

Preface

This book explores the realm where the territories of the political meet the terrain of the psyche. Its major concerns, nationalism and psychoanalysis, might well be charged with obsolescence in the contemporary world, the price of an almost myopic focus on the levels of the bounded and the particular (territorial sovereignty, individual psychosexual development) at a moment when, by most accounts, we are going ever more global, connecting ever more intricately to the world outside ourselves, and living our lives in the increasingly larger light—or longer shadow—of global culture. Such indeed, was the import of a question posed to me many years ago, when this project was in its infancy. “But why work with psychoanalysis?” my interlocutor demanded. “It is, after all, a dying field.” The question that began as a demon and persisted as a ghost became, in the end, a gift. For it predicted, long before I knew it, that *Worlds Within* would find its animating concern in tracing the spectral afterlife of ideas, events, and narratives that, far from dying, are always living on.

Psychoanalysis, Jacques Derrida has famously charged, is a body of thought coextensive with the proper name of Sigmund Freud (or, if one admits heretics, Freud and Jacques Lacan), a theory that seeks and finds itself everywhere.¹ Like the imperialism with which Derrida links it, psychoanalysis proposes a description of a bounded territory (self rather than colony) and then extends it into a model of worldwide span. But psychoanalysis (again like imperialism) has also been subject, from those very corners in which it took up residence, to contestation of a sort for which “end” is hardly the right term. Freud’s psychoanalysis is not that of the colonial ethnopsychanalysts who explained empire through the dependency complexes of natives, nor that of Frantz Fanon, feminism, postcolonial theory, and critical race theory. This “historical dynamism,” to borrow a term from Fanon, lends psychoanalysis the uncanny aura of

something that is outmoded and contemporary, dead yet ghostly alive, gone but not gone.² If psychoanalysis is dead, it is dead in the same sense that empire is past. As Nicholas Dirks says, “The postcolonial world is one in which we may live after colonialism but never without it.”³

Nationalism, too, lives in this limbo. Critically visible and conceptually potent for much of the past two decades in studies of the nation’s invented traditions, imagined communities, and discursive instantiation, nations and nationalisms have more recently been regularly dismissed as largely residual forms in the era of globalization. Derrida, for example, claims that nationalism, even in its “worst and most sinister manifestations, those that are the most imperialistic and the most vulgarly violent,” has emerged as a “universal philosophical model, a philosophical *telos*” that today stands arrested, caught at the crossroads between “this intensification of so-called international exchanges, and this exasperation of national identities and identifications.”⁴ The rapid flows of capital, persons, goods, information cultures, and languages across national borders, coupled with the increasing power of various stateless actors, from the transnational corporation to the regional economic market to the diasporic community to the terrorist cell, have undeniably reshaped the political and imaginative construct of the nation. But just because the global international has altered the nation does not mean it has rendered it obsolete, a mere analytical archaism withering away before our eyes. For as a host of late twentieth-century and early twenty-first-century political events attest, from the rise of ethnic nationalisms in the new Europe to the spread of newly imperial nationalism in the post-9/11 United States to the ongoing work of decolonization through popular nationalisms in the societies of the South, nation-states remain a major, perhaps inescapable, container for contemporary politics, ambitions, and transformations.

More than entombing the nation, the present enjoins on us the task of reanimating it. This means learning to see nations in more places and in more ways, as less bounded by their borders and more inextricably connected to all that seems to lie outside them, as well as all that lies inside: the alien, the *unheimlich* (uncanny), the other within. Finally, this project entails rethinking what Derrida calls the *telos* and *topology* of nationalism, a task for which I have enlisted both psychoanalysis and narrative theory. Beneath the image of a progressivist march of nation-state politics

congenitally fixed on territoriality and dead-ending now in the flows of the global present lies a history in waiting, the history of how national identities and identifications have themselves been made through movement. Nations, this book argues, are fantasmatic objects knotted together by ambivalent forces of desire, identification, memory, and forgetting, even as they simultaneously move within, across, and beyond a series of spatial and temporal borders (*us/them*, *territory/flow*, *present/past*, *life/death*). The space of nations is never simply their own. What the structure of national identification conceives of as the outside—the world beyond the border, the cultural other outside the compact—is in fact always already inside, always already present in the very moment and process of national formation.

Worlds Within seeks to recover the structuring presence of both the psychic inside and the global outside within a series of national narratives that range the globe, span the past century, and, not least of all, bring the outside in and the inside out. It further explores how the global is a kind of inside, an imaginary of cross-cultural connection and movement that has been mobilized to express various national identifications and disidentifications, from the adopted imperial Englishness of the Polish émigré Joseph Conrad and the Trinidadian colonial V. S. Naipaul, to the anticolonial nationalism and Third-Worldism of the African American W. E. B. Du Bois, the Martinican Fanon, and the West and East African novelists Chinua Achebe and Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o, to the postcolonial national-cosmopolitanism of the Indian writers Salman Rushdie and Amitav Ghosh, the South African writer J. M. Coetzee, and the Cuban writer Severo Sarduy, and the global feminist revisions of anticolonial nationalism in the northern and southern African novelists Assia Djebar and Tsitsi Dangarembga. Several of these writers betray a certain distance from the place into which they were born and a powerful pull toward other places, be they imperial centers, emergent new nations, or regional alignments. The majority of these writers are exiles, border-crossers, migrants, cosmopolitans, and global citizens, while a few stay put and write their nations from within their borders. Regardless of their individual physical locales, all of the writers surveyed here reveal something about the nation's psychic locale—that incessant movement between distinct spaces, times, and attachments through which national identification (and disidentification)

comes into being. So Du Bois's African America is bonded to the pre-slavery Africa he recalls and the independent Africa he dreams; Fanon's colonized Martinique is redeemed by his vision of a free Algeria; Sarduy's image of postrevolutionary Cuba crystallizes from the perspective of his French exile, poststructuralist loyalties, and Indo-Tibetan exotic-erotic; and Conrad's adopted Thames runs straight to the Congo while, at a later stage, literary descendants of Conrad like Achebe, Naipaul, Dabydeen, Rushdie, and Ghosh think their respective postcolonial localities—Nigeria, Trinidad, Guyana, India—in relation to the metropolitan other of England and English.

As a point of attachment, the nation is a moving target. It emerges here across several historical periods, geographical locales, and political histories, always against the backdrop of the global modernity produced by colonialism, imperialism, and their aftermath and always subtended by mobile networks of political desire and identification. Global modernity, like the nation-form it disseminates, is marked by spatial and temporal discontinuity, unevenness, and overlapping. This book explores these breaks and joinings, as well the shifting linkages of the nation concept to the identity categories of race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, and class, in the interests of situating the nation form itself (more than national literatures or national writers) as the object of comparative criticism. In this effort to world the nation, I have found it necessary to cross several borders, including critical ones. *Worlds Within* thus traces a series of ghostly encounters, from both sides of the imperial divide, between nationalism, psychoanalysis, narrative textuality, and the deconstruction whose method cuts across them all. I have explored several instances in which it is possible to suture psychoanalytic models of longing to national, and global, discourses of belonging. My aim has not been to present a unified psychoanalytic model of national identification or the nation form, or stand-alone psychoanalytic readings of emblematic national-global texts, but rather to explore how national identification and national narrative work. The reading of the one reveals the operation of the other in all their mutual variety and difference. The work of national identification and the making of that heterogeneous entity, the subject of national desire, is sedimented, I argue, into narrative form. Hence this book's guiding concern with narrative modes of connection, especially those exploited by the novel.

The book begins with a series of encounters between the critical study of nations and nationalism and globalization theory, between psychoanalysis and nationalism, and between psychoanalysis and deconstruction, in which “the nation” surfaces as an especially contested term. The introductory chapter also traces the temporal structures that emerge from these couplings, focusing on the plots of recursivity and return (psychoanalytic uncanniness, deconstructive spectrality), as well as the linear plots that animate notions of nationalism’s self-actualizing teleology (*bildung*) and fuel the attachment of the nation form to the genre of the novel and the mode of allegory. Elaborating a model of national desire that cuts across these linear plots, the chapter turns to fantasy, fantasm, mourning, and melancholia in order to explore the range of temporal and spatial connections on which national identification depends. The imperial and postcolonial national novel provides one record of these connections, as I argue in a concluding discussion of Rushdie’s *Midnight’s Children* (1981), a national novel in global form.

Chapter 2 explores the convergence of imperialism, nationalism, and psychoanalysis through a reading of what is arguably postcolonial criticism’s most iconic allegory, Conrad’s *Heart of Darkness* (1899). The novella shares with the Freudian uncanny an oscillating temporality that renders the present continuous with the past and the self coincident with the other. The convergence of these two fin-de-siècle fables of civilization and its discontents reveals the heart of the West, the soul of Europe expressed in two of its most powerful, most exported, subjectifying stories. But when explored in other places and other times, in conjunction with other narratives about the formation of society and self, their convergence exposes a significantly more diffuse, polycentric, and differentiated zone. Conrad’s discourse of British national imperialism is itself constantly invaded by the space and time of a global elsewhere, while Conrad’s literary descendants uncannily repeat this process in reverse, recasting England from its imperial peripheries. These rewritings of *Heart of Darkness* further describe the changing forms of both nations and novels, from the resistant realism of Achebe’s portrait of a cultured and deeply historical precolonial Africa in *Arrow of God* (1964), to the mournfully introspective narration that marks Naipaul’s nostalgia for a lost European imperialism in *A Bend in the River* (1979), to the narrative discontinuities through

which Dabydeen chronicles a multiethnic, diasporic, and postimperial London in *The Intended* (1981).

If literary texts are subject to a ghostly life of return and reanimation, so too are the narratives of nation and psyche. Du Bois, the subject of Chapter 3, initially translated nineteenth-century German romantic nationalism into his own racial nationalism even as he fractured any symmetry between race and nation with the psychic construct of double consciousness. The pre-psychoanalytic language of the psyche that Du Bois draws on describes a black self located simultaneously within the United States and without it, both in the sense of lacking the nation and lying beyond it, in such extranational places and times as ancient Egypt, precolonial Ethiopia, and the resurgent black world of Du Bois's dreaming. The divisions and connections of double consciousness are mirrored in the formal strategies of Du Bois's polygeneric manifesto, *The Souls of Black Folk* (1903), and writ large in his social realist romance, *Dark Princess* (1928), and final trilogy, *The Black Flame* (1957–61). Du Bois's straddling of racialist, nationalist, anti-imperialist, and diasporic allegiances illustrates one of this book's central tensions: the simultaneous pull between territorialization and deterritorialization, between a concept of identity rendered isomorphic with place and emblematic of race and nation, and identity reconceived as that which evades place per se and constitutes an altogether different kind of being, at once more interiorized and more diffused. Du Bois's famous figure of a color line that belts the world expresses one vision of this identity,⁵ strikingly different in its lateral energies and transverse networks from the recursive-repetitive loop of the uncanny, yet ghosted nonetheless by the haunted work of racial memory and the allegorical figuration that is, for Du Bois, one of its formal modes.

Fanon also turns to the troubled plots of racial and national time, and similarly considers the range of possible *forms* through which they may be either surmounted or achieved. Chapter 4 explores the ghostly continuities between Fanon the Martinican-born psychiatrist and Fanon the anticolonial Algerian nationalist. It finds in both a common engagement with the topological limitations of territory, both colony and nation, by means of the oscillatory temporality of consciousness, including the racial consciousness Fanon attempts to get beyond in *Black Skin, White Masks* (1952) and the national consciousness espoused in *The Wretched of*

the Earth (1961). The ghostly form of form links *Black Skin's* polyvocal, polyphonal interrogation of race in the colony, richly illustrated with colonial and anticolonial novels, poems, plays, and films alongside its case histories and philosophical-psychoanalytic debates, with *Wretched's* invocation of nation in the postcolony. *Wretched* is both a manifesto and a conjuration, a call for a resistant internationalism born of anti-imperial nationalism yet also coexisting with it in the peculiar style, and form, of the ghost. Through a reading in dialogue with Derrida's *Specters of Marx* (1993), I argue for Fanon's body of work as a model of fantasmatic nationalism, nationalism that incorporates outside into inside, globe into nation in such a way as to suggest that those externalities were always there from the beginning. Far from tarring Fanon with an outmoded particularism, restoring nationalism to a figure more lately embraced as cosmopolitan, Chapter 4 attempts to account for the ghostly forms, including what I call the ghostly generic forms, through which identitarian desires are expressed in national and global eras. With his heterogeneric writing, Fanon, like Du Bois, brings an expanded sense of the various forms, modes, and styles through which the nation is written. Chapter 5 considers the African novel from independence onward as one genre in which the heterogeneity and heterochronicity of Fanon's form return. As the work of the Kenyan novelist, playwright, and essayist Ngũgi, the Algerian feminist novelist and filmmaker Djébar, the Zimbabwean feminist novelist Dangarembga, and the postmodern South African novelist Coetzee show, the postcolonial novel has a particular capacity to capture the multiplicity of time, place, and language that is the peculiar cast of the postcolonial nation, in which liberation is still an unfinished project and loss remains the nation's dominant mode.

Chapter 6 returns to the novel of nationalism, as irreverently deconstructed by the expatriate Cuban-turned-French poststructuralist Sarduy. Breaking with a broadly national-allegorical tradition of Latin American literature, Sarduy's poststructuralist, post-Boom novel *Cobra* (1972) undermines the discourses of both identity and territory by charting the global wanderings and multiple metamorphoses of a Cuban drag queen en route to India and Tibet. In Sarduy's playful transculturation of the French *nouveau roman* (new novel) to the Cuban national novel, and of the theoretical apparatus of Lacanian psychoanalysis to the Spanish language and

a distinctly orientalist imaginary, lies yet another model of the changing relationship between psychoanalysis, nationalism, and the novel on the global stage. This chapter, like earlier ones, also turns to the Freudian models of mourning and melancholia in order to consider Sarduy's parodic-performative novelistic kitsch as a different kind of response to national loss and another expression of national desire that gets at its object from afar, in the style of anamorphosis. The book concludes with a postscript devoted to subcontinental portraits of national memory, mourning, and movement in Rushdie's *The Satanic Verses* (1988) and Ghosh's *The Shadow Lines* (1989). Here, as throughout the book, I consider the possibilities of thinking the nation through the practice of fantasmatic cartography—the mapping of national and global territories of belonging through an analysis of the psychic work of longing. While this work has continuities with the analysis of loss undertaken by trauma theory, it stops short of turning loss into the meaning or outcome of the national project per se. Nations, variously imperial, anticolonial, and postcolonial, are structured by loss, but they nonetheless remain.

I have characterized *Worlds Within* as a book concerned with explanatory ideas, historical events, and cultural narratives that, far from dying, are always living on. The book takes spectral uncanniness both as its theoretical occasion and its formal model. I have organized the argument around the rhythms of repetition and return. Each chapter is conceived as a chronological arc, beginning with a literary or theoretical masterplot (Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*, Du Bois's double consciousness, Fanon's divided racial-colonial subject, Sarduy's vintage *nouveau roman*) and then proceeding from that point of origin to various reworkings. In the case of Conrad and his postcolonial inheritors, the novel recurs and is reanimated in novelistic form. In other cases, an initial theoretical elaboration is followed by a fictional quickening, as in the transition from the race manifesto of *The Souls of Black Folk* to the allegorical romance of *Dark Princess*, or the pairing of Fanon's theory of nationalism with postcolonial African novels. The passage from Sarduy's *Cobra* to the exegeses of its novelistic strategy afforded by Sarduy's theoretical writings reverses this trajectory. The net effect of these narrative arcs is to confirm the uncanniness of an exemplary body of postcolonial literature, of an implicit historical zone (imperialism and its aftermath), and of a specific narrative of literary

history that emerges from this crossing and recrossing of distinct literary spaces and times. I aim to trouble a series of definitional borders, beginning with the line between nationalism's territories and psychoanalysis's interiors and extending to those that would divide the national from the global, the fictional from the theoretical, and the novel from the generic ghosts that are the substance of its continued life. Manifesto and romance, epic and tragedy, like the modes of allegory and parody, all surface in these pages. Through tracing their apparitions and their returns across a long twentieth century, I hope to show the many ways in which narrative representation makes political identification possible, particularly the simultaneous coexistence of national and global identifications.

Beneath the formal structure and critical preoccupations of this book, with its many movements back and forth and in and out, there also exists a set of questions posed from movement and addressed to method. In answering them, I have thought of movement *as* method. If the nation, the novel, and psychoanalysis do indeed draw our gaze in two directions at once—inward to their imaginary psychic territories and outward to their global reaches or, on a different axis, backward to their hegemonic histories and forward to their postcolonial afterlives—what can we learn from such double vision? Understood as an epistemological response to the philosophical condition of living after (a condition as old as it is new), and mobilized as a particular lens on literature, politics, and identity in the period stretching from late imperialism to postcolonial diaspora, seeing double is the guiding method of this book. For just as no map, including those of literature's cartographers, can be drawn with straight lines or single planes alone, so no act of reading can proceed without circling back to familiar territories, times, and texts, and thus retracing the tracks of a different, and double, life for the future.