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THE POLITICAL ECONOMY OF 'TRAUMA' IN HAITI IN THE DEMOCRATIC ERA OF INSECURITY

ABSTRACT. This article explores the challenges that emerge at the intersection of economies of compassion and terror: local, national, and international forms of humanitarian assistance; security practices in insecure social and institutional environments; questions of victimization and global reparations; and quests for justice, as revealed through an analysis of political violence and humanitarian interventions in Haiti during and after the 1991–94 coup period. Each domain is constrained by politics and history but can engender "occult economies" that challenge the intended consequences of restitution policies at international, national, and local levels of exchange. 'Trauma' and discourses about traumatic suffering are the hinge around which these economies pivot, generating new forms of political subjectivity for Haitian activists.

KEY WORDS: bio-politics, Haiti, humanitarian assistance, trauma, violence

Where is the line between drawing attention to the suffering of others in order to assist them and appropriating the suffering of others for institutional or personal gain? This thorny question is emerging as the humanitarian assistance apparatus—assemblages (Deleuze 1988) of governmental and nongovernmental agencies—intervenes across and within national borders to assist traumatized "victims" of politically motivated and interpersonal violence, disasters, and the conflicts that arise within failed or failing states. As much as governmental and nongovernmental humanitarian interventions are motivated by compassion, they are also motivated by concerns for security: global political and economic security, as well as national, institutional, and "human" or "common" security—"the security of individuals [or groups] as an object of international policy" (Rothschild 1995: 54).[1]

The definition of security has been extended in the post–Cold War era. From an initial, militaristic focus upon protecting the nation-state against other polities, current conceptions of security have shifted to encompass concerns for maintaining the integrity of the international system, promoting the security of groups and individuals, and concerns for the protection of the physical environment (Rothschild 1995: 55). As the definition of security has expanded, the imperative has been to determine the ways in which political, economic, social, or environmental factors impact "human security." In addition to this there has been an expansion of the locus of responsibility for promoting and protecting "human security" at a policy level. The institutions that adopt this humanitarian imperative include multilateral (international), national, and local governmental and

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nongovernmental institutions (among others) (Rothschild 1995: 55–56).[2] In practice, however, both the conventional and expanded forms of security may be present within foreign policy initiatives of both governmental and nongovernmental institutions. One of the ways in which both traditional and expanded concerns for security have manifested, particularly since the reputed end of the Cold War, has been in international discourses of 'trauma' within the humanitarian assistance apparatus.

In this article I explore the relationship between discourses of security—so prevalent in the West after the September 11, 2001, attacks—and discourses of 'trauma' or posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD).[3] Trauma and security issues intersected in fieldwork that I conducted with victims of organized violence over more than 27 months of residence in Haiti between 1995 and 2000.[4] I worked at three institutions during this period in my capacity as an ethnographer, activist, and physical therapist: between 1996 and 1999 I worked at a privately funded women's clinic in Martissant—an urban area just southwest of the capital that was heavily targeted for violence during the recent 1991–94 coup years; from 1998 to 1999 I participated in therapeutic sessions at an outpatient clinic at the Mars/Kline Center for Neurology and Psychiatry at the State University Medical Hospital located in the capital, Port-au-Prince; from 1997 to early 2000 I worked at a nonprofit nongovernmental organization (NGO) funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) that housed a rehabilitation program for victims of organized violence also located in Port-au-Prince.

The time period in which I conducted my research was considered to be a period of "democratic consolidation" after the US and UN Multinational Force restored democracy on October 15, 1994. Despite this military intervention, Haiti continued to be plagued by political and criminal violence, called *ensekirite* (insecurity) in everyday discourse. With its economic stagnation and ongoing instability there is a pervasive climate of fear and "nervousness" (Taussig 1992) within the Haitian social body, but it is both acute—with regularly high levels of fear and social paralysis—and chronic for *viktim*, those who claim to be the victims of state-sponsored violence[5] from the recent 1991–94 coup years. Within this "insecure" environment I worked with *viktim* as they searched for assistance from a swarm of governmental and nongovernmental agencies that comprised the humanitarian assistance apparatus in Haiti at the time. I examined how the discourse of trauma is employed, and by whom, within the broader realm of governmental and nongovernmental humanitarian assistance in Haiti and the ways that deployment engenders different linkages of power relations or forces from the local to international realms of social and political action (James 2003). At the same time I sought to understand and alleviate in some small measure the embodied suffering of my Haitian physical therapy clients at the clinic, and to witness how Haitian *viktim*

articulated their trauma in therapy groups that I cofacilitated in the rehabilitation program. Despite the manifest struggle to cope with everyday *ensekirite* and the ongoing experience of "traumatic stress," a peculiar transformation of *viktim*'s subjective and intersubjective pain and despair occurred as they presented and were implicitly required to perform their suffering in order for it to be "recognized" in a variety of institutional and clinical contexts.

After a brief analysis of Western notions of trauma and their links to the recent shifts in security talk in political theory,[6] I will analyze how historical stereotypes of Haitians and Haiti affect how Haitians are able to adopt subject positions within these discourses of security, suffering, hope, and despair. Through a discussion of the deployment of discourses of security and trauma during this period of research in Haiti, and their effects on the experience and tactics of *viktim*, I will show how these discourses can generate new economies based upon commodifications of suffering. Nonetheless, the ability to participate in these debates depends on positioning, whether geopolitical, communal, or individual. This piece is a meditation on how current concerns for safety and suffering are highly moral discourses that involve questions of compassion, ethics, obligation and action, and are inextricably linked to history and political economy.

TRAUMA IN THE 'POST–COLD WAR' ERA

The post–Cold War era has been viewed by many sociopolitical theorists through the lens of "postmodernity," a term which signifies the breakdown of grand narratives of politics, economics, culture, and ideals of progress. According to theorists of postmodernism, the "symptoms" of the postmodern condition are also characterized by the experience of space and time as chaotic, fragmented, schizophrenic, or incoherent. This "postmodern condition" is indelibly marked by the disordering yet productive, or "titillating," effects of global capitalism (Harvey 1990: 39, 63; Jameson 1991; Lyotard 1984). While the content of geopolitical fears has changed since the end of the Cold War opposition between democracy, liberty, or capitalism and communism or socialism, the form or structure through which these discourses manifest continues to have a similar pattern—that of identifying threats to the security of the West or to "civilized nations," and resulting in some form of intervention. The continuation of these practices calls into question whether or not the Cold War has truly ended; however, the particular strategies by which current geopolitical threats are identified and managed are new. Against this perception of discontinuity or ruptures between modern and postmodern ideals and practices, I argue that the era begun by the end of the Cold War is *neo-modern*[7] in character and hinges on security at the international, national, community, and individual levels.

Since the end of the Cold War, emerging proto-democracies—nations like Haiti that have struggled free from the shackles of dictatorship, socialism, or political conflict—have been targets of intervention. In some ways the modes of representation and practices of intervention in "transitional" states trace their genealogies at least as far back as the colonial era, but are not identical to interventions from that time. Nonetheless, the way in which the humanitarian assistance and development apparatus designs and attempts to implement social, political, and economic change in nations that are undergoing "transitions to democracy" or "post-conflict reconstruction" is unsettlingly familiar, but involves new bureaucratic technologies of suffering that are required to legitimize the activities of the intervener. With these practices the interveners establish their accountability to those whom they are responsible.

In describing this phenomenon I hesitate to use rhetorics of "neocolonialism," "neoliberalism," or "supracolonialism" (Pandolfi 2000) to describe what is currently happening in nations like Haiti. That being said, the transnational efforts to rebuild post-conflict nations appeal to modernist or universalist languages of rights, civil society, law, and economic and human development in a manner reminiscent of the missions of colonial expansion. I will use the term "neo-modern," therefore, to refer to the neo-Enlightenment theories and practices of governance that arise in relationship to the crisis of the state in what has been called the post–Cold War era. In this formulation, both governmental and nongovernmental development and humanitarian assistance efforts engage in practices of intervention, social rehabilitation, and political and economic reformation. These interventions are designed to build "civil societies" that respect the "rule of law" and promote equality and citizenship for all of their members—aspects of "human security"—even as the states in which these assistance or development efforts are deployed open their markets to the unrestricted ebbs and flows of global capital. The technologies of intervention that arise in the effort to promote human security are reminiscent of what Foucault calls bio-power—"*techniques* of power present at every level of the social body and utilized by very diverse institutions (the family and the army, schools and the police, individual medicine and the administration of collective bodies), operated in the sphere of economic processes, their development, and the forces working to sustain them" (Foucault 1990: 141, emphasis in original).

In the neo-modern, post–Cold War era, the discourse of trauma permits the exercise of global bio-power by the humanitarian assistance apparatus as nations make the transition toward the respect for the rule of law, human rights, democracy, and capitalism. The responses to the traumatized victims of politically motivated violence become the meter by which states, criticized for their past predatory or negligent practices, are now measured in order to determine their competence and accountability toward their citizenry. This is also a manifestation of what Foucault calls the practice of "governmentality" (1991)—the discipline and management

of populations through particular forms of government rationality. In the case of transnational humanitarian assistance the practices of governmentality often occur in place of the weak or failed state; however, this does not mean that they occur without challenge, resistance, or unintended consequences that belie the sovereignty of the intervening institution or polity.

Furthermore, in the neo-modern period a shift has occurred such that "toward the end of the 1980s, 'trauma' projects appear . . . alongside food, health and shelter interventions" (Bracken and Petty 1998: 1). The emergence of trauma treatment programs reflects a growing familiarity with the concept within Western culture and a desire to tame the unimaginable:

> Over the course of the past two decades, the language of trauma has become part of the vernacular—it is accessible and familiar in contemporary Western culture. Thus, while a mass audience may find modern warfare, waged against ordinary civilians, almost unimaginable in its scale of brutality, when that experience is translated into the everyday language of stress, anxiety, and trauma, its character changes and becomes less challenging. (Bracken and Petty 1998: 1)

The discourse of trauma has been an organizing trope that has motivated new forms of technocratic practices designed to manage new categories of people within a social field—"victims of human rights violations"—whose shocking experiences of egregious and unspeakable forms of suffering evoke compassion, concern, anxiety, moral outrage, and fear in those who are proximal and distant witnesses.

The humanitarian apparatus has routinized or professionalized forms of response or intervention that targets the suffering of victims and transforms their experiences, identity, and "political subjectivity" (Aretxaga 1997). These acts of bureaucratized care can make of suffering and despair something productive; however, the unintended consequences of these acts can also engender what I am calling *occult economies* of trauma that generate new forms of victimization and reproduce sociopolitical inequalities at local, national, and international levels of engagement. For example, within the practice of humanitarian assistance to victims of human rights violations, the suffering of the victim is confessed to physicians and psychiatrists, lawyers, activists, the clergy, and other human rights observers. These trauma narratives are documented in affidavits and other written testimonials and verified through physical examinations and psychological tests. The experience of suffering is appropriated or alienated from the subject and transformed (Das 1995; Kleinman and Kleinman 1991) into what I am calling the *trauma portfolio*—the aggregate of documentation and verification which "recognizes" or transubstantiates individuals, families, or collective sufferers into "victims" or "survivors" (Fraser 1995; Povinelli 2002; Taylor 1994).

This portfolio can be circulated within the global humanitarian market as currency (Kleinman 1995); however, portfolios are exchanged differently within local,

national, and international humanitarian markets. At the level of the individual, the portfolio of trauma can resemble a portfolio of economic investments: it may become a symbolic index of worth or one's holdings, as well as a material representation of one's victim identity. Each document, photo, affidavit, or letter provided by local, national, and international institutions, or by individuals who have the political capital to affirm the authenticity of the individual's suffering, adds to the "value" of the portfolio relative to those of other sufferers once it is circulated within the humanitarian market.

At the community or collective level, *viktim* have joined together to form advocacy groups. Each member's portfolio adds to the strength of the group in having its needs met by local, national, and international institutions. With the best of intentions the governmental and nongovernmental humanitarian assistance apparatus assembles and collects these portfolios of suffering in order to fulfill their salvific missions of "doing good" (Fisher 1997). They collect them in order to support their interventions into nations, communities, and the minds and bodies of individuals. But they also collect and present them to acquire funding and political capital in order to promote their own institutional security even as they promote "human security" in their practices (James 2003).

As in the case of currencies that flow within the international monetary system, the trauma portfolios of some nations, communities, and individuals can be devalued. The question to be considered more generally is whose trauma—assuming that such a thing is universal—should be recognized as legitimate and why? What is at stake when we recognize others through the lens of their suffering and not through their political subjectivity? In what way do new forms of political recognition merely replicate the historical denials of humanity and sovereignty among formerly colonized nations?

DISCOURSES OF TRAUMA, PRACTICES OF DENIAL

In the early 1990s a tremendous amount of attention was given by the media to ethnic cleansing and genocidal rape in the Balkans, as well as to the psychological trauma or posttraumatic stress that the survivors of war were presumed to experience as a result of their victimization. Less present in the media at this time was the plight of Rwandans, whose two major ethnic groups were on a genocidal path of self-destruction. Even more obscure within the media was the suffering of Haitians who were caught in a "dirty war" perpetrated by the de facto military regime. On September 30, 1991, the first democratically elected president of Haiti, Jean-Bertrand Aristide, was ousted by a violent coup d'état after less than eight months in office. Subsequent to the coup a reign of terror was unleashed without constraint against the generally poor, pro-democracy *Lavalas* coalition members who supported Aristide. The perpetrators of this violence were several

groups affiliated with the Forces Armées d'Haïti (FAD'H—the military/police), whose membership was seven thousand men. After the coup, tens of thousands of civilian, paramilitary attachés—armed and supported by FAD'H—joined with the military to control the population. The three years that followed the coup were years in which the extended military apparatus tortured, murdered, raped, and "disappeared" the *Lavalasyen* with impunity. Nearly three hundred thousand Haitians were internally displaced, and tens of thousands fled by boat to other Caribbean nations, South America, and the United States. The majority of Haitian refugees who reached the United States were detained in prison-like conditions or sent back to Haiti, with the accusation that they were fleeing from poverty rather than politically motivated terror.

When reports were released by Haitian and international human rights organizations like the National Coalition for Haitian Refugees (now called the National Coalition for Haitian Rights), Human Rights Watch/Americas, Physicians for Human Rights, and others, outlining the increased use of brutal forms of repression as the coup regime sought to remain in control of the nation, some US government officials denied the reports and called them exaggerations. For example, a cable sent from the US Embassy in Port-au-Prince to Washington in April of 1994 states the following: "We are, frankly, suspicious of the sudden, high number of reported rapes, particularly in this culture, occurring at the same time that Aristide activists seek to draw a comparison between Haiti and Bosnia" (United States Embassy [Haiti] 1994). The use of systematic rape during the coup years was questioned and said to be part of Haitian culture rather than a strategy of war. The implication of this statement was that Haitian sexuality was naturally violent and depraved. The United States explicitly charged that the reports of human rights abuses were fabrications.[8] The implicit message, however, was the incommensurability between the suffering of poor black men and women in Haiti with that of the embattled ethnic groups in the former Yugoslavia.

A further insinuation of this denial of experience is that Haitian men and women could not possibly suffer from trauma or traumatic memories in a culture in which political, criminal, and sexual violence are stereotyped as the norm. To some degree these US political officers evoked discourses of cultural, moral, emotional, and intellectual relativism that denied the recognition of Haitian humanity; however, this was not a new practice. Stereotypes of Haitian psychobiology have always been present as bio-political discourses (Foucault 1990, 1997) or rhetorics that accompany concerns for US and European political and economic security.

Since its successful achievement of independence in 1804, after the 12 years of the Saint-Domingue struggle for sovereignty, Haiti entered its postcolonial period as a political outcast within the slaveholding "international community." At the same time, however, the new nation was a source of inspiration and hope

for enslaved blacks and colonized Africans throughout the world. Nevertheless, independent Haiti would be viewed continually as a threat to hemispheric and global security, and the "cancer of revolution" and the "contagion of black liberty" sparked numerous policies to secure American borders against the influx of Haitian revolutionaries (Jordan 1968: 375–402). Haiti would be denied political recognition of its sovereignty and right to exist for the next two hundred years.

Instead of receiving the same protections that the United States proclaimed in its Monroe Doctrine (1823), Haiti and Haitians were depicted as insane, highly sexed and syphilitic, deficient in both intellectual and moral capacity, superstitious, hysterical, and easily influenced by the charisma of *Vodou* priests and priestesses. Indeed, in the 19th century racialist works of Gobineau (1999), LeBon (1974), and Southern American physician Cartwright (1851), Haiti and Haitians became the case study to illustrate the genetic roots of black incapacity. For example, Cartwright defined *drapetomania* as a propensity for slaves to flee from the plantation. Using Haitians as evidence, he described *dysaesthesia Aethiopica* as a tendency for free blacks to suffer from "insensibility" that manifests as mischief due to stupidity, destruction of property and theft, diminished mental capacity and lassitude, and insensitivity to pain when subject to punishment for these actions. In this respect, Haitians were not viewed as having the capacity to feel, to love, or to reflect in a cognitive manner that would engender the moral capacity that was prerequisite for what one would categorize as "shell shock" or "trauma" at the turn of the 20th century.[9]

From the 19th to the 20th century, stereotypes of Haitians as superstitious and sexually liberal continued to proliferate, especially during the 1915–34 American Occupation of Haiti (Craige 1933, 1934; Renda 2001) and more recently with the onset of the AIDS pandemic. In the early 1980s the CDC designated Haitians as vectors of HIV. As members of the infamous "4-H club," which also included hemophiliacs, heroin addicts, and homosexuals, Haitians as a racial and cultural group were labeled as a danger for the spread of infection (Farmer 1992; Sabatier 1988). While the sick or diseased have long been considered threats to the United States and other nations, those recognized as fleeing political repression have been given asylum. Nevertheless, as tens of thousands of Haitians fled to the United States in the 1980s and 1990s and were labeled "economic refugees," they were denied recognition as political subjects because of the potential threat that they represented. Upon analysis of the peculiarities with which Haitians have been treated in asylum cases and in US foreign policy (DeConde 1992; Lawyers Committee for Human Rights 1990; Miller 1984; Plummer 1992), it is possible to say to some degree that Haiti and Haitians continue to be symbols of horror, violence, pathology, and the chaos of a nation that the United States views as willfully refusing to follow a democratic path. Recurrent images of the violence of the Haitian Revolution and the ongoing negative stereotyping of the nation's

people and leaders suggest that Haiti is an archetypal object of consciousness upon which the international imaginary remains fixated (Dash 1997; Freud 1997: 207[10]; James 2003).

Beyond the screen of fantastic images, the reality is that Haiti remains infamous for being the poorest country in the Western Hemisphere and for its struggles toward democracy in the 21st century. While the accuracy of statistical measures may be questioned, the following figures are generally accepted as valid. Life expectancy in Haiti is estimated at 50.36 years for men and 52.92 years for women (Central Intelligence Agency 2004). Six percent of the entire population of Haiti is considered to be HIV positive; however, the infection rate may be as high as 13 percent in the Northwest Department (Dubuche 2002), which has been plagued with drought, food shortages, and heavy damage in the aftermath of Hurricanes Georges and Mitch in the fall of 1998. The 2000 Human Development Report (United Nations Development Program 2000) affirms that 63 percent of the population lack access to safe water, 55 percent do not have access to health services, and 75 percent lack access to basic sanitation. Twenty-eight percent of children under age five are below normal weight. The infant mortality rate is 95 per 1,000 live births. Overall, at least 80 percent of the population lives in abject poverty (Central Intelligence Agency 2004). At the time of this writing the unemployment rate is believed to be nearly 70 percent. In terms of its economy, Haiti ranks a low 170th out of 206 countries, with a GNP of only US$460 per year (World Bank 2001).

Certainly, as a result of its dire poverty and political insecurity, many Haitians still attempt to flee Haiti in order to find a better future in the United States. While the anxiety that these hopeful migrants provoke continues to be acute, it inspired the most concern for the United States and its own bio-political security during the coup years of 1991–94, when Haitians were interdicted at sea and returned to Haiti's politically and economically insecure shores in the thousands without adequate hearings. Nonetheless, it is striking that what continues to be elided within national and international discourses of Haitian democracy is acknowledgment of the legacy of violence from the Duvalier dictatorships (1957–86) and the post-dictatorship period, as well as the egregious uses of torture and terror between 1991 and 1994. Just as the extremity of the violence has yet to receive thorough recognition and analysis in the manner that has been attempted in other "post-conflict" nations (Hayner 2001),[11] the ongoing suffering of Haitian *viktim*, among the general population living in the climate of *ensekirite*, remains acute and nearly invisible.

What actually happened during the years of the coup d'état in Haiti, and how were victims of human rights abuses coping in the aftermath of conflict? Did they, in fact, suffer from 'posttraumatic stress' and how did this manifest according to gender? What assistance could be provided to help them rebuild their lives, and

how could this be done successfully considering the ongoing crisis of insecurity in Haiti's post-coup era? Given the crisis of the Haitian state and the ongoing international ambivalence toward assisting the nation, who or what institution or state should be held accountable for recognizing and repairing the legacy of egregious suffering in the recent and distant past?

TORTURE AND ITS CONSEQUENCES

Gender, sexuality, production, and reproduction were explicit factors in the mode of repression in Haiti during and after the coup d'état of 1991. This section is a general overview of the types of violence perpetrated during the coup years and is based upon my analysis of case files representing more than 2,000 *viktim*, my own documentation of cases in the field and physical therapy work at the clinic, and participation with *viktim* in discussion groups in a variety of settings. The majority of the poor who were targeted were designated *Lavalasyen*—supporters of Aristide. Just as Das and Nandy (1985) observed in their discussion of sacrificial and political violence in South Asia, there were differences in the particular "style" of violence employed to maintain the climate of terror in Haiti during these years. Men were attacked for their involvement in the popular democracy movement—whether as organizers or supporters. When apprehended, they may have been arrested or kidnapped, interrogated in a detention facility, beaten—at times with the intent to damage their sexual organs—whipped, derided, or humiliated. In order to ensure that they could never again perform manual labor or other work, they may have had a hand chopped off, or been cut in ways that left permanent physical damage. At times these attacks on the body and mind were accompanied by theft and destruction of property, livestock, or other possessions.

Women were also targeted for their active organizing role in the political domain, as well as in their roles as small-scale merchants; however, they were also victimized in place of their husbands, fathers, brothers, or spouses as surrogates—what Girard (1977) has called "sacrificial substitutes." They were often unable to go into hiding because of their responsibilities for their children and because their commercial activities bound them to local markets, so they were vulnerable to further attacks by the various military-affiliated groups. Although politically motivated rape occurred immediately after the coup, by late 1993 rape, repeated rapes, gang rapes, and even forced incest were tools of repression that were used systematically to terrorize families and communities generally, but women specifically.

The use of gendered and sexualized forms of torture and terror was intended to destroy the productivity and reproductivity of the individual victim, and to rupture the social bonds between the direct target of violence and his or her family and community through the use of physical pain, threats, and other coercive acts. As Scarry (1985) suggests, power and productivity were stripped from the targets of

violence and transferred to the torturer(s), and to the coup apparatus as a whole as it sought to consolidate its hold over the nation. The efficacy of torture used in Haiti during this period, however, lay beyond its use against the "body" in the short-term. The forms of torture perpetrated were effective in controlling social space as well as the subjectivity of their targets over time. Beyond the initial attempt to extract legitimacy and power from victims' physical bodies through the use of pain, the purpose of these horrific acts was to inculcate what Patterson (1982) has described as "social death" of the victim and "natal alienation" from his or her social network of responsibility through the violation of moral norms. In this respect, the psychosocial sequelae of torture leave their traces on the individual psyche or self over time, as well as on the extended family and communities of *viktim*.[12]

THE TRAUMATIC SEQUELAE OF TORTURE: SOCIAL DEATH AND NATAL ALIENATION

In the aftermath of the coup years, the most common laments among *viktim* were feelings of shame, humiliation, powerlessness, and isolation or disconnection from their families and communities. These experiences and articulations of suffering are also gendered. Women who had been raped were often abandoned by their partners or husbands and families and labeled as *fanm kadejak*—"the wives of the rapist." Alienated from their social group, they often fled to other areas in order to restart their lives. Many of these women were market vendors and had also lost their livelihoods at the time of the attack. In many cases, however, their only recourse for survival was to appropriate their own sexuality as a means to generate income, much as the coup apparatus appropriated power from their bodies during its reign of terror. Haitian women lamented their inability to care for their children—to send them to school, feed and clothe them—in accordance with cultural ideals of femininity and parenthood. Furthermore, women *viktim* and their children often suffered from tuberculosis, malaria, and malnutrition, as well as somatic forms of emotional distress arising from the imbalance of *san* (blood) in the body.

Haitian men who were victims of violence similarly articulated feelings of humiliation and shame at having been powerless to protect their families, and at having been subjected to abasing forms of torture. What they lamented most strongly in the therapy groups in which I participated was their rage and anger over the loss of their property, livestock, and public status—essential aspects of the ideals of masculinity. Indeed, the perceived loss of social status was among the greatest factors in the way that Haitian men experienced and narrated their trauma, depression, and anxiety. In many cases, however, the personal sense of shame, ongoing economic impotence, and failure to meet their expected social roles—fulfilling their domestic responsibilities to provide for their children and support

their conjugal partners—culminated in the total abandonment of their families. The care and subsistence of the family was left to other relatives, or to no one, leaving women and children even more vulnerable.

Earlier in this paper I asked if PTSD manifested in Haiti following the coup years, and in what way. I can speak of "posttraumatic stress disorder" in Haiti, but only in a guarded sense. Many victims of organized violence in Haiti have suffered memory loss—not simply from dissociation in the psychological sense, but because of blunt trauma to the head. *Viktim* are generally hypervigilant and have feelings of detachment from others. Many expressed a "sense of a foreshortened future," or feelings of depersonalization—the sensation that their bodies did not feel like their own. But these "symptoms" do not capture the despair and social dislocation of people like Elsie, a 60-year-old grandmother who still searches for her son who has been missing since 1992. She spoke of him each time I saw her in the Martissant clinic. Her perpetual torment is not knowing if he is dead. If he is, her inability to lay his body to rest through proper funerary rites leaves her in a state of moral limbo in which she is vulnerable to haunting and persecution by the *zonbi*, an aspect of the disembodied soul of the deceased. But who or what institution or government is or should be responsible for repairing these moral cleavages?

HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE, SECURITY, AND BIO-POWER

In the aftermath of the denials of gendered and sexualized forms of torture and the political motivation for acts of terror in Haiti in the early 1990s, a cacophony of dissent erupted from international and national human rights organizations and other supporters of the nation's fragile democracy against the US government. In response to the criticisms of its practices and the accusation that the United States was not a credible promoter of global human rights, the US government, through USAID, provided humanitarian assistance to *viktim* from the 1991–94 period. The vehicle for this aid was a rehabilitation program for victims of organized violence housed at a nongovernmental organization. The program functioned in various incarnations from July of 1994 until February of 1995, and again from July of 1996 until May of 1999. During the early phase of 1994–95, the project provided complete medical care to *viktim*, including surgeries, trauma counseling, legal assistance, and stipends, to help alleviate suffering. Nonetheless, the attention to and promotion of Haitian human security was not given without a simultaneous goal of protecting US national security and the US's own image in the international community: explicit within the draft documents for the first incarnation of this assistance project was the recognition that US credibility was low regarding supporting democracy and human rights in Haiti. Providing assistance to Haitians at this juncture was crucial to creating an image of the United States as accountable[13]

to its own citizenry and to the Haitian government and civil society whose democracy it intended to help consolidate; however, it can be debated whether this effort was successful.

The second phase of the project continued this assistance to victims of state-sponsored violence without restriction to time period, but required that beneficiaries be members of victims' associations or advocacy groups, or have a recommendation from a recognized institution like the Ministry of Justice, the Episcopal Justice and Peace Commission, local or international human rights groups, women's groups, or other formal institutions. The project continued to provide assistance to individuals and families until its untimely demise, when a series of attacks by disgruntled members of the victims' advocacy groups forced the rehabilitation program to close in order to preserve the security of its staff in May of 1999. During the suspension of services, however, individual members of the Democracy office of USAID/Haiti informed USAID/Washington that "there were no more victims in Haiti"[14] and that funding for the program should be discontinued. This occurred at nearly the same moment as USAID/Washington's presentation of the Haitian rehabilitation project to Congress as an example of their success in providing relief to torture victims (US Congress 1999a, b).

In this field site the recognition of collective suffering by USAID was a security strategy for the US government: the rehabilitation project was viewed as a step toward building US credibility in Haitian civil society, legitimizing the impending US intervention into Haiti, as well as assisting individuals and families who might otherwise have lost their lives trying to reach asylum in the United States. The project was also viewed as useful in demonstrating the sincerity of US human rights practices overseas, as well as the US's own image as a humanitarian nation. Nevertheless, when this assistance became challenging or problematic and it was no longer necessary to maintain US authority or authenticity in this domain, the funding was discontinued and the existence of *viktim* denied once again. The abrupt withdrawal of aid left many individuals and families who were beneficiaries of the program with little time to find other resources to help them continue to rebuild their lives.

Within the privately funded humanitarian assistance apparatus, the political economy of trauma functioned in a different manner. I also worked at a women's clinic that had been established in Martissant by the joint efforts of two women's organizations, one Haitian and one US-based. One of the main goals of creating this space was to address concerns for the ongoing suffering of women who had been raped during the coup years. These women were encouraged to form survivors' organizations in addition to establishing their membership in the Haitian women's group that founded the clinic. They were provided with small business grants to help them recover financially, and many of them received subsistence supplies from the storehouse that the organizations maintained in the neighborhood. The

US-based women's organization solicited funds on behalf of the clinic through its extended membership and frequently updated those on its mailing lists about the progress in assisting these "survivors." At times, however, those funds were slow to reach the clinic staff.

Over the course of my fieldwork, however, I learned that within the local community outside the clinic and the rehabilitation program, certain individuals acted as gatekeepers who facilitated or prevented the victims' access to either the Haitian or the international assistance organizations. In a country where as much as 70 percent of the population is illiterate, those who can read and write have tremendous power as mediators between the local and the international domain of charity, and are often sought as field assistants. In both of my field sites I became aware that outside of the institutions *viktim* were often asked to pay the local representative or investigator who documented their cases and built their trauma portfolios before they were linked to the individuals and organizations that would assist them. In many cases, the dossiers were withheld until the ransom was paid to the investigator.

In some cases, those who could pay the local investigator would have false portfolios assembled for them. They might be recognized as victims locally, nationally, or internationally because of their purchased portfolio and their ability to perform a convincing tale of woe. Within the environment of poverty and insecurity that Haiti has experienced in the past decade, victim status—whether legitimate or purchased—offers the possibility for political recognition and economic assistance. In this respect, one of the social consequences of the intense international gaze placed upon trauma, rape, and victimization is the creation of what I am calling *trauma brokers*—gatekeepers to the humanitarian assistance apparatus who profit from the suffering of others and who supply the demands of consumers of performed suffering in the international humanitarian apparatus.

I remain haunted by my own part in this cycle of the appropriation, transformation, and commodification of suffering. I wonder how many voices have been silenced within or excluded from recognition within the discourses of trauma and victimization as they are currently conceived as originating from some past traumatic event. For example, I had been working at the women's clinic in Martissant for about a month when Louise came to ask me for a physical therapy session. I told her that my appointment book was full, as I had already arranged to work with rape survivors for the majority of my time at the clinic. Nevertheless, she came every day and waited for a chance that I might see her. Louise was not a member of any women's organization or human rights group. She was not a survivor of state-sponsored terror. In focusing on the trauma of systematic rape at this time I could not recognize her suffering. Nor did I recognize her need for a listening ear and a compassionate, nonthreatening touch.

I agreed to see her when one of my clients was unable to keep her appointment. We went back to the small room where the massage table stood in the center of an overflow waiting area. Mosquitoes buzzed near the floor and underneath a table in

the room. We could hear the loud banter of some young boys in the neighborhood and the cries of the newest addition to the family who lived next door. Louise apologized to me because she did not have soap to bathe or to wash her clothes before coming to the clinic. Then she began to tell me her story. "I was almost raped," she said, as if to justify her worth in my eyes. "What happened?" I asked. "I'd been sleeping on the gallery of a house in Martissant. For the past year and a half I've had to sleep with men for money in order to feed my children and to try to send them to school. One of the men tried to rape me but I fought him off. Please don't tell anyone here at the clinic what I do."

I assured her that I would not. In preparation for the physical therapy session I asked her how she felt and she complained of intense low back pain. One night while she was "at work" on the gallery she had been drenched in a flash flood with water that flowed through the garbage and sewage that were dumped from each household onto the street in this neighborhood. She felt that the water had afflicted her with the pain in her back and pelvis. When I inquired further about her situation, Louise told me that often she had slept with ten men per night, accepting whatever they would give her in payment, which was often a slap in the face instead of money. She only used condoms with those who requested it. As she grimaced from pain with the effort to lie down on the table, I was reluctant to work with her before she had seen a doctor to determine what was the immediate cause of her physical pain. She misinterpreted my hesitation and said to me, "Don't worry. I'm not going to sleep with anyone after this massage. I still have two months before I have to pay the registration fee for school."

ONGOING ETHICAL CHALLENGES

The global discourse of trauma is quickly becoming a language of entitlement in neo-modern discourses of human security that is deployed in the aftermath of each recognized state of emergency. It encodes the inequality between those who identify and label the suffering of others as disordered and those who have survived life-shattering circumstances and become 'victims,' 'rape survivors,' or 'patients.' In this era of *traumatic citizenship*,[15] an era in which individuals and groups seek recognition, agency, political and economic power, and security through attempts to seek justice and restitution for past wrongs or experiences of victimization, we must ask ourselves what is at stake when we recognize and materially compensate others because of a single attribute—their suffering, their injury or trauma, their gender, or their race?

As Brown (1995) suggests, does this particular form of recognition perpetuate a second-class or underdeveloped status for those who are the objects of humanitarian intervention? Does the recognition of trauma in this manner perpetuate forms of bio-power that are rooted in the imperial past? In discussions of international

security must the trauma and suffering of some nations be denied for fear that prolonged victim assistance may turn into forms of welfare or managed care without borders? Furthermore, when our compassion is fatigued or our gaze turns to other global terrors or dramatic forms of suffering that we witness from a distance (Boltanski 1999; Nussbaum 2003), what are the repercussions of withdrawing the "gift" of humanitarian aid?

Maurice Godelier has written the following on the "tyranny of the gift":

> Giving . . . seems to establish a difference and an inequality of status between donor and recipient, which can in certain instances become a hierarchy: if this hierarchy already exists, then the gift expresses and legitimizes it. Two opposite movements are thus contained in a single act. The gift decreases the distance between the protagonists because it is a form of sharing, and it increases the social distance between them because one is now indebted to the other. . . . It can be, simultaneously or successively, an act of generosity or of violence; in the latter case, however, the violence is disguised as a disinterested gesture, since it is committed by means of and in the form of sharing. (Godelier 1999: 12)

The development of the ethical economies outlined in Mauss' formulation of the gift (Mauss 1950) is extremely relevant to this discussion of suffering, security, reparations, and restitution, but also to the way in which violence may involve economies of appropriation and exchange in the form of taking. As I discussed in this article, the economies of extraction of suffering or trauma occur in different ways, depending on whether one examines the practices used during the repression of the coup years or the unintended generation of occult economies by the humanitarian assistance apparatus. Nonetheless, to examine these activities solely from the present without regard to history would be an error.

Haiti's infamous position as the "poorest country in the Western Hemisphere" has roots in colonial economies of violence, terror, and extraction of productivity from the bodies of slave laborers. Since its independence, the "state of extraction" remains linked to its current "state of pathology" (James 2003)—the perception on the part of international donors that the government of Haiti can neither arrest the political, criminal, and economic insecurity within its borders, nor consolidate its democracy according to their expectations. The dilemma remains that in nations like Haiti, where the state is incapable of meeting the needs of the poor majority, any means toward political recognition or assistance is crucial for its citizenry and may result in tragic tactics of survival, including transforming, appropriating, and circulating narratives of the suffering of victims as currency in the global political economy of trauma. In this respect trauma portfolios lie at the nexus of economies of compassion and terror (Nussbaum 2003) in which are linked local, national, and international forms of gift giving; security practices in insecure social and institutional environments; questions of global reparations; and quests for justice. The danger for the humanitarian assistance apparatus, however, is in assuming an obligation to a population that the state cannot or will not fulfill—and that the

international community ignores or is reluctant to assume. While their actions are well-intended, even transnational nongovernmental organizations—that are not accountable to those they serve in local realms—may abuse their own power or contribute to occult economies of suffering.

There are no easy answers to the ethical and moral dilemmas that I have presented in this article, nor are the problems I describe new ones. The fact remains that the ubiquitous presence of human suffering caused by the pernicious acts of others, as well as the responses to it, is inextricably bound to local, national, and international histories, politics, economies, and cultures that are not easy to disentangle. In order to examine adequately issues of agency, causality, inequalities, prejudices, and oppression, questions of suffering, insecurity, and security will continue to require more complex analyses than can be encompassed by the conceptual frameworks of 'trauma,' 'human rights,' or even the trope of 'structural violence.' Thus the ethical task at hand is also not a new one.

Social theorists, activists, advocates, and other humanitarian actors involved in technologies of bio-power and knowledge production must still acknowledge and grapple with new forms of complexity in this neo-modern age, including our own unforeseen roles in perpetuating cycles of inequality and exclusion of those who would achieve equality and citizenship within the international community. In the domain of humanitarian assistance the challenge remains one of balancing the economy of gifts and exchanges and limiting dependencies and the perversion of aid (Terry 2002). The reality, however, is that for injured individuals and families who have no other recourse in these "cultures of insecurity" (Weldes et al. 1999) and uncertainty, the path of survival may lie in crime or the appropriation of others' suffering for personal gain. The remainder may risk death on the high seas to reach asylum on other shores, or may appropriate their own bodies and risk disease in order to survive. Those of us from cultures of relative security must acknowledge that while our intentions may be to "do good," there is always the potential that we who profit from the partial recognition of our subjects' humanity will perpetuate the cycle of global inequality. But perhaps this is a stepping-stone toward global inclusion—call it "trickle-down compassion," if you will.

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NOTES

1. The definition of "human security" is based upon the description given in a 1994 United Nations Development Program Human Development Report that conceives it as "safety from 'such chronic threats as hunger, disease and repression,' and 'protection from sudden and hurtful disruptions"' (Rothschild 1995: 56, citing UNDP 1994: 22–23).

2. See, for example, the recent discussions of the imperatives and crises of humanitarian action in Terry 2002, Rieff 2002, and Cahill 2003.

3. The reader should note that whenever terms like "trauma," "posttraumatic stress," or others are used in this piece, I recognize that they are highly contested in moral, political, and therapeutic discourses, as well as among those whose experiences have been categorized according to these terms.

4. In this article I will focus specifically on victims of state-sponsored violence; however, my field research was conducted in an area that was also vulnerable to natural disasters. 'Victim' status was articulated most explicitly in relationship to the violent repression of the 1991–94 coup period, rather than in relation to the devastation of Hurricanes Gordon in 1994, Georges in 1998, and Mitch in 1998.

5. *Viktim* choose to use the term to describe themselves as a political category of sufferers. While the perpetrators of violence ranged from members of the military to paramilitary affiliates of the coup apparatus, the people with whom I worked recognized that campaigns that targeted their neighborhoods were conducted by individuals and groups that used explicit, antidemocratic political accusations in their attacks against them. While local "thugs" were hired to carry out some of these campaigns, a pattern with historical roots in Haiti that raises the question of how the boundaries of the state are defined and limited, pro-democracy activists were targeted by armed reactionary forces that sought to prevent the consolidation of democracy in Haiti.

6. Elsewhere I argue that trauma can result from ruptures in routine, and that the lack of security—individual and collective, national, international political and economic, emotional and spiritual—is a precondition for the emergence of traumatic experience (James in press).

7. In coining this term it is not my attempt to create yet another metanarrative, but simply to link the present to the past while marking the ways in which new discursive practices and technologies have emerged that result from marking the 'end' of the Cold War.

8. This certainly relates to an unwillingness to intervene in order to protect the security of Haitians in the pro-democracy movement at the time, as well as an ambivalence about President Jean-Bertrand Aristide—a political leader whose advocacy for the security of the Haitian masses conflicted with the political and economic strategies proposed by the United States and international financial institutions to "structurally adjust" the Haitian economy.

9. Conceptions of 'trauma' have had an intrinsic moral tone since the identification of shell shock in World War I and these conceptions are often intertwined with discussions of politics. Young notes that "most army doctors were inclined to believe that flawed heredity and constitution have a determining effect in the great majority of cases of war neuroses" (Young 1995: 55) and that they were largely "functional" disorders. The implication of this statement is that only "degenerate" soldiers suffered shell shock. Debates were prevalent at the time, however, on how to distinguish "hysterics" and malingerers who might be

seeking compensation or avoiding further military service from those with true or authentic shell shock (Young 1995). Traumatic afflictions implied weakness or a desire to profit from reputed cases of suffering. Furthermore, in earlier discussions of pathogenic memory, Freud's concerns with traumatic guilt—that one might be traumatized by the violence one commits—demonstrate the way in which discourses of traumatic stress require that the sufferer have the moral capacity to feel guilt in order for it to develop into pathogenic memories (Young 1995: 80). This conception recurs in discussions of PTSD among Vietnam veterans and has been of particular note in analyses of PTSD among African American veterans. Allen (1996) discusses the fact that black veterans suffered a high rate of PTSD in comparison with veterans of European descent because of greater feelings of moral conflict about targeting the Vietnamese for abusive violence (Allen 1996: 211–212); he also notes, however, that the emotional distress of African American men is most likely to be denied or misdiagnosed as "paranoid" or "dangerous" on the one hand, or "passive-dependent and essentially 'weak' of character" (Allen 1996: 225) on the other. Haitians have been characterized in much the same contradictory way from the 18th to the 20th centuries. If their suffering is recognized as valid, it requires a response. But if violence—and sexual violence in particular—can be categorized as "normal" for Haitian culture—suggesting that Haitians would feel no guilt or remorse and concomitantly that such violence can be denied status as political terror or crimes against humanity—why should the United States intervene?

10. In Freud's discussion of fetishism he argues: "It seems rather that when the fetish comes to life, so to speak, some process has been suddenly interrupted—it reminds one of the abrupt halt made by memory in traumatic amnesias. In the case of the fetish, too, interest is held up at a certain point—what is possibly the last impression received before the uncanny traumatic one is preserved as a fetish" (Freud 1997: 207). While I do not wish to discuss the mechanisms of memory in this piece, Freud describes a process by which an event that cannot be processed within consciousness becomes a figure of obsession or fixation. I argue (James 2003) that the legacy of Haiti's successful revolution in 1804 was its transformation into a 'fetish' within the global imaginary. One can argue that on a symbolic level Haiti's independence was an inassimilable "traumatic event" within the political consciousnesses of slaveholding and colonial powers and the nation and its people continue to be viewed as exotic, abject, occult, mysterious, etc., while being held in "states of exception" in international law and US foreign policy.

11. While the Government of Haiti inaugurated a truth commission that completed its work in 1995, the report has been highly criticized, even by the truth commission's president, herself (James 2003).

12. The targeted 'body' or 'self' described by my clients is an inherently social one that extends through space and time to incorporate the influence of environment, ancestors, and the unseen spiritual realms (James in press).

13. The language of "accountability" is important within the political development assistance realm. A thorough discussion of this concept lies beyond the scope of this article but will be addressed in subsequent work.

14. The director of this program informed me that a Latin American and Caribbean administrator at USAID/Washington informed the president of the organization that acted as the procurement structure for the assistance project that USAID/Haiti had reported to headquarters that "there were no more victims in Haiti." For a fuller discussion of these details and the politics of this decision refer to James 2003.

15. In her analysis of the mechanisms of compensation for survivors of the Chernobyl disaster in the Ukraine, Petryna discusses "biological citizenship" and focuses on how "the damaged biology of a population has become the grounds for social membership and the basis for staking citizenship claims" (Petryna 2002: 5). As in the discussion of the way in which torture has often been viewed through the lens of the physical body, the concept of *traumatic citizenship* is meant to indicate alternative correlations of suffering, identity

politics, and the body, and to encompass the way in which time is intrinsic to the conceptions of compensation and reparations.

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