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Beauty in violence: (Re) imagining violence and trauma in Yvonne Vera's *Without a Name* and *Under the Tongue*

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ABSTRACT

This research report is a study of how Yvonne Vera re-imagines violence and trauma by creating alternative ways to narrate the traumatic experiences of women, creating both new spaces for them to speak and highlighting possibilities of healing. This study will focus on two of Yvonne Vera's texts *Under the Tongue* and *Without a Name* and how they form part of lineage in black women's writing that congregates around beautiful expression in order to capture black women's experience. Both texts deal with particularly difficult forms of violence: incest, rape, and infanticide. It is the contention of this study that while violent and traumatic experiences are difficult to speak of and narrate Vera manages to do so in a manner that maintains the dignity of her characters. This research therefore aims to highlight that through the use of aesthetics and transcending the limitations of ordinary language and physical space, Vera's characters occupy new spaces in which to express themselves. Vera contributes to the discourse on trauma and re-imagines violence and trauma, encouraging us to find new perspectives on both while creatively forming new ways of speaking to violence within African literary studies, ways that continue to be reflected in contemporary women's writing and poetry.