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**Summary Report for IRIS Summer Graduate Student Fieldwork Award, 2020**

I am grateful for the IRIS grant that allowed me to conduct archival research in Nairobi, Kenya. In 2021, I traveled to my field site and spent the months of June to August at the Kenya National Archives, where I gained access to numerous documents pertaining to the Mau Mau Revolution. The Mau Mau Revolution is an important part of my dissertation research, which examines theater that engages the afterlives of revolutions in Africa and the Caribbean using the body as a category of analysis. Despite the fact that the Mau Mau is one of Africa's most studied events, few scholars have looked into the concept of the body as a category for understanding the event's capacity to act as a rememorative, demonstrative, and prognostic sign that marks progress in contemporary Kenya. The materials I gathered will allow me to complete a dissertation chapter on how the "Mau Mau body" is a source of contention, having been appropriated by colonial officers and Africans to serve different purposes. Whereas the colonial archive portrays this body as animalistic, savage, psychologically disturbed, and murderous, the documents I gathered—which include accounts by detained Africans—show how Africans resisted these labels and sought to affirm their humanity by exposing contradictions in colonial policies and practices. In modern Kenya, the Mau Mau body has become a focal point for scholars debating Kenya's pasts and futures. For example, the creative works I examine in my dissertation depict a desire for a parrhesiatic body, an unbreakable body capable of speaking truth.

The IRIS grant enabled me to collect detainees' letters to British colonial officers, the Crown, and local newspapers. I also had access to government records from the war as well as the policy frameworks put in place by the British government to put a stop to the Mau Mau Revolution. These documents, including parliamentary Hansard reports, are critical in that they

allow us to hear the voices of various Mau Mau Revolution actors. My project engages the Mau Mau Revolution's afterlives by putting the archive in conversation with historical theater. My research also looks into how historical drama as a medium that grapples with what Eduard Glissant describes as “a prophetic vision of the past,” might be used to articulate our present even though it is based on a reconstructed past and past futures that may be out of sync with the contemporary world. I argue that a meaningful interrogation of the postcolony—a site littered with ruins, artifacts, material objects, and absences that give testimonies and bear witness to incomplete revolutions—must begin with interrogating the assumptions anti-colonial dramatists made about the present. As David Scott underscores in *Conscripts of Modernity*, “the questions to which the anti-colonial nationalists addressed themselves—questions about their presents and their connection to their pasts and their hoped-for futures—are not the same ones that organize our contemporary concerns and preoccupations.” For instance, if African dramatists reflect a desire to assert the authority and, therefore, the political significance of an African perspective on the colonial and postcolonial era, how do theater practitioners deal with the contradiction of advancing such historical claims through fiction? My project seeks to engage these questions as a departure for articulating new ones that speak to our present and possible futures. I attempt to mediate the “theory of the body” in the Mau Mau historiography and the one that emerges from historical drama.