Journal of People and Worldviews (JPW)

Maiden Edition, Volume 1, Number 1 (Part 2)

Review Article Open Access

Interrogating a Postcolonial Ethics of Peaceful Coexistence from African Literature

Abstract

The aftermath of colonial violence, civil war, ethnic conflict, and systemic gendered oppression has left postcolonial African communities confronting a moral paradox. Healing demands honest remembrance of past injustice, yet that same honesty risks perpetuating grievance and resentment that make genuine peaceful coexistence structurally difficult. Existing Western frameworks of transitional justice and reconciliation have addressed this paradox with considerable normative ambition but limited philosophical adequacy. Through failing to engage the moral traditions, communal obligations, and narrative resources, postcolonial African communities have actually negotiated the relationship between memory, justice, and coexistence. This paper argued that postcolonial African literature constitutes a philosophically distinctive site of moral memory and reconciliatory imagination whose narrative engagements with conflict, remembering, and the possibility of coexistence both instantiate and productively challenge existing philosophical frameworks. Analyzing three works, namely Helon Habila's *Travellers* (2019), Teju Cole's *Tremor* (2023), and Pumla Dineo Gqola's *Rape: A South African Nightmare* (2015), the paper developed an original philosophical framework designated as postcolonial reconciliation ethics, grounded in three mutually reinforcing principles which are: obligatory memory, relational moral repair, and coexistence across difference. The paper contributed to moral philosophy, postcolonial ethics, memory studies, and the philosophical foundations of Sustainable Development Goals 16 and 17.

Keywords: Moral memory, Postcolonial reconciliation, Ubuntu ethics, Peaceful coexistence, African literature

Amaka Patricia Nwana, PhD
Department of political science and public administration
Igbinedion university, okada
ORCID ID: 0009-0004-0519-274X

Edith Ngozi Nwana, Ph.D
Department of Arts Education
University of Abuja, Abuja, Nigeria
E-Mail: ngozinwana15@gmail.com
ORCID ID: 0009-0009-2922-1601

Corresponding Author's Email:
nwanaamaka2@gmail.com

Date Received: 14th March, 2026

Date Accepted: 22nd March, 2026

Doi: https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.193840(

Introduction

There is a wound at the center of postcolonial African moral experience that neither time nor political settlement has adequately healed. It is the wound of memory, the accumulated moral weight of colonial dispossession, civil war atrocity, ethnic violence, and the systematic dehumanization of persons whose suffering has been simultaneously constitutive of African historical experience and persistently marginalized within the philosophical frameworks that claim to address it. Communities that have endured these histories face a moral paradox of considerable philosophical depth: that the honest acknowledgment of what was done, the remembering that

genuine justice demands, threatens to reproduce the very conditions of grievance, resentment, and moral antagonism that make peaceful coexistence structurally impossible, while the forgetting that coexistence seems to require threatens to betray the moral claims of those whose suffering demands recognition and accountability.

The existing philosophical literature on transitional justice and reconciliation has engaged this paradox with considerable normative ambition. However, as Leebaw (2021) argues, the dominant frameworks of transitional justice, grounded in international law, liberal rights theory, and the procedural mechanisms of truth commissions and criminal tribunals, have consistently failed to engage the specific moral traditions, communal obligations, and narrative resources through which postcolonial African communities have actually negotiated the relationship between memory, justice, and coexistence. The philosophical consequence of this failure is not merely academic; it is practical and morally urgent. Transitional justice frameworks that do not engage the specific philosophical resources of the communities they claim to serve produce institutional processes whose conception of reconciliation reflects the moral assumptions of the Global North while presenting itself as universal, a form of epistemic injustice whose material consequences include the systematic exclusion of communal, gendered, and indigenous moral claims from the architecture of postcolonial reconciliation.

This paper advances a precise philosophical thesis in response to this condition :that postcolonial African literature, specifically Helon Habila's *Travellers* (2019), Teju Cole's *Tremor* (2023), and Pumla Dineo Gqola's *Rape: A South African Nightmare* (2015), constitutes a philosophically distinctive site of moral memory and reconciliatory imagination whose narrative engagements with conflict, remembering, and the possibility of coexistence both instantiate and productively challenge existing philosophical frameworks. Drawing on Paul Ricoeur's narrative account of memory and reconciliation, Avishai Margalit's *Ethics of Moral Memory*, African communitarian ethics as developed through Ubuntu philosophy, and the postcolonial moral thought of Fanon (2021), Achebe (2016), and Ngugi (2018), the paper develops what it designates postcolonial reconciliation ethics, an original philosophical framework grounded in three mutually reinforcing principles: obligatory memory, relational moral repair, and coexistence across difference. In doing so, the paper contributes to SDG 16 on peace, justice, and strong institutions and SDG 17 on partnerships for the goals. The problem this paper addresses is the philosophical inadequacy of existing transitional justice frameworks in engaging the specific moral traditions, narrative resources, and communal obligations of postcolonial African communities, an inadequacy with practical and morally urgent consequences for the architecture of reconciliation in post-conflict societies. The paper pursues three specific objectives: first, to examine how selected

Citation: Nwana, Amaka P. & Nwana, Edith N. "Interrogating a Postcolonial Ethics of Peaceful Coexistence from African Literature". *Journal of People and Worldviews (JPW),* 2026: pp52-62.

postcolonial African literary texts philosophically engage the relationship between moral memory, justice, and peaceful coexistence; second, to bring African philosophical traditions, particularly Ubuntu communitarian ethics, into critical and constructive dialogue with Western frameworks of memory and reconciliation; and third, to develop an original philosophical framework, postcolonial reconciliation ethics, whose principles are grounded in and responsive to the specific moral experience of postcolonial African communities.

Literature Review

This section reviews the principal philosophical frameworks and scholarly traditions that inform the paper's analytical approach. It draws on four interrelated bodies of literature: Ricoeur's narrative phenomenology of memory, Margalit's ethics of moral memory, Ubuntu communitarian ethics as developed by Ramose and Metz, and the postcolonial moral thought of Fanon, Achebe, and Ngugi. Together, these traditions constitute the theoretical ground from which the paper's constructive framework, postcolonial reconciliation ethics, is developed.

Moral Memory, Narrative, and the Ethics of Remembering: Ricoeur and Margalit

Memory is not merely a psychological phenomenon. At its most philosophically serious, it is a moral one, the medium through which individuals and communities construct their identities, account for their histories, and determine the obligations that the past places on the present. Paul Ricoeur's philosophical engagement with memory, history, and forgetting constitutes one of the most rigorous accounts of the moral dimensions of remembrance in contemporary philosophy. Ricoeur (2004) argues that memory is not a passive repository of past experience but an active moral practice, one through which communities construct the narrative identities that give their present lives meaning and their future aspirations direction. For postcolonial African communities whose colonial and postcolonial histories have been systematically distorted, suppressed, and misrepresented by the dominant narratives of imperial power, the recovery of accurate moral memory is not merely a historical project but a philosophical imperative, the foundational condition of the moral self-understanding that genuine reconciliation and peaceful coexistence require.

Ricoeur's (2004) concept of the duty of memory, the moral obligation of communities to remember past injustice honestly and completely, refusing the consolations of selective forgetting or politically convenient amnesia, establishes the normative standard against which the reconciliation processes of postcolonial African societies must be philosophically evaluated. Applied to the specific contexts of postcolonial Africa, this duty of memory demands that the moral claims of those whose suffering has been most systematically marginalized, namely the victims of colonial dispossession, civil war atrocity, and gendered violence, be placed at the

Citation: Nwana, Amaka P. & Nwana, Edith N. "Interrogating a Postcolonial Ethics of Peaceful Coexistence from African Literature". *Journal of People and Worldviews (JPW),* 2026: pp52-62.

center of any philosophically adequate account of reconciliation.

Avishai Margalit's *Ethics of Memory* provides a philosophically complementary but distinctively different framework. Margalit (2002) distinguishes between thick moral relations, grounded in shared memory, communal bonds, and the particular obligations that intimate communities owe to their members, and thin moral relations, grounded in the universal obligations that all human beings owe to one another as rational moral agents. This distinction captures precisely the moral tension at the heart of postcolonial African reconciliation: the tension between the particular communal obligations of memory that thick moral relations generate and the universal demands of justice and human dignity that thin moral relations impose. Margalit's (2002) further argument that communities bear a moral obligation not to be complicit in the erasure of the memories of those who have suffered, what he designates the duty against moral forgetting, provides a direct philosophical foundation for the paper's engagement with Gqola's feminist critique of post-apartheid reconciliation.

Ubuntu, Moral Repair, and African Philosophical Foundations of Reconciliation

The Western philosophical frameworks elaborated above share a structural limitation of considerable consequence for any philosophically adequate account of postcolonial African reconciliation: both frameworks conceptualize reconciliation primarily as a relationship between individuals or between individual citizens and the state, a conception that systematically undervalues the communal, relational, and cosmological dimensions of moral injury and moral repair that African philosophical traditions place at the very center of their accounts of what reconciliation demands and what coexistence requires.

Ubuntu's foundational philosophical insight that personhood is constitutively relational rather than atomistically individual, that the human being is who they are through their relationships with others rather than despite them, carries implications for the ethics of reconciliation that go considerably beyond what Ricoeur's narrative identity or Margalit's moral community of memory can fully theorize. When moral injury is understood not merely as a violation of individual rights but as a wound to the relational web of communal existence through which persons sustain their humanity, reconciliation cannot be adequately theorized as a procedural arrangement between discrete moral agents. It must be understood as the restoration of the relational bonds of mutual recognition, communal care, and shared moral responsibility whose disruption by historical violence constitutes the deepest dimension of the moral wrong that reconciliation is obligated to address. Ramose (2015) argues that Ubuntu's relational ontology generates precisely this communitarian account of moral repair, one whose philosophical adequacy for postcolonial African reconciliation derives from its grounding in the specific moral traditions of the communities whose wounds it addresses. Metz (2017)

Citation: Nwana, Amaka P. & Nwana, Edith N. "Interrogating a Postcolonial Ethics of Peaceful Coexistence from African Literature". *Journal of People and Worldviews (JPW),* 2026: pp52-62.

develops Ubuntu's reconciliation ethics into a systematic philosophical argument, demonstrating that the African relational moral framework generates obligations of communal accountability and moral repair that extend beyond the procedural requirements of transitional justice toward a substantive philosophical commitment to the restoration of the conditions of genuine communal flourishing.

The postcolonial philosophical contributions of Fanon, Achebe, and Ngugi ground these Ubuntu insights in the specific historical conditions of colonial and postcolonial African experience. Fanon (2021) establishes the philosophical conditions under which postcolonial African reconciliation operates, demonstrating that colonial violence is not merely physical but ontological, a systematic assault on the moral subjectivity, cultural integrity, and self-understanding of colonized peoples whose consequences persist long after formal decolonization. Achebe (2016) translates this insight into a direct account of African literature's philosophical vocation, arguing that the narrative reclamation of moral dignity, cultural authority, and historical self-understanding constitutes the foundational act of postcolonial moral repair. Ngugi (2018) extends this argument by demonstrating that the decolonization of memory is inseparable from the decolonization of moral and political life, that communities whose historical memories have been systematically distorted by colonial narrative cannot achieve genuine reconciliation without first recovering the philosophical authority to tell their own stories, on their own moral terms, with the full weight of their own cultural and ethical traditions behind them.

Methodology

This paper adopts a qualitative, interpretive methodology situated at the intersection of philosophical analysis and literary criticism. The methodological approach is threefold. First, it employs philosophical close reading as its primary analytical tool, examining selected postcolonial African literary texts not merely as cultural artifacts but as sites of moral and philosophical reasoning whose narrative structures, ethical tensions, and representational strategies constitute genuine contributions to the philosophy of memory and reconciliation. Second, the paper engages in systematic cross-theoretical synthesis, bringing four distinct philosophical traditions into structured dialogue: Ricoeur's narrative phenomenology, Margalit's ethics of memory, Ubuntu communitarian ethics, and postcolonial moral thought. Third, it employs constructive philosophical argument to develop an original framework, postcolonial reconciliation ethics, whose three foundational principles are derived directly from the literary analyses and theoretical syntheses preceding them.

The three primary texts were selected on principled grounds of philosophical representativeness and thematic scope. Habila's *Travellers* (2019) addresses diasporic moral memory and the ethics of displacement; Cole's *Tremor* (2023) engages transatlantic racial memory and the obligations of historical debt; and

Citation: Nwana, Amaka P. & Nwana, Edith N. "Interrogating a Postcolonial Ethics of Peaceful Coexistence from African Literature". *Journal of People and Worldviews (JPW),* 2026: pp52-62.

Gqola's *Rape: A South African Nightmare* (2015) confronts gendered moral memory and the limits of formal reconciliation. Together, these texts represent three distinct but philosophically interconnected dimensions of postcolonial African moral experience, and their combined engagement with memory, violence, and coexistence provides the evidential and argumentative foundation for the paper's constructive philosophical claims.

Findings

Diasporic Memory and the Moral Weight of Displacement: Helon Habila's *Travellers*

Helon Habila's *Travellers* is a philosophically restless and morally serious novel whose engagement with African migration across Europe constitutes one of the most sustained contemporary fictional explorations of the relationship between displacement, moral memory, and the possibility of belonging in conditions of radical historical dispossession. Structured as a series of interconnected narratives whose protagonists, Nigerian, Congolese, Cameroonian, and Ugandan migrants navigating the moral and political landscapes of Berlin, Rome, and unnamed European cities, carry the accumulated weight of colonial and postcolonial histories whose consequences European host societies consistently refuse to acknowledge, the novel deploys the formal resources of multiply voiced narrative to construct a philosophically precise account of what diasporic moral memory demands and what its systematic denial costs.

The philosophical significance of *Travellers* begins with Habila's (2019) account of memory as an inescapable moral condition rather than a voluntary psychological act. His characters do not choose to remember the colonial histories, civil war devastations, and postcolonial governance failures that produced their displacement; they are constituted by those memories in ways that shape every moral choice, relational bond, and aspiration toward belonging that their diasporic lives make possible or foreclose. This account of memory as moral constitution instantiates Ricoeur's (2004) argument that narrative memory is the medium of moral identity, demonstrating through the specific lives of specific displaced persons that the duty of memory is not an externally imposed moral obligation but an internal philosophical condition of the moral selfhood that these characters' lives both enact and interrogate.

Margalit's distinction between thick and thin moral relations illuminates the specific form of moral injury that displacement inflicts on Habila's travellers. The colonial and postcolonial histories that produced their displacement systematically severed the thick moral relations, the communal bonds of shared memory, mutual recognition, and particular obligation through which their moral identities were constituted and sustained. Habila's (2019) narrative demonstrates, with quiet philosophical force, that thin moral recognition without thick moral engagement constitutes a form of moral impoverishment that no amount of legal protection or humanitarian assistance can adequately address. What these characters most urgently need is not the

Citation: Nwana, Amaka P. & Nwana, Edith N. "Interrogating a Postcolonial Ethics of Peaceful Coexistence from African Literature". *Journal of People and Worldviews (JPW),* 2026: pp52-62.

procedural satisfaction of legal rights but the restoration of the relational conditions of communal belonging through which their full humanity can once again be recognized, sustained, and morally productive, a finding that directly corroborates Ubuntu's communitarian account of moral repair.

Racial Memory, Historical Debt, and the Obligations of Reconciliation: Teju Cole's *Tremor*

Teju Cole's *Tremor* is the most philosophically meditative and intellectually demanding of the three texts examined. Its essayistic narrative form, transatlantic moral landscape, and sustained engagement with the philosophical obligations that accumulated histories of racial and colonial violence place on the present constitute one of the most rigorous fictional explorations of memory and reconciliation in contemporary African literature. Cole's protagonist Tunde, a Nigerian-born photographer and academic living in Cambridge, Massachusetts, whose consciousness moves fluidly between personal reflection, art historical meditation, and unflinching moral reckoning with the specific histories of racial capitalism, colonial dispossession, and cultural extraction, embodies precisely the philosophical condition that the paper's central argument designates as postcolonial reconciliation's most demanding moral challenge: the condition of the person who did not personally perpetrate historical injustice but whose present life is constituted by its benefits and whose moral integrity therefore demands a philosophical accounting that neither innocence nor good intention can discharge.

The philosophical significance of *Tremor* for the paper's reconciliation argument is most immediately visible in Cole's (2023) account of the tremor of historical knowledge, the destabilizing moral recognition that the cultural objects, institutional privileges, and aesthetic pleasures that constitute educated contemporary life are inseparable from histories of violence, extraction, and dispossession whose moral claims on the present cannot be acknowledged without fundamentally unsettling the conditions of one's own existence. This tremor is not merely psychological discomfort but a genuine philosophical crisis, a confrontation with the moral reality that Margalit's (2002) *Ethics of Memory* identifies as the duty against complicit forgetting: the recognition that the comfortable amnesia through which educated beneficiaries of historical injustice typically manage their moral lives constitutes a form of moral evasion whose philosophical inadequacy the novel refuses to allow its narrator or its reader to sustain.

Ricoeur's (2004) concept of difficult forgiveness illuminates the specific moral challenge that *Tremor* poses: that genuine forgiveness is neither the easy absolution of amnesia nor the impossible demand of unconditional moral clarity, but a philosophically arduous process of honest reckoning whose completion requires the acknowledgment of specific wrongs, the recognition of specific victims, and the moral courage to sustain the discomfort of historical accountability. Tunde's moral recovery, partial, provisional, and

Citation: Nwana, Amaka P. & Nwana, Edith N. "Interrogating a Postcolonial Ethics of Peaceful Coexistence from African Literature". *Journal of People and Worldviews (JPW),* 2026: pp52-62.

philosophically honest in its incompleteness, is achieved not through solitary moral reckoning but through the relational bonds of artistic community, intellectual friendship, and cross-cultural recognition whose cultivation constitutes the novel's most philosophically affirmative moral gesture.

Gendered Memory, Violence, and the Moral Limits of Reconciliation: Pumla Dineo Gqola

Pumla Dineo Gqola's *Rape: A South African Nightmare* occupies a philosophically distinctive position among the three texts this paper examines. It is neither a novel in the conventional sense nor a work of purely academic scholarship; it is a work of feminist cultural philosophy that deploys narrative analysis, theoretical argument, and unflinching moral testimony simultaneously to expose what Gqola designates the spectacular nature of rape culture in post-apartheid South Africa, the systematic normalization of sexual violence as a mechanism of social control whose persistence within and beyond the formal reconciliation process constitutes one of the most philosophically devastating indictments of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's moral adequacy available in contemporary South African intellectual life.

Gqola's (2015) central philosophical argument is direct and morally consequential: that post-apartheid South Africa's celebrated reconciliation process achieved its political settlements and moral narratives by systematically rendering the specific suffering of women philosophically invisible within the architecture of national healing. Margalit's (2002) duty against moral forgetting provides the most philosophically precise normative framework for evaluating Gqola's indictment; the systematic exclusion of gendered violence from the moral memory of post-apartheid reconciliation constitutes precisely the form of morally impermissible forgetting that Margalit identifies, a community's complicity in the erasure of its most vulnerable members' suffering from the collective moral record that reconciliation is supposed to construct and sustain.

Gqola (2015) further argues that genuine peaceful coexistence in post-apartheid South Africa is philosophically impossible as long as the bodies and moral claims of women remain structurally excluded from the relational web of communal recognition and mutual accountability that Ubuntu's philosophy of moral repair demands. This is a philosophically precise and politically courageous extension of the Ubuntu reconciliation framework, one that insists with moral urgency that neither comfortable communitarian philosophy nor procedural transitional justice can evade, that genuine relational moral repair requires the active inclusion of gendered moral claims within the community of reconciliation rather than their deferral to a subsequent political moment that post-apartheid governance has shown no philosophical commitment to honor.

Discussion

The three literary philosophical analyses elaborated in the preceding section converge on a conclusion of

considerable philosophical significance. Habila's diasporic moral memory, Cole's transatlantic historical reckoning, and Gqola's feminist indictment of reconciliation's gendered blind spots together demonstrate that postcolonial African literature does not merely illustrate existing philosophical frameworks of memory and reconciliation but actively exposes their structural limitations and demands their philosophical transformation. The framework this paper designates postcolonial reconciliation ethics is the constructive philosophical response to that demand, grounded in three principles whose derivation from the preceding analyses is direct and argumentatively precise.

The first principle is obligatory memory, the philosophical claim, grounded in Ricoeur's duty of memory and Margalit's ethics of thick moral relations and instantiated across all three texts, that communities emerging from histories of collective violence bear unconditional moral obligations to remember honestly, completely, and with specific attention to those whose suffering dominant narratives of reconciliation have most systematically marginalized. Obligatory memory goes beyond the procedural requirements of truth commission testimony to demand what Ngugi (2018) designates the decolonization of memory itself, the recovery of the philosophical authority to remember on one's own moral terms rather than within the epistemological frameworks of the dominant political culture. This principle is most vividly instantiated in Habila's *Travellers*, where the moral identities of displaced African migrants are constituted by colonial and postcolonial memories that European host societies persistently refuse to acknowledge, and whose moral integrity requires the honest acknowledgment of those memories rather than their displacement into the convenient amnesia of humanitarian abstraction.

The second principle is relational moral repair, the philosophical claim, grounded in Ubuntu's communitarian ontology and Metz's African moral theory, that genuine reconciliation demands the active restoration of the relational bonds of mutual recognition, communal care, and shared moral responsibility whose disruption by historical violence constitutes the deepest dimension of the moral injury that reconciliation is obligated to address. Relational moral repair insists that the work of reconciliation is complete not when legal processes have been satisfied but when the relational conditions of genuine communal flourishing have been substantively restored across the full range of the community's membership. Cole's *Tremor* demonstrates this principle with particular philosophical force, showing that Tunde's moral recovery is achieved not through solitary intellectual reckoning but through the cultivation of relational bonds of artistic community and cross-cultural recognition that instantiate Ubuntu's communitarian account of what genuine moral repair requires.

The third principle is coexistence across difference, the philosophical claim, grounded in Gqola's feminist Ubuntu critique and Fanon's account of the ontological dimensions of colonial

Citation: Nwana, Amaka P. & Nwana, Edith N. "Interrogating a Postcolonial Ethics of Peaceful Coexistence from African Literature". *Journal of People and Worldviews (JPW),* 2026: pp52-62.

violence, that genuine peaceful coexistence demands the active philosophical inclusion of all moral claims, including those of women, the displaced, and the historically silenced, within the architecture of postcolonial reconciliation. Coexistence across difference is the most politically demanding of the three principles precisely because it insists that no reconciliation is philosophically genuine that purchases communal harmony at the cost of the moral invisibility of its most vulnerable members. Gqola's text provides the most philosophically rigorous demonstration of this principle, showing that post-apartheid South Africa's celebrated reconciliation process produced precisely this morally impermissible outcome when it systematically excluded gendered violence from the moral architecture of national healing.

These three principles constitute a philosophically coherent and politically rigorous framework for postcolonial reconciliation whose contribution to the existing literature on transitional justice and memory ethics is both constructive and critical. Constructively, postcolonial reconciliation ethics provides a systematic philosophical framework that integrates the normative resources of Western memory philosophy with the moral traditions of African communitarian ethics and the political urgency of postcolonial moral thought. Critically, it exposes the structural limitations of existing frameworks that conceptualize reconciliation as a procedural arrangement between discrete moral agents while systematically undervaluing the communal, relational, and gendered dimensions of moral injury and moral repair that the three literary texts examined in this paper place at the philosophical center of their moral arguments.

The implications of this framework for Sustainable Development Goal 16 on peace, justice, and strong institutions are direct and demanding. The institutional frameworks through which postcolonial societies pursue peace and justice must be philosophically grounded in the specific moral traditions, narrative resources, and communal obligations of the communities they claim to serve. The framework also resonates with SDG 17 on partnerships for the goals, insisting that genuinely transformative global partnerships must engage the epistemological and moral resources of postcolonial communities rather than presenting Global North frameworks as universally applicable solutions. Postcolonial reconciliation ethics insists that the epistemic justice required for sustainable peace demands not merely institutional inclusion but the fundamental reorganization of the philosophical premises on which reconciliation processes are built.

Conclusion

Postcolonial African literature is not a peripheral contribution to the global philosophical conversation about memory, reconciliation, and peaceful coexistence. It is one of its most philosophically necessary and morally urgent voices, one whose engagement with the specific moral realities of colonial violence, diasporic displacement, racial historical debt, and gendered oppression produces forms of

Citation: Nwana, Amaka P. & Nwana, Edith N. "Interrogating a Postcolonial Ethics of Peaceful Coexistence from African Literature". *Journal of People and Worldviews (JPW),* 2026: pp52-62.

ethical knowledge that neither Western transitional justice frameworks nor abstract philosophical argument can generate with equivalent depth, cultural specificity, and moral honesty. This paper has argued that Helon Habila's *Travellers*, Teju Cole's *Tremor*, and Pumla Dineo Gqola's *Rape: A South African Nightmare* together constitute a philosophically distinctive moral laboratory for memory and reconciliation, one whose narrative engagements with the most urgent moral questions of the postcolonial African present both instantiate and productively challenge the philosophical frameworks of Ricoeur, Margalit, Ubuntu communitarian ethics, and postcolonial moral thought through which the paper has read them.

Postcolonial reconciliation ethics, as this paper has developed it, is not a regional philosophical project. Its three foundational principles, obligatory memory, relational moral repair, and coexistence across difference, address moral challenges whose philosophical significance extends well beyond the African postcolonial context to encompass every society whose present is constituted by histories of collective violence it has not yet found the philosophical courage or institutional commitment to honestly acknowledge and adequately repair. Its implications for SDG 16 on peace, justice, and strong institutions and SDG 17 on partnerships for the goals are direct and demanding: that the institutional frameworks and global partnerships through which postcolonial societies pursue peace and justice must be philosophically grounded in the specific moral traditions, narrative resources, and communal obligations of the communities they claim to serve, not in the epistemological assumptions of the Global North whose philosophical adequacy the postcolonial African literary tradition has, across decades of morally serious and intellectually rigorous narrative production, persistently and persuasively questioned.

References

Achebe, C. (2016). *The education of a British-protected child*: Essays. Penguin Books.

Cole, T. (2023). *Tremor*. Faber and Faber.

Fanon, F. (2021). *The wretched of the earth* (R. Philcox, Trans.). Grove Press.

Gqola, P. D. (2015). *Rape: A South African nightmare*. MF Books Joburg.

Habila, H. (2019). *Travellers*. W. W. Norton and Company.

Leebaw, B. (2021). *Judging state-sponsored violence, imagining political change*. Cambridge University Press.

Margalit, A. (2002). *The ethics of memory*. Harvard University Press.

Metz, T. (2017). *A relational moral theory*: *African ethics* in and beyond the continent. Oxford University Press.

Ngugi wa Thiong'o. (2018). *Wrestling with the devil*: A prison memoir. Penguin Books.

Ramose, M. B. (2015). Ubuntu as the foundation for an African jurisprudence. In M. Murove (Ed.), *African ethics*: An anthology of comparative and applied ethics (pp. 230-243). University of KwaZulu-Natal Press.

Ricoeur, P. (2004). *Memory, history, forgetting* (K. Blamey & D. Pellauer, Trans.). University of Chicago Press.

Citation: Nwana, Amaka P. & Nwana, Edith N. "Interrogating a Postcolonial Ethics of Peaceful Coexistence from African Literature". *Journal of People and Worldviews (JPW),* 2026: pp52-62.