian efforts have brought credit to the industry" (Rosen n.pag)

for the December 2014 Issue of *Vanity Fair*, recently gave his *Instagram* followers a quick status update on the shoot by celebrating Jolie's motherhood: "With the amazing Angelina. She always surprises me with what she is doing. Acting, directing, raising children, being a wife, etc. etc! And always looking great and giving great energy" ("Mario Testino Shares" n.pag).

In his seminal work on stardom, Richard Dyer examines the construction of the star image. By placing stars within the framework of capitalist production, he categorizes stars as products of the media. For movie stars like Jane Fonda and Marlon Brando, promotion, publicity strategies, and public discourse matter as much as the films they star in. In Dyer's own words, stars are "produced by the media industries, film stars by Hollywood (or its equivalent in other countries) in the first instance, but then also by other agencies within which Hollywood is connected in varying ways and with varying degrees of influence" (*Heavenly Bodies* 4). Since "stars are made for profit," Dyer posits celebrities as both "labor and the thing that labor produces" as they are not only constructed by a variety of producers, including themselves, to be consumed by audiences, but they are also charged to use their image "to produce another commodity, a film" (5). Along with his celebration of Angelina Jolie's celebrity motherhood, Mario Testino also shared a photograph he snapped of Jolie as they were having breakfast: a clean, black and white photograph of Jolie touching her face daintily and wrapped in lavish dark robes. The photo's colour saturation and framing, Jolie's seemingly fit and healthy white body[70] enhanced by the expensive and lush robes enveloping her invoke the sense of a Classical

[70] Here we must take into account not only Foucault's framing of the healthy body as the 'normal' body, but also Dyer's argument that Western film and photography apparatuses have developed around the privileging of white skin; the saturation of colour worked to enhance the white skin of the subject in w ay that transformed him or her into a representation of whiteness itself – whiteness as ideal humanity. Thus we can see how Jolie's picture works biopolitically. In Dyer's own words, "In the history of photography and film, getting the right image meant getting the one which conformed to prevalent ideas of humanity. This included ideas of whiteness, of what colour – what range of hue – white people wanted white people to be." I will return to this point when I discuss the role of her mastectomy in her construction as a 'transnational madonna' (Dyer 90)

Hollywood pedigree befitting her A-list actress-humanitarian status.[71] But her friendly, inviting smile works to imply a sense of commonality with the 'average mother,' especially when read alongside his praise. This is simply one of many examples in which the plethora of media production surrounding Angelina Jolie has helped to construct her present image. However, if as Joshua Gamson writes, the machinery behind the hyper-constructedness of the star has become increasingly visible (44), how is it that the public can read Angelina Jolie's humanitarian-mother image as authentic, investing it with the kind of capital that allowed it to elevate her status to the very top among the Hollywood elite, while other celebrities, in particular Madonna, can be criticized for their transnational adoptions?[72] It is especially curious when one considers how Angelina Jolie began her career, but as I argue, it is precisely her beginnings as a star that point towards the ways in which the contradictions in her identity have been negotiated; at the centre of this resolution is the mother-child unit and the meaning invested into it that allows for Jolie's continued participation in international affairs.

When thinking of sociopolitical implications of Jolie's transformations, we need to consider the ways in which her gendered body has over the years aligned with ideals of whiteness and femininity within the specific cultural landscapes of the post-Cold War 1990s and the post-9/11 2000s, the two periods of history within which her star image has circulated most powerfully within public discourse. I mentioned earlier that various machineries of production within the entertainment industry, including the star's own labour, help to construct the star's image for consumption. As Kathleen McHugh suggests in her analysis of Jolie, the star's own

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[71] Angelina Jolie has certainly been compared explicitly to Classical Hollywood figures before. In 2011, a writer for the Telegraph wrote, "There are plenty of powerful women working in Hollywood today and innumerable great beauties. But there is, arguably, only one actress whose glamour can bear comparison with the screen idols of 1950s Hollywood: Angelina Jolie" (Lawerence n.pag).

[72] Indeed, Jolie herself has publicly criticized Madonna for her adoption of her son, David, from Malawi, which has largely been framed in the media as being less than legal ("Angelina Jolie Attacks Madonna for 'Illegal Adoption' of Baby David" n.pag).

self-staging as a transgressive figure undercut the intense objectifying focus on her body and sexuality in the 90s. As she argues, during this time, Jolie successfully used the media to "write agency back to her body" (6). Important to this analysis is the transformation of her agency as she transitioned into transnational motherhood, and most importantly, the ways in which gendered and racial discourses inflect how the transformation of both her agency and body operated within post-9/11 American culture.

In the late 90s, early 2000s, before Brad Pitt and before her adoptions, Jolie's non-normative sexuality dominated the conversations surrounding her. Not only did the media wonder about her possibly incestuous relationship with brother and actor James Haven, but they also gossiped about her relationship with actor and director Billy Bob Thornton. In 1998, the same year she admitted her bisexuality (Thakur 180), an article by *People* Magazine framed her as a sexual, obsessive adulteress by first noting how she "passionately clung" to her brother at the Oscars before speculating about her role in the break up of Thornton's marriage: "reports are surfacing that she may have played a part in the break-up of Billy Bob Thornton and Laura Dern. New York's *Daily News* says that Jolie is sporting a new tattoo that reads 'Billy Bob'…Jolie's publicist did not return the newspaper's calls" (Silverman n.pag). In another *People* article written in 2001 after her famed incestuous kiss with her brother, Karen Schneider, perhaps as part of the hype machine for her role in the *Tomb Raider* movie, celebrates Jolie's "unorthodox" image while simultaneously reinforcing it as the dominant frame of her identity:

> Believe the rumors: Angelina Jolie really does carry drops of husband Billy Bob Thornton's blood in a pendant around her neck. And you know what? Big deal. The couple also used their blood to sign wills they rewrote earlier this year. And get this: as a first wedding-anniversary present, Jolie, 26, gave Thorton [sic], 45, his-and-her grave plots in Louisiana…best forget the literal translation of her name; for the fiercely unorthodox daughter of Oscar-winning actor Jon Voight, heavenly hellion is more like it. (Schneider n.pag)

The article lists the scandals that have made her infamous — her "bizarre" declaration of love for her brother (just before the incestuous kiss) at the Oscars, her bisexuality, self-mutilation, and drug use — before confidently declaring that "[c]learly, Jolie has just the edge to play Tomb Raider's Lara Croft" (Slaughter n.pag). And yet it becomes clear from Schneider's assertion that Jolie's behavior "has made chitchat of subjects rarely heard even in Hollywood," and its uncomfortable characterization of her bisexuality as "lesbian longings" that the article cannot quite seem to conceal the tension between its celebratory tone and its framing of Jolie's image as sexually deviant. Jolie's presence in magazine covers during this period certainly reflected anxiety surrounding her womanhood. On a 2000 *US Weekly* magazine cover, Jolie clutches Billy Bob Thornton while the headline reads: "EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW: Angelina Jolie and Billy Bob Thornton reveal their secret affair and a love life 'so good we're afraid it's going to kill us.'" Here the magazine utilizes Jolie's threatening sexuality as a medium through which its reader can understand her relationship with Thornton: as wildly passionate, but also, consequently, dangerous and, even, life threatening. Very different than Mario Testino's recent photo of Jolie as respectable actress, mother, and humanitarian, the Jolie on the *US Weekly* cover is young and almost naïve despite the sexuality of her expression. Her positioning within the frame is telling: she is collapsed in Thornton's arms as if a broken doll, almost so as to suggest an emotional dependence on the much older star.

This framing of Jolie, which suggests that her 'wild' sexuality is a result of her youth and naïveté, echoes discourses of the wayward youth who has yet to properly transition into responsible citizenship; this takes on a new layer of meaning when read against Kathleen McHugh's analysis of Jolie's agency. Indeed, as McHugh points out, Jolie authored and sanctioned the shocking information about her private life. It was Jolie who declared her love for

her brother on stage at the Academy Awards, Jolie who told reporters of her use of blood and flesh-mutilation for her own romantic expression: “it’s your husband,” she told a reporter as she explained the reason behind writing her then husband Jonny Lee Miller in blood. “You’re about to marry him. You can sacrifice a little to make it special” (Jolie qtd in McHugh 8). As McHugh suggests, this shifts the paradigm of the star-as-passive-victim of the media, particularly when one considers in this case that Jolie’s privilege as the wealthy white daughter of Jon Voight, a Hollywood celebrity, would have afforded her the ability to engage in such socially shocking behavior within the privileged, excessive space of celebrity while being largely protected from the violent kind of persecution more marginalized, civilian individuals may have faced. “Her celebrity notoriety,” McHugh writes, “significantly not of the caught out, abject, or addicted school of self-destruction (think Drew Barrymore or Lindsay Lohan), thus derived from its active, autographic capacity to infuse the domestic (her marriages), the familial (her father and brother), and her own body with self-authored impropriety, danger and excess” (9).

For publications to insist upon underlining the image of her dangerous sexuality with suggestions of her naiveté reveals an attempt to resolve her star text by reading her dangerous body in ways that align more safely with dominant paradigms of femininity and citizenship. On one hand, female agency and power, as we’ve seen through the ways in which liberal discourses have framed motherhood in relation to masculinity, can be threatening to the dominant patriarchal order. On the other hand, the efficacy of this power can be siphoned by suggesting that Jolie is the ‘wild child’ that simply hasn’t ‘grown up’ yet.

This conception of her naïveté anticipates the ways in which her humanitarian star text became legible in those crucial years of transition despite her dominant framing in the past. I have mentioned that Jolie’s star text circulated within the media in ways that associated her

sexuality with individual (for example, self-harm) and societal danger. If Jolie was 'out of control,' this only suggested that she was undeveloped as a full citizen. One could also say that her past construction as a 'sexual deviant' gave her an image similar to the figure of the white 'fallen woman,' the unmarried (thus immoral) white woman who Yngvesson describes as being a powerful counterpoint to the middle class, legally married mother.[73] She explains that within the cultural apparatus of the 80s and 90s, amidst the debates surrounding welfare reform and the need to channel women's reproductive faculties into legal, accepted forms of kinship, the "illegitimacy of unmarried motherhood [was] given particular weight…by its powerful association not only with the dependent (read 'neurotic' or 'fallen') white woman" (41). Single white women who exercised their sexuality outside of the prescribed (hetero)normative structures of marriage were easily pathologized through moral and social discourses as problematically sexual and emotionally unstable, lacking control of their lives.[74] And yet as my earlier analysis suggests, for the white 'fallen' woman and the black 'welfare queen,' despite their similar roles within welfare reform debates, racial constructions of blackness positioned the fallen white woman as redeemable. "[W]hite unmarried mothers have been viewed differently and subjected to different forms of discipline" historically derived from moral discourses that preach the necessity and possibility of saving such women through "the virtues of domesticity and motherhood" (41). At the onset of her relationship with Brad Pitt in 2004, Jolie had already

[73] A special "Weddings of the Year" issue of *US Weekly* published in December of 2000 seems to telegraph this cultural distinction with regards to Jolie, Catherine Zeta Jones and Jennifer Anniston. The cover of the magazine shows photos of three newly married couples: Jolie and Billy Bob, Catherine and Michael Douglas, and (ironically) Brad Pitt and Jennifer Aniston. While the last two pictures conform to the clean-cut, 'respectable' fairytale formulation of the bourgeois wedding, Jolie and Billy Bob are pictured in plain clothes, Billy Bob with his black cap and Jolie in a tank that shows the tattoos on her arms. Even despite her economic status and marriage, Jolie's inability to perform middle-upper class subjectivity or adhere to its cultural practices seems to have contributed to the magazine's framing strategies in such a way that denies her a perfect alignment with the figure of the married, middle class woman.

[74] Some of Angelina Jolie's famous early roles sees her performing exactly such a character, including her Oscar Award winning role as Lisa in *Girl, Interrupted* (Thakur 2010).

begun her humanitarian work as Goodwill Ambassador, and she had already adopted her first child, Madoxx from Cambodia. Mainstream media circulated article after article about Jolie and Pitt's adulterous relationship and here Jolie, who by this time had been predominantly framed as dangerously sexual, had stolen away the husband of Jennifer Anniston who had built her career on depicting more of a normative and nonthreatening image as one of America's sweethearts.[75] The media could not seem to get enough of the glamorous new power couple,[76] but of the two women, Jolie represented the pathological side of Freud's Madonna/whore dialectic (Freud 1910), which placed her 'unrestrained' sexuality always uncomfortably (and perhaps tantalizingly for the public and media) simmering underneath the surface of their glamorous relationship. However, just as a 'fallen,' unmarried white woman, could be redeemed by either giving up her child to those participating in normative kinship structures or by entering those kinship structures herself (thus, for Charles Murray, saving white communities from the 'epidemic' of social ills), the transformation of Jolie's star image into humanitarian working mother came about through her accumulation (to put it rather cynically) of children *with* Brad Pitt as her partner. This gains particular importance during the post-9/11 period that saw the return of a Cold War mood in which fear of international political threats returned to the forefront of the everyday. As McHugh writes, upon her appointment as a Goodwill Ambassador in 2001 came a shift in the discourse of danger:

> Rather than Jolie as the agent of danger (to herself), those agents and sources now become international and political—Cambodian land mines—and the danger extends beyond Jolie and includes innocent Cambodians, particularly children. Jolie seeks these

[75] In one 1998 article published in *People*, Jennifer Aniston is listed alongside Judy Garland and Mary Tyler Moore as the Girl Next Door. "There's something very attainable about her," says a quoted director. "She seems like a girl who may have lived on your block" ("The Girls Next Door!" n.pag)

[76] *W* magazine devoted an entire 60-paged portfolio to the couple in promotion of their film, *Mr. & Mrs. Smith*, an act which greatly upset ex-wife and American Sweetheart Jennifer Anniston who blasted the couple in the media ("Aniston Says Pitt Missing 'Sensitivity Chip'" n.pag).

> collective, political, global dangers, now not from sexual desire but from publicly articulated and performed humanitarian impulses and commitments. (9)

Using Dyer's Marxist model of the star text as a tool of analysis, we can say that stars like Angelina Jolie speak to core capitalist notions of individualism despite the heavily manufactured nature of stardom that produces the star as a collection of incoherent contradictory identities. In fact, it was because of the performativity of the image, manufactured and reinforced through media and publicity, that stars became a terrain through which the audience *sought* ideological resolution. Dyer writes that this is "one of the ironies of the whole star phenomenon…all these assertions of the reality of the inner-self…take place in one of the aspects of modern life that is most associated with the invasion and destruction of the inner self and the corruptibility of public life, namely the mass media" (13). At the same time that the very act of possessing children within post-war kinship discourses carries with it the promise of full, ideological citizenship for the married couple, giving them the means through which to prove "that they were, if not happy, then American" (Briggs 188), the genre of the celebrity mother has long taught devout readers of entertainment and women's magazines that becoming a mother not only made a woman happy, but made her more mature, more desirable to her husband, and generally more fulfilled. Furthermore, Jolie's motherhood becomes aligned more strongly in this era with a dangerous international political arena within which her status as a mother signifies as a safeguard against global threats. As Jolie settled into her role as humanitarian, she did not wholly leave behind her sexual image; her non-conformist femininity has certainly remained part of her image, a point I will return to later on in this analysis.[77] However, in recent interviews, Jolie has prioritized this

[77] One could argue that having so many children, both biological and adopted, is itself a display of non-conformist femininity, though because of her status as a rich white celebrity within the privileged space of Hollywood (which gives her the economic resources to willingly adopt children out of altruism), she can escape being read through the same lens of disgust that might be applied to, for example, a poor black woman with a similar number of children.

tidy romantic narrative of motherhood, particularly in relation to her marriage to Brad Pitt. In the June 2014 issue of *Elle* magazine, Jolie tells readers, "I never thought I'd have children…I never thought I'd be in love, I never thought I'd meet the right person. Having come from a broken home—you kind of accept that certain things feel like a fairy tale,[78] and you just don't look for them" (Jolie n.pag). Jolie becomes legible through this narrative frame and, taken with her glamorous status as a celebrity, her current image as a hard working, redeemed mother of transnational children now functions for those audiences receptive to its semiotic messages, she also becomes aspirational and global. During this period, her "narration and agency…becomes future-oriented…and collective, a utopian fantasy of globalised maternity (pointedly not based on bloodlines) where family making equates to world-making" (9). As Dyer states, "stars matter because they act out aspects of life that matter to us; and performers get to be stars when what they act out matters to enough people" (*Heavenly Bodies* 17).

It is this seductive quality of Jolie's figure that sets her apart from other celebrities, such as Sandra Bullock or Charlize Theron who have adopted black children. Jolie's motherhood of multiracial foreign children, her work as a humanitarian and her narrative of redemption structures the actress as a sign that is further romanticized through the fevered celebrations of her relationship with an equally beautiful A-lister. In their 2006 cover story spread of the Jolie-Pitt brood, *People* magazine declared them to be The World's Most Beautiful Family, tying her humanitarian transnational motherhood into the romanticized framework of the celebrity mom genre that emphasizes the joy, glamour and ease of parenting. "He's a two-time Sexiest Man Alive. She's the world's Most Beautiful Woman. Together they are building a multicultural

[78] Jolie's reference to her broken home calls up comparisons to Livingstone's mythologizing of Mary Slessor, whose broken household and fraught childhood became part of her mythic coming-of-age narrative into a celebrated missionary and transnational mother.

brood that transcends continents," writes *People*. Their article introduces the topic of the couple's humanitarian work in the global South by first gushing about their luxurious life, hopping around the world, discursively aligning the beauty of their multiracial family with the 'exotic' beauty of the foreign lands the children were taken from: "even the windswept splendour of the sub-Saharan desert can't upstage this family's combined gene pool" (Tauber n.pag). The article incidentally makes explicit the colonial link between their humanitarian work and the possession and consumption of racialized bodies in racialized lands. The privilege that the global capitalist system has given rich, white celebrities like Angelina Jolie and Brad Pitt enables them to move freely throughout the world. Capital resources and racial (and national) privilege have given them access to different geographic spaces and to their children in a similar fashion to those European explorers of the colonial period. As Mimi Sheller explains in her discussion of the tourist industry, "[i]n some respects this is a return to the co-presence of consumption exemplified by the direct abuse of the slave's body by the European colonist, but the tourist touches and consumes 'others' in different ways" (136-7). That is to say that 'exotic' scenery and bodies have been objectified and consumed in similar ways, as evidenced here in this article when Jolie conflates the two: "[Nambia is] a country we're very fond of… a beautiful land and hospitable people and a place that we want to be for the time being." For Sheller, the dual objectification and consumption of colonial land and peoples "involved various kinds of animalisation and objectification" including that which occurs "through the visualisation of bodies as edible commodities and as sexual objects" (137). Characterizing racialized bodies and lands as objects to 'consume' (consumption of resources and labour, sexual, and visual consumption etc.) involves the naturalization of the European's access within the Western imperial imagination, which in this article is further glamorized, thus becoming part of the logics

through which the "building" of the Jolie-Pitt family becomes legible. *People*'s readers are invited to vicariously partake in Jolie and Pitt's imperialism through the article's lush descriptions, and the images of the (then pregnant) couple lounging across a desert in Nambia with Ethiopian-born Zahara placed for visual contrast between her two white parents.

This imperial logic helps lend authenticity to Jolie's star image as humanitarian and transnational mother. Within the Victorian bourgeois imagination, children are already figured within the sphere of domesticity and consumption, as discussed in the previous chapter. As with the shift of understandings of children as valuable workers to "toy-like, at least in the eyes of adults…precious objects" (Hermine Makman 119), the post-World War II cultural formation of the nuclear family already necessitated the participation of children as consumable commodities, valuable in part through their "consumptive labour" of making American families ideologically 'complete' (Eng 108). But many racialized bodies, through colonial discourses, already signify as consumable—and since the black African in particular has been conceived of, not only as being locked within a primitive state of childhood and thus in need of rearing under the care of the Western subject, but as having consumptive value within the political economy of colonization, this conceptual framework would certainly lend a kind of coherency to the image of a pregnant Jolie, Brad Pitt, and baby Zahara lying across the desert sand. The article's insistence on the family's beauty only intensifies the aspirational dimensions of Jolie's image which, given its implicitly imperial undertones, carries on new troubling dimensions. Discourses of American imperialism and global capitalism are centered upon Jolie's white maternal body; here, humanitarian impulses of global protection, and its uneasy link to Third World exploitation and consumption are made glamorous through the heavily constructed image of the upper-class celebrity.

As my analysis of Suhay's framing of Natalie Hawkins shows, not every maternal body can participate equally within the parameters of ideal white motherhood. Salma Hayek's 2009 breastfeeding controversy makes clear that this is also true in the case of celebrity transnational mothers. While on a humanitarian mission for UNICEF in Sierra Leone, Hayek was photographed by *ABC News* breastfeeding a malnourished black African baby. The media and public read this maternal act of 'saving' a malnourished African child through racialized and sexualized frames. As Spring-Serenity Duvall notes, "comments from viewers fixated on whether it was selfless, disgusting, or sexual for a Latina actress to nurse a black infant" (325). On one hand, her decision to breastfeed a child that was not her own signified a kind of selflessness that intersected with the logic of ideal motherhood and Western humanitarianism.[79] However, there was also a larger cultural attempt to empty out this humanitarianism of its bourgeois white feminine dimensions. As a Latina woman and colonial Other, Salma Hayek performed a transgressive act, defying the white boundaries of femininity by nourishing another racialized Other with her own brown body—a body which, under white ideological frameworks, can only be used for white consumption. However, the subsequent "sexualisation of her breastfeeding by Western journalists and commenters…serve[d] to reclaim her breasts from the African infant and diminish the transgressiveness of her behavior" (333). This sexualization, of course, speaks to historical framings of "women of color as sexually wild and uncivilized

[79] And yet, these representational logics needed the presence of a black African baby to be mobilized, invoking the visual trope of rescue that Briggs discusses. Oprah's humanitarian efforts towards impoverished girls in South Africa also speaks to the ways in which African children work representationally to enable racialized women to perform white humanitarian motherhood. In an interview about the Oprah Winfrey Leadership Academy for Girls, Oprah frames herself as a mother towards the students (Winfrey qtd in Chang and Effron n.pag). At the same time, she also has been vocal about her frustrations towards the black American students she's helped. According to Oprah, such inner-city students only want "iPod[s] or some sneakers" as opposed to black South African children who "ask for uniforms so they can go to school" (Winfrey qtd in Kelley 364). This example clearly shows the capital of specifically African children and their special ability to shore up humanitarian ideals, as I have discussed in Chapter 1 and will return to again in Chapter 4 when I analyze the transnational adoption story of an Ethiopian adoptee.

beings" (Asencio 1).[80] In contrast to the framing of Jolie's white maternal body, the non-whiteness of Hayek's body barred her from fully inhabiting the ideals of global white motherhood.

The racial anxieties surrounding Hayek's breastfeeding of the African baby also extends to a fear of racial mixing. Some spectators "reacted with racist comments about the abhorrence of seeing a light-skinned woman nurse a black baby" (Duvall 332). Relevant, here, are the operations of colorism and anti-blackness in white and racialized communities that culturally position lighter-skinned bodies above darker-skinned bodies (hooks 1992; Collins 2000). This racial anger adds another dimension to my earlier assertion about the differences between celebrated Olympic motherhood and the transnational celebrity motherhood—namely, that a celebrity mother's adoption of foreign children does the work in shoring up western humanitarian ideals. To examine the implications of the racial anxieties surrounding Hayek's breastfeeding, I return to the image of the Jolie-Pitt transnational family in *People* magazine.

The magazine's positioning of Zahara as part of Jolie-Pitt's "combined gene pool" calls up the colonial anxieties I have referenced in the previous chapter: the potential of racialized bodies to 'infect' and transform the white body of the colonizer. In post-Reconstruction America, white anxieties surrounding shifts in economic, social, and legal power manifested as attempts to stop sexual relationships from forming between white women and black men. As Shawn Michelle Smith writes, "fury over interracial sex…resonated with eugenicists' warnings about the dangers of miscegenation, which they claimed always corrupted the superior (Anglo-Saxon) racial 'stock'" (78). Given this, we can reconsider the Cold War logic of children conferring upon middle-class, white mothers a kind of wholeness as complete citizens of America, thus

[80] For a more in-depth discussion of the sexualization of Latina bodies, see, for example, Marysol Asencio's *Latina/o Sexualities: Probing Powers, Passions, Practices and Policies*.

enabling these mothers to act as safeguards to the white imperial ideological meaning of the nation. The white maternal body must protect the exceptionalness of whiteness and shore up the racial boundaries of the nation. The anxiety surrounding Hayek's breastfeeding calls up discourses of the leakiness of female bodies due to their production of various gendered bodily fluids (Paster 44). However, Jolie is not known to have breastfed her adopted children; in fact, she has only been photographed breastfeeding her white children, as most famously depicted on the November 2008 cover of *W* magazine (Duvall 334). This is a different kind of motherhood than the type she displays in the *People* spread. The picking up of black children for adoption shores up white humanitarian ideals in a way that reifies the ideological cohesiveness of her white maternal body. Colonial representational logics help concretize racialized boundaries between white adoptive parent and black adopted child. Jolie's surrogate motherhood thus does not compromise the wholeness of her white body.

This dominant discursive paradigm surrounding Jolie's motherhood persists even in spite of the ways in which Jolie's white maternal body has changed over the years since transitioning into her role as a celebrated transnational mother. And indeed, as I argue here, these changes have only reified her positioning. I am referring in this instance to Jolie's double mastectomy, a procedure she underwent in 2013 as a preventive measure against breast and ovarian cancer. As Robert A. Aronowitz explains in *Unnatural History: Breast Cancer and American Society*, cancer of this kind, already articulated through the rubrics of fear, is also caught up in the politics of shame, particularly because of what it means for the gendered body. In particular, the fear of breast cancer, not simply of death, but of a loss of femininity and sexuality is legible in a society that sexualizes breasts, constructing them as signifiers for the hegemonic sexual and reproductive duties of womanhood (19). Ovarian cancer would work similarly considering the biological and

symbolic significance of the ovaries, which Jolie also removed as a preventative measure later on. Yet in response to her announcement to the public, which she staged as an opinion article in *The New York Times*, major publications have framed Jolie's mastectomy, not as a source of shame, but as an act of heroism. Just as Brad Pitt heralded his wife's decision as "absolutely heroic," CNN wrote of how the actress, through her opinion editorial "has bravely helped inform women with a history of breast cancer in their families about the need to seek out testing and counselling" even at the risk of public scrutiny and possible shame ("Brad Pitt Calls" n.pag; Caplan n.pag). Once again her privilege as a rich white celebrity—the privilege to be able to pay for a surgical procedure as a result of testing positive for a genetic mutation that may or may not eventually lead to cancer down the line—is not explicitly questioned in such publications, but it certainly forms part of the framing of her body, her agency, and her motherhood. Whereas her self-mutilation in the 90s, performed to express her romantic love for her former husband, was read as a sign of her self-serving, non-normative, out-of-control femininity, the surgical 'mutilation' of her body is tied to more rational, altruistic logics, performed for 'higher' aims of protecting herself, her family, and potentially other women at risk of breast cancer (though presumably only those wealthy enough to contemplate a double mastectomy for preventative reasons). Once again, these publications seem to emphasize Jolie's transnational, white, maternal body, her social and political role as mother and saviour not just for those in need abroad, but those in need at home (for example, those women who may, as *CNN* argues, benefit from her mastectomy announcement). Her self-disclosure is read as a humanitarian act aimed at saving lives, and this only further emphasizes that despite the removal of her breasts, Jolie's transition into transnational humanitarian motherhood "marked a signal transformation in her self-staging; it shaped and converged with her humanitarianism, and re-framed both her activism and her

sexuality" (McHugh 10).[81] Indeed, dominant publications and Jolie's own accounts either reinforce "Jolie's humanitarianism as care work" or frame "her turn to single motherhood as a signal displacement of her previously touted sexuality" (10). In doing so, however, her agency, once aimed in service of challenging dominant norms of femininity, dissolves into the familial realm of self-sacrificing maternity and out into networks of global imperial responsibility, ultimately satisfying frameworks that articulate the (white, heteronormative) female body as the safeguard of American citizenship and empire.[82]

Jolie then represents a compelling example through which we can tease apart the ideological work of contemporary humanitarian transnational motherhood. The historical sociopolitical contexts that write the figure of the transnational mother make the figure legible to a contemporary mass culture in ways that inevitably and unmistakeably map onto acts of adoption. Indeed, the kinship relations resulting from transnational adoption should not be understood outside these frameworks of Western imperialism, global capitalism, and patriarchal anxiety derived and adapted since the colonial era. It is integral, thus, that we understand how these connections frame dominant frameworks of the bond between adopted children and adoptive parents; however, equally important to the transnational family are those bodies that ghost the frame: the birth mothers whose bodies act as the provider of the children made available for exchange within the global market of adoption. In the case of Angelina Jolie's

[81] Recall that her black and white photoshoot with Mario Testino, in which he praises her ability to 'do it all' as a mother, wife, actress, humanitarian etc. was taken after her mastectomy. Indeed the framing of her picture in conjunction with the praise seems to suggest that her mastectomy has only reified her self-sacrificing, gold medal motherhood.

[82] As I have mentioned, on September 19, 2016, Jolie filed for divorce from Brad Pitt, sending the media into a frenzy. However, despite some questioning Jolie's motives, most of the scrutiny has fallen on Pitt's fatherhood and whether or not he abused his biological and adopted children (McNiece 2016). The accusations call to mind the potential vulnerability of adopted children in adoptive white households, which have historically been constructed as a better environment for such children. However, it also shows the power of Jolie's global, white humanitarian motherhood that has not nearly been as scrutinized in the media as Pitt's fatherhood following the announcement of their divorce.

adoption of Zahara from Ethiopia, we can consider Zahara's biological mother, Mentwabe Dawit, who in 2007 told the Associated Press that she conceived Zahara after being viciously raped in the southern town of Awasa. "He pulled a dagger, put one hand on my mouth, so that I could not scream. He then raped me and disappeared," she recounts in tears (Dawit qtd in Tadesse 2007). Her story has not been nearly as widely and globally circulated as the narrative of Jolie's transnational motherhood. The trajectory of the two mothers, adoptive mother Jolie and biological mother Dawit, indeed differs wildly, and yet we must read them as part of the same neoliberal economy. The sexual violence exacted upon Dawit's black maternal body and the global capitalist violence that made her unable to provide for her child provided the means through which an economically privileged white celebrity could perform her celebrated, white global motherhood. Unlike Jolie who proudly showed her biological and adoptive motherhood on the cover of magazines, Dawit hid her pregnancy for as long as possible because she "feared the consequences of being raped in a community where rape is considered a taboo" (Dawit qtd in Tadesse 2007). It becomes clear through the differences in their maternal experiences that the classed and racialized African mother who may give up her child for adoption is burdened by local and international structures of power that hinder her ability to partake in the transnationalized ideal of white American motherhood.

Furthermore, while Dawit's marginalization makes clear the violent exclusions produced through the mobilization of this ideal, these exclusions powerfully serve the affective economy of white motherhood that drives legal and illegal transnational adoption. In laying out the cultural dimensions of the transnationally consumed American economy of motherhood, I have thus set the stage for the next chapter, in which I place the figure of the African birth mother back into the frame for what it can tell us about the contours of transnational kinship within

larger, uneven global economies. As we will see through a close reading of vulnerable Nigerian birth mothers subjected to various forms of material and ideological violence, the conception of 'failed' and 'dangerous' motherhood takes on new meanings in the African postcolony.

Chapter 3: Nigeria, Surrogacy, and the Mothers of Men

> When I wan sleep my mother go pet me
> She go lie me well-well for bed
> She go cover me cloth say make you sleep
> Sleep sleep my pikin o
>
> When I dey hungry my mom go run up and down
> She dey find me something we I go chop
> Sweet mother e. Sweet mother o e.
>
> When I dey sick my mother go cry cry cry
> She go say instead wey I go die make she die
> She go beg God, God help me, God help me, my pikin o
>
> — "Sweet Mother," a popular Nigerian song by Prince Nico Mbarga

The first and second chapters focused on the larger narratives that form the ideological parameters of the transnational family. Victorian discourses of family, childhood, and motherhood shore up white, hetero-patriarchal capitalist intentions that ultimately inflect the humanitarian undertones of transnational adoption. It is important to consider these structures of power, then, because of how they ultimately play a part in shaping the relationality between adopted child and adoptive parents locally, and sending and receiving nations globally. In the next chapter, I will consider the ways in which these relations can be differentially experienced by the parents and the children. However, in this chapter, I look at how the relationality between adoptive parents and adopted children—or perhaps more specifically in this analysis, conceptions of the relationality between parents and children are mediated by structures of power that ultimately create economies of affect, the cultural coherence of which necessitates and creates the conditions for the erasure of bodies who do not fit within the frame. I am speaking of those birth mothers whose existence within the frame of the transnational family, with their affective and biological attachments to the children given up for adoption, in many ways threaten its hegemonic investments. As I argue in this chapter, these economies take on added significance when brought into the context of the adoption of black African children.

I frame my understanding of affect with the work generated since the "affective turn" of the mid-eighties, as Patricia Clough refers to it, which saw an increased theoretical interest in how emotions and subjectivity frame relationality (Clough 2). Brian Massumi, for example, thinks of the way in which affect springs from and acts upon the body to unfold various experiential contexts. Affect, in a sense, is the body's ability to both affect and be affected by stimuli; in responding to the stimuli of everyday contexts, the body registers the intensity of the response and readies the body to act accordingly. "Intensity is asocial, but not presocial," Massumi asserts, suggesting that the social elements involved in producing and registering intensity are infolded in the brain and flesh as contexts "that are nothing if not situated" (30). Important is the notion that through intensity individuals gain a sense of their relationship to the contexts and individuals around them. In other words, affect helps to shape the relationships between bodies and environments.

As Lauren Berlant writes in the introduction to *Intimacy*, affect is "more than that which takes place within the purview of institutions, the state, and an ideal of publicness" (4). However, as Sara Ahmed reminds us, we cannot forget that the relationality of bodies ultimately involves strategies of exclusion just as it creates structures of belonging. In "Affective Economies," Ahmed writes, "emotions work to align some subjects with others and against other others" (117). That is to say that collectives are formed in part through negative affective attachments to figures who do not 'fit,' figures whose expulsion from communities and kinships defines the boundaries of belonging (118-119). Negative attachment does not necessarily correlate to the emotion of hate, and particularly in the case of the birth mother, we could think of this figure within the affective economy as a body oriented within spaces of belonging in ways that construct them as Others that exist outside of the spaces of normative kinship; and yet their

exclusion only in turn constitute those very spaces. In *Strange Encounters*, Ahmed speaks of the figure of the stranger in a phenomenological sense, as a body out of space. Taking the example of the migrant as being considered a stranger in the regions she travels to, Ahmed warns us that we cannot "overlook and forget the very relationships of social antagonism that produce the stranger as a figure in the first place" (79). Her argument thus concerns "how 'the stranger' comes into being through the marking out of inhabitable spaces, bodies and terrains of knowledge. To talk of the migrant as the stranger is not sufficient," she asserts. "It cannot deal with the complexities of the histories, not only of the displacement of peoples, but the demarcation of places and spaces of belonging" (79). Though Ahmed speaks of the migrant travelling across geographic borders only to become figured as a stranger within her new surroundings, in the case of transnational adoption, we must consider humanitarian transnational economies of affect, particularly economies which shore up ideal white Western motherhood, with its imperial dimensions. Such economies potentially transform the birth mother into a stranger that must be figured as socially and affectively outside—in other words, a body out of place.

To begin to tease out the contours of this relationship, I return again to the example of Angelina Jolie's humanitarian transnational motherhood. Angelina Jolie's acceptance speech upon receiving the Jean Hersholt Humanitarian Award in 2013 is interesting for the way in which it exposes Jolie's strategies for framing herself in relation to those refugees and starving mothers who make up the pool of potential birth mothers whose reproductive labour produces the children who can consequently become free for circulation through adoption (and other) markets. Though she thanked her family, she focused her discussion on her own mother, Marcheline Bertrand, who died of cancer in 2007. "She wasn't really the best critic since she

never had anything unkind to say," said Jolie, "but she did give me love and confidence. Above all she was very clear that nothing would mean anything if I didn't live a life of use to others. And I didn't know what that meant for a long time." Here, Jolie depicts her mother within the cultural formation of motherhood: an always kind, always patient nurturer capable of properly rearing even a 'wild child' like Jolie. She continues: "It was only when I began to travel and look and live beyond my home that I understood my responsibility to others" (Rosen n.pag). In addressing what she perceives as her responsibility as a rich, white Western woman to those women in developing lands, she draws upon the rhetoric of universality to emphasize her likeness to these women, but she avoids discussing the planetary relations that may contribute to the differences in their living conditions by keeping her discussion of the women she wishes to help firmly within the narrative context of motherhood and rearing:

> I have never understood why people are lucky enough to be born with the chances I had and why across the world there is a woman just like me with the same abilities, same desires, same work ethics and love for her family…only she sits in a refugee camp and she has no voice. She worries about what her children will eat, how to keep them safe…I don't know why this is my life and not hers, but I will do as my mother asked me to do…and be of use to others. ("UNHCR Special Envoy" n.pag)

We could take this as willful ignorance, or perhaps a refusal to acknowledge her role in sociopolitical, historical, and economic systems of exploitation that has allowed her to live a much different life than a refugee mother in Ethiopia. What is important, though, is that in this section of her speech, she fills these absences with the affective investments shored up in conceptions of motherhood. In her narrative there are three mothers: Jolie's mother whose loving rearing enabled Jolie to develop into a citizen of the world and a global symbol of American liberal democracy, those mothers "with no voice" unable to care for their own children while suffering through their conditions, and Jolie herself, a mother of several children, and ready, perhaps, to take on an almost mothering role to those mothers and children in ravaged countries

in need of saving. Along these lines we can return to Briggs' analysis of the Madonna-waif image that became a standard trope in UNICEF's humanitarian efforts. Recalling Chapter 2, the effectiveness of the Madonna-waif trope in securing donations from suburban middle-class families for the developing world can be attributed to its bringing together of the emerging ideologies defining the nation during and after World War II: American interventionism and the nuclear family of late-capitalism (Briggs 182-8). The cultural formulation of motherhood and the language of liberal democracy that proposed it as universal became the rallying point behind calls for urgent humanitarian aid: to help the mothers who cannot help their children the way they *should* be able to.

Here we see the intersections of humanitarian affect "epistemologically and historically encumbered, as it is, in ideologies of national sovereignty" work through equally implicated affective notions of nurturing in service of "the workings of global capital through the production and management of structures of affect designed to give 'a human face to globalization' and to export the moralist 'normativity' of human rights" (Härting 62). The sense of humanitarian urgency also often extends to transnational adoption, such as when the United States and other developed countries, in the wake of the 2010 Haiti Earthquake, stressed the role of adoption in humanitarian relief efforts and urged Haiti to apply the Hague Convention in order to quicken the process of inter-country adoption (Spence 23). The notion that expediency is not only expected, but should be demanded by the state's political body when it concerns vulnerable children makes clear David Eng's assertion that transnational adoption remains "one of the most privileged forms of diaspora and immigration in the late twentieth century" (1). At the same time, it also exposes the ways in which humanitarian affect "is predicated on the belief in the autonomy of affect: the common-sense assumption that affect or emotion is somehow immanent

to the human subject," thus veiling its own construction "by the history and politics of race and imperial modernity" (Härting 63). The relationship between adoptive parents and adopted child, between sending and receiving nations, and between birth and adopted mothers, becomes dehistoricized and depoliticized. Humanitarianism's implication in systems of exploitation and its inextricable link to the colonial expectations of ready access to racialized children are erased, as are the existence of the shadow economies made possible through the production of affect that privileges the link between the adopted child and her new home.[83] Necessary to this affective frame of kinship is the logic of the birth mother's "incompleteness" (Briggs 185). Thus in this chapter, I explore the contours of the relationship between adoptive and birth mothers in an American and African context: the consequences of an affective paradigm that renders the birth mother a 'stranger' out of space and out of sight, and the models of kinship that are shut down in service to the coherency of normative structures. Though I move from national to transnational contexts, I will analyze specifically the case of Nigerian Baby Factories within the context of surrogacy, African domestic and transnational adoption, and human trafficking. In doing so, I will reveal how discourses of transnational adoption, with their preoccupation with the seemingly smooth link between humanitarianism and ideal motherhood, set the stage for the erasure of birth mothers, who, marginalized by class and race, are unable to fully participate in the ideal motherhood that adoptive mothers can purchase. Indeed, that the birth mother's reproductive services can be purchased itself exposes the connection that must be made between the economy of affect shored up in the performance of northern white Western motherhood and economies of human trafficking that ghost the neoliberal global economy.

[83] Indeed, the frequency of adoptions during the Haiti Earthquake crisis sparked alarm from international organizations concerned that the widespread reliance upon adoption as a tool of rescue would lead to the exploitation and exacerbation of Haiti's already pre-existing issues with human trafficking (Selman 42-3).

Surrogacy: A Preface

For the first part of my analysis, I will locate questions of the affective boundaries of motherhood and its consequences to birth mothers within the parameters of surrogacy, the process of carrying the fertilized egg of another woman in order to give birth to the child in her stead, before segueing into a treatment of the topic as it relates to transnational adoption. I use surrogacy in this chapter to frame my analysis of the potential erasure of birth mothers within the neoliberal global economy in order to draw attention to the economy of feelings at work in shoring up ideal (white, middle-class) motherhood. By placing the affective notion of nurturing at the center of the mother-child dyad, this ideal's privileging of affective motherhood reveals the anxieties surrounding transnational adoption. How can ideal motherhood, which mobilizes the characterization of women as the (biological and ideological) reproducers of the nation within the nuclear kinship model, maintain itself in the case of transnational adoption in which the biological and affective processes of motherhood are split into multiple maternal bodies? Indeed, the parallel examples of surrogacy and adoption reveal that the functions culturally tied to motherhood—the biological and affective acts of fertilizing an egg, incubating a zygote, birthing a child, and raising that child into a citizen—can be carried out by different bodies. This not only exposes the constructed-ness of 'motherhood,' but also opens up the possibility of alternative kinship models. However, the privileging of affective motherhood in spite of these considerations makes possible an economy of feelings that enables certain individuals—especially those privileged by race and class—to enact their designated role within normative kinship logics. This enactment comes at a cost. By linking surrogacy to humanitarian transnational adoption, and both to a history of the (ab)uses of the female bodies underprivileged

by race and class, I will show how the economy of feelings feeding privileged women's ability to enact emotional motherhood also helps to relegate underprivileged birth mothers to abject status.

The case of surrogacy in fact very succinctly brings together discourses of reproduction and personhood inscribed upon the female body while revealing the murky terrain of commodification within which the female body and the circulated child are situated. As Karen Balcom notes in *The Traffic in Babies*, debates on adoption in the twentieth century have long been entwined with concerns over bringing children into the sphere of consumerism. I have argued in the first chapter that the post-nineteenth-century figure of the Child is always already bound up in modern discourses of late-capitalism. But, as Balcom notes, although "selling children for adoption is a troubling affront to the twentieth-century vision of the sentimental, sacred, and 'priceless' child," part of the conservative moral panic surrounding the 'pricing' of the child—which itself challenges the discursive structures that have held the child as 'priceless' to begin with—is that it has never been quite clear what constitutes the 'selling' of children (167). "But what constitutes the sale of a baby?" Balcom asks. "When do legal fees, medical fees, or fees to cover the expense of caring for an unwed mother become a purchase price? What laws, if any, are broken when black markets sell children and adoptive parents buy them? Defining the crime in baby-selling was, and remains, very difficult" (167).

The specific issue of surrogacy muddies the waters of morality and criminality further as it relates to the bodies of 'mothers,' which makes it a useful point of analysis. Although the legislation of some Western countries distinguishes between 'altruistic surrogacy' and 'commercial surrogacy,' only approving the former,[84] and although surrogacy has historically been constructed as altruistic (Laflen 2010; Markens 2007), even in the modern era, the powerful

[84] Denmark, for example, outright bans commercial surrogacy and stipulates that no money or contract must be involved in the process of surrogacy or adoption (Kroløkke and Pant 234).

ideological categories of 'natural,' biological motherhood, 'good' motherhood versus 'bad' motherhood have complicated what is considered altruistic and commercial baby-giving. Danish legislation, for example, stipulates that only those women who "achieve pregnancy 'naturally'" and without monetary compensation or contract can become a surrogate (Kroløkke and Pant 234). This demonstrates a clear attempt to regulate the reproductive technologies made available to childless parents and keep categories of the natural (biological, moral) sphere and the commercial sphere separate when it concerns the circulation of children.

The act of surrogacy seems to explicitly cast the mothers involved in doubt, placing them under conservative suspicion. Angela Laflen, in her essay "(Re)Conceiving the Surrogate," references the 1985 American legal case between surrogate mother Mary Beth Whitehead Gould and married couple William and Elizabeth Stern, dubbed the *In re Baby M* case. This case, as she estimates, brought the issue of surrogacy, baby-selling, and motherhood into the realm of the American public sphere, framing it through patriarchal narratives of suspicion. Whitehead Gould entered into a contract with the Sterns whereby upon being artificially inseminated with William Stern's sperm, she would bear a child for the married couple, who would act as the legal parents according to the contract. As the contract further stipulated, after giving birth, she was to sever any and all maternal right to the child by any means necessary in order to facilitate the Sterns' adoption of the baby. However, she later recanted and decided to keep the child for herself. Conservative discourses of the biopolitical function of the female body propelled the "media circus of women bashing," as Laflen calls it, that demonized both Whitehead Gould and Stern, while leaving William Stern unscathed (191). As Foucault states, the discursive transformation of women's bodies into an institutional object of knowledge and power, a process which he calls the "hystericization of women's bodies," cast women's bodies into a sphere of medical practice

and pathology in which the flesh "was placed in organic communication with the social body (whose regulated fecundity it was supposed to ensure), the family space (of which it had to be a substantial and functional element), and the life of children (which it produced and had to guarantee, by virtue of a biologico-moral responsibility lasting through the entire period of the children's education)" (104). In the production of this female body as subject, one of the "refuse" identities, to use Butler's terms (2009), cast off and delineated into the realm of monstrosity and pathology was the "hysterical woman," a knowledge-object through which society could conceive of the terms of sex and its relationship to bodies (Foucault 105). The two mothers at the heart of the Baby M case were certainly narrativized along these lines, Whitehead Gould for being a woman with unstable finances who would be willing to give away her child for profit and Stern for seemingly forsaking her 'natural duty' to become a mother in favor of her profession (Laflen 191). This public malice was no doubt buoyed by neoliberal discourses of personal responsibility as both women became, for different reasons, irresponsible mothers. However, despite the prevailing public discourse, in 1988, the New Jersey Supreme Court decided not to enforce the surrogacy contract. Not only did they rule that the government could not legally (and perhaps morally) force a mother to give up her own child, but, invoking the logic of 'natural' motherhood, also decried the monetary contract as "illegal, perhaps criminal, and potentially degrading to women" (qtd. in Haberman n.pag).

The moral outrage simmering beneath the ruling, in placing the element of capital exchange in line with criminality and the degradation of women (or, rather, the degradation of the perceived role of women as mothers) echoes Balcom with respect to the messy boundaries between adoption and the baby market, baby-gifting, and baby-selling, particularly where the perceived biological and affective dimensions of motherhood are involved. Given the powerful

ideological pressures that frame women as 'complete' upon having a child, and families as 'whole' upon mimicking the nuclear structure, we cannot understand the Stern's desire to have a baby and Whitehead Gould's initial willingness to give them the child even through contract wholly within the realm of commodification. True to Balcom's assertion, moral and biological discourses of motherhood and the 'pricelessness' of the child are not sufficient to create iron-clad universal legal structures governing surrogacy; laws regarding surrogacy can indeed vary from country to country, especially as they pertain to international surrogacy in which the child is expected to cross borders into different jurisdictions. However, the restriction, or even banning of surrogacy by stricter Western countries has pushed many couples to turn to surrogacy (international in particular) brokers advertising their services on the internet (192). As with the humanitarian calls for Haiti to expedite their adoption processes during the Earthquake crisis, the sense of urgency and necessity mediated through forms of affect (and internalized social fear) encourages and discourages theorizing the relationship between birth mother and adoptive mother as one-sided economic exploitation.

As such, the relationship between birth mother and adoptive mother cannot be so easily understood within the rubrics of economics. However, particularly with regards to transnational surrogacy and adoption, which brings the pregnant African body into the frame as the focal point of intersections of postcolonial and global capitalist vectors of economic, racial, and gendered power, we must consider this relationship as still intrinsically tied to material capitalist processes and neoliberal discursive formations as they work to shift and reshape the meaning of the surrogate body as an object of knowledge. Thinking through the significance of the pregnant female body within the discursive terrain framing birth and adoption in the modern era will expose not only the psychic dilemma of the adoptive mother generated through the machinery of

adoption and surrogacy, but also the resultant negations that work, at least in theory, to fortify affective boundaries.

Despite its expressed distrust of the placing of the child within the realm of economic exchange, the ruling of the "Baby M" case suggests that the signification of the pregnant female body is invariably tied as much to neoliberal ideology as to the conservative ideologies circulating in the late twentieth century. Indeed, the proliferation of birthing technologies over the past few decades has only intensified their privileged position in framing and delineating the role of the pregnant body in an era of global capitalism and modern citizenship. In order to explore this further, I turn now to a personal testimony of the process of surrogacy brought into the public sphere through national media. In 2008, Alex Kuczynski, a reporter and columnist for *The New York Times* wrote an article for the news source entitled "Her Body, My Baby." In the piece, she shares her experience with using a surrogate to become a mother in 2007 after struggling with infertility. My focus, for now, will be intra-national surrogacy within America; by focusing on Kuczynski's story, I hope to tease out how the pregnant body both creates and threatens the affective dimensions of motherhood before discussing the ways in which international surrogacy builds upon and complicates the discursive terrain.

Body of the Surrogate: Nightmare and Necessity

Kuczynski's article for *The New York Times* seems rife with the kind of psychic anxiety and resultant disavowals that accompany conservative, biopolitical policing of motherhood. As she grapples with the commodification and legality of surrogacy, as she recounts her excitement, confusion, shame, and as she expresses her fear of the outcome, the article itself seems to manifest as a psychic battle between notions of real motherhood and fake motherhood, a

semantic minefield through which the author is constantly negotiating as she pleads her 'case' to the reader. That Kuczynski internalizes the contemporary discourse of motherhood becomes clear as she mobilizes its affective logics to explain her desire to become a mother. She describes her desire to have a child as having "always" been "rooted" in her. Of course, the notion of 'rootedness' situates affect and desire in the realm of the body and flesh, mystifying their connection to social and historical formations. However, it is also important to point out that she seamlessly connects this sense of maternal desire as being 'rooted' in flesh to her socioeconomic upbringing within the domestic space. "The desire to be a mother," she writes, "to give birth to a child, to care for that child…has always been rooted in me. I never doubted my ability to be a good mother. I had a charmed, happy childhood; I have a warm, loving, funny mother." As I've discussed in previous chapters, the nuclear family acts as a privileged kinship model within discourses of capitalist modernity, delineating the limits of 'normal' citizenship. As Foucault argues in *The History of Sexuality*, limits of normal citizenship include the affective and sexual relationships that form between individuals. Foucault specifically roots the social formation of affect and sexuality in the public sphere, heavily policed between individuals, within the nuclear family as a unit under surveillance within the polity. "[S]ince the eighteenth century," he writes, "the family has become an obligatory locus of affects, feelings, love…sexuality has its privileged point of development in the family….for this reason sexuality is 'incestuous' from the start" (108-9). The affective dimensions of the family, then, came to be figured as the basis for the relationships between individuals. If it was a "guarantee that one would find the parents-child relationship at the root of everyone's sexuality," then these relationships come to figure the proper channels of desire, affect, and sexuality, which create the family (and thus sexuality) as an object that is subject to and constituted through disciplinary apparatuses – legal, medical, and

social (113). That is to say that the family becomes a space of "law and the juridical dimension in the deployment of sexuality…the economy of pleasure and the intensity of sensations" (108). If the family home becomes a space where affect 'begins,' then in centering her upbringing, Kuczynski is essentially framing herself as the proper recipient of the family's ideological labour. Through this framework, Kuczynski becomes the product of the labour of the "Object Mother" (113), developed to proper completion as a citizen through rearing by a mother she describes as 'warm,' 'loving' and 'funny'—the opposite, perhaps, of Foucault's nightmare figure, the "hysterical woman" (105). Kuczynski's "charmed" childhood not only points towards the nurturing abilities of her own mother, but also suggests that she grew up with a level of comfort at home. While one cannot discern the economic privilege of her household through just these words, the overall picture she paints in her account is one that ties maternal love to a comfortable home, and a comfortable home to the proper nurturing of a child and, consequently, the normative reproduction of a citizen.

Through setting up her story in such a way, Kuczynski frames herself as affectively ready for motherhood; indeed, she is someone who would be figured within a hetero-patriarchal, capitalist discursive framework to 'deserve' motherhood and who should, 'by all rights' be a mother. She corroborates the post-Cold War imperative of the nuclear family when she admits, "I did not think of raising a child as a goal in itself. I saw motherhood as a natural outgrowth of a loving relationship. If I never met the man, I would skip the child." (Kuczynski n.pag). This is perhaps an attempt to pre-emptively stave off the kind of criticism that comes packaged with adoption and surrogacy: the notion of greed and commercialism—a 'fake' mother who greedily desired to become a 'real' mother and did so by taking a child. Taking this into account, however, only emphasizes the author's psychic attempts to affirm the validity of her motherhood

through the narrative she constructs. Not only did she come from a 'good' family, but she also came from a 'good' home, the terms of which have already been set by bourgeois Victorian discourses.

As such, she presents herself as being ready to create a 'good home' of her own after marriage. What stops her, then, is not her desire or affective development, but her biological development – her body. She writes, "[h]appily married at 34, I hoped that becoming pregnant wouldn't be too difficult. My husband — 54 — was older, but his sperm had a track record: he already had children from previous marriages. By the time I turned 35, nothing had happened." Throughout the article, Kuczynski singles out her body as the only barrier to her transition into 'natural' (with all its social, economic, and biological undercurrents) motherhood. Referring to her previous failed attempts at in-vitro fertilization as "the battle for [her] fertility," she highlights her difficulty in conceiving as she details the medical process of the removal of her eggs, the inspection of her ovaries, and the preparation of her uterus. She explains, as if to a jury, the reason behind her inability to participate in 'proper' motherhood; and tellingly, as she describes her failure to conceive through in-vitro fertilization, her closest attempt culminating in a miscarriage, she refuses to locate the problem within her embryos or the miscarried fetus: "Knowing that there were no genetic defects [in the fetus] — reassuring, in at least a scientific way—also made me realize something else: The baby, the fetus, wasn't the failure. I was the failure." In referring to herself as a 'failure,' she casts herself as a kind of pathological Other to her own mother. It is only the biological functioning of her body, she asserts, that keeps her frozen in a kind of discursive limbo with one foot over the boundary that demarcates 'ideal' motherhood.

What this self-admonition makes clear is the way in which her attempts to negotiate her identification as a mother necessitates a splitting characterized by the separation and paradoxical (non)negation of her body. I borrow the term 'splitting' from Francis Barker whose historicist argument follows Hegelian and Foucauldian frameworks of subjection under regimes of power. As he writes in the *Tremulous Private Body: Essays on Subjection*, although the bourgeois citizen-subject is considered a private, free, and autonomous body, "the subject becomes self-censoring. The I that writes deletes *from its own text* the body of the unacceptable, or allots it to a marginal or parenthetical status (of which the supervening I is, as they say 'unconscious') but from which it none the less threatens to return" (54). Here, the body of the unacceptable is Kuczynski's own 'failed' body.

Her choice to identify herself as a failure by tying the word to the subject 'I' may seem to point towards a location of pathology within both the self and the body as one. However, the very fact that her writing subjugates her body from her 'self,' particularly through repetitive descriptions of her body (and particularly her womb) as 'unreliable,' suggests that the failed 'I' of her confession is constituted on one hand by abject flesh, and, on the other hand, by that which the body affects: the ashamed self. Indeed, Kuczynski tackles the topic of shame. And yet, while she laments the ways in which those women who turn to science in order to conceive are subjected to shame and pushed into "self-enforced secrecy" and anonymity as if hiding from disciplinary social structures, she does not link these structures to the production of her own desires, as exemplified by the ambiguous phrase: "A low whistle: Boy, you must really want a child. You must really want a child. As if that were a bad thing."

Her attempt in the text to negotiate her identity within the logics of motherhood under the repressive apparatus of shame involves other-ing her body. As Sara Ahmed writes in "Shame

Before Others," shame is an intensely physical experience acting upon the self. It is "a self-feeling that is felt by and on the body....When shamed, one's body seems to burn up with the negation that is perceived (self-negation); and shame impresses upon the skin, as an intense feeling of the subject 'being against itself' (103). Kuczynski's other-ing of her own body through the politics of shame results in a splitting of not only her subjectivity, desire, and affect from her flesh (echoing, perhaps, the Christian idiom 'the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak'), but also her own material flesh from that of her embryos and miscarried fetus, spurring her decision to embrace surrogacy.

Certainly, the fetus occupies a privileged position within the text as the sought after figure. Kuczynski opens the article by enthusiastically describing her son, thirty-one weeks into gestation within the surrogate, to the readers. "At 31 weeks," she writes, "my baby was kicking and stretching. On the sonogram screen, I could see that he was doing his customary sit-ups. The monitor broadcast the slushy sound of his heartbeat." The affective language that re-characterizes the fetus as "my baby" lines up discursively with the various techniques she uses to present the fetus as an autonomous individual. Disembodying the fetus from the flesh of the womb, the text reifies the fetus, focusing the readers' attention on the fetus as a free-existing individual.[85] The image of the fetus doing sit ups on the monitor most assuredly calls up images

[85] Lauren Berlant writes on the changing relationship between the reproductive female body and the fetus within the "cultural logics of American personhood" that constructs citizenship as a "kind of iconic superpersonhood, of which the fetus is the most perfect unbroken example" (87). She argues that the contemporary pro-life movement operates by placing the fetus into frameworks of citizenship as a vulnerable body in need of protection by the state. Appropriating the logic of identity politics, but within a neoliberal, global capitalist rubric concerned with the inclusion of individuals of disparate social groups into the nation-state as citizens of global modernity, fetuses are reconfigured as vulnerable bodies owed the rights that should be guaranteed by their proper inclusion into society. That the fetus is a citizen that always-already belongs to the nation-state is taken for granted. As Berlant writes, by channeling discourses of marginalization through the "nationalistic rhetoric of the Reaganite right, the pro-life movement has composed a magical and horrifying spectacle of amazing vulnerability: the unprotected person, the citizen without a country or a future, the fetus unjustly imprisoned in its mother's hostile gulag" (97).

of Foucault's healthy modern bodies, training themselves through self-discipline for proper entrance into the society. Through personification, we are introduced, then, not to a conglomeration of developing cells, nor to an offshoot of the surrogate's womb – and indeed, the surrogate herself is only belatedly mentioned in the introductory paragraphs, only partially slipped into the narrative when Kuczynski quickly mentions "the stomach of the woman who was bearing [her] child."[86] We are introduced, instead, to Kuczynski's son: a future citizen of the nation-state. The flesh of the surrogate and adoptive mother are subordinated to the child-as-citizen.

The other-ing of Kuczynski's own flesh coincides with the prominence of not only her child as an autonomous subject, but her own affect towards the child, her desire and will to be a mother, and the psychic costs she endured throughout the series of failed inseminations, and the process of surrogacy. If 'natural' motherhood depends upon the virility of the female body as reproductive machinery, and if "the subject, which splits itself off from its body, requires that body in order to sustain its splitting activity" suggesting that "the body to be suppressed is thus marshalled in service of that suppression" (Butler, *The Psychic Life of Power* 59), then the subordination of the female body paradoxically becomes integral to the negotiation of Kuczynski's identity as a mother. More specifically, it facilitates her identification as mother by

[86] Once again this calls up the Berlant's imagery of a fetus trapped in a woman's 'gulag.' New fetal technologies emerging in the late-twentieth century have encouraged this perception by providing mass culture with images of the 'trapped' fetus and thus reifying the fetus as a distinct citizen. And yet, the reification of the fetus has resulted in the relative subordination of the flesh bearing it. "When the fetus became available to photography," Berlant explains, "making 'life' miraculous in a new way, it came to occupy a new scale of existence, often taking up an entire frame like a portrait. In the process of becoming bigger, it pushed the externally visible bodies involved in reproducing it outside of the family picture" (123). The mass proliferation of the image of the fetus, in engendering a sense of autonomy of the fetus from the reproductive body bearing it, has tipped the power differential in favor of the fetus, creating a culture, Berlant argues, in which the pregnant body becomes discursively subordinated to the fetus: "[i]n this context, the pregnant woman becomes the child to the fetus, becoming more minor and less politically represented than the fetus, which is in turn more privileged by law, paternity, and other less institutional family strategies of contemporary American culture" (85).

prioritizing her performance of affective motherhood, for which her normative, 'charmed childhood' has prepared her, according to her own narrative framing of herself as would-be mother. Her body becomes crucial in this process of formation, as does the body of the surrogate that comes to carry the burden of gestation that cannot be completed by Kuczynski's own 'failed' womb. She does spend time writing about the surrogate, Cathy Hilling, even expressing a kind of identification with her as she explains that Hilling's own identity as a "college-educated" white mother with her own nuclear family prompted Kuczynski to choose her as a surrogate. However, her narrative, in attempting to establish her own motherhood, makes sure to remind the reader that it is the surrogate's body alone that plays a role in the birth and life of her son. Multiple times, Kuczynski refers to Hilling as having a more "reliable" body and uterus, as if to mark the woman's womb as the primary point of divergence between the two mothers. The visual element of the article indeed reinforces this through its framing of the two mothers. The three photographs in the margins of the article feature both Hilling and Kuczynski, though never in the same frame. The images of Hilling show her very visibly several months pregnant with her protruding stomach the focus of the camera; in the second photo, Hilling's large stomach is exposed as she lays flat on a medical table, her body firmly interpolated into the discursive terrain of science and medicine. Roland Barthes in *Camera Lucida* mentions that the representational apparatus of the photograph transforms the subject into object, and thus, in the frame's rendering as invisible, blurs the distinction between the referent and its representation, mediating the self through "a cunning dissociation of consciousness from identity" (13). The framing of Hilling's motherhood through the materiality of her body thus constructs her in symbolic contrast to Kuczynski, who is photographed from a distance in front of her upper-

middle-class house, standing upright, healthy, able-bodied, fully clothed, and holding her baby – the iconography of white middle-class motherhood.

The imagery chosen to represent the article's narrative reinforces the tension between motherhoods underlying the text, providing a way for Kuczynski to resolve these tensions in favor of her own reification as mother. She ends her piece on exactly this note when summarizing for the reader her own understanding of the roles the two mothers share in the life of her new son. As she tells the reader, in response to her anxieties surrounding the validity of her own motherhood, called into question by the fact that her child came from another womb, her husband allayed her fears by greatly marginalizing the surrogate's role. "My husband […] took my hand. 'You gave birth to our baby,' he told me. 'The doctors went in and took our baby out of you 10 months ago.' He was casting back to the day the doctor removed my eggs." Not all processes of surrogacy or adoption involve or even necessitate the child being both of the biological parents' reproductive gametes, but this textual displacement of the surrogate from the creation and birth of Kuczynski's son speaks to the ways in which the surrogate's normatively reproducing body represents a threat to hegemonic definitions of motherhood. First, its existence complicates the very notion of the 'birth mother' as the fetus was 'created' by both Kuczynski's eggs and the nourishing environment of Hilling's body. Both have equal right to name themselves 'mothers' of the child and this risks exposing the constructed-ness of not only ideal motherhood, but also the model of family that depends upon the existence of one mother. The surrogate's body, in being able to handle the biological processes of reproduction, risks constructing the non-reproducing mother within the realm of pathology. She ends by declaring, "Our child did come from me, from us. […] He is our most vivid dream realized – the embodiment of the most blindly powerful force in the universe, brought to life the only way he

could be. With a little help." As Kuczynski relegates Hilling to the margins by almost trivializing the physical, emotional and psychological complexities of her surrogate gestational labour as "a little help,"[87] the risk that the birth mother represents is nullified through her negation.

The framing of Hilling's body complicates the already uneasy connections between altruism and commodification always underscoring discussions of surrogacy and adoption. As such it serves this chapter's larger discussion of birth mothers in a neoliberal economy. Although Kuczynski insists that Hilling embraced the altruistic dimensions of her surrogacy, being figured as ultimately a body-vessel for the child leaves Hilling's body open for commodification. Indeed, Kuczynski describes in detail the costs of surrogacy, which was mediated through a middle man. For Kuczynski, the use of a middle man downplays the commercialization inherent in the process since, as she assures the reader, "[n]o money ever change[d] hands directly between the intended parents…and the surrogate." Nevertheless, the element of transaction between the surrogate and the parents remains a prominent fixture within the text, most notably when she describes the process of choosing a potential birth-mother. As she writes, she and her husband were sent "profiles of potential surrogates […] [t]heir household incomes were not, on the profiles I saw, more than $50,000. Most asked for about $25,000 to carry a baby, more for twins, and each made different stipulations: This one would not abort if the fetus was found to have Down syndrome, another one would" (2008). The desire of a woman to have a child, an affect configured as seemingly occurring within nature, here is troubled by the neoliberal logic of consumer choice. Each surrogate comes with a price tag and different features that may or may not suit the tastes of the consumer: some will abort a developmentally disabled, 'unhealthy' child, some "were married women and single women, women in their 20s and women in their

[87] The phrasing also frames Hilling as expendable 'hired help,' which aligns her with the marginalized domestic workers I will be discussing later on in this chapter.

40s; women who would be willing to bear a child for a gay couple […] women from the Bible Belt, the Rust Belt, the Pacific Northwest and the industrial Northeast." Kuczynski, despite her maternal desperation, calculated her choices carefully, taking into account what suited her future interests.

It is important to consider that Cathy Hilling, despite being a white, middle-class, American mother, was herself subjected in many ways to those oppressive frameworks that would see her reduced to a body readily available for labour—a construction that operates in service to the formation of Kuczynski's motherhood. The commodification of Hilling's womb reveals that the economic privilege of the Kuczynskis still played an important role in their ability to contract out the labour of birthing her son to another reproductive body. Kuczynski does not give much thought in the article to the question of privilege as she chooses which mother's labour to purchase. She spends much more time explaining her desperation to conceive, her readiness to be a mother, and her desire to be a mother. However this question of class privilege will remain an important feature of this analysis as we cross over into transnational cases of adoption. What the case of surrogacy reveals is that the economy of feelings involved in achieving the ideal of white, middle-class motherhood relies upon a definition and experience of motherhood that is compromised by the existence of two maternal bodies. Motherhood anxiously shuttles between the biological acts of reproduction and the affective act of nurturing. As Kuczynski's text shows, the existence of Hilling signals her own incompleteness as a mother, and thus as a citizen of the nation state. Suppressing the significance of the body and reifying her affective connection to her child enables her ability to perform motherhood, but she needs Hilling's pregnant female body nonetheless. Hilling's body is at once buried in the text by Kucyznski's affective experience of motherhood, and objectified, not only by the article, but by

the process whereby it becomes an purchasable object for use and discard. Likewise, within the paradigm of transnational adoption that shores up white, middle-class motherhood and the nuclear family, the classed and raced birth mother can only exist insofar as she remains, paradoxically, outside. The visibility of the birth mother compromises the legibility of the transnational family within hegemonic frameworks, but her invisibility only puts out of frame the various methods through which her body may be corralled into service.

We must take seriously this relationship as we consider transnational contexts, and the global neoliberal economy in which private, middle-class citizens of the Global North can purchase the labour of economically-underprivileged, racialized birth mothers of the Global South. We must take seriously the shadow economies of human trafficking, and Härting's discussion of humanitarian affect as driving movement: of state, non-governmental, and individual actors across borders into the nation-states of Africa (63). The affective dimensions of motherhood seem to weaken the borders between territories and the border between morality and criminality. As with the case of American parents taking children from Haiti after the Earthquake through a variety of legal or illegal means regardless of whether or not the children were orphaned, Western parents with the means can choose to enter the process of transnational adoption, choose to cross borders into other countries to receive their new child driven by affect. However, especially within the context of the vastly unequal power relations characterizing transnational adoption, the permeability of borders exists only in certain circumstances and for certain people. Zygmunt Bauman, in his essay "Tourists and Vagabonds," explains that in an era of global capitalism in which economic processes have created an increasingly bifurcated polarity between those who can and cannot participate in consumer society, the ease of mobility has come to demarcate the line between the privileged and those 'failed' consumers fixed in

space. Because the desire of the tourist to consume, as well as their willingness and ability to travel, defines the tourist as a successful consumer engaging 'properly' in the performances of ideal citizenship, the desire of the mother to travel in order to obtain a child is nevertheless ideologically linked to the logic of consumerism that facilitates the collapsing of space/time: "For the consumers in the society of consumers, being on the move—searching, looking for, not-finding-it or more exactly not-finding it yet is not a malaise, but the promise of bliss […] Consumers are first and foremost gatherers of *sensations*; they are collectors of things only in a secondary and derivative sense" (83). The apparent liberating benefits of mobility and the fulfillment of desire paradoxically depend upon the violently constricting processes of globalization that engender the formation of identities. The complicated relationship between the birth mother and the intended parent is, thus, intensified within the contexts of global capitalism and international surrogacy and adoption. Placing the pregnant African body not only within a colonial history of surrogacy and representation, but also within the context of the international relations characterizing global capitalism and the necropolitical sovereign power of African nation-states adds further dimension to the negotiations that must take place for the (re)construction of the (transnational) white mother's motherhood.

Privileged Movements and Shadow Economies:

To understand how the erasure of Hilling in the context of surrogacy ties to the larger erasure of birth mothers in the context of transnational adoptions, we must tease apart the complex intersections between the demand for the labour of poor racialized women, and the movement of privileged and underprivileged women and children across national borders.

Kuczynski's potential surrogates, itemized like contestants in a catalogue, and the intended parents' ability to choose based on the surrogate's homes, socioeconomic statuses, personal histories, and ideologies exposes the cultural logics that position women as "identity machine[s]…producing children in the name of the future" (Berlant 85). Women in general are configured as bearing the responsibility of *reproducing* the nation despite their marginalization within the nation. Through nationalistic discourse, women come to be "located as biological reproducers of ethnic groups; as reproducers of the *boundaries* of ethnic/racial/national groups, as transmitters of the ideology and the culture; as signifiers of ethnic/racial/national differences; and as participants in national, economic political and military struggles" (Mohanram 59-60, emphasis original). Yet despite the sociopolitical importance of their work in delineating and embodying boundaries of difference, women are still discursively placed within the domestic, private space of the family, framed as "outside the purview of the state" despite providing the very conditions of it (59). According to Robin Truth Goodman, who borrows and builds upon Habermasian theory of the public sphere, this preoccupation with the private sphere as a gendered space and the conception of its marked separation from the public and the political leaves the labour performed in the 'private space' open to the neoliberal exploitation indicative of an era of global capitalist privatization. This has particular significance transnationally. Referencing the work of Michael Warner, Goodman explains that while the work of the public sphere, commonly gendered male, is considered productive and professional, part of national enterprise and development, women's work, which is not explicitly tied to a kind of enterprise or profession, is by contrast locked within ideals of morality and selflessness. "The category of the private," she writes, "that recognizes certain work as female work and therefore 'lacking,' 'unproductive,' nonremunerative, or 'nonprofessional' also inflects inside the increasingly

feminized, increasingly privatized sphere of 'third world' labor as functionally distinct from its control and management apparatuses located mostly in the industrialized and financialized economies of the 'first world'" (16). Within the global market of bodies, it becomes increasingly a matter of 'common sense' for citizens of the 'first world' to turn to immigrants as sources of domestic labour, locking them into economic relationships that reproduce unequal colonial relationships. Sunera Thobani, for example, discusses the issue of gendered migrant work in the context of legal Canadian citizenship, noting that the immigration legislation regulating migrant workers searching for legal citizenship "trapped them into a near-complete dependency on their employers by the stipulation that they live-in at their place of employment for a period of two years" (99).

It is important to note the unequal policies applied to non-white, economically marginalized bodies seeking entrance into the nation-state, particularly in light of privileged movements across borders. The expansion of the private sphere under regimes of privatization normalizes colonial relationships across the globe, increasing the vulnerability of migrants whose work is considered within 'private' space. As economically privileged individuals from the Global North employ migrants, predominantly migrant women, from the global market to take care of their children and clean their homes (which has characterized mother's work in the 1950s domestic ideal), migrants, taking on the work traditionally performed by women and slaves in these unseen spaces, work under gendered, classed, and racialized conditions. These conditions further render them exploitable because the rules governing their work have been conceptually de-linked from the public, political space and instead tied to global neoliberal policies of personal choice, economic exchange, and deregulation. Paradoxically, at the same time that migrant women's work is considered culturally to be work of the unseen private sphere, many

Western nations are creating greater obstacles to legal immigration and, indeed, legislation aimed at regulating migrant workers have created increasing barriers for migrant women seeking movement across nations. Rhacel Parrenas has interrogated the culture of 'benevolent paternalism' (2), which concerns the labour of migrant women. The U.S.'s Victims of Trafficking and Violence Protection Act (VTVPA) positions its policies against human trafficking of women and children as protecting women's moral values and safety. This gendered framing, Parrenas argues, has extended to other countries aimed at universalizing American moral values and regulations. However, in her examination of Filipina migrant workers in Japan, Parrenas notes that these American laws, by failing to recognize the conditions of trafficking faced by female workers, and by increasing the obstacles for women to cross their borders legally, actually exacerbate the conditions that endanger travelling migrant women, forcing them to depend on shadowy middle men with means to make possible their travel (9). She further explains:

> According to TVPA, foreign countries must prohibit and punish severe forms of trafficking; punish so as to deter trafficking; and demonstrate sustained efforts to eliminate trafficking. If countries do not comply with these basic requirements…they receive a Tier 3 ranking and become ineligible to receive 'nonhumanitarian, nontrade related foreign assistance.'…The denial of aid as a means of deterring trafficking ironically seems to aggravate one of its central causes – poverty. If punishment is the denial of aid, then would not the country be in greater risk of poverty, which would then heighten the economic desperation of individuals and in turn push them to willingly take the risk of being trafficked? (10)

Despite the outwardly paternalistic and humanitarian conception of racialized migrant workers, legislation regulating these bodies supplies them as fuel for the shadow economies that are in turn fueled by the demands for their labour. We can read this economy alongside the privileged movement of adopted children into Western nations, and Western adoptive parents who travel to developing countries to employ the services of surrogates or to take children from

orphanages. It becomes clear in this juxtaposition that despite the humanitarian outcry against the abuse of impoverished, racialized migrant women, their bodies and realities are easily disappeared by the same economies of humanitarian affect that enables the travel (legal or illegal) of economically privileged Westerners.

The erase-ability of these classed, racialized, and gendered bodies is evident in the iconographies of rescue Briggs has analyzed, the Madonna-waif trope at once articulating Third World mothers as objects of rescue and protection, and dismissing them in the focus upon the affective connection between the target audience of white Western mothers and the destitute children in the images. Discursive strategies only fuel this latter connection. Indeed, since the construction of the good mother, who adopts through sentiment, love, and a sense of a higher moral obligation to the less fortunate, also depends upon the sense of what Briggs calls, "a logic of incompleteness" (185) engendered within representations of the Third World mother-child dyad, the disappearance of the birth mother becomes a particular strategy for enabling these adoptions.

Briggs discusses these discursive strategies in the context of American international interventions. During the Second World War, images of lone women and children together, or children alone frequented American newspapers narrativizing the atrocities occurring in Europe and Asia by invoking the "logic of incompleteness" that constructed it against the 'completed' middle-class American family—an incompleteness that could be solved through America's military participation (185-6). As Arisa Ho explains, representations of helpless children and mothers helped to build "imagined bridges of sentiment and obligation between" the sending and receiving countries, which, within familial logics, blurred the lines between imperial military obligation and metaphorical adoption (35). In her essay on Korean adoption, Jodi Kim mentions

these representational logics with respect to the Moral Adoptions Sponsorship Program through which American families were encouraged to virtually 'adopt' hundreds of Japanese children orphaned by the atomic bomb attacks. As Cold War sentiments aligned sponsorship, intervention and adoption, inevitably "[v]irtual adoptions became actual adoptions" (Ho 35). Kim speaks to this point, describing the opening moments of a documentary film on Korean adoption, *First Person Plural*. The film begins with a white American woman who explains that her decision to adopt a Korean girl in the 1960s was largely driven by "an NBC television segment on a 'Foster Parents' Plan' for the 'thousands of needy children in Europe and Asia'." The semiotic power of "suffering orphans" mobilized by NBC moved the woman enough to take matters of international politics into her own hands, saving children through her own privatized methods (861). Ho attributes this crossover into adoption as humanitarian practice to Harry and Bertha Holt's establishment of the Holt Adoption Program, which "made Korean adoption available to large numbers of Americans" and helped cement the legal and ideological foundations for inter-country adoption for years to come (35). As Ho continues, "Christian Americanism, a fusion of Cold War patriotism and vaguely Christian values, promoted Korean adoption as a kind of missionary work through which ordinary Americans could support their government's efforts to display radical liberalism in the face of Soviet propaganda and thus win the allegiance of newly decolonizing countries in Asia and Africa" (35-6). At the same time, as Deann Borshay Liem explains in her documentary *In the Matter of Cha Jung Hee*, the actual erasure of birth mothers (and birth parents) formed a crucial part of the processes of international adoption of Korean children. Deann, herself a Korean adoptee, was placed in an orphanage because of her mother's inability to care for her due to the South Korean state's lack of investments in social protections, particularly for unwed mothers. However, she, like so many Korean and Vietnamese adoptees,

was declared an orphan through state-sanctioned manipulation of her legal documents. Here we see Western imperialism and patriarchal Korean state sovereignty working together to legally disappear Korean birth parents, particularly vulnerable single birth mothers. Despite being alive, not only was Deann's birth mother disappeared by the process of adoption, but by her own white adoptive parents' discursive (re)-framing of Deann's childhood: that Deann was an orphan whose father died during the Korean War and whose mother died giving birth to her.

The perceived visible 'differences' between predominantly white Western mothers and those foreign racialized, poor mothers unable to care for their children only serve to highlight the white mother as the superior nurturer. Other scholars have noted the ways in which discourses of agency and health play a part in these representational strategies (Briggs 2003; Dubinsky 2012). Birth mothers, depicted as lacking the agency, energy, and ability to properly nurture their children become the ideological counterpart to those healthy white female bodies whose nurturing actively contributes to the health and vivacity of the birth mother's children. Under the adoptive mother's care, the child becomes healthier and happier. Numerous photographs of Angelina Jolie with her children likewise reinforce for the Western consumer the notion that foreign, adopted children would be better off with their white mothers.[88] That these representational politics become part of the logic of transnational (white, middle class) motherhood partly explains why Angelina Jolie's reproductive travel for the sake of humanitarian adoption is not nearly as criticized as Madonna's illegal adoption of her son David from Malawi. Indeed, Angelina Jolie publically criticized Madonna's adoption of her son:

[88] Many such photos capture the children in contented moods, playing, shopping, laughing, holding toys and other commodities while Jolie looks on; not only are they able to express a certain level of agency relative to their counterparts still "trapped" in the Third World, but their ability to participate in the practices of global consumer capitalism helps to articulate their happiness to the assumed Western consumer (See for instance "Jolie-Pitt Kids: My, How They've Grown!" n.pag).

"Madonna knew the situation in Malawi, where he was born," said Jolie. "It's a country where there is no real legal framework for adoption…I would never take a child away from a place where adoption is illegal" ("Angelia Attacks Madonna" n.pag). Yet both celebrities' adoptions can be placed within a context in which affective economies of motherhood and humanitarianism normalize the logic of their travel and enable the various (ab)uses of those birth mothers whose reproductive labour fuels their endeavours.

We must, therefore, consider carefully that legal loopholes and inconsistencies in adoption, immigration, and child welfare in different countries facilitate reproductive travel across states and between nation-states, meaning that "border-crossing directly facilitate[s] the commercial transaction" of baby-selling (Balcom 4). Rick Solinger reminds us that reproductive travel—the travel across borders for the purposes of acquiring children—rests upon unequal power structures and places restrictions upon the movements of bodies across borders. Indeed, as I have suggested in my analysis of migrant women, not all bodies can move through inconsistent legal regimes so seamlessly, not all bodies can take advantage of political structures to move across borders for reproductive purposes, and not every choice made in the name of parenthood is made under the same set of conditions. Grounding adoption practices in the politics of choice, Solinger affirms that the choice of the privileged few to adopt children transnationally is in many cases tied to the birth mother's relative choicelessness. As he writes, in the matter of the transference of babies from one woman to another woman of a higher socioeconomic status, we must consider "the degree to which one woman's possession of reproductive choice may actually depend on or deepen another woman's reproductive vulnerability" (7). International adoption of African children, therefore, requires contextualizing the circumstances of the birth mothers within a history of American imperialism and colonialism and the contemporary violent global

(and African state) processes that limit the choices of many of the women positioned by various biopolitical structures as the 'sending' mothers. To develop this idea further, I turn to the specific case of Nigeria, one of the countries of the Global South recently brought into prominence in public Western discourse for its housing of 'baby factories.'

Abiyaomo[89]: Motherhood, Baby Factories, and the Pregnant African Body

Nigeria has been grappling with the proliferation of 'maternity clinics,' colloquially referred to as baby factories, for several years, but its role in the trafficking of babies should be considered part of a larger struggle with human trafficking. The United States lists Nigeria as a "Tier 2 Watch List" country, signifying that not only does the country not meet the minimum requirements for the elimination of human trafficking, but in fact this trafficking is facilitated by "security personnel" of the sovereign state—police, military and government officials (Cullen-DuPont 77). Of course, this suggests that the trafficking of human bodies is ultimately tied to the biopolitical power of African nation-states that control who lives and dies, along with setting the differential conditions of life within which certain people are allowed to live. We can amend this presumption by taking into account the ways in which international economic processes have transformed and redefined biopolitical power in the postcolony. Though the process of decolonization may have "initially presented itself as the panacea for economic and cultural growth," attempts to reinstate sovereign state-power "with the help of institutions supposedly created to aid in their 'development' (the IMF, the WTO, the World Bank)" has resulted in the further degradation of living conditions for the most vulnerable populations within the state, "while the local elites enjoy benefits akin to the foreign ruling class during colonial times"

[89] Among the Yoruba people in Nigeria, this word refers to a parent (particularly a mother) who is considered to be *truly* a parent: a parent who does everything to love and care for her children.

(Reinares 51:90). Achilles Mbembe pinpoints three major historical processes in the re-conception of the biopolitical power of African nation-states: first, the de-linking of the continent from formal international markets, then, its re-integration into a parallel international economy, and finally the fragmentation of public authority (*On the Postcolony*, 67). Neoliberal structural adjustment policies that placed economic power in the hands of private, international, non-governmental organizations have reshaped conceptions of the relationship of labour and trade, "in the shift from an economy based on the slave trade (sale of slaves and ivory) to an economy based on trade in cash products (ground nuts, palm oil, gum arabic, etc.)," which inevitably "led to a transformation of the material bases of states" (69). That is not to say that these structural adjustments led to an end of slave transportation, as evidenced by the increased prominence of human trafficking across the continent. However, the re-integration of Africa into the global market via the extraction of raw resources and privatization has resulted in new modes of sovereignty that have reshaped the configurations of citizenship, allegiance, and power. As Mbembe explains, "large companies, equipped with commercial and mining privileges, and with sovereign rights allowing them to raise taxes and maintain an armed force, accentuated the prevailing predation and the atomization of lineages and clans, and institutionalized a regime based on murder" (72).

James Ferguson confirms this murder regime in his work *Global Shadows*, when he discusses how the neoliberal logic of privatization behind a corporation's attempts to secure "exclusionary spatial enclaves" in Africa, along with the fragmentation of sovereign power, has conferred upon these companies the ability to exercise the sovereign biopolitical 'right to kill.'[90]

[90] In "Necropolitics," Mbembe explains Foucault's sovereign right to kill, or *droit de glaive,* as a mechanism of power of all modern nation-states, in which "power (and not necessarily state power) continuously refers and appeals to exception, emergency, and a fictionalized notion of the enemy," though, as he argues, this sovereign right is complicated exponentially within the African postcolony (16).

This corporate assumption of sovereign rights has manifested in, for example, shoot-to-kill policies, as with the Zimbabwe firm, Sengamines, protected by the Zimbabwean armed forces who "habitually shoot and kill local people unfortunate enough to attempt to dig diamonds on the companies' claimed 'concessions,' even though both the boundaries of these concessions and their legal basis are often highly unclear" (37). The violence necessitated by participation in the international economy and the weakening of African polities due to debt has "led not only to the militarization of power and trade and the intensification of extortion, but also to a complete dislocation of the trade-offs that had previously governed the relationship between holding public power and pursuing private gain" (Mbembe, *On the Postcolony* 72). In Mbembe's estimation, this economy has generally resulted in a fragmentation of power and an atomization of individuals and organizations realigning themselves with parallel, or 'shadow,' structures of economic and sovereign power. For individuals in the African postcolony, "these developments substantially altered the ideas individuals had of their membership in a political community, and the shape of that community" as they are increasingly encouraged to align themselves with "underground channels whose tentacles, however 'invisible,' are worldwide (from drugs and arms trafficking to money laundering)" (72-3).

The changing conditions of the African postcolony have reconfigured the biopolitical sovereign right to kill. And though this is not to say that the nation-state has been completely divested of its regulatory role, the fractioning of sovereignty has forced "features belonging to the realm of warfare and features proper to the conduct of civil policy to coexist in a single dynamic" (85). It is within this context that we must consider human trafficking in Nigeria. Because of the country's role in the illegal movement of bodies within the country and across borders, Nigeria has become known as one of the most prominent human trafficking hubs on the

African continent. According to Kathryn Cullen-DuPont, an estimated 200,000 children are trafficked to Western countries every year with Nigeria as a central route, while 45,000 predominantly female Nigerians (adult and children) are trafficked to Europe alone. Girls and women are largely targeted while at the market place, lured into sex work, primarily in Italy and Spain, with promises of upward economic mobility by pimps, madams, and other affiliates of international trafficking organizations, while children may be lured with coveted commodities (bikes, toys) into domestic servitude. Indeed, trafficking of individuals is not limited to movement across national borders; vulnerable individuals are also moved within the country, with people trafficked from rural Nigerian communities into large urban centers. Millions of child labourers work in slave-like conditions in Nigeria, many of whom sell wares on the side of the streets in Nigerian towns, work in mines, factories and plantations, or remain within the domestic space as 'house-boys' and 'house girls' (Cullen-DuPont 77-82).

These economically vulnerable bodies find themselves the focal point of gendered power that blurs the lines between oppressed and oppressors as it is typically configured, even in critique, within a master-slave colonial discourse. Heike Härting notes, building upon Mbembe's work, that the categories of ruler and ruled are not so neatly drawn between the West and its former colonies. As she argues, "violent and pornographic rhetoric[s] of power" are "shared by the commandment and the ruled" (69). In referencing the acts of sadistic pleasure and corporeal defilement normalized during the Rwandan genocide, particularly as it was inflicted upon (but not limited to) female bodies, she goes on to add that "[w]hile 'intimate tyranny' stresses the complicity of the citizen with the rituals and practices of 'authoritarian' rule and with the daily reenactment of and investment in the 'political economy of the [African] body,' it tends to eroticize and blur the violent and military structures necessary for maintaining the rule of

tyranny" (69). I would argue that this fetishization of power does not simply manifest as a spectacle of violence inflicted upon the body. According to Mbembe, the regime of murder now entwined with postcolonial African sovereignty involves a "privatization of public violence" in which the police, military, customs, and revenue services battle with social groups, organizations, and individuals over apparatuses of the "shadow economy" for private gain and power (*On the Postcolony* 85). The fetishized and gendered power over the African body would therefore logically extend to those vulnerable bodies caught up in the processes of these struggles.

It is precisely the vulnerable who enter into Nigeria's 'baby-factories.' Despite being self-sufficient after decolonization in the 1960s, Nigeria has in recent decades become structurally incapable of providing welfare to meet the requirements of a standard quality of life for most Nigerians. Nigeria operates as one of Africa's biggest producers of raw oil, but many of the organizations and agents controlling the extraction and distribution of the resource are either Euro-American or Nigerian businessmen abroad, though the latter is far less likely (Cole and Manuh 98). Recall that unlike Appadurai, who sees the global economy as being characterized by capital flowing around the world, Ferguson sees capital as 'hopping' from point to point, enclave to enclave, skipping over the huge swaths of land inhabited by the majority of Africa's population. As Ferguson states, most Africans have "only a tenuous and indirect connection to 'the global economy'" (14). The stratifications of capital can be seen within singular African nation-states. Despite Nigeria housing some of the richest inhabitants in the continent, it also contains areas of extreme poverty. Pregnant Nigerian women, particularly single, impoverished young mothers-to-be who conceived out of wedlock, thus often enter into 'maternity clinics.' The United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) refers to the

entry of such women into clinics as 'baby harvesting,' an emerging trend first reported in 2006.[91] Facilities posing as medical clinics provide care for pregnant girls and women, who relinquish their parental rights by signing contracts and swearing silence. It is precisely because of the socioeconomic context within which these women are situated that the willingness of Nigerian women to enter into these homes and sell their children to uncertain fates should not be reduced through neoliberal discourses to the concept of choice. Many women are driven by the destructive processes of globalization that create precarious conditions among vulnerable populations (particularly women and female children) and limit the resources needed for the vulnerable to provide for their children. Indeed, the corruption of state leaders exacerbates these conditions. As S.O. Osoba notes in his outlining of state corruption in Nigeria, many of Nigeria's elite governmental leaders, obsessed with the accumulation of personal wealth, monopolize national resources meant for the running of public institutions, thus diverting marginal youths into criminal networks and precarious activity (384). At the same time, economically underprivileged women are also driven by a violent patriarchal culture that frames, much as it does in the West, the conception of ideal motherhood; many such girls and women have explained, through interviews, that shame over having children out of wedlock—even in cases of rape—has made them to turn to 'clinics' that would at least give them payment in return for their children.[92]

The commercial dimensions of this transaction, unsavory for the privileged in the Western world operating within moral logics of white civil modernity, here become a necessity.

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[91] The first cases of "baby factories" in Nigeria were reported in a 2006 UNESCO Policy Paper (Olagbegi n.pag).
[92] In many cases, the social pressures that might lead a woman to decide to sell her baby in Nigeria aligns with similar cases in impoverished areas of India. In both countries, women who enter 'willingly' into the baby market, whether through legal or illegal channels, face the gendered politics of shame that seek control over definitions of femininity and motherhood (Kroløkke and Pant 245).

In many other cases, however, pregnant girls and women are often lured under the false pretense that the facility operates as an abortion clinic. Once inside, they are held against their will and forced to give birth. In other cases, women are kidnapped, raped, forced into pregnancy, and kept inside the facility for the entire gestational period until they can produce infants available for circulation in the market. These babies are then made available for a variety of uses, and although such uses are often unknown to the birth mother, many human rights and social theorists have listed child soldiering, slave labour, rituals, sex work, and illegal adoption as among the primary venues for Nigeria's baby market (Eseadi et al 2015; Okoli and Okpaleke 2014; Olagbegi 2006).

Within the hidden confines of the facility, these girls and women are subjected to sexualized and racialized power shaped by colonial dynamics, but, within the postcolonial state, appropriated and mobilized by African agents. This power is inflicted upon the bodies of the socially and economically marginal through the control exercised over their bodies' labour and mobility and through the exploitation, violation, and commodification of their flesh. This is where it becomes especially important to bring back into the frame of discussion Goodman's theory of 're-privatization,' which involves the discursive de-linking of the private sphere from the public sphere under the regime of global capitalism. Recall that Goodman, in referring to re-privatization as "the current corporate and financial practice of avoiding the regulatory state by directly capitalizing on a type of labor that resembles women's work of the industrial era" (1), exposes the ways in which the conception of women's work as fundamentally outside the economic public sphere configures gendered labour as private and thus outside the reach of political regulation. Remaining hidden within the confines of the private, the labour becomes exploitable by neoliberalism. She writes: "The structural space of women's private labour in the

liberalism of the industrial age—where domestic work is separated from politics and the state, serving as a refuge where subjectivities and class positions get socialized—is currently being reproduced as again a limit to outside interventions, now in the form of taxation, regulation and oversight" (5). The retreat from public governance has produced a global private sphere, then, that aligns with the traditional private sphere in which it becomes conceivable to corral certain bodies into performing certain forms of labour in spaces hidden from view. As others have discussed (Cullen-DuPont 2009; Olagbegi 2006), in many Nigerian communities, since men are not entirely expected to use their earnings for the household, and given the neoliberal gutting of the welfare state, women bear much of the burden for ensuring the survival of their families. In many cases, as is implicit in the familial dynamics of Western nuclear family units, women and girls in Nigeria are expected to have little interest outside caring for their homes and producing children, which, despite the centrality of the mother, is still governed by patriarchal power.[93] However, the burden placed upon women by the (unpaid) work of motherhood intensifies in areas of extreme poverty. Like the house boys and house girls often confined within the domestic space of middle- and upper-class Nigerians[94] or the migrant workers recruited to clean the homes and care for the children of middle- and upper-class households in the Global North, within these spaces, vulnerable bodies are often left at the mercy of power.[95]

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[93] Indeed, many young girls in Northern Nigeria have no say in when, how and to whom they will get married. These decisions are left in the hands of their fathers (Cullen-Dupont 83).

[94] For more on domestic servitude in Nigeria, see: Izuora and Egigbo, "Assessment of House Aids in Nigeria Using the Draw-a-Person Test."

[95] I am reminded of Kuczynski's article for *The New York Times*. As mentioned earlier, only one of the photos features Kuczynski herself holding her child. Her performance of white, bourgeois motherhood depends not only her framing in the photo in relation to her child, but also the nanny, a brown woman, listed in the credits as the "baby's nurse." The nurse is never discussed in the article, only appearing in the frame, standing watch over the mother and her child, the nature of their relationship never articulated, but perhaps suggested by the representational politics at work.

As others have argued (Härting 2008; Mamdani 2009), humanitarian affect is often elicited by narratives of suffering black women and children and often mobilized in service of humanitarian intervention that does not take into account the violent fetishization of power, and the fragmentation of economy and community in the postcolonial state, nor the fact that they each must be situated within the context of imperialism and globalization. Rather, the violence inflicted upon the bodies of Nigerian women and children involved in the baby market can easily be stripped of its complexity and historicity. Thus, the issue enters into the interpretive framework of African savagery for the West, and, in the conservative and neoliberal cultural politics of Nigeria, becomes the result of the moral and familial breakdown of the nation. Particularly in the case of the latter, this framing places the individual at the focal point in such a way that it can evoke judgment and criticism rather than empathy and critical engagement. Some Nigerian and non-Nigerian sociological studies (Duru and Ogbonnaya 2010; Huntley 2013) depend upon the neoliberal politics of personal responsibility in order to conceptualize the factors that create the conditions for the black baby market in Nigeria; among them, they list lack of education and illiteracy on the part of birth mothers and traffickers alike as primary causes. A recent news report conducted in November of 2014 by *African Independent Television* certainly funnels the issue of baby factories and baby harvesting through patriarchal, economic, and moral discourses. The host of the Nigerian program introduces the report by focusing on those women who "become mothers overnight." As she states, "twenty-five years ago […] the world made a promise to children to protect and promote their right to survive and thrive, to learn and grow, but some young women […] become mothers overnight and engage in the trading of children." The report thus announces itself as preoccupied by the (perceived lack of) moral responsibility among the birth mothers, encouraging the viewers to access the narrative through particular

prescriptive channels. Rather than the global and cultural conditions that produce the precarious situations faced by Nigerian women and girls, readers are instead led to question what kind of women would sell their children. This line of thinking is made explicit in the last phrase uttered before the transition into the report: "some people have decided to trade with the life of their own children." Traffickers are erased from this initial framing, as the introduction produces a narrative in which the wrongdoer is the young birth mother whose irresponsible actions victimize her innocent child. Moments of acknowledgement of traffickers and the often violent circumstances that brought the girls to the factories (such as kidnap and rape) seem in tension with the report's insistence that the girls had to be "restrained" by authorities in order to save their children from the baby market. One (unnamed) interviewee, through his patronizing patriarchal language, very explicitly trivializes the socioeconomic and political contexts within which the birth mothers are situated, stating that "these are young women who are involved because of petty things" need to understand that "that is not the only way they can actually earn a living."

The patriarchal ideologies that delineate ideal forms of motherhood are similar, perhaps, to those in the West, but are still culturally inflected. Michelle Lynn Brown discusses conceptions of motherhood in Nigeria, situating them within an ethno-cultural context. In her estimation, within this context, mothers are conceptualized as having an almost 'god-like' role within the community. The conferral of power to the mother, particularly in Yoruba cosmology, is considered to begin through the process of giving birth, a process so significant to the cultural knowledge framework of kinship that birth mothers are seen to be invested with metaphysical power: "Each birth," she writes, "creates three entities specific to that particular birthing experience: a baby, a mother and the important bonds they share. Children know that their

mothers can at any time invoke *ikunle abiyamo*, their special mothering powers granted by both the birthing process and by social and metaphysical valuation of their mother status" (104).[96] According to Brown, while colonialism exacerbated pre-existing colonial structures, jeopardizing the role of the mother, globalization shifted conceptions of wealth away from those frameworks that were invested with affective significance for communities. Cosmological understandings of motherhood thus continue to share the same symbolic space as meanings inscribed through global economies.[97]

The symbolic importance of women in Nigerian cultural thought can certainly be used as an African feminist point of critique against patriarchal, economic structures as they exist today. However, as I would argue, the perceived importance of women raises the costs for those women who might fail to perform ideal notions of motherhood. The task of demonizing, in public discourse, those women driven by various forces into the hidden spaces of a baby factory, a space that engages in the 'unnatural' selling of children, becomes easier. Indeed, in the news report, what is of concern to many of the officials interviewed is not necessarily the well-being of the women, but the well-being of the child—or, perhaps, the fact that the well-being of the child directly signifies within biopolitical dimensions of the family the health of the nation. "All we know is that at the end of the day, our children, Nigeria's children are being sold," one official states. "It's not a good image for Nigeria at all," says another in a different interview, as if to finish the statement. If the adherence to the international rights doctrines concerning the universal rights of children is what marks a nation's proper inclusion into the 'civilized' culture

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[96] As my own mother tells me, the term Abiyamo (or Abiyaomo) can actually refer to both males and females: perhaps this is simply due to a linguistic and connotative shift that may have occurred over the years, but regardless, even in the present day context, the term has its most powerful expression when connected to women.

[97] Brown seems to come close to reinforcing a somewhat traditionalist perspective that conceives of the cultures and indigenous knowledge frameworks of Africa as shifting only due to the influences of European activity. However, she does at least assert that she and other African feminists who share her view do not want a return to pre-colonial family models, but rather a clean break from colonialism and its "successors."

of global modernity,[98] then birth mothers are configured, at least within the report, as a national obstacle to this inclusion.[99] Through its reductive framing, the report presents the proliferation of baby trafficking in a way that almost mirrors dominant Western conceptions of African violence (and motherhood) as irrational, ahistorical, apolitical, and horrific—violence that does not 'make sense' to the rational modern subject.[100] This framing is of course evidenced by the very title of the report: "Baby Factories: Nigeria's Latest Nightmare." Under these rubrics, the birth mother keeps the Nigerian nation-state one foot outside modernity.

I return here to Sara Ahmed's notion of the 'stranger' in her framing of affective relations. Projects aimed towards nation-building and securing national unity, such as Australia's reconciliation project (Ahmed 2004) or South Africa's construction of itself as a 'rainbow nation' following the horror of apartheid (Gqola 2004), require the affective galvanization of individuals around national objects and ideals. And as countries seek to define themselves not only as nations, but also as members of an international community, it becomes necessary to regulate the communities within their borders. Discursive strategies in political doctrines are often designed to ensure that they are affectively oriented around the appropriate ideals; however, we must remember that these strategies often require the sacrificing of the bodies and affects of those women whose marginalization impairs their ability to participate fully in national ideals of proper womanhood. While discussing the notion of intimate publics, Ahmed builds upon Said's notion of "orientalism as domestication—to make the strange familiar, to bring the strange home" to suggest that the stranger, who "is often seen as the figure outside the bond of a

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[98] See: Schultheis 31-40.

[99] Elsewhere we see the example of the state exercising their biopolitical sovereign power over marginalized women for the sake of their standing in the global political arena.

[100] In invoking the concept of violence that does or does not 'make sense' within Western capitalist modernity, I am referring to Mahmood Mamdani's work "Political Violence," in which he states that conceptions of violence as genocidal and irrational, or revolutionary and counterrevolutionary is in part what maintains the hierarchal distinctions between nation-states solidified through humanitarianism.

connection…comes into being as stranger only in relationship to the project of appropriation or bringing home. So the stranger becomes a very intimate figure and familiar in its strangeness" (Ahmed qtd. in Antwi 112). We can think of this dynamic in relation to the state-sanctioned social death of South Korean mothers such as Deann Borshay-Liem's birth mother, who are rendered invisible by state and global forces that require their labour, but also require their disappearance in order to make their children available for the global market, thus supplying the economically-privileged Western mother's ability to perform ideal motherhood. As Jodi Kim writes, "the confluence of forces that makes it disproportionately difficult for racialized birth mothers to exercise the right to keep or *parent* their children and to then give up their children to strangers (as opposed to their extended kin or friends) itself constitutes a social death for such mothers" (867). And yet as Deann states in *In the Matter of Cha Jung Hee*, the use of these mothers' bodies and labour helped to boost South Korea's economy through the sale of children. Though their affective connection to their children was buried and the (ab)use of their body buried, these figures were still needed within the body politic to construct the nation as a part of global modernity. Likewise, Nayanika Mookherjee writes of Bangladesh and its biopolitical regulation of the motherhood of raped women upon its emergence as a new state in 1971. After the 1971 war, Bangladesh forced the 200,000 women raped by the Pakistani army to give up their children for international adoption so that they could be 'included' in the national project as *birangonas*, or "war heroines." That way the nation could avoid being ostracized by the international community for the violence enacted upon these women's bodies (342). Giving up their children was seen as necessary for their rehabilitation and thus re-inclusion into the nation; it theoretically "protected them from the emotions of motherhood" (339). In these cases, the state regulation of the reproductive and mothering capacities of marginalized women helps to build

the nation economically and ideologically while at the same time burying the various (ab)uses of these women's bodies, (ab)uses which ultimately feed national and international affective economies ironically by attempting to cut bodies off from affect.

With these considerations, we can return to the report on Nigeria's baby factories. The report's constant references to the rights of the child, taken together with the implicit demonization of the birth mothers, reinforce a conceptual framework that I argue is similar to that underlying Alex Kuczynski's article for *The New York Times*. A similar kind of effacement of the birth mothers takes place as biopolitical conditions reify the role of the birth mothers' bodies in the nation-state's cultural performance of modernity. The African Independent Television's news report suggests this framing of birth mothers through the visual components of their news report. At the start of the report, as the voiceover lists in detail the number of cities housing baby factories, shot after shot displays rows of nameless pregnant young women along with each city. Much like in those humanitarian relief commercials in the West that present African bodies as an undifferentiated mass of black bodies, young girls always appear in the report in groups, moving into the frame in an endless stream. In many instances, the camera focuses solely upon their bodies, cutting off their heads in a way that draws comparisons to the 2007 Marie Claire article, "Surrogate Mothers: Womb for Rent," which, despite its attempt to expose the commodification of Indian surrogate mothers, showcases a featured image of Indian women with their heads cut off, their bellies the focal point of the frame. In line with Foucault's "hysterical woman," and in line with Reagan's "welfare queens," the young Nigerian birth mothers, or rather the reproductive potential of their bodies, represent a kind of danger to the social reproduction and construction of the nation, and this danger is put at the forefront of the narrative, obscuring from view their precarity within the global private sphere. These are bodies

to be regulated for the 'sake' of the nation, bodies whose socioeconomic circumstances, affect, and subjectivity are not as important to the national frame as their reproductive capacities. However, whether or not the body of the African mother is pathologized in certain contexts, it is always-already overburdened with meaning as it has been "overinscribed in systems of slave and colonial significations" (Gqola 123). If, as Berlant argues, the conservative preoccupation with children has reduced the pregnant woman to the pregnant body, and the pregnant body to 'imprisoning flesh,' a mere receptacle for the 'person' forming inside (97), then what can be said of those women who, "once objects of that [colonial] clinical gaze," have historically faced the violent erasure of their subjectivity while differentially inscribed by ideologies that presupposed their absence from their own bodies (123)?

Many theorists (Gqola 2005; hooks 1992; Hall 1997) have discussed the African woman as a body of knowledge, theorizing the semiotic burden black female bodies have continued to bear, left over from the violent epistemological regime of colonial trade and imperial rule. Here, I must focus specifically on the signification of the pregnant African woman. Stuart Hall has argued that the fetishizing of racial otherness includes the process of disavowal, which he explains as a "strategy by means of which a powerful fascination or desire is both indulged and at the same time denied. It is where what has been tabooed nevertheless manages to find a displaced form of representation" (*Representation* 267). Scientific discourse becomes a way for those with the power of the gaze to negotiate, explain, and justify their fetishistic desire to look at the body, sectioned into individual, sexualized parts. Hall uses the animalization of Sara Baartman, and the reduction of her 'self' to the individual, sexualized sections of her naked body to argue that scientific discourses presented the flesh of the Other as proof of their inferiority, mediating thus the sexual fascination with the naked body (267-8). According to this argument,

the location of European desire within the body of the racialized Other actually necessitates a kind of reductionism that also invariably involves a reification of divisions, an ideological splitting, that makes bearable and legible to the European imagination, their fascination and desire. The reduction of the African Other's body to flesh is thus utilized to regulate and articulate the affective dimensions of European subjectivity.

This ideology might explain why the fascination with the fecundity of the African female body and fetishization of her banal reproductive functions manifested historically in representations of the pregnant African female slave as lacking emotion through the process of childbirth and even towards the children birthed. Jennifer Morgan writes in *Laboring Women: Reproduction and Gender in New World Slavery* that the slave trade made violently and dehumanizingly explicit the connections between commodification, production, and reproduction for the reproductive female body as "the double meaning of the terms of labor and travail, as well as the need to articulate a social space for Africans in the context of emerging socioeconomic ideologies of difference, biology and lifelong forced labor, collapsed the performances of work into the bodies of African women" (40). As she explains, the imagined "pain-free reproduction" of African women on slave-owner property became part of the strategy through which their reproductive labor of birthing children as commodities became connected to their supposed biological predilection towards "till[ing] the soil" (8). The supposed evidence provided by their "mechanical and meaningless childbearing" not only seemed to justify European fascination with their perceived insatiable sexuality, but facilitated their alignment with "metaphors of domestic livestock […] and sexually located cannibalism," making logical the notion of their bodies' reproductive labour, in every sense, as available for consumption (40).

I mention slavery here because, as Carlyle Van Thompson writes in *Eating the Black Body*, "[t]he fact of slavery refuses to disappear, along with the deeply embedded philosophies, personal attitudes, and public-policy assumptions that supported it for so long" (167). We find within colonial contexts the African pregnant female body that has been overwritten, primarily in ways that justify and facilitate its vampiric consumption by others. Through a past and present that entwines the logic of economic violence with racialized, gendered, and sexual preoccupations, the women embroiled in Nigeria's baby factories are already legible within national and international discourses as bodily resources. That is why in the specific case of babies being produced in the black market as part of the process of surrogacy and adoption, it is important to note that the movement of babies does not always occur transnationally. We can recall here the Kuczynski case in which class privilege ultimately structures the use of Hilling's body, which Hilling sells for money to a more economically-privileged couple. Nigerian society tends to be pronatalistic in such a way that infertility is taken as socially crippling (Chukwuneke 105). Nigerian couples who have trouble conceiving children (especially the coveted male children) may employ the services of 'clinics' in order to purchase a child that will bring them social capital. Wealthy couples can travel from overseas or from different municipalities to fulfill this purpose (Eseadi et al. 2015). In this case the body of the birth mother is put to work in service of the desires of the intended parents; once again, the expression of the affective vectors of subjectivity depends upon the conceptual reduction of the birth mother's flesh. The relative choicelessness of the women who enter into the baby trade in Nigeria, even if not through baby factories, is complicated by the lack of legal guidelines regulating surrogacy. Furthermore, international adoption in Nigeria, at least through official channels, is not as well defined. In contrast to the staggering figures of child trafficking, children adopted through official adoption

agencies remain quite low. Since the 1960s, the country has refused to sanction official foreign adoption offers and so the number of children moved through these channels numbers in the low hundreds (Alstein and Simon 1991). The lack of regulatory bodies leaves birth mothers that much more vulnerable to predation by traffickers (Chukuneke et al. 106).

This is not to say that the relationship between the birth and adoptive mothers would be solely one of domination. I have discussed before the concept of altruism within adoption and child-giving, but the concept of altruism in surrogacy and adoption is itself socially constructed, dependent upon norms of natural femininity and selfless motherhood that view the giving of one's child for money to be unfeminine, unnatural, and immoral. Even altruistic forms of child-giving to 'help' a woman achieve her dream of motherhood can be based ultimately upon exploitative dynamics. Concentrating on American family dynamics, Sharyn Roach Anleu writes, "women are particularly vulnerable to exploitation within families…In the case of altruistic surrogacy, a sister or mother may feel guilt at her own fertility in the face of a female relative's inability to conceive" (37). Furthermore, Janice G. Raymond situates the birth mother within histories of patriarchal giving of wives and daughters for sex, marriage, and family-formation. That women have long been at the center of the transaction that builds patriarchal kinship means that we must consider the relationship between the birth mother and adoptive mother as part of a tradition which validates the production of women as "not only the gift givers but the gift as well" (7). In this sense, even in cases of altruism, those social pressures that privilege motherhood as a social class still inevitably elevate a woman's reproductive capabilities above her subjectivity, placing the demands of the adoptive mother who wishes to fulfill her maternal affective duties at the forefront.

For African women trapped within a violent system that considers them to be natural resources of the state and naturalizes these logics within familial and labour dynamics, cases of surrogacy and child-giving must be placed under even greater scrutiny. Africa is figured by Enlightenment discourses as being the origin of humanity and civilization and yet somehow still frozen in time. Similarly, if women reproduce the nation, then within the Western episteme, African women have given birth to the global community of humans—of citizens.[101] And yet trapped within the primordial past, they remain situated outside of modernity. The perceived absence of the African woman from modernity and from the affective dimensions of humanity reduce her to her reproductive capabilities, which have created a space within which bourgeois white motherhood is produced and fostered.

Because this epistemological framing has held fast under the conditions of late capitalism, and transnationally due to the ever-expanding global private sphere, it remains important to consider when thinking through the complexities of transnational relationships sutured through reproduction. I return here to Bauman's "Tourist and Vagabonds," in which he categorizes residents of the 'first world' and 'second world' based on their relationality to space and time. As he argues, only the latter is bounded by space, the former limited only by the time it takes for them to travel and consume: "For the inhabitants of the first world—the increasingly cosmopolitan, extraterritorial world of global businessmen, global culture managers or global academics, state borders are levelled down, as they are dismantled for the world's commodities, capital and finances" (89). With regards to Africa, then, the dismantling of political and economic structure by structural adjustment policies only facilitate the dissolution of borders for those parents driven by a desire for a child, including celebrities such as Madonna and Angelina

[101] Such discursive framing of African motherhood is evident in films such as Alfonso Cuaron's *Children of Men* (2006).

Jolie. The ease of their travel ghosts the international policing of the movements of migrants and refugees: "For the inhabitants of the second world" Bauman goes on to explain, "the walls built of immigration controls, of residence laws, and of 'clean streets' and 'zero tolerance' policies, grow taller…the first [category of traveler" travels at will…the second travel surreptitiously, often illegally" 89). If women's bodies are inevitably "identity machine[s]" (Berlant 85) producing the boundaries of racial difference through their production of children, and patriarchal control over women's bodies is the patriarchal control over the reproduction of the cultural definition of the nation, then this control would logically extend to strategies of policing the crossing of women through borders—keeping certain women from entering through national borders and banishing certain 'unproductive' and 'undesirable' citizens from the nation-state.[102]

However, conceiving of the borders of citizenship, constituted by the female body and the woman's performance of motherhood, as being strictly policed, also complicates the transnational relationship between the adoptive and birth mother. For their article on surrogacy in India, Charlotte Kroløkke and Saumya Pant interviewed fertility doctors on the topic of reproductive travel to India. One doctor insisted: "I don't call them tourists, I call them reproductive exiles because they are being forced to go somewhere else because whatever you want to do for some reason you cannot do in your own country or you can't afford it—there's a long waiting list or the government doesn't approve of certain technologies" (Malpani qtd in Kroløkke and Pant 242). In this interesting inversion, the adoptive mother is configured as the exile, forced to travel rather than travelling for leisure. Of course, as Bauman would respond, economic privilege is what allows certain reproductive tourists to choose to contract the services of a poor woman in India simply because the waiting lists for adoption are too long, or the laws

[102] For more on banishment and the political condition of statelessness in particular, see: Hannah Arendt. "We Refugees."

restrict other processes of gaining children. And yet, if we recall Alex Kuczynski's framing of herself as a 'failed mother' due to her inability to give natural birth, it does become possible to conceive of the adoptive mother as also trapped within a socially unsettled position; those societal pressures that bear down the politics of shame upon those women unable to complete the post-Cold War imperatives of motherhood and citizenship can relegate those women into an abject category of otherness. This is not to draw an equivalence between the social position of childless middle-class mothers and the condition of precarity experienced by the stateless exiled from their nations, or the immigrants travelling 'illegally' into hostile countries. However, I do draw attention to the notion of childless (white) privileged mothers as exiles in order to explain that the African birth mother, even if rendered more vulnerable through postcolonial and global economic processes, represents a kind of motherhood that lies somewhat outside of the scope of adoption. Emphasizing the birthing process and biological motherhood as natural motherhood creates the tension between the two mothers and, as seen throughout Kuczynski's testimonial, the separation of ideal motherhood into its affective and birthing elements, and then, the diminishing of birthing through the subjection of the body becomes a method through which the motherhood of the adoptive mother can be asserted.

At the same time, the centrality of the birth mother to the construction and articulation of the adoptive mother's affective motherhood also creates a condition of vulnerability—of affective and therefore national boundaries of citizenship. In the final chapter, I will expose these complex dynamics as they play out in the dynamics of transnational families.

Chapter 4: An Invisible Child: Psychic Boundaries and Conditional Citizenship

> This single story of Africa ultimately comes, I think, from Western literature. Now, here is a quote from the writing of a London merchant called John Locke, who sailed to West Africa in 1561 and kept a fascinating account of his voyage…referring to the black Africans as "beasts who have no houses."
>
> — Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, "The Danger of a Single Story"

> On the inside, I'm still *Habesha*, cuz I like the way I am. But outside my body I am American. Because…We switch it when I come here. I really like being an Ethiopian person, but I hate being black. I wish I was a white person…Nobody can understand how hard it is.
>
> — Weynsht Ward, *Girl, Adopted*

Despite the representational and systemic violence that shapes transnational adoption discourse, the transnational family offers to the racial Other inclusion into the body politic. The adopted child's inclusion into her adoptive family and nation, however, comes at a cost. This chapter interrogates the conditional citizenship of the transnational adoptee made possible by the global neoliberal economy and sociopolitical discourses that detach the adoptee from her origins—maternal body, community, place, etc. More specifically, in my analysis, I explore the ways in which the affective orientations of the adoptee within her new family and community might expose the costs and contradictions of her 'belonging' and challenge the paradigms by which her inclusion is constructed.

The discursive paradigm of transnational adoption mapped out by the violent structures and histories of modernity has shaped models of relationality with respect to adopted African children in a way that closes down more ethical models. That is to say that the popular narrative of the transnational nuclear family ultimately reaffirms exclusionary conceptions of national citizenship and racial inclusion. At the same time, the subjective 'story' of the adoptee, in laying bear the affective dimensions involved in one's dislocation and relocation into a new family and body politic, can create analytical avenues through which to expose this citizenship of the transnational adoptee for its conditional nature. Furthermore, through these analytical avenues,

others—including the family, and the adoptee herself—can potentially engage with and inhabit the histories and realities often erased by humanitarian narratives, however confusing and contradictory this process may be. The erasure of the subjectivity of African children within humanitarian frameworks is reflected, for example, in the humanitarian campaigns of Invisible Children, the organization perhaps most famous for organizing the Stop Kony campaign of 2012. As Alexandra Schultheis has argued while analyzing the organization's promotional videos, the prioritizing of white members of the organization and their journey into the 'heart of Africa' to save children in need only encourages viewers to identify with the white 'protagonists' rather than the African children featured (34). In an ironic echo of the organization's name, placing the experiences and viewpoints of the humanitarians inevitably implies that dominant humanitarian frameworks forged in unequal or unethical relations erase and subsume the subjectivity of the adoptee, placing them out of its line of visibility. The erasure, or perhaps management, of the adoptee's subjectivity is part of the terms of inclusion into the nation-state; however this management has greater implications that extend beyond the adoptee. The adoptee's conditional citizenship brings back into view those racialized bodies (and racialized children) against whom borders are closed, exposing the national preoccupation with children as central to the constitution of a cultural, national, and global identity. However, upon listening to the story of the adoptee, and upon examining their un-manageable subjectivity, we can begin not only to deconstruct the pedagogical framework that constructs identities and situates racialized others within essentialist categories, but also to imagine terrains of alterity that ethically reconnect colonial histories into global capitalist contexts.

In the following discussion, after I situate the conditional citizenship of the transnational adoptees within sociohistorical contexts of racialized inclusion and exclusion, I will offer a close

reading of an adoption documentary, *Girl, Adopted* (2013), for what the subjective experience of adoption can expose about the costs and contradictions of the terms of inclusion. The story of the adoptee and more specifically their un-manageable subjectivity itself disrupts the pedagogical framework that constructs diasporic identities and situates racialized others within essentialist, exclusionary categories. Furthermore, the un-containablility of the adoptee's identity allows us to imagine terrains of alterity that ethically reconnect colonial histories into global capitalist contexts. Through my analysis, thus, I hope to show how the inability of adopted children to fit neatly into the social categories needed to maintain the sociopolitical investments of the transnational nuclear family serves as the very means to disrupt the family model's often problematic political work.

Little Crises: Conditional Citizenship and the Excluded Children

Girl, Adopted, is the story of Weynsht, a dark-skinned Ethiopian girl who is adopted from an orphanage as a pre-teen by a large, white Christian fundamentalist American family. As she crosses international borders to live with her new family in Arkansas, she carries with her multiple historical, political, and social coordinates that cannot quite be subsumed within the affective economy of the transnational family. While in Arkansas, she attempts to re-define herself as an American, to understand her racial positionality within this intensely racialized landscape, and to connect with her new siblings and classmates even as these relationships threaten her sense of self-worth. She strives to be the 'good child' her adoptive white parents 'paid for' and expected, but as these attempts unravel, so too does the promise of multicultural, familial bliss offered by the promotional video that sold her. Indeed, through her everyday struggles for integration, it becomes clear through the documentary that the very interpersonal

interactions that are often left out of the larger, celebratory narratives promoted through figures such as Angelina Jolie and Princess Diana (Shome 2011) are in fact sites where global and historical relations of power can be excavated. As David Eng has argued, we must recognize not only that transnational adoption is discursively encumbered in the neoliberal rhetorics of personal choice, but also that these rhetorics work "in tandem with a domestic politics of colorblindness precisely to subsume race within the private sphere of the family and kinship relations…[and] to isolate and manage the private as a distinct and rarified zone outside of capitalist relations and racial exploitation, as well as dissociated from its domestic and global genealogies" (9-10). Eng refers to this as 'the racialization of intimacy'; however we can see a similar reading of affect's potential within the work of Ann Cvetkovich. In "Public Feelings," Cvetkovich argues that public histories, as well as *languages* of trauma and historical injury can be exhumed from within the affective and psychic domain. Recall from Chapter 3 those raped women, officially labelled 'war-heroines' by Bangladeshi national discourse, whose affective attachments to their infants (the products of rape) were perceived as obstacles to their inclusion into the nation (Mookherjee 2007). At the same time that Bangladesh sought to deal with, or more specifically, manage its own violent histories in order to construct itself publically as a nation, medical and legal officials ruled that the emotional attachment of raped women to their children was uncomfortable affect that did not fit within official narratives and had to be disappeared. As Cvetkovich reminds us, "[a]ffect is often managed in the public sphere through official discourses of recognition or commemoration that don't fully address everyday affects through legal measures (ranging from the abolition of slavery and segregation to affirmative action) that don't fully provide emotional justice" (465). The affective economies of humanitarianism and white, middle-class Northern motherhood, which I have explored in

Chapter 3, form part of the larger national discourses of global citizenship, multiculturalism, and universality; and certainly they seem to prioritize affective attachments. However, their casting of the relationship between mother and child within mythic ideals only calcifies the colonial and neoliberal legacies of these economies. It is through the minutiae of the everyday as we follow the transnational adoptee's attempts at re-alignment that we can come to "explore the affective legacy of racialized histories of genocide, slavery, colonization and migration" (464).

The tension that exists between publicly celebrated representations of transnational adoption and the affective complexities to be found within such families brings to the forefront the ways in which affective orientations work alongside, and sometimes in tension with, state structures and global economies. Though the transnational nuclear family acts as a symbol of Western, liberal multicultural modernity, its seemingly endless potential as a staging ground for global citizenship exists in contradiction to the fortification of border security against those children deemed risks to the nation. As we see with the calls for legal expediency to facilitate the adoption of Haitian children after the Earthquake, affective economies complicate categories of insider/outsider, allowing certain children to cross national borders. However, once adopted children cross these borders, they will only find themselves situated in a new landscape inundated with other borders and boundaries—racial, gendered, political etc.—produced through historical legacies of biopolitical regulation.

What kind of histories does Weynsht become encumbered in as a 'black' African child immigrating to America? What kind of legacies of racial categorization, of immigration regulation does she step into that must be excavated in any analysis of her everyday affective relations in America? To answer this, we must think about the ways in which America has funneled its anxieties surrounding the production and movement of racialized children into law.

Certainly, America's history of legislative policy has played a crucial part in shaping exclusionary discourses of American identity and citizenship. In America, legislative policies focusing on regulating movements of bodies across borders, as well as those preoccupied with the 'threat' of women's reproductive bodies and their children, helped to reinforce racialized boundaries that separated 'desirable' from 'undesirable' persons. Anti-miscegenation laws that "turned sex acts into race acts" (Koshy 1) and that sought to police sexual contact between races have their foundations in the American South and the institution of slavery. Miscegenation laws that prohibited white and black intermarriage[103] functioned as a strategy to perpetuate slavery by regulating the transmission of rights through generations, particularly the right to own property. As such, they inevitably involved the careful construction of racial identity, delineating those boundaries that would separate those deemed worthy of bearing such rights and those perceived as excluded from the realm of rights altogether (Courtney 2005; Roberts 1994).

For the purposes of this chapter, it is important to note here the centrality of children and racial identity to the continued maintenance of not only this discursive realm of rights and citizenship, but also the construction of American national identity. Laws that "rendered 'illegitimate [the children born of] Negro slaves and white masters'…determined the slave or free status of such children 'according to the condition of the mother'" (Courtney 263). Children produced through interracial 'unions' between white male slave owners and black slave women, most commonly through the rape of women, were still considered slaves and thus property of the slave owner (Frankenberg 73). On the other hand, the children born to white women and black men were considered free in some states while others were forced into indentured servitude

[103] The first anti-miscegenation law was created in 1661 in Maryland, prohibiting not only white-black, but also white-Indigenous marriages.

despite escaping classification as a 'slave' (Zack 79).[104] Since the establishment of America as a white settler nation involved political and cultural strategies to maintain patrilineal control and ownership over stolen Indigenous lands, policing the racialization of children's identities enabled a system of property transmission designed to ensure the white racial 'purity' of the nation while specifying the realm of rights and citizenship as a particularly white male economic space. As Ruth Frankenberg writes in *White Women, Race Matters*, "as much as laws prohibiting legitimated unions across race lines drew on cultural dimensions of racism, such laws also served to ensure the continued existence of an enslaved population and to restrict membership in the group with economic and political power" (73). The conception of membership within a national community of citizens is key; while the one drop rule managed the racial identity of interracial black-white offspring, banning them from the rights and privileges of whiteness, state legislations such as "The Pocahontas Exception" within Virginia's anti-miscegenation law allowed for the reclassification of Indigenous children as white, often times depending on their blood parentage (Koshy 4-5). Particularly in the case of Indigenous children, their classification as white, especially in the cases of white fathers and Indigenous mothers, worked towards legitimating white patrilineal claim over land ownership and other economic rights throughout the colonial period. Already we start to see a dichotomy arising out of this preoccupation with the racial classifications of children; in pursuit of the creation of a national identity, colonial and postcolonial legislation managed the diverse populations within the nation through managing the practices and consequences of their sexual reproduction at both a political and discursive level. National and societal borders were fortified by the production of not only 'desirable' and 'undesirable' bodies, but also, more specifically, desirable and undesirable children. Although

[104] Despite this, white women bearing children from sexual relations with black men were in many cases penalized and punished by the state for placing the system of ownership at risk. See Roberts, especially chapter 5.

eighteenth-century anti-miscegenation laws may have delineated insiders from outsiders within the context of slavery, over the course of hundreds of years, such laws evolved in structure and expanded to prohibit marriages between whites and various different races and ethnicities. At stake are the ideological boundaries of the nation, within which children must have a cohesive, singular identity that includes, though is not limited to, a stable, singular racial identity.

We must view Weynsht, an African child adopted into a white American family, as part of the fraught racial history and continuing legacy in which the regulated movement of racialized bodies across social and political borders puts at stake the constitution and fortification of these ideological boundaries. Appadurai notes in *Fear of Small Numbers* that anxieties surrounding the entrance of racialized bodies into national borders has become increasingly intense in the present era of global capitalism. In this period of ever intensifying insecurities due to the global economy, the process of demarcating 'desirable' from 'undesirable' bodies at points of entry into the nation has become belied by a latent, bubbling anger against those minorities and immigrants that seem to stand in as the symbol of the uncertainties of globalization (9).[105] That children can be the targets of such anti-immigration anxieties is made evident by recent reported cases of immigration of unaccompanied children. Such cases in particular unveil the tensions between discursive paradigms arising out of anxiety and fear of cultural identity and those particularly preoccupied with the vulnerability and innocence of childhood. In the first half of 2014, the influx of Central American children across the Southwestern American border received intense national media coverage. Between October 2013 and August 2014, U.S. Border Patrol caught over 60,000 children, often escaping extremely violent sociopolitical contexts in Honduras or poverty in El Salvador and Guatemala and attempting to cross the border illegally.

[105] In this vein he argues that the Rwandan Genocide, in which a Hutu majority sought to ethnically cleanse the Tutsi 'alien' minority from the country as an extremely violent form of community-building (Appadurai 7).

Unaccompanied by adults, large groups of children crossed into the United States in high enough numbers that President Obama called the phenomenon an "urgent humanitarian situation" (Obama qtd. in Park, *New York Times*, 2014).

The declaration of the event as a humanitarian concern points towards the various ideological and political tensions at work in this case, as made evident by the June 2014 news report produced by *ABC News* entitled "The Invisible Crisis: Small Children Crossing the US Border On Their Own." Anchor David Muir certainly frames the situation as a humanitarian concern when he opens with a description of the children crossing through the border "without their parents," only to be "trapped in limbo." Before the report begins, images displayed on the screen show large groups of children "sleeping on what looks like foil"—and indeed rows of the foil catch the attention first, shot just far enough away that you cannot see the faces of the children themselves (though the faces of the children are later purposefully blurred in subsequent images most likely for legal reasons). A montage of images scrolls across the screen of the children huddled inside small, confining rooms and even cages at a U.S Government border facility. As mentioned in the narration, the images were captured by Republican Texas Congressman Henry Cuellar and made public to the media in order to highlight the deplorable conditions labelled "gruesome" by a church official interviewed by ABC. "They're not prisoners," insists the exasperated pastor, "they're children." Indeed, according to the news report, over eighty percent of the children lacked adequate food and water during their prolonged stay in the facility. And yet, the audiovisual strategies designed, perhaps, to illicit humanitarian concern from the viewers, cannot be extricated from the rhetoric and representational paradigms permeating the short report. We see in the images 'hordes' of faceless children huddled together, much in line with dehumanizing and other-ing strategies of depicting racialized bodies in

televisual media (Shohat and Stam 119-20); and although this may accurately reflect the conditions faced by these children, the images resonate ideologically with the characterization of the children as part of "a hidden America just now discovered," as narrated by Muir. The supposed gap between children and prisoners is called into question when the children are framed here as a group of 'them' illegally "crossing *our*…border" [emphasis mine]. The news report belongs to ABCs "Hidden America" series, but the phrasing seems too uncomfortably close to the kind of rhetoric that casts racialized others as a kind of vague, hidden threat lurking outside the purview of unsuspecting American citizens. Without delving into the political and cultural climate that led to dilapidation of facilities meant to house immigrant children, without a larger engagement with the global neoliberal imperatives that created conditions of extreme violence and poverty from which the children needed to escape, the newscast, painting the picture of an America with "open," but also ultimately "overwhelmed arms," runs the risk of ideologically validating the imaginations of those already politically predisposed to viewing even children as 'undesirable' bodies. Indeed, buses filled with unaccompanied children were often times met with hordes of immigration opponents attempting to block their entry into the country with loud displays of angry protests (Greenblatt, *National Public Radio* n.pag).

I call attention to these tensions to make explicit the exclusions obscured by the emotional vectors of transnational adoption; that is to say that while transnational adoption acts as a privileged form of immigration, the adopted children welcomed into Western homes are always ghosted by those children left, in a figurative and sometimes literal sense, outside the borders. The children whose acceptance into the waiting arms of (white) American nuclear families suggests the nation's imperial sovereignty and liberal modernity are doubled by those deemed unfit for this acceptance.

Yet, as we will see in the documentary, Weynsht's acceptance into her family is not freely given. The borders open to her are open only insofar as she is able to accept her hegemonic role within her family and within the nation as a helpful sister, dutiful daughter, American citizen, 'black' American, model immigrant, and humanitarian success-story. Although this is what her family expected upon her arrival, what they are faced with instead are Weynsht's "uncomfortable emotions" (Brydon 1003). These emotions, which are at times expressed in spite of herself through her words and actions, contradict her family's attempts to 'fix' Weynsht into particular gendered, racial, and political categories of citizenship and expose the ways in which her citizenship is conditional upon her falling in line with the kind of affective orientations that create communities of insiders while hanging over their heads the threat of becoming outsiders.

In the following sections, therefore, I will pay close attention to Weynsht's 'uncomfortable emotions' for what they can tell us about the histories and contemporary realities in danger of being subsumed within larger celebratory narratives of the transnational family. By analyzing their navigation of a new familial and cultural landscape, I hope to show how the inability of adopted children to fit neatly into the social categories needed to maintain the sociopolitical investments of the transnational nuclear family serves as the very means to undo, or at least challenge, the family model's often problematic political work. Indeed, the processes of adoption and transnational movement dislodge the adoptee from any kind of fixed positionality; however, rather than locating the transnational adoptee as occupying a liminal space of 'belonging nowhere,' we can instead see the adoptee as a figure capable of occupying multiple locations, multiple histories, and positions. By their very inability to properly fit into prescribed roles, the transnational adoptee complicates familial structures, but heterogeneity of

this sort also has psychic consequences that ultimately offer insights into which the affective orientations of the everyday suture private to public, local to global, personal to political.

Girl, Adopted: Considerations

Firsthand accounts of adoption have long played a role in building a corpus of scholarly research on adoption, though the majority of these accounts come from Asian, and particularly Korean, adoptees. This is largely because of the long history of Korean adoption; many of the children adopted in the fifties began to tell their own stories once they reached adulthood through interviews, documentaries, and writings; this has inevitably informed much of adoption scholarship (Eng 2003; Hübinette 2006; Kim 2009). I follow suit by analyzing the documentary *Girl, Adopted*. Originally airing on PBS's Global Voices in 2013, the documentary details the struggles of a teen Ethiopian girl, Weynsht, after being adopted into a white family in the American South. In the film, Weynsht, like many adoptees before her, returns home to Ethiopia accompanied by her parents, in an effort to resolve the tensions in her identity.

This examination of Weynsht's challenging positionality and narrative development involves an engagement with ethnographer Barbara Yngvesson's influential work on adoption, most specifically her analysis of the production of orphan identity, and her theorization of the return. In regards to the latter, she investigates what she calls the "myth of return" by studying firsthand accounts of "roots trips," the quintessential narrative of an adoptee's search for her supposed place of 'origin' ("Going 'Home'" 9). She first investigates these narratives in her seminal essay, "Going 'Home': Adoption, Loss of Bearings, and the Mythology of Roots." According to Yngvesson, there are two prominent stories of adoption still circulating in popular discourse: the story of the 'freestanding' child and of the 'rooted' child. The former, as she

argues, was promoted by "adoption practices in the 1960s and 1970s" (8). The latter insists upon the child's rootedness in another land. Though it seems on the surface that roots trips support the latter, as Yngvesson argues, they in fact call into question the ideological core underlying both of these narratives, placing them on the same continuum in regards to Western philosophical notions of identity (9). While I place my analysis within the context of this argument, I also attempt to separate my work by revealing how the transnational adoptee's ability to challenge Western philosophical narratives of identity and development can call into question humanitarian narratives of African (sub)humanity. In challenging such narratives, the adoptee's subjective experiences can radically expose the tenets of conditional citizenship while bringing back into visibility those African immigrant and domestic black children laden with a colonial legacy and suffering under the current neoliberal regime.

It is important to note that firsthand accounts cannot offer the 'truth' of the adoptee's experiences. The documentary as a media platform through which one's past experiences and memories can be consumed by a viewer requires us to consider the ways in which the experiences recounted are enmeshed in questions of authenticity, (self-)representation, and objectivity. As Susan Egan explains, documentaries are indeed similar to fictional films in their constructedness. Both involve "the crude objectivity of the camera eye with the editorial skills that cut and paste to create narrative images" (88). As with written testimonials and autobiographies, the subject's attempts at self-representation split between various textual layers that implicate the medium, processes of production and distribution, and consumption. "[N]ot unlike the written text," she writes, "film implicates the viewer here and now in the auditorium in interpretation of the then and there of the filmmaking. Like conventional autobiography furthermore, documentary film interacts with other genres in its medium" (88). As with other

films, the visual component becomes a key feature in the audience's acceptance of the narrative in a way similar to the consumption of the photograph. Language obviously forms part of the process whereby the viewer interprets the succession of imagery displayed in the film; however, the image, in the words of Roland Barthes, still represents "the 'perfect analogon' of reality" (Barthes qtd. in Egan 89). Egan argues in this vein that film presents to the viewer a kind of objective reality: "[f]ilm is peculiarly able to present this quiddity, this presence, because…cinema is a language that differs from verbal language in seeming to have no code…Cinema mimics the natural and real, effacing its hidden structures by reference to the visually empirical world out there" (89).

That the documentary seems to present the natural and the real in the face of the processes of its construction and distribution already calls into question its status as a vehicle of truth. Leigh Gilmore has written on the complexities of the self-representation involved in writing one's (specifically traumatic) experiences. In her book, *The Limits of Autobiography: Trauma and Testimony*, Gilmore notes that filtering one's psychic wounds, memories, and contradictions through the constrictive narrative form is nearly impossible, as is presenting an authentic self through the mesh of representation. She asks, "[h]ow can one tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, when facts, truth and memory combine in the representation of trauma to undermine rather than strengthen representativeness" (19)? Trauma in particular eludes language and representation—and this certainly includes the potential trauma involved in what David Eng calls "the psychic economies of transnational adoption" (2). The form becomes too limited: "the portals are too narrow," Gilmore writes, "and the demands too restrictive" (3). This, then, complicates the act of analyzing testimony told through media forms, particularly in regards to discussing its political significance. Given the limitations and

constructedness of the form, how much weight can one place on the testimony being given? Furthermore, how can one listen to and view the testimonial without becoming merely a voyeur to and a consumer of these experiences?[106] The official summary of *Girl, Adopted* does seem to hint at some of these potential problems. Describing the documentary as a "contemporary-coming of age story" with the adoptee at its center, Weynsht as "irrepressibly adolescent," the description already places Weynsht's testimony, itself inadequately representable, within a language of marketing aimed at pulling in viewers desiring to consume a certain 'genre.' Going back to Yngvesson, the roots trip narrative is common. A canon of such narratives already exists, told through various mediums from documentary film to autobiographical texts (Sorensen 155). The production of such stories cannot be extricated from the demand for them, a demand as market-based as it is pedagogically-driven. The potential for the filmmakers of the documentary to place the adoptee's testimony within easily recognizable and thus marketable narrative arcs perhaps requires further scrutiny and caution when investigating the claims made in the documentary.

Yet the idea of scrutiny does seem to privilege the viewer in a way that, particularly with regards to a marginalized documentary subject, re-inscribes the very unequal power relations the analysis is attempting to challenge. Gilmore notes: "the judgments [these forms] can invite may be too similar to forms in which trauma was experienced. When the contest is over who can tell

[106] Rebecca Adelman warns of the process whereby viewers of documented suffering become complicit in the presented violence in *Beyond the Checkpoint*. Discussing the various visual apparatuses that, as she argues, has shaped conceptions of American citizenship since the War on Terror, Adelman calls attention to Abu Ghraib torture photos, arguing that although activists have taken previously concealed visual information as part of the activism on the assumption that "informed citizens will hold the state accountable" (21), the consumption of the spectacle of violence on display in these photos actually form part of the violence, re-victimizing the prisoners. Likewise, in *Scenes of Subjection*, Saidiya Hartman agrees with Sontag about the desensitization to other people's suffering that can follow the consumption of photos displaying violence—though, she distances herself from Sontag's paradigm by explaining how the circulation of images of black suffering (for example lynching photos) is itself complicit in the original violence it seeks to document.

the truth, the risk of being accused of lying (or malingering, or inflating, or whining) threatens the writer into continued silence" (3). Voices of the marginalized are always already called into question when speaking to their experiences, especially when one considers, as Spivak does, the "ideological epistemic violence" of "the heterogeneous project to constitute the colonial subject as Other. This project is also the asymmetrical obliteration of the trace of that Other in its precarious Subjectivity" (31).

My aim in watching and analyzing this documentary is still to interrogate the work, while taking note of the various layers of construction and the inadequacy of representation, in a way that does not seek to undermine the testimony, but understands it as part of an intertextual dialogue with the stories of other adoptees that have informed the scholarship this analysis is indebted to. Gilmore gestures towards this process with respect to serial autobiography. As she writes, one must already consider the autobiographical subject as split, in this case, between "the subject-who-writes" and "the subject in the text," both of which, she argues, "are joined to each other in this emergence-through-enactment, and form a representation figure capable of signifying beyond any single text" (97-8). This allows for a reading across texts, a tracing of the shared preoccupations existing within them. "These links," she continues, "may be simply thematic; or, situations, scenes, and images may recur…in this way, serial autobiography can be read within the ruins of textual memory. Among these marred, effaced, or revised elements, a larger self-representational project becomes visible" (98). Aiming beyond the confines of 'truth' and 'accuracy' thus allows us to see autobiographical work as that which can not only illuminate the relationship between trauma, identity and representation, but also between "personality identity and one's relation to a family, a region, a nation; and of citizenship and a politics of representativeness (and exclusion)" (12).

Referring to Korean adoptee memoirs, Eli Park Sorensen labels the stereotypical roots/search narrative as a "narrative of consolidation" (166). The 'three-act structure' features the adoptee first at home in the West, haunted by an imagined 'original home' and questions about her identity. These unsettled emotions prompt her to journey back to the country of origin and, after finding the answer she needs, she returns home with a more secure sense of self. This narrative, in following an almost *Bildungsroman* script, serves "the ideological message that…the country of birth…has no real, determining or lasting meaning for adoptees, and that their true home is in the west; that their true (and in some cases only) family is their adoptive family" (166). This documentary draws upon this structure to an extent. The film begins with Weynsht's adoption, and shows moments of initial transnational familial bliss before disrupting it with Weynsht's uncertainty, frustration, and insecurity. Weynsht is shown entering into this period of uncertainty fairly quickly in the film; however, even after her roots journey, the uncertainty persists, almost in spite of various attempts by certain members of the family and even the film itself to neutralize it towards the end. These unresolved tensions reveal Weynsht's identity as spilling over multiple, uncontained loci while simultaneously dragging her back towards an imagined unified center. My analysis will first unpack the center: the dimensions of Weynsht's family and community within which she is meant to fit through the performance of a (neo)colonial, neoliberal bourgeois identity. Then, after contextualizing the conditions for and costs of Weynsht's movement across America's borders and membership within her new community of citizens, I will show how Weynsht herself challenges these frameworks through her ambivalent attempts to understand her own identity.

Producing the 'Adopted Child': The Single Story

Though Weynsht's story begins with her adoption, her relocation to Arkansas, and her attempts to re-orient herself around American national and familial ideals, I start my analysis of Weynsht's complex attachments by briefly focusing on a key scene that occurs in the second half of the documentary. At this point in the film, Weynsht has returned to Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, the city from which Chris and Melanie Ward adopted Weynsht as a thirteen-year old from her orphanage two years prior. Her father Chris and two of his biological daughters accompany her on her roots journey. During this scene, the four are travelling in a packed van through the city streets when young street beggars rush up to the van, sticking their arms through windows. The following exchange stands as perhaps the only moment in the film that attempts to explicitly and adequately address the vast global inequalities situating the white American Ward family and their adopted Ethiopian daughter in relation to Ethiopia and its inhabitants. Once the beggars appear, the father, seemingly unperturbed, brings out a stack of money: "I came prepared," he tells the girls. Despite his cool demeanor, however, Weynsht is embarrassed at the presence and persistence of the beggars, apologizing as if on their behalf. "It's okay to give money though," Chris reassures her. "That's a great thing." Tellingly, he adds: "there has to be a better solution though—a more permanent solution than just giving money." However, what this solution might be remains unspoken: it remains as a question, existing only outside the purview of the documentary. "It's so upsetting," Weynsht responds, though it is not clear whether she is referring to the circumstances of the beggars, or her own 'shameful' identification with them, as upsetting.

Chris's statement at least gestures towards an understanding on his part that the socioeconomic inequalities that exist between his family and the beggars is too complex to be

relieved permanently by individual, privatized gestures such as giving money. Even if further and deeper conversation on the topic took place during their trip, the film does not depict this; indeed the film spends very little time framing Weynsht's adoption outside the confines of the private and psychic space of the family and the members within it. Much of this has to do with the directional choices made by the filmmakers. There is no outside narration within the documentary, nor any kind of visible or audible interference from the filmmakers. In an opening still frame, they do present some context to help situate the narrative. However, the simple white letters placed against a black backdrop only explain that "[s]ince 1999, American families have adopted more than 230,000 children internationally" before the narrative begins with a shot of the Ward family's rural home in Pyatt, Arkansas. The film focuses on the family, interspersing moments of their everyday lives with personal interviews given by the members—primarily, Weynsht and her parents. These interviews were conducted over the course of several years, and so the viewer is privy to the family's experiences and feelings even before Weynsht and the Wards meet. Their perspectives, as implicated in sociopolitical and ideological paradigms as they may be, do much of the work in producing the narrative.

In one such interview at the beginning of the film, Weynsht's adoptive mother, Melanie, describes the family's reasoning for adopting despite already having five biological children, following the humanitarian script very closely: "When I was ten and the famine in Ethiopia was going on, I was watching it on TV and I remember just bawling my eyes out and saying at ten years old to my mom: 'I really, I wish I had a million dollars 'cause I would go and I would help those people in Ethiopia.'" Though there is not much attempt by the documentary to place the narrative within a concrete timeline of events, this interview suggests that Melanie is discussing the famine of the early-to-mid-eighties. The image of Melanie bursting into tears seems in line

with the outpouring of humanitarian affect that came to characterize the West's response to the famine, immortalized perhaps by the song *We Are the World*. International media coverage of the event was integral in depoliticizing the famine, mobilizing what Alexander de Waal refers to as "disaster tourism" (82) to create the now easily recognizable 'famine story': decontextualized shots of the most destitute areas in the country featuring inhabitants constructed as helpless by the media's stressing of "the hunger and dependence of the people and the importance of relief" (82).

This is not to dismiss Melanie's emotional reaction to the coverage of what was a harrowing situation, nor to downplay the socioeconomic conditions of the country. According to the United States Agency of International Development, despite its consistent economic growth in recent years, Ethiopia is one of the poorest countries in the world with thirty percent of the inhabitants living below the poverty line, receiving less than $1.25 USD per day, despite its fast growing population of around 94 million (USAID 2015). A report back in 2003 estimated that over thirteen percent of all Ethiopian children were orphans, many of whom had lost their parents to diseases such as malaria and HIV/AIDS. Many of these orphans, like Weynsht as she explains in the documentary, are taken care of by extended family for as long as possible, though a portion of them are forced to live on the streets (Chan et al 599-600). Given this situation, Melanie's and other individuals' desire to intervene is perhaps understandable.

Yet there are crucial absences that must be illuminated. Indeed, since Melanie, Chris, and Weynsht's interviews build much of the narrative, to understand the complexities of their relationship, their testimonials and experiences must be contextualized. As de Waal argues, during the period of famine, international media's etiolated, depoliticized presentation of the lived realities of Ethiopians was used politically by both the American and Ethiopian

governments. “The principal cause of the famine was the counter-insurgency campaign of the Ethiopian army and air force in Tigray and north Wollo during 1980-85,” explains de Waal. “The zone of severe famine coincided with the war zone, and the phases of the developing famine corresponded with major military actions” (115). Restricting trade, relocating populations (including farmers), blocking supplies from other countries, and the denial of relief programs to non-government-controlled areas were part of the military strategies that, in hindering the distribution of food, created the conditions for famine. Emotional appeals for aid through the media became part of the American government’s cover up of the Ethiopian government’s use of starvation as a tool of war and their own lack of intervention. Further, the U.S. could maintain an international profile at the forefront of the humanitarian effort to save Ethiopia (365).

The media thus implicated a largely oblivious American population in the political conflict thought to be wholly separated from their daily lives; however this was made possible only through exploiting an already existing imperial and colonial epistemological framework. ‘Saving,’ in de Waal’s words, became “a suitably non-political way in which Western donors, especially the US, could channel aid to communist Ethiopia” (127). As David Jefferess has argued, dominant media representations appeal directly to “an image of donor identity constructed in relation to a needy other” (3). Melanie’s interview initially presents her relationship with Weynsht as exactly this, though the emotional language subsumes it within a more affective realm. “It happened with me having a dream about a little foreign baby and I woke up and I knew that that was my baby,” she recounts. Here, Melanie introduces Weynsht’s adoption to the viewer as a process that began from a dream; their introduction as Evangelical Christians also corroborates the framing of this narrative. She continues: “I told Chris that we need to adopt and he said ‘Oh, no. No, no we don’t.’ And I said, well you pray about it. You pray

about it. And he did and it took a long time and finally he said, yeah, you know, I think that you're right. I think we need to adopt." Weynsht's adoption here is not only decontextualized and depoliticized; it is, in effect, detached from an earthly context. Melanie's recounting of this, and of her desire to help as a child—a story that she ends with her mother's assurance "if that's your desire, you will"—depicts Weynsht's adoption as almost miraculous—a prophecy fulfilled.

But Weynsht's story must be situated within the context of the neoliberal conditions, governmental policies, and disproportionate global flows through Ethiopia that made possible her availability as an adoptee. Considering that Ethiopia has become one of the largest sending nations of adoptees in the world (Gibbons and Rotabi 2011), we must take into account the fact that children in developing countries have borne the brunt of the harsh conditions brought about by the predatory processes of globalization, particularly orphaned children. According to a 2010 report given by the United Nations General Assembly, "in developing countries more than a third of the children under five suffer from stunting and a quarter suffer from underweight and severe malnutrition before they enter primary school, with, in some cases, irreparable damage to their cognitive development and long-term impacts on their physical health and development" (UNGA 2010 qtd in Gibbons and Rotabi 106). However, despite Ethiopia housing a great number of vulnerable children, the process whereby children are sent to receiving nations can be scrutinized along the lines of the exploitable loopholes left by oversights in international legislation. *The Hague Convention on the Protection of Children and Co-Operation in Respect of Intercountry Adoption* regulates adoption practices between two official Convention nations. Therefore, "while the USA may be a party to the Convention, adoptions that occur with non-Convention nations fall outside of the regulations of the HCI" and are thus "vulnerable to unscrupulous individuals and agencies" (Gibbons and Rotabi 109-10). This is also due in part to

the lack of a centralized government and legal infrastructure required to oversee and regulate adoption or respond to the increasing demands from receiving nations (110).

The audience is never given a sense that the Ward's adoption of Weynsht was brought about through unscrupulous means. However, this is due in part to the filmmaker's choice not to detail or mention in the documentary the legal process by which Melanie and Chris come to adopt her. The film shows more of an emotional journey beginning with Melanie's description of how they came to adopt. One of the only parts of the adoption process shown in the documentary is the choosing of the adoptee. In the scene, the couple sits in a dark room with the lights turned off, watching a video produced by the adoption agency that runs the Layla House orphanage. The close-up perspective privileges their subjective experience in viewing the children, privatizing the process further as Melanie's voice narrates: "We felt a sense of calling. We were just praying for all these kids—this little group of kids that were waiting so long for families…We feel like everything happens for a reason and in perfect timing and we think that we were meant for her and she was meant for us."

It cannot be ignored that as one of the African nations that has not signed the international agreement, Ethiopia has in many ways been affected by the strategies of some adoption agencies to circumvent the legalities of adoption. Often, adoption agencies that do not meet international standards purposefully target non-Convention countries (Gibbons and Rotabi 110). Many such agencies have switched their focus to Ethiopia as a result of Guatemala, formerly a prominent sending nation, closing adoptions in 2008 before re-opening with more restrictive legislation. As Karen Smith Rotabi explains, Ethiopia became a popular adoption source among U.S. agencies and American families because, despite the country possessing some level of organization with regards to managing adoption practice, the system was expedient

and the children available for adoption were, perhaps in contradiction to stereotypical media depictions, fairly healthy. After the Haiti Earthquake of 2010, many parents looking to adopt a Haitian child were encouraged instead to look to Ethiopia (Joyce 136). Many adoption agencies would also advertise to hopeful parents the cost of their services, which was relatively less expensive in the country due to lack of restrictions. While there are most likely well-meaning and responsibly functioning organizations existing in the country, unequal global networks leave the children open for exploitation. According to Rotabi, some agencies that have met with legal problems and complaints elsewhere are flourishing in Ethiopia (Rotabi n.pag).[107]

The faith-based dimension of the Ward's adoption of Weynsht, along with the involvement of their church and evangelical community, prompts further questions and considerations. As Kathryn Joyce explains in *The Child Catchers: Rescue, Trafficking, and the New Gospel of Adoption*, the evangelical adoption movement has often involved the circumvention of national and international laws by Christian organizations and the families who employ their services along with receiving economic support from their churches. To Joyce, the explosion of faith-based NGOs facilitating intercountry adoption is troubling insofar as their expressed goal of conducting third world children's economic, social, and spiritual conversion obscures the methods through which many enter countries. As she explains, often faith-based organizations will enter initially through missionary and educational initiatives, only to facilitate adoptions after successful entrance into the country. However, the colonial and religious

[107] Layla House, the orphanage from which Weynsht was adopted, has been met with accusations not only of sexual abuse, but of failing to provide adequate conditions and medications for the orphans under their care. The orphanage is run by an American adoption agency, Adoption Advocates International, which has placed many Ethiopian children into the care of very large, white Christian fundamentalist families (the director of the agency is from one such family). See: Adoptions Advocates International 2012, and Graff, "They Steal Babies, Don't They?"

mandates of "saving" create powerful incentives for possible extra-legal activities and falsifications (xiii).

The encroaching power of non-governmental organizations into the state politics of African nations is part of the "transnational governmentality" characterizing the condition of the African postcolony in the globalized era; the weakened bureaucratic control brought about by the consequences of neoliberal politics leaves areas open to privatizing forces of transnational organizations that function to provide political and social services: "[l]ike the privately secured mineral extraction enclave, the humanitarian emergency zone is subject to a form of government that cannot be located within a national grid, but is instead spread across a patchwork of transnationally networked, noncontiguous bits" (Ferguson, *Global Shadows* 40). The ideology of necessary rule-bending extends to top levels of government, as indicated by a telling statement uttered by Whitney Reitz of the US Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS): "At the 2010 Adoption Policy Conference in New York Whitney Reitz, the staffer credited with crafting the 'humanitarian parole' program, was reported by *Huffington Post* as saying 'The idea was to help the kids. And if we overlooked Hague, I don't think I'm going to apologize'" (Joyce 20). As shown through the case of Medefind, the faith-based initiative operating under the mandate of "rallying Christians to address what has come to be known as the 'orphan crisis,'" evangelical NGOs can work in concert with federal administrations to further the privatization of (global) social services (44). As Alexander de Waal warns, because of the lack of restrictions that can be placed upon NGOs, "literally anyone can start [one], obtain funds by public appeal or other means, and try their hand at running feeding centres, clinics, or orphanages…The lack of regulation leaves the NGO section open to manipulation" (81). And just as Western actors may be implicated in this potentially exploitative terrain, so too are African actors. Following the

explosion of interest in Ethiopia's children, Ethiopian agents began working more closely with adoption agencies, exchanging children for thousands of dollars: "Imagine what that sum of money does in a country like Ethiopia where people make $300 to $500 a year. All of a sudden someone receives $5000. That's ten annual incomes. Nearly everyone is corrupt for ten incomes" (Hoogeveen qtd in Joyce 136). The Ethiopian government has also taken advantage of the influx of adoption agencies entering their country by demanding that adoption agencies that seek to conduct their services must also, in exchange, donate relief money and services, including building schools and hospitals (135). Orphans are thus caught between the various agendas of national and international, government and non-government actors.

The viewer is never shown the exact methods through which the Wards adopted Weynsht, nor are these global networks and their implications explicitly stated. However, the documentary's focus on the emotional journey of the Wards brings these questions uncomfortably to the surface. One moment, Melanie and Chris are watching videos of children in a dark room thinking of whom to select. The next moment, they are in Ethiopia. Their meeting with Weynsht is foregrounded by shots of Addis Ababa in which the viewer is shown images of white parental figures hugging Ethiopian children in the orphanage's school. The warm embraces continue when Melanie and Chris meet Weynsht. Then, after meeting the other orphanage children with whom Weynsht shares a tearful goodbye, they are back in Arkansas to begin their new life as a family. Because of the documentary's pinpoint focus on their subjective experience and testimonials, hints at the larger contexts within which they are mired must be exhumed from within the silences; and in fact, this focus on the emotional vectors of family provides analytical channels through which the symbolic boundaries of this kinship model can be related, as it necessarily must be, to planetary concerns.

Interviews and exchanges throughout the documentary seem to reveal the neoliberal undercurrents of not only the imperial mandate of saving the economic poor in the Global South, but also the nuclear family at its center. Chris's reasons for finally adopting Weynsht, along with hinting at Christian preoccupations with spiritual salvation, echo the neoliberal conflation of democracy and equality with the market logic of exchange: "We've been blessed to have been born in the greatest country in the world. And so to whom much is given, much is expected…We have such a responsibility to do all that we can for our fellow man." In Ethiopia, over a series of interviews, then orphan Weynsht and another female orphan describe their reasons behind their desire to be adopted, revealing an ideological investment in America's globalized self-depiction as a liberal democracy. Weynsht's assertion that "in America, they're raised with freedom" coincides with her friend's more tempered confession that despite any potential problems that may arise with her hypothetical new family, the economic differences between the two countries inevitably make the latter country the better potential home. Later at the end of the documentary, when speaking to a group of students, Weynsht admits that while they were orphans, the children, from their socioeconomic position, whole-heartedly thought of America as "heaven." Not just the parents, but also the children, from their own socioeconomic positions, invest in the ideological paradigms characterizing Western liberal modernity.

The promise of economic prosperity begins to be fulfilled the moment Weynsht meets her parents. After a tearful hug of greetings, the next significant gesture made on the part of the parents is to give their newly adopted daughter a necklace and bracelet. Melanie tells Weynsht that the gift is from her new sisters, and Chris adds that they also have clothes for her, which Melanie excitedly corroborates. That commodities are immediately given to Weynsht as a symbol of love to solidify this new kinship formation as well as an act of relief that gestures

towards the intermingling of emotional and economic vectors underlying their relationship. As I have mentioned in the previous chapter, the notion of exchange permeates the process of adoption such that the perceived altruism of baby-giving and adoption has uncomfortably close ties with baby-stealing and trafficking. Placing value on the child, who is supposed to be 'priceless,' opens up ethical quandaries for parents and agencies. Nonetheless, "it is accepted as common…sense by the public and many adoptees" (Yngvesson, "Gift Child" 234). Chris's discussion of his community's involvement in the adoption reveals this uneasy connection. After asking Weynsht how she felt upon coming to their church for the first time, he explains to the camera: "it was really a community effort to get Weynsht to America…it was a community coming together to, you know, contribute what they could…and they all shared in the happiness that we felt when we brought her here."

It is important to note first the language of community and its echoes of citizenship in Chris's words. This is where a closer focus on region helps in the unpacking of the relationship between Weynsht, her new family, her new community, and her new nation. In stark contrast to the Conservative protests launched against the Central American children desiring to cross the Southern American border, Chris's quote depicts a rural community's willingness and desire to welcome a foreign child into their space. Arkansas, a conservative state known for being part of America's Bible Belt,[108] has a history of immigration belied by white supremacy.[109] After the Civil War ended, with the resultant loss of able-bodied men and the northern migration of newly freed African Americans, the state launched many initiatives to attract a new labour force

[108] A Gallup pole in 2012 also listed Arkansas as one of the ten most conservative states in the country (Hickey, "And Now Here" n.pag).
[109] A recent controversy involving an Arkansas town's prominent displaying of white supremacist billboards sponsored by the Klu Klux Klan reveals the state's continuing racial tensions ("New KKK billboard in Arkansas causes stir" n.pag).

through immigration. The forming of the Arkansas Immigrant Aid Society (AIAS) in 1865, however, stressed the importance of bringing immigrants from Europe, namely Germany, Switzerland, and Sweden, for the explicit purpose of maintaining a "Caucasian majority" (Watkins 38).[110] In 1980, the state reacted with vitriol to the influx of illegal Cuban refugees into the state during what came to be known as the Mariel Boatlift Crisis, voting out in retaliation then Governor Bill Clinton (Hulse 2014).[111] In the recent decade, various police agencies in the state have been working with customs and immigration agencies to push for tougher anti-immigration measures against the growing Hispanic community; and true to the state's anti-government leanings, measures to keep racialized bodies outside of their borders have often circumvented official federal immigration laws (*The Economist* n.pag).

However, despite dominant sociopolitical conditions in Arkansas, communities within the state can and have shown complexity in their dealing with foreign or immigrant bodies, as with the case of the residents of Petit Jean, Arkansas, who reacted angrily over the removal of illegal Mexican labourers in an immigrant raid in 2005. It is possible that the outcry was partially due to losing part of their labour force, or to the interference of the federal government in community affairs. However, a sense of loss and indignation permeated interviews of the residents regarding the issue. The county sheriff told *The Los Angeles Times*: "We take them into our public schools. We accept them into our churches. They play on our football, soccer teams…And then one day Immigration comes in and sweeps them all away" (Tucker qtd. in Hennessy-Fisk 2006). The adoption of Weynsht into the community of Pyatt likewise reveals a

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[110] These initiatives later extended to Black and Chinese immigrants when earlier attempts at drawing European immigrants were not sufficiently successful. The arbitrariness of boundary creation exposes the delineation of citizenship as a feature of Eurocentric biopolitical state power. See, for instance, Watkins, "Efforts to Encourage Immigration to Arkansas," and Tsai "These Chinese in Arkansas."

[111] The Mariel exiles were given the legal name of "excludable aliens" by the federal government rather than refugees, indicating their conditional citizenship: these persons, not yet citizens or legal residents, were considered to be "on parole" meaning that upon committing a crime they could be sent back to Cuba or jailed (LeMoyne n.pag).

community structure of belonging that challenges the dominant conception of racial minority immigrants being either a threat or a source of manual labour.

At the same time, though Weynsht is not performing manual labour for the community, she is performing social, affective labour that is part of the exchange between the orphanage and the community. As Chris said, the community contributed whatever money they could and as a result "shared in the happiness" of her arrival. David Jefferess's indictment of World Vision comes to mind here. He has argued bluntly that the organization "sells peace of mind" (17), noting that the racialized, foreign poor act as objects "through which the sponsor/consumer may find satisfaction and fulfilment" (4). Of course, Jefferess here does not account for the potential benefit for the sponsored; in lieu of the macro-economic and sociopolitical systemic changes that would need to occur in order to improve the conditions for sponsored children, privatized aid can also provide temporary relief and can indeed threaten Western power structures through new affective attachments made possible by these connections (which I will elaborate upon while analyzing the affective relations between Weynsht and her adoptive parents). However, it is important to note that the social capital of the adoptee, in carrying with it the expectation of fulfillment and happiness, further entrenches Weynsht's relationship with her family and community into a privatized market language that emerges later in the film when Weynsht returns to Ethiopia. Her return to Ethiopia illuminates the neoliberal framing of kinship as it collides with conditions of global inequality. The extreme poverty of the nation awkwardly 'intrudes' upon Weynsht's roots journey at various points in the film. As mentioned earlier, in Ethiopia, at different times, Weynsht responds to beggars by giving money to them. In one instance, Weynsht comes across a beggar while showing Chris and her two adoptive sisters around her old neighborhood. After they continue on, an angry voice can be heard in the

background invading their private, family moment. It is from a pedestrian on the street, and though the camera, following the family, shifts too quickly to focus too long on bystanders, the film subtitles the angry interjection occurring off screen: “Why the hell is she showing our neighborhood to these people? She’s not even trying to get them to give us money!”

The interjection forces Weynsht’s roots trip momentarily into the realm of the absurd. Weynsht’s personal need to find herself and reconnect with her family by recovering a unified identity through her interactions with the people and the land suddenly must share narrative space with the country’s economic deprivation in a way that does not position the American visitors as benevolent. Instead, in that moment, Weynsht’s need to find herself seems suddenly self-serving, revealing her distance from the inhabitants despite her attempts to reconnect with them. Weynsht’s roots journey becomes exposed as at least partially a performance of a (neo)colonial, market identity, previously veiled by psychic and familial affective preoccupations. Just as her adoption was perceived as a way for the community of Pyatt to gain ‘satisfaction and fulfillment,’ so too is the community of Addis Ababa viewed and ultimately consumed by Weynsht and her family for the purposes of her psychic resolutions.

Her investment in the privatized logic that permeates dominant Western conceptions of family and personhood also becomes clear through her meeting with her biological brother. Upon returning to Ethiopia, Weynsht learns through a discussion with her former guardian that she has an older, adult brother in his twenties. I will come back to this moment later in the chapter for what the resultant explosion of emotions can tell us about Weynsht’s subjective experience of loss. However, it is important to note here that, although this moment reveals the complexity behind Weynsht’s perception of family, ultimately she still performs a perhaps learned (neo)colonial, neoliberal identity when she, in an attempt to reconnect with her brother,

promises to give him money. While Weynsht and her adoptive family sit with her brother and his friends (who interpret her English for him, as she has lost the ability to speak fluent Amharic), she learns of his situation: he has a menial job and is working, but lacks an education and economic stability. Stressing his need for a proper education, Weynsht immediately offers to help him by providing him money to go to school. Thus they enter into a saviour and donor-like script inextricable from their emotional, kinship bond; it is a mode of relationality threatening to reinscribe colonial power relations.

And yet, that she reconnects with her brother and takes on the burden of supporting him points towards the ways in which the transnational adoptee's heterogeneous positioning can never be fully contained or resolved within a unified identity. That she seeks out a relationship that would enable her to maintain ties with her brother challenges the socioeconomic and legal discursive forces that would seek to define her as a separate entity. These forces operate within a global economy, exerting pressures on her in order to actively construct for her a fixed identity.

Barbara Yngvesson notes in her essay "The Gift Child" that an object becomes a gift only through its imagined alienation from the producer much like any commodity. The adoption of children in which a child is relinquished and given to the receiving family recreates market relationships, thus the adopted child becomes "a 'gift of love' that makes a family (complete)" while at the same time the child exists as "a 'resource' that has been contractually alienated from one owner so that it can be attached to another" (235). Indeed, international statutes such as the *Hague Convention* articulate child's rights in a way that positions the child as a nation's resource and obligation; as the nation's resource, the child has the right to be protected by both family and nation (236). The construction of the child's identity by international and national policy plays a key role in their production within a global economy of child circulation. The Conventions of the

Rights of the Child (CRC) stipulates that the child has a right "to identity (conceived in individual, familial, and national terms)," and implies that the smooth development of this identity requires the child's belonging to a family, to a nation and to "international modernist culture" (Stephens qtd. in Schultheis 32). The bourgeois figure of the child appears here in international human rights discourse, which frames childhood "as a time of innocence and play, insulated, from what Stephens terms, 'the arduous tasks and instrumentalized relationships of the production sphere'" (Schultheis 33). The conception of the child's identity echoes a familiar conflation of protection and ownership in modernist discourse; that the child is a resource that must be protected inevitably assumes the protector's ownership of the resource—a valued resource that the state can relinquish for the child's own protection (and various other monetary) benefits.

Yngvesson stresses the state's role in determining and articulating which children are adoptable and to whom; and I would argue that this process is more complicated within the context of Ethiopia and other non-Convention African nations where illegal markets and private actors exploit the country's condition of transnational governmentality, although the state still does play a role in the production of orphans along these discursive and, in some cases, legal lines. As with India's push towards encouraging domestic adoption in the 1980s, and China's decision to permit domestic adoption by families already possessing one child (Yngvesson, "The Gift Child" 236), Ethiopia's push for local adoption in the face of growing concern over international migration demonstrates an attempt to assert the state's ability to determine and regulate a child's mobility. Similarly, the state's attempt to mitigate the interference of adoption agencies by requiring donations in exchange points to their assertion of biopolitical sovereignty. The state then colludes with international actors and legal discourses to produce orphans and

regulate their crossings through and within borders, and for the Ethiopian state this also involves mobilizing modernist frameworks. Despite the active role of the state in producing children as orphans, including the government's hand in political conflict, poverty, and famine (de Waal 1997; Joyce 2013), The Ministry of Women, Children and Youth Affairs in Ethiopia articulates the existence of orphans through language that aligns with the modernist inflections of international human rights. According to the Ministry, a child's welfare depends on the environment of the family, and orphans are thus produced by social issues (drugs, divorce etc.) that begin with the family (Boyden and Howard 7).[112]

As Yngvesson argues, "it is the circulation of persons, as promoted or prevented by state policy, that establishes borders, belongings, and the right of a child to 'an identity'" and so "[m]obility (and the traversal of boundaries this implies) is fundamental to modernity and the fixed identities this requires" (237-8). The global economy in which the child is circulated requires and facilitates the orphan's fixed identity, particularly an identity that suits its ideological paradigm. *Girl, Adopted* shows the ways in which the orphanage and the Wards participate in the process of creating this identity. Elaborating upon their reasons for adopting Weynsht, Melanie tells the viewer: "We [The Wards] don't have a lot, but we can love somebody and offer them a family and belonging. And that's the one thing that they're really missing." Of course, Weynsht does have extended family—a point she herself reminds them of later on in the documentary. However, this de-linking is facilitated by the orphanage, which positions her as well as the other children as orphans. In their dark room at the beginning of the film, as Chris and Melanie watch a video produced by the orphanage, we see the framing

[112] Studies actually show that child relinquishment in Ethiopia differs greatly from other countries in which causes can range from parental, family problems (as in Russia) or governmental reproductive policies (as in China). In Ethiopia, the primary motivation for child relinquishment is overwhelming poverty (Chan, Wilma et al. 599-605).

mechanism. The white staff remain out of view, but narrate the children as "available for adoption" while any mention of extended family is relegated to the past tense. The close up shots of the camera decontextualize the children so that they remain the sole focus of the frame. For Weynsht, they explicitly claim that "she doesn't have any relatives at all," which the viewer later finds out is not true. However, whether or not this is known by the orphanage, this becomes part of the discursive terrain that produces Weynsht as 'available.'

Weynsht's first few moments with her new adoptive family shows how the maneuvering of emotional linkages can facilitate these larger sociopolitical attempts to 'de-link' Weynsht and produce her as something to be received by the family and community. The moment of meeting between Weynsht and her adoptive parents is striking in part due to how quickly they begin to mobilize the language of family and ownership in order to define their relationship. When Melanie gives her the necklace and bracelet, she tells her "it's from your sisters…they can't wait to talk to you on the phone so we're gonna call 'em." In such exchanges, Weynsht is almost immediately ushered into a new kinship relationship before even leaving Ethiopia with her new adoptive parents. Once she arrives in Pyatt, the community lavishes her with gifts and cakes that read "Welcome to Our Community." The documentary shows the Ward's home video showcasing what Chris dubs a "Welcome Home" party organized for Weynsht and attended by excited members of the community. These warm and welcoming gestures, though displaying a capacity for the Conservative South to accept foreign Others, double as a form of emotional management that contracts, as David Eng argues, the adoptee's cultural and political history "into the privatized boundaries of the white American family…through the repression and erasure of …emotions" (16). There is no room in this narrative of happiness and welcome for Weynsht's fear and uncertainty as a result of her border-crossings. There is no room for feelings

of loss and nostalgia over her various separations. Because Weynsht is now 'of them,' there is no space in this narrative for her belonging to another time and place, or for her to occupy what Notisha Maassaquoi calls "a state of frozenness…the cold space upon arrival in [the immigrant's] new home where [she is] suspended in uncertainty, caught between the culture [she] left behind and the new one [she doesn't] quite understand, and the transgenerational stability of knowledge that can no longer be assumed" (142). These welcoming gestures, thus, dictate the terms of her acceptance.

The next few scenes detailing her new life indeed corroborate that her entry into the Ward family, into the community of Pyatt, and into American citizenship relies upon a discursive framing that privileges the Western philosophical, capitalist conceptions of kinship and childhood identity. As Melanie, Chris, and Weynsht go for a walk through a rural path in town, they give a short interview about how the transnational family has been adjusting to their new life. "Weynsht is…you don't have to discipline Weynsht," says Chris and Melanie readily agrees: "You don't. She's helpful—she helps with the other kids. She's just a great kid." After Weynsht thanks them for their kind words they laugh and hug. It is not simply that Weynsht is placed into a framework of the obedient child that risks the repression of her subjectivity; she must occupy this role in order for the transnational family's happiness (or comfort) to be fulfilled. As mentioned earlier, the identity of 'the child' within humanitarian and human rights frameworks is based upon this Western construction of childhood innocence. Therefore, to be considered a recipient of human rights and a future productive member within an "imagined community of …rights holders" (Slaughter 328), a child must take on this particularly Western, late-capitalist identity. This is part of what marks her conditional citizenship, part of what

constructs her as a wanted adopted child in contrast to those 'threatening' racialized children left at the country's cultural and national borders.

This exchange has various implications. The moments described here suggest that Chris and Melanie Ward invest in this dominant conception of family. Not only does this dominant kinship model include a fixed, hierarchal relationship between parent and child, but it also endorses and requires the consumptive labour of the child. In the case of the transnational family, capitalist conceptions of childhood are extended transnationally, producing as 'common sense' the adopted child who 'must' be relinquished from her original historical, social, and political contexts, detached from her 'original' home and made available for circulation and adoption. As identities, relationships, and values are subsumed into the private sphere, neoliberal ideology becomes entangled in the realm of affect. This internalization makes it difficult to reconnect, as we must, larger socioeconomic and political contexts to the kind of inequality that made Weynsht available for circulation, the inequality Weynsht and her adoptive family brush up against during her roots trip to Ethiopia. It is not surprising, then, that Chris, after watching Weynsht give money to beggars, tells her that although there is no shame in giving, "there is so much need … you would never have enough money to meet all of the need, you know?" When, in the van, Chris points towards a need for a better solution but can't quite articulate what it is, it becomes clear that an exclusionary language of citizenship has worked in tandem with privatization of values, concerns and conceptions of human relationality to obscure the networks that link his adoption of Weynsht to the poverty of the Ethiopians around him.

The wholeness of her transnational family and its values depends upon Weynsht's psychic unity, or in other words, her possession of a stable identity that fits neatly into these problematic frameworks. And yet Weynsht's willingness and desire to reconnect with her

biological brother shows that her constant attempts to negotiate her subjectivity casts these frameworks (and thus her family's happiness, along with the perception of her membership in the community) into doubt. It is in this doubt, analyzed through the psychic costs of Weynsht's adoption, that the materials of possible resistance to these forms emerge. Not only does her subjective experience expose the constructed-ness of these frameworks, but it also brings into view alternative models for understanding citizenship and international human relations. Her lingering ambivalence, however, makes clear the emotional burden that adoption places on the adoptee; and indeed, it is because of this burden that it may not be so easy for the adoptee to access these 'materials of resistance' for herself.

(Re)locating the Adopted Child: Melancholy and Identity

Roots trips, as Barbara Yngvesson argues, "reveal the precariousness of 'I am,' the simultaneous fascination and terror evoked by what might have been" ("Going Home" 9). Like many roots trips narratives, the emotional burden of adoption is a theme throughout the film. Regardless of the attempts to manage her emotions, regardless of the political, social, and cultural pressures forcing her into a unified identity, Weynsht's uncertainty permeates the documentary. During the scene in which her adoptive parents call her a "great kid," and after she thanks them for their praises, she says, tellingly, "I don't know," before hugging them. The phrase 'I don't know' is uttered by Weynsht many times, a constant refrain throughout the documentary. In fact, her uncertainty begins the documentary. The film begins by introducing us to an eighteen-year-old Weynsht five years into her adoption, her self-styling perhaps a reflection of society's image of a stereotypical 'rebellious teen girl': heavy, dark eye-makeup, a bandana covering her short hair, a nose-ring. The confusion displayed in her opening confession aligns

with her image as a bored, 'wayward' teen: "There is nothing to do in Arkansas. God, instead of putting me anywhere, anywhere that I would live, he put me here—and I'm still trying to figure out why." Although the film places the narrative of her adoption along a very easy to follow, but decontextualized script—from Melanie and Chris's decision to adopt, to their arrival in Ethiopia, and finally Weynsht's welcome home—at the beginning of the film, in these opening moments, Weynsht offers an alternative perception to this expedient, teleological narrative: "When people say—they, like, ask, what happened to you…and I'm like well in Ethiopia my mom and dad died. I went to an orphanage and now I'm here. But even though I went through it, I still don't understand how I got here. You know? I still don't understand it."

Her inability to articulate or make sense of her movement across national, cultural, and kinship borders speaks to the fraught relationship between trauma and representability. Despite the first few moments shown with her new family promoting an image of domestic, familial bliss, the trauma of her adoption surfaces, sometimes explodes, throughout the documentary. Weynsht's articulations of her frustrations and insecurities, at times contradictory and unclear, seem to expose language as insufficient to representing such experience 'accurately.' These moments, however, are also key to unmooring her feelings pertaining to her precarious understanding of 'self' from the realm of individual psychology and connecting it to larger, political structures. We can use Raymond Williams's term "structures of feeling" to analyze Weynsht's expressions of self. According to Williams, these feelings correspond to those affective elements arising out of inarticulate experiences during the process of identity formation. These feelings, however, far from being contained solely within the individual's psyche, exist within the social realm. Structures of feeling have "specific internal relations at once interlocking and in tension…[they are] a social experience which is still in process, often

indeed not yet recognized as social but taken to be private, idiosyncratic…but which in analysis…has its emergent, connecting, and dominant characteristics, indeed its specific hierarchies" (132). Despite the various methods of containing and regulating her affect around the community of Pyatt and the adoptive family, Weynsht's "experiences of immigration, assimilation, and racialization in the United States…fundamentally determined through both the forced relinquishing of lost but unspeakable [Ethiopian] ideals and foreclosed investments in whiteness" (Eng 19) force her to negotiate her multiple identity positions and the split, asymmetrical affective attachments they engender.

The film's depiction of her early moments with the Ward family certainly suggests that her conditional citizenship requires her orientation around an identity of American-ness and, implicitly whiteness. Theorists such as Anne Anlin Cheng (2000), David Eng (2003), and Sara Ahmed (2010) have used the Freudian framework of melancholia to discuss the experience of assimilation for racialized immigrants. Sara Ahmed writes of what she terms the "melancholic migrant" who suffers due to her inability to perfectly orient herself around national ideals—which most often implies ideals of whiteness. In her estimation, "the refusal to play a national game is the 'truth' behind the migrant's suffering: you suffer because you do not play the game, where not playing the game is read as self-exclusion" (142). In this sense, since melancholia is a "refusal to let…go" and "a stubborn attachment to… [racial] injury," then 'happiness' is simply a form of cultural hegemonic coercion (142). Happiness requires an affective "orientation towards the objects we come into contact with" (24). The case of the transnational adoptee complicates this framework, however, as the transnational adoptee's happiness is not simply oriented around the nation—at stake is her inclusion into and cohesion with the family that she now must call her own. In one scene, the documentary shows another home video, this time of

Weynsht showing the camera and implicit viewer around her new room. She and her adopted sister Devon point out Weynsht's poster of American singer Usher, and Weynsht gushes about being his fan. Of course, globalization makes it possible for children around the world to consume the figures of American cultural production, and to an extent this complicates Ahmed's framework of the melancholic migrant's orientations around the second country's national objects as an explicit strategy of belonging in that nation. Yet Weynsht asking her mother, "do you like Usher, mommy?" seems at least subconsciously strategic. In calling her by the child-like term (from an American cultural perspective) "mommy," Weynsht evokes the natural, metaphysical bond thought to exist within the mother-child dyad. At the same time, that she places Usher as a symbolic meeting place meant to suture this affective bond invariably points to its conditionality.

As a foreign, non-white transnational adoptee, the conditions of her fitting in require these connections; however, in this moment there is something at stake for the mother too. The popularized, globalized images and narratives of Angelina Jolie and Princess Diana[113] have set the standards for transnational motherhood: a motherhood that is always understanding, never tired—a mother that accepts and neutralizes cultural and racial differences through affective vectors, thus implicitly promoting America's imperial sovereignty through kinship logics. When Melanie, after an awkward pause, tells her daughter that she also likes Usher, she takes the lead of her adoptive daughter and participates in the attempt at suturing this bond. Both mother and daughter share in the management of feelings around objects of cultural conformity, both ensuring that these feelings stay within the domestic space of the transnational nuclear family.

[113] As Raka Shome has argued, Princess Diana also serves as a figure of global white motherhood particularly because of her extensively photographed humanitarian interactions with impoverished racialized children of developing countries (389).

It becomes clear that the successful management of these feelings requires an assertion of Weynsht's newfound American-ness. Weynsht must answer questions that assert her citizenship, for example, what kind of American food she likes. The film initially depicts her seemingly adjusting to her new American identity, defined in part through assimilatory market discourses; she is shown surrounded by commodities, dolls, and make-up (the latter becoming a motif throughout the documentary). While eating at a local restaurant, her parents, in an interview, gush that she "fits in so well…the kids love her…she's not done anything negative at all." Once again, we see an invocation of bourgeois discourses of obedient, passive childhood, (and perhaps also the implicit fear and suspicion of the racialized other). Factoring in Weynsht's status as a foreign adoptee, the "negative" behavior to which they refer may also implicitly include the immigrant's melancholia, which would challenge the fantasy of the adoptee's stable, American self. Their mention of love is also important; once again the affective dimensions among the transnational family becomes de-naturalized and exposed as containing elements of conditionality.

The emotional burden these conditions place upon Weynsht quickly becomes clear as the documentary begins to depict her struggles with her cultural and racial identity. Weynsht's confessions challenge her parents' assertion that she is 'fitting in': "This is a new country to me. I have to learn, you know?" The notion of 'learning' alludes to the fact that her negotiation of identity is situated within a system of cultural pedagogy. As one scene makes clear, this system mobilizes the politics of shame. At school, Weynsht sits with her white classmates during lunch. Rather than taking her taco toppings and placing them inside her tacos like the other children, she pours them all over her plate. The other kids, including one of her adopted sisters, stare at her. In line with Foucault's theories, their stares operate as a kind of a biopolitical measure meant

to discipline bodies into hegemonic submission. Upon seeing the children's stares, Weynsht laughs; embarrassed, she covers the plate with a number of napkins. Weynsht thus shows that she is keenly aware of her difference. In another scene, she confesses that sometimes she doesn't like going out in public with her white parents because of the looks she will receive. This is demonstrated while Weynsht walks with her mother through Walmart hand in hand only to be met with the incredulous look of a young white boy. On one hand, she is 'welcomed home' as an American citizen, but on the other she is racialized by her community in the repeated reminders of her foreignness.

In the following interview, her mother attempts to address this racial difference, stating that although their relationship draws "funny looks occasionally…that's just 'cuz of [Weynsht] calling [her] mommy." Weynsht's racial difference is simultaneously acknowledged and denied, mirroring the concerted production and erasure of Weynsht's difference by her family. Ruth Frankenberg argues that color-blindness is a method of population management meant to categorize racial difference and place racialized bodies into different levels of acceptability while affirming white supremacist structures. In the interviews she conducted with white women, she notes different euphemisms used to refer to different races, particularly to categories of immigrant groups. An older woman, in recounting her upbringing during the Great Depression, utilized the terms "melting pot, race riots, and separatism," which Frankenberg notes act as "indicators of degrees of rapprochement and opposition between 'different' people" (154). Indeed, for the woman, only certain immigrant bodies (European) qualified as part of the melting pot; while more aggressive indicators of difference were allotted to dark, racialized bodies (155). To be able to discursively move racial Others into allotted categories of difference is a feature of white supremacy. Though it is mired in historical power relations, the 'not-naming' and 'not-

seeing' element of color-blindness obscures these relations and, at the same time, in doing so pathologizes race and ethnicity as something to be avoided and ignored for the sake of community-building and national unity. "[W]ithin this discursive repertoire," Frankenberg states, "people of color are 'good' only insofar as their 'coloredness' can be bracketed and ignored, and this bracketing is contingent on the ability or decision—in fact, the virtue—of a…white…self. Colorblindness, despite the best intentions of its adherents, in this sense preserves the power structure inherent in essentialist racism" (150).

For Melanie as Weynsht's white adoptive mother, her insistence that the 'funny looks' they sometimes get are only because Weynsht uses the word 'mommy' further implicates the racist power structures as inextricable from their kinship. Her ambiguous (non)naming of Weynsht's racial difference and her simultaneous absorption of this difference into their mother-daughter bond empowers her to perform white motherhood while re-inscribing hierarchies between white Americans and non-white Africans to go along with the unequal relationship between parent and child. If we return to Melanie and Chris' statement about Weynsht as an obedient child, their equation of Weynsht being a "great kid" with her "help[ing] with the other kids" likewise reveals these troubling undertones by gesturing uncomfortably towards the historical relationship between white home owners and immigrant domestic workers. The history of black domestic slaves is also pertinent here and especially resonant in the South. One cannot help but think of cases of American adoption of Ethiopian children that have exposed violent manifestations of these implications. Kathryn Joyce has written about the case of Hana Williams, a thirteen-year-old Ethiopian girl adopted by a white Christian fundamentalist family three years prior. Hana, who had been beaten and abused by her parents, Larry and Carri Williams, and mocked by her eight adoptive siblings eventually committed suicide. Though Larry and Carry

were subsequently charged with murder, Joyce notes that claims of color-blindness on the part of the parents, community, and agency often times create conditions in which the possible dangers adoptees face can go overlooked (73).[114] Indeed, this is a clear example of what is at stake in the investment of the humanitarian paradigm of the transnational family. Legacies of colonialism, slavery and racism mapped onto the body of the adoptee and obscured by the affective dimensions of kinship ghost the privileged diaspora of the transnational adoptee in ways that complicate her position as insider-outsider in relation to national citizenship.

As *Girl, Adopted* shows, the psychic cost of these denials of racial difference is the unresolved tension in Weynsht's racial identity. Of the 'looks' she gets from other members of the community, Weynsht says "my mom tells me it's not a big deal, but to me it's a big deal. It makes me every time sad." What David Eng calls racial melancholia—that is "registers of loss and depression attendant to the conflicts and struggles associated with immigration, assimilation, and racialization"—involves the adoptee's inability to resolve racial identities with ideals of whiteness (16-7). For Weynsht, however, her dark skin complicates this: upon arriving in America, she finds herself newly racialized and having to navigate already existing categories of race constructed through colonial efforts of biopolitical regulation. For Eng analyzing the Asian American adoptee, the two different poles remaining elusive to the adoptee are her Asianness and whiteness. Indeed, Weynsht shows frustration with her inability to attain whiteness ideals. Her obsession with beauty and constant application of make-up threads through the documentary as she in different moments mentions to the people around her that she does not see herself as

[114] Joyce also mentions in a magazine article written for *Slate* that Merrily Ripley of Adoption Advocates International, the same Christian fundamentalist agency that runs Layla House from where Weynsht was adopted, helped place Hana with the Williams family. Along with the racial and imperial dynamics within the family, a harsh disciplinary culture of Christian fundamentalism can also contribute to cases such as Hana's (Joyce, "Hana's Story," n.pag).

pretty. Her preoccupation with her white, blonde adoptive sister's 'beauty' indicates that this self-effacement is more than just the insecurity that comes along with adolescence. At the same time, her desire for whiteness is interspersed with not only her uncertain claims of an Ethiopian identity, but also her attempts to carve out her identity around American cultural notions of racial ethnicity and color. Explaining her reasons for embarking on a roots trip, she states, "On the inside I'm still Ethiopian because I like who I am, but outside I'm American." After an extended shot of her application of make-up, she admits "I really like being an Ethiopian person, but I hate being black…I wish I'm a white person…I hate my color." As she explains, in Ethiopia, she was never a color. Her movement across American national borders forced her into categories of African American identity that despite her humanitarian status as a 'third world' child enmeshed in affective familial and community realm, simultaneously relegate her to the same abject status. As Frankenberg writes, "beyond the local, it is also true that 'blackness' is historically a more consistent marked space of racial alterity than most others, from the standpoint of white selves. All of this underscores the historical, social, and political rather than 'natural' content of racial classification" (155).

On the one hand, her racial ambiguity creates avenues for her to resist stable racial classifications. She says in an interview, "sometimes I lie to the people because of my colour. I say my dad's black or Mexican." Historically in America, as I have outlined, the terms of racial (and national) boundaries have been set by and are continuously redrawn to benefit white structures. Through her heterogeneous racial identity and ambiguous visual coding, she can evade other people's categorizations of her, though despite what power this mobility gives her, she does not completely set the terms of her inclusion/exclusion. As bell hooks argues, the terms of passing are not equal, often mediated by white structures that mete out privilege for some and

facilitate the internalization of oppressive ideology for others (*Black Looks* 19). Her rejection of a black identity is both part of her desire to claim the "lost objects" (Eng 15) which include not only her roots in Ethiopia, but also American whiteness. Still, as Homi Bhabha's theory of hybridity suggests, her ability to occupy different cultural identity positions across boundaries can at least begin to serve the process of resistance against colonial strategies of racialization (38). On the other hand, however, the burden this hybridity places upon her makes this potential for resistance difficult to achieve—her disorienting experiences of racial melancholia and her powerful desire to fit in take precedence in the documentary. In the end, her attempt to orient herself around whiteness and her desire for white objects—as seen by the preoccupation with the difference between her 'ugly' hair and her blonde sister's 'beautiful' hair—requires a rejection of black identity that she cannot perfectly resolve, a tension exacerbated by her attempts to cling to an Ethiopian identity. This desire for resolution is what sparks her roots journey.[115]

It is here that we must revisit Barbara Yngvesson's concept of "the myth of return" ("Going Home" 9). Weynsht's own need for unity compounds the various mechanisms through which international, political, familial, and communal agents work to simplify and fix her around an identity position that suits Eurocentric imperial, neoliberal, and affective discourses of family and belonging. As I have mentioned, Yngvesson contextualizes the roots journey of the adoptee by placing it between the poles of two common narratives:

> In the clean break version of this myth, the adoptive child is set free from the past (constituted as "abandoned" or "motherless") so that he or she can be assimilated completely into the adoptive family. In the preservation story, on the other hand, the child

[115] We see other instances of color-blindness in these moments in which Weynsht is frustrated with her hair. As bell hooks states, black hair is part of a political history in which white supremacist power structures used the visual coding of (typically West African-delineated) black women's hair to justify and promote the dehumanization of black women (70-1). When Weynsht praises her sister's blonde, straight hair, but dismisses her own as ugly, her sister rolls her eyes and tells a listening teacher, "she thinks she's ugly." The gesture doubles as a loving act of encouragement and trivializing of historical and contemporary racial trauma, once again demonstrating the entanglement of racial power in the affective realm.

> is imagined as a part of his or her birth mother or birth nation, imagined as being constantly pulled back to that ground. (8)

Both are founded upon "a familiar and powerful (Western) myth about identity as a matter of exclusive belonging and belonging as a matter of 'an active proprietorship'" (8). These myths certainly perpetuate the consolidation of capitalist ideals into dominant models of identity: the whole, unified, rational self, existing within a singular, private, nuclear family space. Weynsht reveals her investments in these paradigms and the importance of managing her emotional connection towards her family and community along these lines when in an early interview not long after her adoption she says: "I am happy about my sister. I mean, I have many sister. I have many brother. But first time, I don't have brother, I am very sad. Now I have brother, I have uncle, I have all of these. I have mom. I am very happy." Two distinct moments of time can be identified in her words: 'the first time' and 'now,' echoing a teleological chronology in which her experiences, histories, and subjectivities cannot happen congruently, but in logical, sequential order. True to dominant political and cultural frameworks, she characterizes her 'before' time in a way that emphasizes her state as an orphan, lacking a family. Subsequently, she depicts herself as *gaining* a family through the process of adoption. This underlying philosophy of capitalist exchange pertaining to notions of family and home explodes to the surface in a later scene when she fights with her parents, shattering the image of domestic bliss. Melanie and Chris reveal to the cameras that she called the police one night trying to get them to take her away: "someone told her you can change families," says a distraught Melanie. In this inversion of the child-as-gift, Weynsht 'cashes in' on the global economy that characterizes her as a circulating object, turning it instead on the family and revealing the terms of her own commodification in an attempt to exchange her family for another. Her indictment, "you think I

don't have a family?" further denaturalizes and exposes as constructed the emotional vectors of the bourgeois family used to render hidden the planetary relations that brought her to them.

But at the same time, Weynsht's assertion also challenges her own investment in these frameworks. Her desire to exchange her family shows that she has affective space for only one family and one home, yet her pronouncement of already having a family points towards the psychic inclusion of another. We see this again in the reunion with her former, Ethiopian caretaker, who had taken care of her before she was moved to the orphanage, and her discovery of a biological brother.

Her roots journey can be characterized, in Yngvesson's words, as "a longing for the safety of home" (9). Weynsht says herself that she doesn't feel "safe" in Arkansas with her family. When her father corroborates that her return home is a search for "truth," he suggests what Stuart Hall argues is a prominent condition of transnational displacement. In his essay "Cultural Identity and Diaspora," Hall writes that this displacement "gives rise to a certain imaginary plenitude, recreating the endless desire to return to 'lost origins,' to be one again with the mother, to go back to the beginning" (236). The conflation of motherhood and origin perhaps explains Weynsht's fixation on her adoptive mother as a specific source of her anxiety. Earlier in the film when questioning her position in the family, she singles out her adopted mother: "Maybe my adopted mother don't like me. I don't know." Weynsht lacks a biological mother, but excavates her through her former, Ethiopian female guardian who tells her that her "love" for Weynsht's mother is what caused her to take Weynsht in and care for her for as long as she could. This provides the perfect framework to allow Weynsht to map her feelings of belonging onto these figures of 'root' and 'origin.' Indeed, she tells her guardian, "I want you guys" when asked why she had returned.

This could be read as a rejection of the adoptive mother, which would recast the roles involved in the economy in which the suppression of the original birth mother is required for the fulfillment of adoptive motherhood. However, through Weynsht's meeting with her biological brother, we see that her feelings, in their complexity, spill over the discursive confines that would force her to choose. After she finds out from her caretaker that she has a brother, she immediately enters a mode of distress. In their hotel, she screams at her adopted father who is attempting to facilitate their reunion. The failure of language to articulate trauma returns here in this display of extreme anxiety. Weynsht cannot fully articulate the reasons for her extreme panic and frustration. She yells over her dad in an attempt to drown out his voice, repeating again and again that she doesn't want to see her biological brother: "dad, I swear to God, I'm not kidding," she warns threateningly before telling him "I have so many things in my head…you still want me to face a bunch of crap." Finally, while crying against her bed, she admits the reason behind her eruption. She is afraid of the framework she has learned and invested in—the one that necessitates that she neatly resolve her identity within the affective realm of one family: "If I have my brother, why would I want you guys? What makes you think I need somebody else? If I have a brother, I want to stay with my brother," she says initially before adding, "and I don't want that. Cuz I love you guys." At this moment, she bursts into tears. "I don't want to lose my sisters because of my brother. I don't want to lose anything." What is interesting about this moment is that her affective attachments to different families, different communities, and different nations have engendered, not a need for resolution, or a way to resolution, but a fear of resolution—or at least the kind of resolution mandated by dominant frameworks. Though she invokes the logic of exchange, and of having 'one' or 'the other,' the very existence of this fear, and her desire and need for both communities characterizes her psychic dilemma but once again

proves that she is capable of occupying this heterogeneous psychic and affective space, however confusing. It can be said, in fact, that it is because of her investment in normative structures that this space of alterity causes this much pain and confusion, even though she is already inhabiting it. Yngvesson theorizes the adoptee's negotiating and inhabiting of different positions concurrently revealed through the roots trip:

> Roots trips reveal the precariousness of "I am," the simultaneous fascination and terror evoked by what might have been, and a longing for the safety of home. They materialize an unfathomable moment of choice, when one life that might have been was curtailed and another life that exists now came into being…Such moments interrupt the myth that the legal transformation to an "other" was free—that the child simply came home to a site of love where he or she always belonged—revealing instead the cost of belonging (and of love)…But they also interrupt the myth of the return as a form of completion or fulfillment in which one can find oneself in another. (9)

Different temporalities meet in this interstitial identity, rooting the past through the present and allowing Weynsht to occupy both through feeling. But by the end of the documentary, the transformative potential of this mode of being seems to have slipped away. When giving a speech to her classmates, she uses her life as almost a cautionary tale, warning them that they should not take for granted what they have: a nuclear family, and perhaps, a stable identity. Weynsht is still, after all, interpellated into powerful cultural frameworks whose introduction into her life most likely would not have started with her entrance into America.

At the same time, her mother's perhaps contradictory closing statements reveal not only that this negotiation is ongoing, but also that its transformative potential exists nonetheless:

> When I see [Weynsht], I don't see Ethiopian adopted child, I see Wendy[116]: my child. But, I would never, never say that Weynsht will one day feel completely whole. But everything is cohesive…Because she's always going to be an Ethiopian, she's always

[116] Wendy is a nickname given to Weynsht presumably by her adoptive family. However, one can consider the gaining of a Eurocentric nickname as part of the conditions of her inclusion into a white domestic and national space. David Eng argues that the original name of the adoptee carries with it affective attachments to her racialized origins. Thus, re-naming the adoptee can serve as a strategy to overwrite these affective alignments with the "collective emotional will" of the adoptive family (123).

> going to be a [sic] African American. Either she's going to look different or talk different from everyone else—she's always going to be reminded. I'm not reminded.

Melanie's attempt to manage Weynsht's racial and familial identity through color-blindness is evident when she insists once again that she doesn't see Weynsht's difference, and yet at the same time, the intimacies that lead her to characterize Weynsht as, irrevocably, "her child" open up networks for Weynsht's difference to flow into Melanie's subjectivity and identity. Weynsht once again lives in different spaces: she is a child of the Wards whose 'not-different-ness' assumes her 'whiteness' and 'foreignness' simultaneously. However, she is also at the same time Ethiopian, and, in Melanie's estimation, 'African American,' which locates her in different positions and temporalities in the African diaspora: she is aligned at once with recent immigration from Africa, as well as with the colonial trans-Atlantic movement of slaves. And by claiming Weynsht through the possessive and affective language of 'her child,' Melanie is unwittingly claiming this difference as part of her own identity. The historical, global sociopolitical contexts that situate Weynsht in relation to Ethiopia and America, in relation to her different families and communities, and in relation to whiteness, 'Ethiopian-ness,' and blackness can be accessed through these affective connections.

While Melanie's strategies of difference-management perhaps make it more likely that the possibility for political subjective transformation may become buried and neutralized by modernist kinship discourses, it may not be so for the viewer of the documentary. By presenting the testimony and psychic struggles of the adoptee as she crosses and re-crosses boundaries, the film offers an avenue through which the viewer can begin to reconnect that which is erased through dominant narratives of humanitarianism. While the figure of the adoptee serves dominant Western philosophical frameworks, the subjectivity of the adoptee excavates colonial histories, implicating them within global contexts of the present and materializing these contexts

through networks of feeling. These affective networks thus allow the adoptee, the family, and viewers to explore the conditions and contradictions of cultural identity and national citizenship. I have mentioned earlier, this ‘possibility’ carries with it the danger of enabling the further consumption of a figure already trapped within an uneasy terrain of commodification. However, it is in the critical engagements that involve the re-contextualization/re-subjectification of the transnational adoptee, the deconstruction of the figure of the African child and her refiguring within the realm of social agents that a larger, more complex understanding of global contexts and alternative modes of relationality can emerge and bring adoption and humanitarianism into more nuanced and potentially ethical dimensions.

Conclusion: African Children, Possibility, and Responsibility

The scope of this project has brought the affective domain of contemporary transnational adoption between African children and white American parents into conversation with histories of colonial transnational intimacies and the precarious lived experiences of classed and racialized individuals in the African postcolony. As a result, this dissertation offers a reading of the transnational family that is very different than the celebratory fictions of global multicultural inclusion. UNICEF, Live Aid, Idol Gives Back, Christian Children Fund of Canada, and other humanitarian organizations and programs mobilize the framework of nuclear family, inscribed by ideological dimensions that serve Western imperial capitalist aims. This framework of the transnational family, however, already begins to break down when one considers that within the frame of the transnational family, there exists not only the white adoptive parents and the adopted child. There is also the African birth mother whose biological flesh must be subjugated beneath the affective needs of the privileged woman of the global North, needs that drive the global neoliberal economy for children supplied by the African female body. The transnational family suggests transnational connections, but, as my analysis shows, Western humanitarian frameworks have also sought to manage the messiness of these connections, to fix certain bodies into old colonial roles, and to exclude certain bodies out of the affective realm of transnational adoption. But these attempts at management and control only speak to the power of these messy relations. Indeed, the confluence of bodies, histories, and geographies characterizing the transnational family involve uneasy intersections of material and emotional realities in ways that open up possible directions for future projects. In this conclusion, I briefly offer these further considerations.

Emerging from my reading of the transnational family are the notions of interconnectivity posed by Diana Brydon when she speaks of productive sites of entanglements. Given that we are implicated in histories of global violence, we are, as Brydon notes, closer than we might imagine. Affect positions us differently than how proximity and distance is conceived through hierarchy-inscribing humanitarian conceptions of global citizenship. Since we are connected through colonial legacies that "have become intertwined in the very subjectivities and bodies of those who constitute the 'we' and the 'they' of these lines," we can think of ourselves as sharing a global space through affective interconnections (995). Thus, we can move out from our own localities into "a widening space of herenesss" that draws multiple bodies (991). By tying together various historical and sociopolitical contexts, and by drawing from various academic fields, including postcolonial studies, affect studies, critical race and gender studies, African cultural studies, and globalization studies, this project asks, in effect, how can counter-hegemonic readings of the transnational family re-organize bodily and affective orientations and conceptions of boundaries and proximities that can ethically reshape understandings of others? A question that my work throws up would be the possibility of ethically reforming conceptions of black African children, and more generally, conceptions of those Africans whose lives have become vulnerable under the violent processes of globalization. Reshaping hegemonic perceptions not only requires an acknowledgment of Africans as embodied subjects; it requires an acknowledgement of how each of us lives embedded within complex systems of relationality that cannot be so easily disentangled.

This projects suggests our transnational interconnectedness through its analysis of different white and non-white maternal figures within different historical contexts. Figures of white global motherhood such as Mary Slessor and Angelina Jolie demonstrate that the affective

labour of white women has historically given them channels of power and authority within the rubrics of domesticity that align readily with political interventions. The reification of the gendered and moral domestic space, which characterized the Victorian period, has survived and found new expression in the present era of global modernity, adjusting itself to the contexts of the Cold War and Post-Cold War periods and even now in the post-9/11 era. The underlying, persisting imperial belief that Slessor (Chapter 1) and Jolie (Chapter 2) have 'sovereign right' over the bodies of African children brings their philanthropic acts of child-saving and child-nurturing into the murky terrains of oppression that leave little room for African children and African birth mothers outside of prescribed roles. Of course, the influence and power given to these particular figures through their celebrity have legitimized in popular imagining their prescribed roles as saviour-mothers; however, as the cases of Joanna Baumgartner (Chapter 1) and Melanie Ward (Chapter 4) show, the cultural and historical logics of white Western women's domestic morality have given even everyday mothers license to perform saving through motherhood.

In the present, the powerful epistemological locus of white motherhood can and has been readily circulated globally. And yet, while different women across the world can internalize these subjective investments, the public suspicions surrounding Natalie Hawkins' gold medal motherhood and Salma Hayek's transnational motherhood (Chapter 2) make clear that racialized women, overburdened with colonial and postcolonial scripts that have shaped knowledge about their bodies, cannot as easily partake in the performance of transnational motherhood that is available to white women, whether or not racialized women have the financial means to do so. That is to say, there is something powerful about the representational politics of the white maternal body and the 'needy' and dependent black African child precisely for how they call up

powerful narratives that have persisted through centuries. This is an imagining of the transnational family that rests upon hierarchies, boundaries, and rigid categories. However, as Weynsht's adoption narrative reveals (Chapter 4), the legacies of the patriarchal, imperial operations that have doled out a kind of sovereign authority to the domain of white motherhood have consequences that are experienced in the everyday. These consequences carry with them the potential to disrupt hegemonic constructions of white and racialized bodies.

Weynsht's story speaks to the work of postcolonial theorists (Eng 2010; Cvetkovich 2007; Stoler 2002) who argue that colonial histories find expression in the emotional registers of the political. The documentary certainly shows that the consequences of various workings of power can be excavated from the affective realm of the adoptee. The radical potential in Weynsht's inability to fit into a fixed identity cannot be extricated from her pain over being unable to locate herself within national, gendered, and racial hegemonic ideals. She cannot live up to the white ideal of beauty that she believes her sisters inhabit. She cannot be the perfect transnational adopted child who is only permitted to be happy in her new environment. And upon returning home, she cannot reintegrate into the cultural environment of Addis Ababa. Her position within both families is fraught with tension and anxieties that are not, and maybe cannot be, resolved by the end of the film.

Here, Binyavanga Wainaina's personal account of watching Live Aid and listening to *We are the World* as a child comes to mind. As he subverts the politics of humanitarian sentiment through lines like "Tears, tears, are not Enou-ou-ou-gh" (Wainaina n.pag), Wainaina reminds us, through his sarcasm, of the subjectivity and agency of African youth. Indeed, whether they live on the African continent or abroad, whether they remain with their biological families or have been adopted into other homes, African youth are finding ways to position themselves within the

world and to interrogate their positioning in the "world." Considering their privileging of the adoptee's subjectivity, then, one possible direction for future work is to think through the ways in which analyses of the transnational African adoptee align with scholarship theorizing the framing and capacities of African youth on and beyond the African continent. Mamadou Diouf, for example, discusses the ways in which national and international discourses have written on the body of African youths, using them to construct notions of national and global citizenship. The meaning of African childhood, he argues, shifted in the transition from independence into the current era of globalization. Youth were once characterized as the hope of various nations and entrusted with the "project of modernity" (4), building nations and leading democracies. However, in an era of neoliberalism and structural adjustment, as a result of "[t]he failures of nationalist economic, cultural and political models," many such youth, much like black youths in America, have been recast in light of moral and civic anxieties as 'threats,' their behavior criminalized and monitored. "The reclassification of young people," Diouf writes, "is manifested in institutionalized hostility toward them. This takes increasingly violent forms which, combined with disdain and indifference on the part of the elites, render their present difficult and their future unpredictable" (5).

In some ways, the emotional states of Weynsht and other transnational adoptees compare to the emotional states of these African youths of postcolonial states. Burdened by colonial and imperial legacies, they are constrained in many ways by the national and cultural discourses that seek to transform them into consumptive capital for the body politic in service of national projects. The burden this places upon the children is clear. In regards to the transnational adoptee, for example, David Eng writes in *The Feeling of Kinship* that despite the fact that transnational adoption is "one of the most privileged forms of diaspora and immigration," the

adoptee's "experiences also underscore it as a process largely devoid of affective self-determination. In [the adoptee's] attempts to mourn the unspeakable loss initiated by her (involuntary) exchange, the transnational adoptee might also be said to function under an affective embargo, making it particularly difficult to negotiate her melancholia and transform it ever gradually into mourning" (123). At the same time, as we have seen through Weynsht's desire to reconnect with her adoptive and biological families, and through her articulation of her feelings (even if they are at times 'incomplete' or 'insufficient'), there is a certain kind of agency in the process of affective negotiation that cannot be ignored. Likewise, Diouf writes that African youth in urban spaces in the African postcolony, despite being subjected to forms of oppression, also have the potential for creative possibility: "excluded from the arenas of power, work, education, and leisure, young Africans construct places of socialization and new sociabilities whose function is to show their difference, either on the margins of society or at its heart, simultaneously as victims and active agents" (5). Similar scholarship (Simone 2005; Cole 2005; Ismail 2009) on African youth cast them as social agents operating within social, economic, and geographical spaces of marginality and liminality that serve "as supports for acts that express within the public sphere, in a violent, artistic, or spiritual way a desire for recognition and a presence" (Diouf 5). African transnational adoptees, in their movement out of Africa due to "the shifting intersections of truncated urbanization, social conflict, and the privatization of the trappings of public life" (Simone 2005), also find themselves within such spaces, although they are situated within the supposedly secure domestic domain of the privileged American home. This is not to generalize the uniqueness of transnational adoption, but to speak to the ways in which the self-positioning of African youths, as displayed in this project by Weynsht and Binyavanga Wainaina can challenge readings of the African child as an agentless child-victim.

This dissertation thus points towards future research projects in the field of African Youth Studies, projects that theorize the agency of African youth in the face of racialized, neoliberal global economies.

Even in lieu of specific violent, artistic, or spiritual acts of agency, the very affect of adoptees provides the means through which we can expose and trouble the workings of power inscribing their experiences. And in turn, because their affect is necessarily entangled with that of their adopted family, it can potentially push them to confront their privilege, to face these workings of power as part of their embodied and interconnected experiences. Furthermore, the complex feelings of adopted African children can force not only the adoptive family, but also international consumers of transnational adoption as a globally circulated popular fiction to recognize their implicatedness in the embodied subjectivities of adoptees. This can then shift notions of cultural and social boundaries and distance. At the same time, however, the notion of consumption brings up more ethical considerations. Transnational adoptees are already circulating within affective and neoliberal economies. They are already cast in the logics of capitalist exchange. Colonial, imperial, paternalistic, and humanitarian discourses already take as common sense the consumption of their bodies. The story of the adoptee is key for challenging the cultural fictions that erase their subjectivity. However, what problematic logics are reinscribed upon the consumption of this story even for ethical purposes?

As Carolyn Pedwell argues, such critical engagement usually calls upon privileged political subjects specifically to "imagine the situations, constraints and feelings of 'others' and, through such empathetic engagement, be moved to recognize their own complicity in oppressive power structure and their concomitant responsibility to act for social change" (19). Indeed, Saidiya Hartman warns us that the telling of narratives of black suffering, even those that are told

with the expressed purpose of creating bridges of understanding between privileged and underprivileged communities, can also be a form of violence. What happens, she asks, when "the pain of the other merely provide[s] us with the opportunity for self-reflection? At issue here," she asserts, "is the precariousness of empathy and the uncertain line between witness and spectator" (3-4). Stories of an African youth's painful experiences of adoption can easily be reabsorbed back into objectifying humanitarian frameworks that decode her affective experiences and insecurities in ways that render them more suitable to the white, patriarchal capitalist order. This has implications for the transformative potential of the transnational family as a rich site, which, as I have stated, can possibly transform spaces of belonging. The interracial drawing together of bodies—those individuals within the transnational family and those outside of the transnational family consuming the adoptee's difficult stories—can reshape emotional geographies and transform conceptions of proximity. However, it can also become a predatory process; the assumption that the adoptee's pain can be resolved or fully understood and translated to serve certain projects of healing and happiness is inherently a violent one. Indeed, As Pedwell writes, "[w]hile prominent liberal commentators figure empathy as an affective means of bridging differences and antagonisms and healing 'past' traumas…efforts to *generate* empathy might be less important or productive in some contexts than examining the potential causes and implications of empathetic 'failures'" (25, emphasis original).

Perhaps *Girl, Adopted* shows us the inherent difficulty of bridging differences through its lack of resolution. Despite Weynsht's attempts to reintegrate herself into American life, the questions still left unanswered and the familial tensions left unresolved at the end of the film deny the kind of ideological coherence that would enable others, from consumers of her narrative to her own family, to once again produce her as a fully knowable object. Thus, such stories of

adoption call "attention to the limits of the imaginative reconstruction, the near magical act of 'putting oneself in the other's shoes', in which liberal narratives of empathy invest" (Pedwell 22). That is to say that the project of closing the gaps between individuals differentially oriented within this order, of awakening the privileged subject to the histories of violence that have created the conditions for the adoptee's suffering needs to be a responsible endeavour that accepts moments of discomfort and demands ethical self-reflection in order to move beyond that discomfort and arrive at social justice. Such stories underscore "how the affective afterlives of colonialism, slavery and racism continue to shape contemporary lives in ways that are not easy to penetrate, nor possible to undo, through the power of empathetic will or imagination alone" (22).

Thinking of transnational adoption, then, as part of a larger project of reading postcolonial intimacy alongside the victimization and agency of African youth gives us a complex lens through which to conceive interconnectedness. The affective circulations threading through the experiences of African youth make clear the slippage between oppression and possibility in ways that challenge the humanitarian order—an order which casts them as vulnerable only through a political denial of collective embodiment in sovereign power structures. In acknowledging and reading unsettling non-resolutions as rich productive sites, scholarly engagements can mitigate the risks of once again articulating youth through the language of futurity; it is not that studies of African youth must one day lead us to an easily definable, static utopian space of positive social change. But perhaps their fluctuating relationalities, uneasily situated within various affective histories, can foster more critical engagements of implicated transnational relationships in a way that is continuously unsettling and challenging. The transnational family offers us a way to imagine different kinds of collectivities, but this must be an imagining that exposes rather than erases the legacies and

afterlives of the very violent processes that have made the adoptee available for circulation. In tying together the threads of experience and history, in bringing together various political subjects, differentially inscribed and written on by the legacies of colonialism and imperialism, this project gestures towards what these collectivities can look like. It is proximity without stepping into, connecting without effacing. It is a larger sense of implication that is responsible, that recalibrates humanitarian notions of inclusion, multiculturalism, and global citizenship around the mandates of social justice and political change. It is not *We are the World*. Rather, it is a configuration of transnational community and inter-relatedness that always seeks to deconstruct old racial boundaries privilege and sovereign authority.

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