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FLESH AGAINST ERASURE: CORPOREAL TESTIMONY, NECROPOLITICAL INSCRIPTION, AND THE ARCHIVE OF FEELINGS IN DANTICAT'S *THE FARMING OF BONES* AND BULAWAYO'S *WE NEED NEW NAMES*[i]

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Abstract:
Western trauma theory's insistence on linguistic failure as trauma's defining signature crystallised in Cathy Caruth's formulation of the "unclaimed" wound that persists precisely through resistance to articulation has generated a consequential theoretical deafness: an incapacity to decode the registers through which colonised and displaced bodies bear witness. This article confronts that incapacity. Through comparative analysis of Edwidge Danticat's *The Farming of Bones* (1998) and NoViolet Bulawayo's *We Need New Names* (2013), I advance corporeal testimony as a concept naming the process by which traumatic historical experience inscribes itself somatically through sensory imprinting, bodily storage, intergenerational transmission via epigenetic and environmental pathways, and transformation into resistance consciousness. The theoretical architecture draws on Frantz Fanon's historic-racial schema and his concept of affective tetanisation, Achille Mbembe's necro politics and the production of death-worlds, Ann Cvetkovich's archive of feelings, Lauren Berlant's slow death, and Bessel van der Kolk's neurobiology of somatic memory. Both novelists deploy smell, taste, touch, and physical metamorphosis as epistemological strategies, refusing Eurocentric assumptions about trauma's unspeakability. Amabelle's persistent coldness and Darling's bruised voice register what official archives erase. The supposed unspeakability Caruthian models identify may reflect not trauma's inherent nature but Western theory's incapacity to decode corporeal registers. Bodies speak what mouths may not, and postcolonial literature has been developing vocabularies for that speech across both Caribbean and African contexts.

[i] SILINMEYE KARŞI BEDEN: DANTICAT'IN THE FARMING OF BONES VE BULAWAYO'NUN WE NEED NEW NAMES ADLI ROMANLARINDA BEDENSEL TANIKLIK, NEKROPOLITIK YAZILIM VE DUYGULAR ARŞIVI

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Öz:
Batı travma kuramının dilsel çöküşü travmanın belirleyici özelliği olarak konumlandırması, Cathy Caruth'un ifadeye direnci yoluyla korunan "sahiplenilmemiş" yara kavramında kristalleşen Avrupa merkezci önyargı sömürgeleştirilmiş ve yerinden edilmiş bedenlerin gerçekte tanıklık ettiği kayıtları çözümleme kapasitesinden yoksun bir kuramsal sağırlık üretmiştir. Bu makale söz konusu sağırlıkla yüzleşmektedir. Edwidge Danticat'ın *The Farming of Bones* (1998) ve NoViolet Bulawayo'nun *We Need New Names* (2013) adlı romanlarının karşılaştırmalı çözümlemesi aracılığıyla, tarihsel travmatik deneyimin duyusal iz bırakma, bedensel depolama, kuşaklararası aktarım ve direniş bilincine dönüştürme yoluyla somatik olarak nasıl işlediğini adlandıran bedensel tanıklık (corporeal testimony) kavramını önermekteyim. Kuramsal yapı, Frantz Fanon'un tarihsel ırksal şeması ve affektif tetanizasyon kavramı, Achille Mbembe'nin nekropolitikası ve ölüm dünyaları üretimi, Ann Cvetkovich'in duygular arşivi, Lauren Berlant'ın yavaş ölüm kavramı ve Bessel van der Kolk'un somatik belleğin nörobiyolojisi üzerine inşa edilmektedir. Her iki romancı da koku, tat, dokunma ve fiziksel metamorfozu, travmanın söylenemezliğine ilişkin Avrupa merkezci varsayımları reddeden epistemolojik stratejiler olarak konumlandırmaktadır. Amabelle'in kalıcı soğukluğu Maydanoz Katliamı'ndan yıllar sonra dahi bedeninin nehir suyunun sıcaklığını koruması ve Darling'in berelenmiş sesi "*kendi ülkemizde olmadığımız için kendi dillerimizi kullanamadık*" (Bulawayo, 2013, s. 242) resmî arşivlerin sildiğini kaydetmektedir. Caruthçu modellerin tespit ettiği söylenemezlik, travmanın doğasını değil, Batı kuramının bedensel kayıtları çözme kapasitesizliğini yansıtıyor olabilir. Bedenler ağızların söyleyemediğini söyler ve postkolonyal edebiyat, hem Karayip hem de Afrika bağlamında bu konuşma için sözcükler geliştirmektedir.

Anahtar kelimeler: bedensel tanıklık, dekolonyal somatik, nekropolitika, somatik anlatı, postkolonyal tanıklık

1. The body speaks a language that cannot be spoken

Dominican soldiers hold up a sprig of parsley. *Perejil*. Pronounce it. The rolled 'r', along with Kreyòl phonemes, turns into weapons that kill. In Edwidge Danticat's The Farming of Bones, soldiers demand, "*Tell us what this is*," brandishing the herb Haitians call pesi, "*used for our food, our teas, our baths, to cleanse our insides as well as our outsides*" (Danticat, 1998, pp. 59-60), that this linguistic test administers death with botanical precision. The tongue falters. Machete deaths in the thousands. Bulawayo's narrator, an ocean and six decades away, registers a cognate violence that operates through the same organ: "*Because we were not in our own country, we could not use our own languages, and so when we*

spoke, our voices came out bruised. As we spoke, our tongues were garbled and staggered in our mouths like drunk men" (Bulawayo, 2013, p. 242). No symbol. Physical fact. Both novelists know that before the tongue becomes a figure of speech, it remains an organ.

Although separated by geography, histories and even oceans, the scenes played out in the Caribbean as well as in Africa are connected by an epistemological crisis: one that Western trauma theory consistently misreads: the body as primary document in situations where state archives lie, official records disappear, and dominant languages kill. The field's founding assumptions point the wrong way. Cathy Caruth's influential formulation positions trauma as "*a wound that cries out*" precisely through resistance to linguistic articulation, an event "*experienced too soon, too unexpectedly, to be fully known*" (1996, p. 4), and Shoshana Felman and Dori Laub extend this into the Holocaust as "*an event without a witness*" where "*survivors had no knowledge, no understanding and no memory of what happened*" (1992, pp. 58,8o). The theoretical edifice is elegant. It is also, as Stef Craps's devastating fourfold diagnosis demonstrates, profoundly Eurocentric: marginalising non-Western experiences, universalising event-based definitions inadequate for what Maria Root terms "*insidious trauma*," privileging modernist aesthetics as trauma's sole legitimate representational mode, and neglecting the metropolitan-colonial connections that expose trauma's structural rather than individual character (Craps, 2013, p. 2; Root, 1992, p. 240). Irene Visser sharpened the indictment: the event-based model has been "*discarded in favour of frameworks attentive to ongoing, structural, and quotidian violence*" (2015, p. 251). According to Naomi Mandel, the underlying problem lies within the premise of unspeakability itself. However, as Stef Craps (2013) argues, this framework "*inadvertently silences the material and historical reality*" of the suffering it claims to honour (p. 2).

The forward motion of critique has considerable weight and impetus, with vast potential for change. Michael Rothberg argues in what is regarded as a watershed intervention that trauma theory "*as long as [it] remains tied to a narrow Eurocentric framework*" distorts the very histories it addresses (2008, p. 227). Similarly, Roger Luckhurst exposed the "*shocking failure to address the political dimensions of atrocity, genocide and war*" in the field (2013). Scholars have productively examined Danticat's testimonial strategies (Harford Vargas, 2014; Feifer, 2020; Hawkins, 2025) and Bulawayo's migration and affective economies (Frassinelli, 2015; Suárez-Rodríguez, 2022; Chakraborty, 2025; Matsika, 2025). So far, no sustained comparative study has traced how either author deploys specifically somatic narrative strategies that find truth not in the collapse of language but in the body's surplus encoding, carrying, and transmitting of experience through touch, taste, smell, and transformation. This distance matters. The text gives rise to what Rothberg identifies as trauma theory's "*individual, temporal, and linguistic*" orientation, as opposed to its "*collective, spatial, and material*" approach (2008, p. 228)

This study argues that corporeal testimony develops in the writings of Danticat and Bulawayo. It is a form of witnessing that theorises historical trauma through the senses, somatic symptoms, and bodily change instead of words. The concept draws on

three theoretical resources constituting a decolonial somatics of trauma. First, Frantz Fanon's analysis of colonialism's assault on the "*corporeal schema*," where racialisation operates as "*fundamental reorganisation of bodily experience itself*" (1952/2008, p. 91-92), what he elsewhere names "*affective tetanisation*" (1961/2004, p. 44). Second, Achille Mbembe's necropolitics sovereignty as the power "*to dictate who may live and who must die*" (2003, p. 11), which names the structural conditions producing corporeal testimony: when the state positions you among the "*living dead*," the body testifies because its status as legitimate testimonial subject has been revoked. Third, Ann Cvetkovich's archive of feelings reconceptualises trauma's traces not as symptoms requiring a cure but as "*repositories of feelings and emotions*" preserving what official archives exclude (2003, p. 7). Alongside these three pillars, Bessel van der Kolk's demonstration that traumatic memory stores as "*sensory bits*", "*visual images, olfactory, auditory, or kinaesthetic sensations*" bypassing narrative-processing centres (van der Kolk & Fisler, 1995, p. 513), provides the empirical spine connecting literary strategy to somatic reality, while Lauren Berlant's concept of "*slow death*" "*the physical wearing out of a population*" (2007, p. 754), threads through both novels as the temporal register within which corporeal testimony accumulates.

Three contributions follow. First, *corporeal testimony* names a process distinct from Caruthian unspeakability and from therapeutic body memory alike; it is collective historical witness encoded somatically, refusing frameworks that pathologise bodily symptoms as individual disorders. Second, the first sustained comparative analysis of these novels through a somatic-decolonial lens bridges Caribbean and African postcolonial experience through embodiment rather than assuming their separation, filling a concrete lacuna that the 2024-2025 scholarship has made visible but not yet addressed. Third, the analysis demonstrates that what Western trauma theory calls "*unspeakability*" may name not trauma's inherent nature but theoretical deafness to alternative registers. Bodies have been speaking all along.

The comparative methodology pairs these texts because their convergences and divergences illuminate distinct postcolonial contexts that generate shared somatic strategies while maintaining culturally specific corporeal vocabularies. Both centre female protagonists, navigating state-sanctioned violence, Amabelle surviving the 1937 Parsley Massacre, Darling negotiating Zimbabwe's layered traumas culminating in Operation Murambatsvina, whose bodies archive what official narratives suppress. The divergences prove equally instructive. Amabelle's retrospective excavation circular, archaeological, and returning compulsively to the river that nearly killed her, contrasts with Darling's ethnographic present tense, her body documenting displacement as it occurs. Danticat's narrative operates as posthumous testimony: the cold remains of a completed massacre, an event whose archival absence Feifer has documented, "*no documentation with direct references to the massacre before, during, or after it has been found in Dominican archives*" (2020, p. 36). Bulawayo captures the ongoing, structural, quotidian violence Visser identifies as eluding event-based models entirely. What Berlant calls

"*slow death*", attrition that "*prospers not in traumatic events… but in temporally labile environments whose qualities… are often identified with the presentness of ordinariness itself*" (2011, p. 100) names the temporality within which Darling's corporeal testimony accumulates. These temporal discrepancies illuminate how corporeal testimony functions across distinct chronotopes. Amabelle's body excavates buried memory. Darling's documents are displaced in real time. Both insist that flesh is a more reliable archive than any official document.

2. Toward a decolonised somatics of trauma

2.1 The Caruthian aporia and its material consequences

Caruth's theoretical edifice rests on a consequential distinction that warrants scrutiny. "*The wound of the mind*," she writes, "*the breach in the mind's experience of time, self, and the world is not, like the wound of the body, a simple and healable event*" (1996, p. 4). Caruth's dismissal of the physical injury as comparatively "*simple and healable*" is worth pausing over. An injury of the psyche, in contrast, is complex, persistent, and philosophically generative. The prioritisation of the mental, the conceptual over the corporeal, echoes the Cartesian dualism, which Fanon called colonialism's ultimate productive weapon. For colonised subjects, the wound of the body is neither simple nor healable. Amabelle's persistent coldness decades after the Massacre River is not psychosomatic in the dismissive clinical sense that term often carries. Her body maintains the temperature at which death approaches. Fanon's own clinical practice in Algeria documented what he termed "*affective tetanisation*" and "*muscular rigidity*" among colonised subjects, the body "*kept on edge like a running sore flinching from a caustic agent*" (1961/2004, p. 44). Not metaphors. Material descriptions of how sovereignty writes itself onto flesh.

The problem is not that Caruth is wrong about linguistic disruption. Trauma fractures narrative coherence: that much her framework captures accurately. The problem is that her framework mistakes one register of traumatic expression for the entire phenomenon. Luckhurst's critique of the field's "*injunction to maintain the post-traumatic condition*" (2013) gains force here: by privileging unspeakability, Caruthian models deny recovery, resilience, and the possibility that bodies might be speaking fluently in registers the theory cannot hear. Mandel's accusation is specific regarding the presumption of unspeakability. However, as Stef Craps (2013) argues, this Western framework "*inadvertently silences the material and historical reality*" of the suffering it claims to honour (p. 2). Berlant (2007) notes that this "*focus on the logic of exception underdescribes the range of response styles that emerge in these extended situations*" (p. 756). The slow death of Haitian braceros in Dominican cane fields, the slow death of Darling's Zimbabwe these operate as endemic attrition, not exceptional rupture. Caruth's event-based model cannot conceptualise them. Neither can it recognise, as Brennan's recent intervention demonstrates, the "*surplus life*" that remains after necropolitical governance has done its work (2024, p. 7). That residue lives in flesh.

2.2 Fanon's corporeal schema and the sociogenic turn

Fanon provides the essential vocabulary. His phenomenological analysis in Black Skin, White Masks demonstrates how racialisation operates not as ideology imposed upon a pre-existing subject but as fundamental reorganisation of embodied experience: "*Assailed at various points, the corporeal schema crumbled, its place taken by a racial epidermal schema*" (1952/2008, p. 93). Where Merleau-Ponty theorises the corporeal schema as pre-reflective bodily awareness enabling spatial orientation and embodied agency, Fanon shows colonial power violently displacing this schema with the "*historico-racial schema*", constructed "*from legends, stories, history, and above all, historicity*" imposed by the coloniser. The result is corporeal impossibility: "*My body was given back to me sprawled out, distorted, recoloured*" (p. 93). His concept of the "*zone of non-being*," that "*extraordinarily sterile and arid region*" (p. 2), names not abstraction but phenomenological description of corporeal reality bodies occupying space, which are denied the right to inhabit. This is ontological erasure made flesh.

Yet Fanon himself must be read critically rather than uncritically absorbed. In his phenomenology, the male body takes centre stage, which is disconcerting. The clinical lingo is borrowed from mid-century psychiatric terms. His revolutionary humanism is universal in a sense that has been suspect ever since the decolonisation turn. The sociogenic principle, rather than the total principle of a representation as a body, is what the recent scholarship extends in directions essential for corporeal testimony. Hannah Goozee contends that Fanon's sociogenic psychiatry, his emphasis on the notion that individual suffering is caused by environmental structures rather than intrapsychic pathology, provides resources for "*decolonising the discipline itself*" (2021, p. 102). Lewis Gordon (2015) argues that one dwells in a "*zone of non-being*", which is a place of death, of one's own corporeal hell. However, this does not imply that one experiences despair; rather, it is a position that enables a revolutionary affirmation to take place. The anti-Black world cannot contain the affirmation of Black life. Fanon does not simply critique; he proposes an alternative epistemology, that of the body, as the site of colonial inscription and potential resistance. When Amabelle's body carries the coldness of the river or Darling's tongue produces "*bruised*" English, the historico-racial schema operates somatically: the body articulating what the coloniser's archive refuses to record.

2.3 Necropolitics and the configuration of death-worlds

Achille Mbembe's term necro politics designates sovereign conditions producing bodily testimony. In his central formulation, where he states that "*the ultimate expression of sovereignty resides, to a large degree, in the power and the capacity to dictate who may live and who must die*" (2003, p. 11), he positions both the massacres this article looks at in a context that is beyond Foucauldian biopolitics. Where biopower controls and optimises life, necro power subjects one's life to the dominion of death and implicates the creation of "*death-worlds*": "*new and unique forms of social existence in which vast populations are subjected to conditions of life conferring upon them the status of the living dead*" pp. 39-40. The 1937

Parsley Massacre and Zimbabwe's Operation Murambatsvina are two examples of necropolitical brutality. The Trujillo regime identified Haitian bodies by their tongues and liquidated them by their phonemes, revealing a grotesque necro power through which sovereignty is exercised via the body's own betrayal. Through Operation Murambatsvina, which consists of the Shona terms muramba ('refuse') and tsvina ('filth') to literally mean 'drive out the rubbish', Shona and Ndebele bodies become superfluous. In her report, the UN Special Envoy Anna Tibaijuka recorded that approximately 700,000 people were displaced "*with indifference to human suffering*" (Tibaijuka 2005). Kamete (2017) refers to these holding camps as "*zones of indistinction*" and "*dump sites for homo sacer*" (p. 76), which extends Agamben's logic of the camp into Zimbabwean urban space. According to Suárez-Rodríguez (2022), the pre-migration residents of Paradise were regarded as "*living dead*" by Mbembe. Further sharpening of the concept has occurred through recent theoretical work. In "*Necropolitics and Surplus Life: Mbembe and Beyond*", published in 2024, Brennan develops surplus life as the residue of necropolitical governance, precisely the category into which Amabelle and Darling are cast post-violence.

Corporal proof of survival emerges through these necropolitical regimes. The state's delegitimation, the stripping away of your status as an agent of truth who possesses a worthy testimonial to provide, takes place when the state's own official papers refuse to document your existence, when the dominant discourse in which the state engages does not recognise the violence to which you are subject, and when the body becomes a witness. It continues to exist as the subject becomes no subject. Silence the mouth, yet flesh remembers. Governmental records overlooked; marks persist. This is not a situation in which an individual pathology calls for therapeutic intervention. It is politics inscribed on flesh, demanding structural recognition. A parallel concept has emerged in Turkish postcolonial scholarship, where researchers have theorised the Mediterranean as a "*necrogeography*" in which migrant bodies bear necropolitical inscription ("*Göçün Nekropolitik Coğrafyaları*," 2025), and where Yarar (2025) argues that contemporary humanitarianism is governed by a *nekropolitika merkezli yönetimsellik* necropolitics-centred governmentality (p. 157). The vocabulary travels. The phenomenon travels with it.

2.4 The archive of feelings and the refusal of pathology

Cvetkovich's An Archive of Feelings reconceptualises trauma's traces as "*repositories of feelings and emotions*" (2003, p. 7), resisting pathologisation. Her refusal of "*pathologising understandings of trauma that permeate medical and clinical discourses*" (p. 7) opens space for understanding somatic experience as testimony rather than disorder. Paul Gilroy extends this through the Black Atlantic: "*the concentrated intensity of the slave experience*" generates distinct memory cultures where trauma transmits through "*embodied practices, music, dance, and ritual rather than written documentation*" (1993, pp. 220-221). Rob Baum theorises the body as an archive, arguing that "*bodies function as material objects of intergenerational*

trauma where transmitted memory becomes physical inheritance" (2017, p. 667). Clara Mucci illustrates how trauma passes through "*tacit non-verbal and corporeal exchange*" (2019, p. 540). Together, these scholars place the body as the major site of knowledge. Bodies understand. The body bears witness to what words cannot signify.

2.5 Corporeal testimony: a working definition

After the synthesis of these trajectories, I offer corporeal testimony as a concept naming how traumatic historical experience is somaticized and preserved. Trauma marks its impact on body and psyche through sensory imprinting rather than through any cognitive recollection. In other words, trauma implants in our flesh a way of knowing that does not equate with memory. It instils in our bodily senses in what we, elsewhere, would call smell, taste, touch, temperature, and kinaesthetic experience. Similarly, we store knowledge somatically: that is, through what neuroscience calls implicit memory, but phenomenology describes more usefully as bodily habit and lived comportment. Moreover, corporeal testimony, or the ways our bodies speak without words, transmits inter-generationally through practices, proximity, gesture, atmosphere, and resonance. Rachel Yehuda has shown that trauma results in measurable alterations in FKBP5 methylation for second-generation trauma survivors. These changes provide biological evidence that "*the experience of trauma or more accurately the effect of that experience is 'passed' somehow from one generation to the next through non-genomic, possibly epigenetic mechanisms*" (Yehuda & Lehrner, 2018, p. 243). The bodily archive is not just phenomenological. Is it biologically conjuring? Lastly, testimony of the body can become resistance consciousness; that is, the body's testimony can create a politics of awareness and collective mobilisation rather than individual pathology.

The operation of this witnessing, though it collaborates with verbal testimony, continues to operate when words fail, are refused or are insufficient. The evidence presented by van der Kolk grounds this refusal as traumatic memory stores as "*sensory bits*", including "*visual images, olfactory, auditory, or kinesthetic sensations*" in the first place, because the event bypasses narrative-processing centres entirely. (van der Kolk & Fisler, 1995, p. 513) There is something to ponder over the circuits of smell. The olfactory bulb can connect directly to the amygdala and hippocampus with no thalamic relay. The fear-conditioning apparatus can only be accessed directly by the primary afferents of smell (Yang et al., 2025; Herz, 2016). This anatomical reality is the material basis for why Danticat encodes the massacre through the smell of molasses and burning earth, rather than via narrative sequence. The clinical work of Vermetten and Bremner confirms that "*memory for odours that are associated with intense emotional experiences is often strongly engraved…They can be powerful contextual cues for memory formation and emotional conditioning and can also serve as cues for olfactory flashbacks*" (2003, p. 202). Trauma, as characterised by Ruth Lanius, is "*not just a psychological but also an emotional injury; it is a sensory injury*" (Lanius et al., 2025, p. 4). While scholars provide the nomenclature for these phenomena, Danticat and Bulawayo delineate the lived reality of sensory injuries.

Such corporeal knowledge, etched onto the body's parts, remains a testimony that no 'talking cure' can ever fully resolve.

3. Sensory architectures: trauma through touch, taste, smell, sound

3.1 The metaphysics of violence in *The Farming of Bones*

By prioritising sensory detail over narrative sequence, Danticat reconstructs the 1937 massacre as a site where trauma is somatically embedded. Amabelle's first experience with violence is mediated through olfaction; she registers "*the smell of burning soil, and molasses invaded the air, dry grass and weeds crackling and shooting sparks*" (Danticat, 1998, p. 203). Cane fields ablaze with the flesh of humans. Evidence indicates that scent is not like literary aura; it travels through the olfactory bulb's monosynaptic projection to the amygdala, but unlike every other sense, it bypasses the thalamic filter (Yang et al., 2025). The experience is coded as a threat by the amygdala. The hippocampus stores the smell as a permanent signature of danger because it cannot generate a narrative representation of the event, precipitating what Van der Kolk and Fisler (1995) term a "*failure of declarative memory*" (p. 512). As this phrase indicates, the sensuous experience and knowledge of the massacre in Danticat's prose is not recollected in a linear time-sense; instead, it takes on the form of a cluster of smells, heat and sound. The molasses smell is not A metaphor imposed, a neutral recall; it is a recollection of a specific neural event.

Even after being soaked in the freezing river, Amabelle's dead body does not warm up. Under the Caribbean sun. As per the Massachusetts water temperature, it resembles. The designation of sensory injury (Lanius, 2025, p. 4) as a type of trauma is significant. Amabelle will no longer be able to regulate her body heat. Memory does not retain the cold. She feels nothing. The body that died by the Massacre River, a body that does not update its record, unlike narrative memory, unlike official archives, unlike Dominican historiography. The parsley test itself utilises sensory betrayal. The herb utilised "*for our food, our teas, our baths, to cleanse our insides as well as our outsides*" becomes death's instrument when soldiers "*pried open mouths and parsley stuffed into our mouths*" (Danticat, 1998, pp. 59-60, 193). Familiar flavour turned instrument of identification and execution. Necropolitics of taste implies the exercise of sovereignty through the mouth, the tongue, and the body's own sensory apparatus turned against it. The ability to determine who is allowed to live and who must die, a concept Mbembe turns into an abstract theory, Danticat gives an oral and sensorial twist. A taste on the tongue of one who speaks Kreyòl of parsley.

Danticat's prose enacts a sensory testimony through its linguistic texture: Kreyòl words interrupt the English flow while Spanish words remain undomesticated for anglophone readers, and the rhythms are derived from oral rather than written. Thus, it offers the sense of belonging to a situated language as well as a very particular place. Munro argues that through her writing, there is a working through of Caribbean colonisation as certain experiences are left out of dominant discourses (2007, p. 228). The

title of the novel, *travay tè pou zò*, which translates into *The Farming of Bones*, connotes meanings that do not easily translate into the English language. These are meanings that indicate bones that break, bodies that are reduced to bones, the sound of machetes cutting cane, which can be mistaken for the sound of machetes cutting flesh. Danticat's unique artistry, comprised of imaginative, documentary, oral, and corporeal modes, helps to create "*novel testimony*" Harford Vargas (2017). Amabelle describes her body as "*simply a map of scars and bruises, a marred testament*," reconfiguring the traumatised flesh as a primary documentary archive. (Danticat, 1998, p. 227) In their recent work, Hawkins extends this reading to present the novel as an anti-epic where Amabelle's speech acts subvert the Virgilian imperial frame to produce a counter-history of the 1937 massacre (2024, pp. 204-235). Although their reading employs classical reception theory as opposed to trauma studies, it parallels my own: where official archives refuse, it is the body which generates the testimony, and that testimony's form refuses imperial containment.

3.2 The sensorium of displacement in *We Need New Names*

Bulawayo's Zimbabwe is meticulously reconstructed through a visceral sensorium that functions as a socio-political indictment. The first scene, in which the narrator steals guavas for the sake of a child's hunger, shows how what a child wants is not just the taste but also the texture, so much so that "*it feels like someone took a shovel and dug everything out of my stomach*" (Bulawayo, 2013, p. 1). Eating guavas until one's faeces ("*like you are trying to give birth to a country*" (Bulawayo, 2013, p. 16) is a childhood treat, certainly not the privilege of the rich, and offers a very powerful representation of (child) hunger. Through lesser-known socio-historical traumas (i.e., the Great War, the Weimar hyper-inflation, the destruction of the small-merchant class, and the Stockholm in-n-Fortier-dealing class), the precision of this piece of evidence works, not as a simple shocking detail but as the somatic register of the structural deprivation. The relationship of body with scarcity, with the common purse, with pleasure stolen by structural poverty. The flavour of guava will not leave Darling's mind, haunting her even in America, where abundance causes starvation of another kind, which Darling terms one of "*hunger for my country*" (p. 242). The protagonist's consciousness, suspended in a state of pre-verbal shock, bypasses cognitive assimilation, storing trauma instead as a somatic imprint. created by the yellow dress and red shoes. The noises of Operation Murambatsvina bulldozers demolishing shanty homes, government forces relocating people classified as *tsvina* are sounds of a trauma to be heard in the background of America. Each of the sensory details functions as what van der Kolk calls an iconic memory: pre-verbal, image-based, and stored on a somatic rather than semantic level (van der Kolk & Fisler, 1995, p. 512).

Following migration, Darling experiences a systematic dislocation that manifests primarily as a bodily crisis. The gustatory landscape of the host nation proves dissonant, and its ambient temperature is registered as hostile. The text is from a novel, *The Old Drift* by Namwali Serpell. According to the narrator of the novel, "*the sky has stayed white all*

this time I have been here, which tells you that something is not right because a sky is supposed to be blue, like our sky back home" (Bulawayo, 2013, p. 150). Embodied alienation is represented as coldness that "*makes it want to kill you, like it's telling you, with its snow, that you should go back to where you came from*" (150). She cannot find thermal equilibrium in places that bore her away. The narrator articulates an inability to assimilate the nutritional abundance of the host nation, as she remains "*hungry for her country*" (p. 242) an appetite that no amount of American food can satiate. Eating in excess would represent, in Berlant's (2020) terms, the exercise of 'lateral agency', not a self-destructive pathology but "*an activity of maintenance, not making; fantasy, without grandiosity; sentience without full intentionality*" (p. 100). One of the most important observations of the significance of sound is that displacements are most pronounced because the voices 'came out bruised' meaning "*what we really wanted to say remained folded inside, trapped*" (p. 242). The act of migration has a damaging effect on the ability to communicate and express oneself. Ndebele consumes English. Voices on the telephone displace physical presence. The sound design of the house becomes unavailable. Chakraborty (2025) reads clothing in the novel as an embodied node where political economy, skin, and NGO visuality meet through what Sara Ahmed (2004) terms "*affective economies*" (cited in Chakraborty, 2025, p. 3). Meanwhile, Frassinelli's earlier concept of "*heterolingual address*" captures a similar dynamic in language Bulawayo's code-switching brings about "*living in translation as a permanent bodily condition rather than a temporary state*" (2015, p. 712).

Both authors render the unspeakable legible by prioritising somatic registers over linguistic ones; in other words, the Caruthian model naturally applies here. Danticat's sensorium is retrospective, archaeological Amabelle excavates layers of embodied memory to recover what official history has buried; her return to the river enacts Rothberg's "*multidirectional engagement with the past, where personal and collective memory intersect through sensory particularity*" (2009, p. 11). Bulawayo's sensorium is immediate, ethnographic. Darling's somatic record chronicles displacement in the 'continuous present', effectively collapsing the temporal distance that dominant discourses impose upon African suffering. The dominant discourse assigns to African suffering. Both refuse what Mandel critiques as the "*inadvertent silencing of material and corporeal existence*" that unspeakability discourse produces (2006, p. 2). Smell, taste, touch, sound, and temperature function as primary rather than supplementary modes of testimony. Bodies articulate a fluency in sensory registers that Eurocentric trauma frameworks have historically been conditioned to ignore.

4. The archive of flesh: scars, symptoms, and bodily markings as historical registers

4.1 Reading the body in *The Farming of Bones*

April Shemak identifies how Danticat deploys "*physical representations of memory in bodies marked by labour and the massacre*" as a central archival strategy (2002, p. 85). She states that marked bodies become even stronger witnesses to the massacre precisely because

they go beyond the limits of language itself, preventing misinterpretation. "*Flesh, indeed, does not lie*." It does not render. It does not fit with dominant narrative structures. The beginning of the novel establishes a bodily archive as the primary mode of narration: "*My back aches now in all those places that he claimed for himself, arches of bare skin that belonged to him, pockets where the flesh remains fragile, seared like unhealed burns*" (Danticat, 1998, p. 1). Before any act of violence, there must always be a mark that signifies love. (Or, there must be a mark to signify love before any act of violence takes place.) The bodily structure of Sebastien is marked by his trade history. Crisscrossing scars from cane stalks cross his face. With the iron hand, the lifelines of his palm disappear, for the machete is both a weapon of labour and slaughter (p. 1). The markings constitute, one presumes, Cvetkovich's own counter archive against what Dominican history has denied access to. The rationality is revealed through an indigenous lens established by Miranda, in which she states: "*When my body is the archive, the archives become flesh and blood with a salty genealogy*". (2018) What records lack, the corporeal body often remembers.

As a figure whose corpse has yet to come to the surface, Sébastien's vanishing provokes a crisis of corporeal testimony an identity whose death remains undetermined by official confirmation. Witnesses, along with the evidence, are erased. Dozens of families of the disappeared lack forensic closure to their cases. The reconstruction of the body through imagination indicates the existence of this other. The invocation, "*His name is Sebastien Onius*," at the beginning of every section, acts as a defiance against erasure. The distinction made by Taylor (2003) is also useful here, defining the archive as "*documents and bones*," and the repertoire as "*the embodied practice knowledge that is transmitted through performance, ritual, and bodily memories*" (p. 19). Amabelle remembers Sebastien through her movem nights, and her body's movement in remembrance of him. When she begins to sink in the river and "*feels pebbles in the riverbed scouring her back*" (Danticat, 1998, p. 308), she performs what Taylor (2003, p. 2) calls "*vital acts of transfer, transmitting knowledge the archive cannot hold*." The rhythmic repetition of the phrase "*his and hers*" in the river's chanting conveniently substitutes the absent physical corpse, transforming the water itself into a body.

4.2 Bodily transformation in *We Need New Names*

Chipo's pregnancy, a result of her grandparents' rape, brings to light structural violence. Her bulging belly has come to signify what the post-colonial collapse of Zimbabwe normalises. The reference to finding Bin Laden and the use of Chipo's pregnant body as a hiding place exemplifies the cognitive dissonance inherent in traumatic survival (Bulawayo, 2013, p. 58). When Chipo finally says: "*He did that, my grandfather*", a testimony emerges fragmented, the violation inscribed on her body speaking what language cannot (p. 41). The temporality of her pregnancy is disrupted, her child is pre-emptively marked by adult violence, leaving the subsequent generation to bear the inheritance of ancestral crimes of the previous generation. Yehuda's studies reveal this exact mechanism with precision. The children exhibit the 'developmentally programmed

effects' of parental trauma, which transmits through 'bodily as well as environmental effects' (Yehuda & Lehrner, 2018, p. 243). Chipo's daughter, before receiving language with which to name it, receives the trauma corporeally.

In America, Darling's body manifests weight gain, altered postures, and different physical rhythms, archiving migration as an ongoing corporeal process. "*We eat like pigs, like wolves, like dignitaries*" (Bulawayo, 2013, p. 173). She metabolises displacement rather than calories. When her mother accuses her of "*trying to sound white*," the accusation identifies bodily betrayal: her mouth produces sounds Paradise never taught (p. 206). Hirsch terms this postmemory's corporeal operation, "*second-generation experience transmitted so deeply and affectively as to seem to constitute memories in their own right*" (2012, p. 5). Darling carries Zimbabwe in her body even as America rewrites that body's physical parameters. The tension produces bodily alienation, rendering her flesh a site of diasporic tension that exists fully in neither location. Cobo-Piñero identifies this as "*embodied mobilities*" (2019, p. 473). Matsika's more recent reading positions Darling and her cohort as inhabiting "*precarious yet potentially transformative spaces*" where gendered displacement becomes ground for emergent agency (2025). Photographs document a transformation Darling cannot fully recognise, non-governmental organisation (NGO) workers' Paradise children; the act feels extractive, commodifying suffering into a visual spectacle (p. 52). Later, American photographs capture a body she no longer fully inhabits.

In both novels, bodily afflictions are not framed as discrete individual pathologies requiring treatment, but rather as a collective historical testimony that demands recognition. Characterising Amabelle's relentless coldness as a mental disorder would effectively depoliticise a systemic condition by relegating it to the private sphere. She does not need to recover from her cold. The coldness is her testimony, her body maintaining the river's temperature because the massacre remains unacknowledged and unprosecuted. To pathologise Darling's transformation as an eating disorder would individualise what is displacement made flesh. Goozee's extension of Fanonian sociogenic psychiatry insists that decolonial approaches must "*recognise suffering as resulting from social conditions rather than individual pathology*" (2021, p. 106). Miranda's framework illuminates what both novelists enact: "*archives that become flesh and blood*" with genealogies that official documentation erases (2018). The body archives what the state destroys.

5. Gendered somatics and children's witness: the body doubly marked

Elleke Boehmer's foundational analysis establishes that postcolonial nations are "*historically male-constructed spaces where women are more often than not cast as symbols or totems while their actual presence remains officially marginalised*" (2005, p. 22). This divergence between symbolic prominence and lived marginalisation produces what Ketu Katrak identifies as the female body functioning "*simultaneously as a site of both oppression*

and resistance" (2006, p. 3). Ayo Coly extends this through postcolonial hauntologies: colonial inscription of African female bodies generates "*a culture of avoidance that holds the female body hostage*" in contemporary discourse (2019, p. 18). Both Danticat and Bulawayo centre female protagonists whose bodies bear specifically gendered national violence: Amabelle as a domestic labourer whose hands deliver Dominican babies while her own people face massacre; Chipo as a raped child whose pregnant body renders structural violence visible; Darling as a girl negotiating migration's bodily transformations. According to Katrak (2006, p. 3), the protagonists do not become mere symbols of nationalism nor mere victims but engage in "*covert resistances*", which they undertake with self-consciousness and creativity. Mavengano's latest ecofeminist interpretation (2024) of Bulawayo extends further by linking the ecological dispossession to the gendered body in Paradise as one of the processes. The flesh of the Earth is gendered and sacred.

Amabelle's position in the house makes her vulnerable in specific gendered ways. The opening of the novel shows that her hands bring life; they deliver Señora Valencia's twins, showing how bodily labour is fundamental to her subordination (Danticat, 1998, pp. 1-12). The very hands that cannot save Sebastien are also the ones that drown Odette by accident while crossing a river. Her hands serve as a corporeal ledger documenting the contradictions of gendered work during colonial times. They know healing. Yet, when the massacre arrives, the household offers no protection. Her bond with Sebestien pushes back against the oppressor, as its stolen moments allow her body to be her own. The structural violence inflicted on children experiences the world bodily before they can process it cognitively. When a subject fails to narrate their experience, trauma becomes imprinted on the flesh (p. 115). The experience of Amabelle's childhood, witnessing both of her parents drown, functions this way: she "*screams until I can taste blood in my throat*" (Danticat, 1998, p. 50). The somatic, the bodily register, comes first, preceding and exceeding the linguistic. Within a present-tense narration, Darling positions the audience within the consciousness of a child who cannot comprehend the events unfolding. However, while she may not cognitively understand what is happening, her body does. The children of Paradise function as collective protagonists, "*Bastard, Chipo, Godknows and Sbho, Stina and me*" (Bulawayo, 2013, p. 1), offloading trauma through multiple bodies. Their games entail physical activity.

According to the transition of global translates geopolitics into local bodily action, as the children's play mimics the structural violence of the state. Arnett (2016) defines this as 'navigating an "*affective economy*" in which children differentiate between performances of suffering aimed as tokens of exchange with outsiders and the necessity of suffering as a site of emotional cathexis within the community' (p. 152). According to Chitando, as cited in 2016, page 114, they "*demonstrate resilience and deploy agency even as structural violence circumscribes their options*". Stobie (2020) defends Bulawayo's novel against the accusation of exploitation of suffering, arguing instead that it "*creates space for reader reflection rather than mere digesting of African misery*" (p. 518). The factors of gender

and childhood intensify corporeal testimony. Those whose bodies are already positioned as vulnerable feel the brunt of violence acutely because those in power do not give them full-subject status. The two novels counter Visser's criticism of trauma theory's tendency to sustain the post-traumatic condition. Amabelle lives on. Beloved changes. The children of Paradise adapt, play and create provisional communities. The act of double marking does not create a situation in which the victim faces double victimisation; rather, it produces doubled modes of witness. These witness bodies testify precisely because dominant frameworks position them as those who cannot speak.

6. From Testimony to Resistance through Corporeal Agency towards Decolonial Futures

Amabelle's bodily return to the Dominican Republic decades later constitutes corporeal resistance. The psychosomatic 'coldness' of Amabelle's frame, once a symptomatic byproduct of trauma, is reclaimed as a form of voluntary testimony when she decides to cross back. Pilgrimage of the body involves walking the routes of massacre, touching surfaces soaked in the body fluids of the dead, and joining survivors at the place where they gather to speak. "*They took turns quickly telling stories, their voices sometimes garbled (almost as if they were racing to get the words out) for greater than the desire to be heard was the desire to tell*" (Danticat, 1998, p. 209). This visceral urgency of articulation operates as a somatic phenomenon, pulsating through the throat, the tongue, and the chest. The final river immersion literalises her relationship to the site: "*I slipped into the current… with my shoulders only half submerged, the current floating over me in a less than gentle caress, the pebbles in the riverbed scouring my back*" (p. 308). She acknowledges that "*nature has no memory. And soon, perhaps, neither will I*", yet continues the work of corporeal witness (p. 308). Harford Vargas (2014) identifies this as "*corporeal modes producing testimony when conventional documentation fails*" (p. 1162). Feifer (2020) terms Amabelle's body narrative a "*counter-archive that records formal dates and the real and imagined accounts of those affected*" (p. 35). Her resistance operates through bodily persistence. Amabelle's resistance is enacted not through institutional political organising or armed insurrection, but through a dogged bodily persistence-an ontological refusal to forget that converts somatic imprints into deliberate, decolonial testimony.

Darling's position embodies Gilroy's Black Atlantic condition, "*being in an expanded West but not completely of it*" (1993, p. 58). Her body does not assimilate fully. A Zimbabwean influence may be detected in her Ndebele accent; it manifests in her flesh as America rewrites itself. In the novel's concluding chapters, the accounting has a devastating diasporic effect: those born on the American side are given "*names that did not mean anything to us*"; they cannot bury the umbilical cords because "*we had no land to call ours*" (Bulawayo 2013, p. 240). When dying, diasporic people will "*wait forever waiting in the air like flags of unsung countries*", a slow death, a waiting, a "*physical wearing out of a population and the deterioration of people in that population that is by now a very nearly defining*

condition of their experience and historical existence" (Berlant, 2007, p. 754). At this grim accounting horizon, survival serves here as resistance, enacting a palimpsestic memory upon our tongues and through our bodies. This aligns with Rothberg's (2009) conceptualisation of multidirectional memory. Zimbabwe becomes part of situating Zimbabwe within a larger pattern of uprooting and loss.

According to Harford Vargas (2014), the corporeal testimony produces 'alternative archives': counter-histories written in flesh when official documents fail or lie (p. 1163). This invisible work takes place within the gap in documentary regimes, as theorised by art historian Nancy Troy (2010), who examines the friction between official records and artistic representation. Yves claims that official testimony "*gets retold as they will, it's written in words you can't understand, in a language that is theirs, and not yours*." So, state documents appropriate the witness (Danticat, 1998, p. 244). *El testimonio corporal se resiste ya que los cuerpos dan cuenta en registros que el discurso oficial no puede captar*. The novels reflect Rothberg's multidirectional memory, linking the massacre of 1937 to present-day displacement and showing that "*collective memories… emerge dialogically across apparently distant histories*" (2009, p. 4). Both novels concretely embody Cvetkovich's (2003) rejection of pathologisation. Amabelle's coldness is not a psychiatric symptom but historical testimony. Darling's transformation is not an eating disorder, but displacement made flesh. The body's refusal to forget becomes a political stance. Not disorder.

7. The body keeps the score differently

This article argues that Danticat and Bulawayo develop parallel strategies of corporeal testimony: sensory-saturated prose positioning smell, taste, and touch as primary modes of witness; bodily symptoms functioning as historical registers rather than psychological disorders; gendered and childhood embodiment intensifying corporeal inscription while refusing victimisation; traumatic marking transforming into resistant agency. Both position the body as an epistemological site, a living archive witnessing what official histories will not record. Amabelle's "*scars and Darling's 'bruised voices'*" constitute corporeal testimonies that transcend the restrictive parameters of Caruthian frameworks. They offer alternative epistemologies of trauma, reclaiming bodies as knowing subjects rather than symptomatic objects.

Corporeal testimony, as theorised here, offers decolonial trauma studies a non-pathologising framework for reading bodily symptoms as collective historical witness. It names how bodies serve as archives: through sensory persistence outlasting linguistic capacity, intergenerational transmission via flesh rather than narrative, and the body's stubborn refusal to forget what states deny. The Caruthian model maintains that trauma's truth lies within language. On the contrary, corporeal testimony views trauma's truth as stemming from the body's "*excessive success*", as it stores, carries, and transmits experience through 'invisible' registers. The slow death theorised by Berlant provides the necessary temporal correction: corporeal testimony accrues not through cataclysmic

rupture but through "*the physical wearing out of a population*" (Berlant, 2007, p. 754) under conditions of endemic violence that event-based models cannot conceptualise.

The analysis of the body would suggest that the unspeakability signified by Caruthian models may not be trauma per se, but rather the inability of Western theorisation to hear alternative registers. The unrelenting coldness of the body serves as a visceral testimony to a massacre that occurred decades ago. Accents embody my stubborn Ndebele sensibility as I refuse to assimilate linguistically. Children's games map acts of political violence onto the body through their movements. Scars are embodied records that remember things that official documentation forgets and go home to witness places it cannot remember. Postcolonial literature is developing vocabularies for that bodily speech; trauma theory must learn to read them. This requires Visser's "*openness to non-Western belief systems*" (2015, p. 260) recognition that Vodou deities might govern testimony, that ancestral bones might provide spiritual protection, that bodies know truths Western mind/body splits render invisible. Future research may connect bodily witness with Jamaica Kincaid's sensual illness narratives, Junot Díaz's lived testimony to the violent Trujillo era, or Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's bodily witness to the Biafran war. Through embodiment, relations established in a comparative framework between Caribbean and African experience indicate possibilities for Black Atlantic and Global South scholarship that offer resistances to homogenisation and hermetic isolation. Scholarly works in Turkish on necro geography and embodied postcolonial critique (Yarar, 2025; "Göçün Nekropolitik Coğrafyaları," 2025) would offer another theoretical framework for scholars in Turkey.

When Amabelle immerses herself in the river that nearly drowned her, and Darling phones Zimbabwe only to hear anger travelling through the thin wire of the phone, both authors assert: the body keeps the score. It keeps it differently than Western psychology has learned to read. That difference between what trauma theory hears and what the body actually says is where decolonisation begins.

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Genişletilmiş Özet

Giriş

Batı travma kuramı, Cathy Caruth'un "sahiplenilmemiş deneyim" kavramında kristalleşen dilsel çöküş paradigması üzerinden inşa edilmiştir. Caruth'a göre travma, "tam olarak bilinmek için çok erken, çok beklenmedik biçimde deneyimlenen" (1996, s. 4) bir olaydır ve dilsel ifadeye dirençli bir yara olarak korunur. Shoshana Felman ve Dori Laub bu paradigmayı Holokost'a genişletmiştir (1992, ss. 57-58). Ne var ki bu çerçeve, sömürgeleştirilmiş ve yerinden edilmiş bedenlerin gerçekte tanıklık ettiği bedensel kayıtları sistematik olarak duyamayan bir kuramsal sağırlık üretmiştir. Stef Craps'ın dört boyutlu Avrupa-merkezci önyargı tanısı (2013, s. 3), Michael Rothberg'in travma kuramının "dar bir Avrupa-merkezci çerçeveye bağlı kaldığı sürece" tarihleri çarptığı yönündeki müdahalesi (2008, s. 227) ve Naomi Mandel'in söylenemezlik varsayımının "acının maddi ve bedensel varlığını kasıtsız olarak susturduğu" saptaması (2006, s. 2) bu sağırlığın kapsamını ortaya koymaktadır. Bu makale, Edwidge Danticat'ın *The Farming of Bones* (1998) ve NoViolet Bulawayo'nun *We Need New Names* (2013) adlı romanlarının karşılaştırmalı çözümlemesi yoluyla bu kuramsal sağırlıkla yüzleşmektedir.

Amaç

Bu çalışma, travmatik tarihsel deneyimin dilsel ifadenin ötesinde duyusal iz bırakma, bedensel depolama, kuşaklararası aktarım ve direniş bilincine dönüştürme yoluyla somatik olarak nasıl işlediğini adlandıran bedensel tanıklık (corporeal testimony) kavramını geliştirmeyi amaçlamaktadır. Üç özgün katkı hedeflenmektedir. Birincisi, bedensel tanıklık, hem Caruthçu söylenemezlik hem de terapötik beden belleğinden farklılaşan, somatik olarak kodlanmış kolektif tarihsel tanıklığı adlandırmaktadır. İkincisi, bu iki romanı açıkça somatik-dekolonyal perspektiften ilk kapsamlı biçimde karşılaştırmalı olarak çözümleyerek Karayip ve Afrika postkolonyal deneyimini, ayrılıkları varsaymak yerine, bedenleşme üzerinden birleştirmektedir. Üçüncüsü, Batı travma kuramının "söylenemezlik" olarak adlandırdığı şeyin travmanın doğasından ziyade kuramsal sağırlığı yansıtıyor olabileceğini göstermektedir.

Yöntem

Makale üç kuramsal kaynak üzerine inşa edilmektedir. Birincisi, Frantz Fanon'un sömürgeciliğin "bedensel şemaya" saldırısının çözümlemesidir; ırksal epidermal şemanın bedensel şemayı şiddetle yerinden ettiğini göstermiştir (1952/2008, s. 112). "Affektif tetanizasyon" ve "kas katılığı" kavramları, sömürge iktidarının bedene nasıl yazıldığını açıklamaktadır. Goozee (2021), Fanon'un sosyojenik psikiyatrisinin disiplini dekolonize etmek için kaynaklar sunduğunu ileri sürmektedir (s. 102). İkincisi, Achille Mbembe'nin nekropolitikasıdır: egemenliği "kimin yaşayıp kimin ölmesi gerektiğini belirleme iktidarı" olarak konumlandırır (2003, s. 11). 1937 Maydanoz Katliamı ve Zimbabwe'nin Murambatsvina Operasyonu nekropolitik icra olarak çözümlenmektedir.

Brennan'ın son müdahalesi (2024), nekropolitik yönetimin kalıntısı olarak "artık hayat" kavramını geliştirmektedir. Kamete (2017), yıkım alanlarını Agamben'in "kamp mantığını" genişleten "belirsizlik bölgeleri" olarak tanımlamıştır. Üçüncüsü, Ann Cvetkovich'in duygular arşivi kavramıdır; travmanın izlerini "duygu ve duygulanım depoları" olarak kavramlaştırır (2003, s. 7). Lauren Berlant'ın "yavaş ölüm" kavramı "bir nüfusun fiziksel olarak yıpranması" (2007, s. 754) her iki romanı birbirine bağlayan zamansal kayıt olarak işlev görmektedir. Nörobiyolojik temel olarak van der Kolk ve Fisler'in (1995) travmatik belleğin "duyusal parçalar" olarak depolandığına ilişkin gösterimi ve Ruth Lanius'un (2025) travmayı "duyusal yaralanma" olarak nitelendirmesi kullanılmaktadır. Koku alma sisteminin benzersiz nöral mimarisi koku soğanından amigdalaya talamik aktarım olmaksızın monosinaptik projeksiyonlar (Yang 2025). Danticat'ın katliamı anlatsal dizilim yerine melas kokusu üzerinden kodlamasının nörobiyolojik temelini sağlamaktadır. Yöntemsel olarak, iki romanın yakın okuması yoluyla somatik anlatı stratejileri karşılaştırmalı çerçevede çözümlenmektedir.

Bulgular

Çözümleme dört temel bulgu ortaya koymaktadır. Birincisi, her iki romancı koku, tat, dokunma ve sıcaklık gibi duyusal deneyimleri travmatik tanıklığın birincil kipleri olarak konumlandırmaktadır. Danticat'ın melas kokusu ve yanan toprak betimlemesi, van der Kolk'un travmanın anlatsal işleme merkezlerini atlayarak doğrudan duyusal modalitelere yazıldığına ilişkin bulgularını edebi düzlemde yeniden üretmektedir. Bulawayo'nun etnografik şimdiki zamanı, yerinden edilmenin duyusal yıkımını gerçekleşirken belgelemektedir: Darling'in bedeninin termoreglasyonu sürgün coğrafyalarında denge bulamaması, seslerinin "berelenmiş" çıkması. İkincisi, bedensel belirtiler Amabelle'in kalıcı soğukluğu, Darling'in fiziksel dönüşümü psikolojik bozukluklar olarak değil, tarihsel kayıtlar olarak işlev görmektedir. Amabelle'in soğukluğunu patologize etmek, temel olarak politik bir durumu özelleştirmek anlamına gelecektir. Darling'in dönüşümünü yeme bozukluğu olarak okumak, yerinden edilmenin bedene kazınmasını bireyselleştirmek olacaktır. Üçüncüsü, toplumsal cinsiyet ve çocukluk bedensel tanıklığın yoğunlaştırıcıları olarak işlev görmektedir. Chipo'nun hamile bedeni yapısal şiddeti görünür kılarken, Cennet çocuklarının oyunları küresel jeopolitiği yerel bedensel performans aracılığıyla kodlamaktadır. Van der Kolk'un gelişimsel travma araştırması, çocukların bilişsel çerçeveler edinmeden önce deneyimleri somatik olarak işlediklerini göstermektedir (2014, s. 115). Dördüncüsü, her iki roman travmatik bedensel iz bırakmayı direniş eylemciliğine dönüştürmektedir: Amabelle'in nehre dönüşü somatik hac olarak işlerken, Darling'in bedensel ısrarı diasporik koşullarda hayatta kalma stratejisi oluşturmaktadır. Berlant'ın "yanal faillik" kavramı bu direniş biçimlerini aydınlatmaktadır: "yapma değil sürdürme etkinliği; görkemlilik olmadan fantezi; tam kasıtlılık olmadan duyarlık" (2020, s. 100). Yehuda'nın epigenetik araştırması, travma kurbanlarının yavrularında ölçülebilir FKBP5 metilasyon

değişiklikleri gösterdiğini belgeleyerek kuşaklararası aktarımın biyolojik kanıtını sağlamaktadır (2018, s. 243).

Sonuç

Bu makale, Batı travma kuramının tespit ettiği söylenemezliğin travmanın doğasını değil, Batı kuramlaştırmasının alternatif kayıtlara karşı sağırlığını yansıtıyor olabileceğini ileri sürmektedir. Bedensel tanıklık, dekolonyal travma çalışmalarına patolojileştirmeyen bir çerçeve sunmaktadır: bedensel belirtileri bireysel bozukluklar olarak değil, kolektif tarihsel tanıklık olarak okumanın yolunu açmaktadır. Kavram, somatik olarak kodlanmış kolektif tarihsel tanıklığı duyusal kalıcılık, bedensel kuşaklararası aktarım ve devletin inkârına karşı bedensel inat yoluyla adlandırmaktadır. Fanon'un sosyojenik psikiyatrisi, bireysel acının çevresel yapılardan kaynaklandığını ileri sürerek bu çerçeveyi desteklemektedir. Amabelle'in soğukluğu psikiyatrik belirti değil, tarihsel tanıklıktır. Darling'in dönüşümü yeme bozukluğu değil, yerinden edilmenin bedene kazınmasıdır. Gelecek araştırmalar, bedensel tanıklık çözümlemesini Jamaica Kincaid'ın duyusal hastalık anlatılarına, Junot Díaz'ın Trujillo dönemi şiddetinin bedensel tanıklığına ve Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie'nin Biafra savaşının bedensel kaydına genişletebilir. Karayip ve Afrika deneyimini bedenleşme üzerinden bağlayan karşılaştırmalı çerçeve, hem türdeşleştirmeye hem de hermetik yalıtıma direnen Siyah Atlantik ve Küresel Güney edebiyat çalışmaları için yöntemsel olanaklar sunmaktadır. Türkçe literatürdeki nekropolitika çalışmaları (Yarar, 2025) ek kuramsal kaynaklar sunmaktadır. Postkolonyal edebiyat, bu bedensel konuşma için sözcükler geliştirmektedir. Travma kuramı onları okumayı öğrenmelidir.