Global Mimesis: The Ethics of World Literature after Auerbach

Madigan Keegan Haley
Minneapolis, Minnesota

Master 2, Université de Paris-7, 2007
BA, University of Wisconsin-Madison, 2005

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Department of English

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Abstract

This project argues that the global in the literary is best approached not as a stable content, imposed ideology, or economic byproduct, but rather as an ethos, which has been at stake and emerging over the past half century in literature from around the world. Reading across genres and continents, it shows how writers such as Samuel Beckett, Nuruddin Farah, J. M. Coetzee, Zoë Wicomb, W. G. Sebald, Orhan Pamuk, Teju Cole, and Naomi Wallace have used literary means to imagine collective life beyond the nation, in the process reconceiving literature's ethical forms (Bildung, allegory, the sentimental). Attending to how these works refigure the horizon and nature of the common at specific historical junctures, this study proposes a conception of the global as emergent within mimesis and reorients ethics away from the encounter with radical alterity toward the performative ways in which texts and objects contour publicity, give exemplary shape to actions and events, and relate audiences to seemingly distant worlds. In this way, "Global Mimesis: The Ethics of World Literature after Auerbach" addresses contemporary world literature's ability to figure "a common life" not as a process of cultural and political standardization—as Erich Auerbach influentially argued in *Mimesis* (1946)—but rather as its ethical potential.

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Introduction

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World/Globe

Halfway through Teju Cole's 2011 novel *Open City*, the narrator, a Nigerian transplant to the United States, travels from his home in Manhattan to Brussels, ostensibly as a tourist. On the plane Julius speaks with a Belgian doctor who lived through the period when Brussels was an "open city," having surrendered to the Germans in order to avoid bombardment. When shortly thereafter Julius enters the city for the first time, its landscape opens out into an imagined vista of the far-flung characters who appear elsewhere in Cole's narrative:

> I looked outside the window, in my mind's eye, I began to rove into the landscape, recalling my overnight conversation with Dr. Maillotte. I saw her at fifteen, in September 1944, sitting on a rampart in the Brussels sun, delirious with happiness at the invaders' retreat. I saw Junichiro Saito on the same day, aged thirty-one or thirty-two, unhappy, in internment, in an arid room in a fenced compound in Idaho, far away from his books. Out there on that day, also, were all four of my own grandparents: the Nigerians, the Germans [...] I saw them all, even the ones I had never seen in real life, saw all of them in the middle of that day in September sixty-two years ago, with their eyes open as if shut, mercifully seeing nothing of the brutal half-century ahead and, better yet, hardly anything at all of all that was happening in their world, the corpse-filled cities, camps, beaches, and fields, the unspeakable worldwide disorder of that very moment. (2011, 96)

Cole here draws together Asia and America, Europe and Africa in a fictional moment that holds freedom alongside unfreedom, the emerging postwar alongside the contemporary world. For September 1944 recalls September 2001, the event around which much of Cole's novel turns, just as Brussels's status as an "open city" ironically recalls the attacks on the World Trade Center.

In this way, Julius's imagined midcentury landscape of people, their "eyes open as if shut," references a similar condition in our own time. Cole's novel represents this contemporary landscape through reflections that range from Nigerians in New York to the situation of North Africans in Europe. The latter is addressed by Farouq, a Moroccan student of literary theory who works at a Belgian "talk shop," a hub, which he offers at one point as a figure for the world at large (113). Farouq speaks to Julius of Paul de Man's notion of an insight that is blindness, and "how what seems blind can open up possibilities" (127)—a dynamic that repeats the play of open and shut eyes in the above-quoted passage. So if Cole's title ironically places Brussels alongside New York, in a deeper sense it references a new world whose apparent openness masks entrapment, yet whose blind spots bear the potential for illumination. In this way, the title *Open City* is also a password or imperative, marking the work as an attempt to manifest a polis where one is absent.

How should we describe such a work and its ethical-political vision? While *Open City* was a finalist for the National Book Critics Circle Award and winner of the Pen/Hemingway Award, its purview extends well beyond American culture, just as the transnational designation "Nigerian-American" does not capture the scale at which passages, like the above, conceive of human history and dwelling. In what

follows, I will describe works such as *Open City* as global, arguing that this status is predicated on the way in which they give ethical form to a notion of globality. While this might seem a predictable assertion at a time when the word "global" has assumed a frenetic adjectival life that renders it at once both reassuring and insipid, my claim rests upon more pointed conclusions: first, that we do not yet know what the global is; and, second, that signal writers from around the world, such as Samuel Beckett, Nuruddin Farah, J.M. Coetzee, W.G. Sebald, Orhan Pamuk, and Naomi Wallace, have endeavored over the past half century to imagine the global in distinctly ethical terms. In other words, my dissertation attempts to conceive of the global as a domain and product of modern and contemporary ethical culture, an idea which not only requires us to rethink the global, but also core ideas about the place of ethics and the work of literature.

If the increasing ubiquity of global talk over the past decades has endowed the word with the aura of meaning both everything and nothing, it has been given a specific content in recent humanities criticism and largely viewed with suspicion. In his 2006 book *Reading the Global*, Sanjay Krishnan argues that the global is best understood as a perspective rather than an empirical process: a "mode of thematization or a way of bringing the world into view" (2006, 1, 4). For Krishnan, the perspective of the global "derives from the conceit that it transcends perspective," and this way of viewing the world arises through British imperialism and is continuous with contemporary neoliberalism. Thus the global, in the present, becomes synonymous with a particular economic process of so-called globalization that predicates a new worldwide prosperity, and even "community," on free

markets. Krishnan advocates, then, a mode of critical reading that can "interrupt the global perspective," a correlative to Mariano Siskind's recent claim that the modern novel has been complicit in shaping such a perspective. Siskind calls this the "novelization of the global," whereby the novel constructs images of a "globalized world" of bourgeois production (2010, 338). The complement to this, in Siskind's account, is the "globalization of the novel," which describes the spread of the historically European genre to the world at large through the same economic-imperial processes. Even Pheng Cheah, who cogently approaches such a "globalization of the novel" as the conduit for a liberatory postcolonial nationalism (2003) and the means of inscribing peoples of the global South within the contemporary history of globalization (2008), insists on a distinction whereby "world" names a cosmopolitan mode of relating and being-with while the globe signifies "the totality produced by processes of globalization [...] a bounded object or entity in Mercatorian space" whose cultural mechanism and endpoint is "mass cultural homogenization" (34).

These are powerful critiques of what I will call neoliberal globalization, the urgency of which, to my mind, is beyond question. Yet do we want to collapse the meaning of the global into this specific, if widespread, ideological and economic process? This is more than a strategic question about the global as a term currently "at stake." Rather it addresses the global as one of the possible names of an emergent historical era whose potential we have perhaps not yet fully seen. In more concrete terms, the imaginative perspective adopted by Julius in the above-quoted passage, Farouq's figure of the worldwide talk shop, Julius's "touristic" travels, and

the very form of Cole's novel—reworking, as it does, that of W.G. Sebald's prose fiction—all seem related to a globality that is both little understood but increasingly preunderstood as compromised. While the reasons for this are overdetermined, such a view of the global arises—explicitly in Krishnan's work, implicitly in Cheah's—from a Heideggerian distinction between the organicism of worlds over against the artificiality of "global" or "techno-scientific" civilization. Saying such a distinction derives in part from Heidegger is not at all an attempt to dismiss it "by association," as it were, or necessarily discount it outright, but rather names its source in order to address it (which I will do in more detail in the second chapter).

This distinction between world and globe subtly carries over into influential accounts of literature that are much more sanguine about worldwide cultural circulation. David Damrosch, for example, has reinvigorated the once dusty category of "world literature" by applying it to all works that "circulate beyond their culture of origin, either in translation or in their original language" (2003, 4). While Damrosch makes the compelling point that such works "gain in translation" (282), his use of world, like Cheah's, requires a bête noir: "I mean to distinguish world literature from a notional 'global literature' that might be read solely in airline terminals, unaffected by any specific context whatever. The world's literature is not yet sold by Borders Books Without Borders" (25). While Damrosch is right to critique this specific "notion" of global literature, which is certainly not my own, the adjective "global" takes on a more ambivalent life in the rest of his influential book, when he asserts, for example, that "English literature is now as much a global as a national phenomenon" or when he suggests that "there can be no more global work,

conceptually speaking, than *Finnegans Wake*" (230, 289). Despite the richness and force of Damrosch's argument, these uses of "global" are never developed, although they gesture at a situation when an enlarged, supranational sphere of circulation becomes intertwined with the language or ontology of the work.

When Damrosch does consider a work that takes the writing of world literature as its theme, and thus "openly anticipates its international circulation after publication" (260, 265), his analysis of Milorad Pavić's *Dictionary of the Khazars* (1984) serves as a chilling object lesson. Damrosch shows how its "runaway success around the globe"—predicated, he suggests, on its formalism and apparent apoliticism—masked a Serbian nationalist content with which it "helped usher in the death it most longed for, the destruction of a multiethnic Yugoslavia" (274). While Damrosch's point that all works are shaped by their origins is well taken, the implicit juxtaposition between an international sphere that is apolitical and formalist against a national one that is ethical and political reproduces, with a different valency, Pascale Casanova's arguments about the literary autonomy of what she calls "the world republic of letters" (2004) (discussed in detail in my first chapter). And when "global literature" is taken up and explicitly explored as a theoretical category, as in Alexander Beecroft's recent typology of historical forms of literary circulation, its legitimate existence as a sphere of circulation arises through its insulation from any immanent global content—the assurance that "global literatures continue to represent themselves as systems of national literatures" (2008, 98).

While the works I examine could be described as world or global literature, according to Damrosch's and Beecroft's uses of these terms, they distinguish themselves by giving shape to a conception of the global that is emergent within the work. This claim is not the same as the idea of a work that represents processes of globalization, neoliberal or other (Jay 2010), or that represents various forms of cosmopolitanism, as critics such as Berthold Schoene (2010) and Rebecca Walkowitz (2007) have explored. Yet my aim is not to cordon off the global work from either of these in the name of an impossible conceptual purity. All the authors I consider are deeply concerned with the social and political transformations over the past half-century that fall under the name globalization, and many hold commitments or explore themes that could be described as cosmopolitan. Yet the texts and moments that are most crucial to my project—a man euthanizing a dog in rural South Africa, a museum based on the everyday life of an Istanbul neighborhood—are not fully legible within the sociological terms of globalization or the philosophical tradition of cosmopolitanism. So while the transhistorical spirit of cosmopolitanism certainly inspires my project, the works I examine are concerned with problems and dynamics specific to their historical era, inviting us to conceive of them as global works. This invitation is rarely explicit, since the global is not so much named in these works as manifested.

The Ethics of World Literature after Auerbach

Both my argument for a conception of the global as emergent within the work as well as the critical concern that this entails cultural homogenization can be traced back to the seminal work of Erich Auerbach. "Global Mimesis" thus returns to Auerbach and conceives of him as one of the figures in Cole's imagined landscape of 1944, looking to the future with unrivaled insight yet with spots of blindness that can become sites of illumination.

Writing in Istanbul during World War II, Auerbach felt able to survey the history of Western representation, and the future of world literature, from an "incomparable historical vantage point" (2003, 553). The view he leaves the reader in "The Brown Stocking," the last chapter of his magisterial *Mimesis* (1946; 1953), is no simple Pisgah sight of Palestine, but rather deeply conflicted. The common bedrock of a European tradition has eroded, giving way to "ruthlessly subjectivist perspectives" that can be traced back to the fiction of Gustave Flaubert (551). Yet the apotheosis of this subjectivism in the novels of Virginia Woolf, in which the individual and the moment are supposedly freed from the controversies of society, politics, and history, paves the way for a "common life" on earth. Auerbach writes: "The more [the moment] is exploited, the more the elementary things which our lives have in common come to light. The more numerous, varied, and simple the people are who appear as subjects of such random moments, the more effectively must what they have in common shine forth." If commonality emerges in such moments, however, modern mimesis simultaneously reveals how "the differences

between men's ways of life and forms of thought have already lessened." "There are no longer even exotic peoples," Auerbach surprisingly continues, "Beneath the conflicts, and also through them, an economic and cultural leveling process is taking place. It is still a long way to a common life of mankind on earth, but the goal begins to be visible. And it is most concretely visible now in the unprejudiced, precise, interior and exterior representation of the random moment in the lives of different people" (552).

On the one hand, Auerbach envisions a coming world literature—no longer restricted to Europe and America—which will make manifest "a common life of mankind on earth." On the other hand, this common life will be purchased through an "economic and cultural leveling process" to which this new world literature will contribute. So when we read "The Brown Stocking" alongside Auerbach's later essay "Philology and *Weltliteratur*" (1952; 1969), written from the postwar United States, a powerful dialectic emerges between the practice of modern mimesis and the field of world literature—the synthesis of which is narrated as tragedy. Here Auerbach redescribes this "leveling process" as a "standardization" to be wrought by Cold War politics. Should the world—specifically the "Third World"—survive the conflict between and the imposition of either American (capitalist) or Russian (socialist) cultural-political forms, "then man will have to accustom himself to existence in a standardized world, to a single literary culture, only a few literary languages, and perhaps even a single literary language. And herewith the notion of *Weltliteratur* would be at once realized and destroyed" (1969, 3). What Damrosch dismisses as a "notional" global literature, Auerbach addresses here head on,

considering it as a bleak possibility not a category error. Auerbach thus sees the potential for a new kind of world literature to manifest the common, yet simultaneously understands this as a tragedy for the world's diverse cultures.

The cultural loss that Auerbach identifies here has been and will continue to be real—the disappearance of indigenous or traditional ways of life that philosopher Jonathan Lear terms "cultural devastation" and which extends, in altered form, into an even more furious devastation of the nonhuman world. Indeed, the process that Auerbach called "standardization" was described in ostensibly opposite terms, at exactly the same moment, by Claude Lévi-Strauss as one of "disintegration" leading to "entropy": "Every verbal exchange, every line printed, establishes communication between people, thus creating an evenness of level, where before there was an information gap and consequently a greater degree of organization. Anthropology could with advantage be changed into 'entropology,' as the name of the discipline concerned with the study of the highest manifestations of this process of disintegration" (1992, 413-14). Standardization and disintegration are two sides of the same coin, it seems, rendering "a common life" that is increasingly devoid of the "living" organization of community.

Acknowledging the real dangers and tragic dimensions of this process does not preclude us from trying to imagine the common, and a common life, in markedly different terms. To take one resonant example, Immanuel Kant, in both "Toward Perpetual Peace" and *The Metaphysics of Morals*, argued for the cosmopolitan right of the visitor by first imagining the world as a globe (*globus terraqueus*) and deriving from its spherical, and thus limited, extent the idea that "all peoples

originally stand in a community of the land" (2006, 146). While Kant stressed that this original "common possession" should not underwrite a *communio* in the present, the "original compact," Hannah Arendt would argue, lives on in his idea of a "community among the peoples of the earth," which allows "the violation of right at any *one* place on the earth to be felt in *all* places" (1982, 84). That Kant posited such a community immediately after denouncing the "inhospitable" behavior of European nations toward the indigenous peoples of Africa, America, and Asia indicates that while the common can be another name for "standardization" or "distintegration," it also can ground an ethos that is opposed to these very processes.

In a similar manner, the works I discuss in my dissertation imagine a dialectic between the common and the global that is different than the one Auerbach foresaw at midcentury—this is indeed their hallmark. For example, the same year *Mimesis* was published in 1946, Samuel Beckett posited the need to rethink "our condition" from the position of a different theater of World War II, a project he would later undertake on the Parisian stage and, as my first chapter shows, which came to inform the Somali writer Nuruddin Farah's vision of the interdependent and dialogic nature of global being. This is not the same process by which, as Auerbach described in a lecture from the early 1940s at Istanbul University, the "Ethiopians of Africa" could become subjects of the modern novel to the degree that the conditions of modernity experienced by a "Parisian doctor" would slowly become reflected in an African environment (qtd. in Konuk 2010, 182). Yet it is in keeping with Auerbach's notion, which rhymes with Kant's, that "as time goes on the life of human beings on earth presents a commonality due, if not due to similarity, to the

fact that an event concerning one individual immediately affects another" (182). While Auerbach would eventually come to codify this as a "standardization" that would allow Third-World peoples to become subjects of the realist novel, matched, as *Mimesis* describes, by the concomitant disintegration of traditional forms in "subjectivist" modern writing, works of global mimesis, on the contrary, approach the common not as ontologically or historically given but rather as something that is opened up performatively through literary form.

This conception of the global work impinges upon recent critical approaches to the form and ethics of literature. Specifically, exploring how literary works open up a conception of the common reinflects the emphasis on otherness in the "ethical turn" in literary studies. Dorothy Hale summarizes how for critics as diverse as Judith Butler and Martha Nussbaum "the ethical value of literature lies in the felt encounter with alterity it brings to the reader" (2009, 899). This idea of presenting or "delivering" others is central to accounts of postcolonial or world literature that crosses borders. In Martha Nussbaum's influential argument, the narrative imagination has a cosmopolitan dimension in that it grants us unique access to other people's lives, thus expanding our own conception of humanity (1997). In two recent books, Shameem Black and David Palumbo-Liu describe the ethics of fiction under globalization in similar terms, yet with nuances that lead in slightly different directions. For Black, border-crossing fiction brings otherness on to "the stage of late twentieth- and early twenty-first-century globalization" (2010, 6), allowing readers to bridge social difference. This "bridging" obtains in the writer's and reader's willingness to imaginatively engage with "significant otherness through

intimate dialogues with specific constructions of the social" (11). If Black offers a corrective to a certain line of postcolonial criticism that completely cordons off the Other from such engagement, Palumbo-Liu posits the "still vital resistance of otherness" to contemporary "claims of commonness" within the humanities and at large (2012, 5). In particular, he casts doubt on supposedly neutral "frames of reference" which offer to disclose "a common 'form' to all *human* beings" (21). In the place of these frames, Palumbo-Liu argues that contemporary "literature engenders a space for imagining our relation to others and thinking through why and how that relation exists, historically, politically, ideologically" (14).

I respond in some detail to Black's and Palumbo-Liu's important arguments in the second chapter, since both center their studies on J.M. Coetzee's fiction. For now, I want to stress that the idea that literature presents us with varying degrees of otherness is to my mind axiomatic—whether the work in question describes life in one's own city or across the planet. (Indeed, the continuous encounter with alterity is one of the fundamental experiences of consciousness.) What is more, the works I examine go to great lengths to imaginatively engage with others (as Black describes) and to explore the historical relations that exist between the peoples and places they take as subjects (as Palumbo-Liu suggests). Yet my project puts emphasis on the other pole in this dialectic, arguing that the ethics of the global work is animated by the manner in which it gives form to the common. This idea of the common is not the same as Nussbaum's delineation of how difference is folded into an enlarged humanity or Palumbo-Liu's account of how fundamental terms like "the body" or "the home" fail to reduce an unruly difference to "sameness." Rather than appeal to

universal categories such as "the human," the works I examine imagine the common as a partial and performative horizon or relation that literature opens up—for example, through figures of likeness (Ch. 2) or sentimental attachments (Ch. 3)—precisely through the formal presentation of particular experience, the otherness of the world.

Conceiving of the ethics of literature through its various historical forms revises the Auerbachian narrative whereby an expanded and triumphant realism would present, seemingly without mediation, the prose of the world to the world. This picture arguably carries over into Nussbaum's conception of literary ethics, in which the problem of formal mediation largely falls away as the dialectic between difference and humanity takes center stage. In the works I examine, notions such as the common or humanity do not transcend the forms in which they appear, and when life is seemingly rendered at its barest, formal history and innovation is often most at play. Returning to Cole, we find a concrete example of this in his recent literary project "small fates." Small fates are one-sentence accounts of fictional events in the lives of ordinary Nigerians—for instance, "In Ikotun, Mrs Ojo, who was terrified of armed robbers, died in her barricaded home, of smoke inhalation"; or "A satellite built by Nigerian engineers, the first such, will be launched into space in July." In Cole's words, these short texts "bring news of a Nigerian modernity, full of conflict, tragedies, and narrow escapes" ("Small Fates"), a formulation which recalls Auerbach's apotheosis of world realism. Yet Cole goes to great lengths to describe the formal complexity of each seemingly self-evident pieces of news. Inspired by items in Nigerian online newspapers, Cole traces his generic innovation to the

French *fait divers*. Cole felt the French form, and its modernist reinvention, capable of "migrating" to a new context and mode of mediation: his posting of the sentences via Twitter. The fate in "small fate" thus pays homage to the French *fait*, at the same time as it comments on the uncertain afterlife each small story receives through remediation—fate as retweet. The same formal complexity internally shapes each item, the irony, "meaningless symmetry," and koanlike quality of which Cole stresses: "Each tells a truth, a whole truth, but never the whole truth." So if Cole imagines small fates as bringing Lagos and Abuja into relation with Paris and New York, our ability to imagine a larger fate, or any resulting commonality, is inseparable from the specific manner in which each small one appears.

While Cole's "small fates" are a stunning example of generic novelty, the foci that organize my dissertation are forms that have been considered central to the ethical quality of modern genres and literature, namely Bildung, allegory, and sentiment. Each of these terms is slippery and multivalent: Bildung evokes a particular kind of writing (the bildungsroman) as well as an expansive model for understanding the place of humanistic culture within modernity; allegory refers to a form of Christian hermeneutics (allegoresis) no less than a procedure for finding the representative (typos/type) within modern society; and the sentimental can describe a cultural period in the latter half of the eighteenth century, a mode of melodramatic mass culture, or a kind of writing caught up with mobility and spectatorship. My project pursues these entanglements between modes of writing and reading, the period specific and its crystallization into malleable and mobile generic forms. I describe these as ethical forms, because each comes to name a

specific and recognizable *way* of writing that brings the myriad otherness of the world "in common"—variously conceived. Literary ethics, in this sense, does not guarantee good action in life or infinite responsibility toward the text. Rather it describes the dialectic whereby the horizon of a being in common, an ethos, is opened up through writing and reading, however provisionally. Genres and modes persist, in part, through the vital ways in which their formal resources negotiate this dialectic at specific historical moments. So Bildung is not so much a transhistorical ethical category, but rather a historical form that is reactivated and reimagined at different times, such as Paris in 1948, when the idea of "rising to humanity" becomes newly urgent and problematic, or in Chandigarh in 1968, when national culture suddenly asserts itself as a sphere of development. Approaching a Somali novel, then, through the ethical form of Bildung rather than literary realism (as Auerbach understood the latter) reveals how what is at stake in the work might not simply be the otherness of individuals but rather the horizon of collective being.

Ethical forms are always sites of negotiation and innovation, continuities as well as ruptures, and my primary concern is how writers from around the world *reimagine* them in order to give shape to the global. This emphasis on the creative adaptation of literary modes and their ethical forms departs from certain postmodern and postcolonial approaches to culture, which understand literary forms as *ratios* conveying sedimented and hegemonic power structures and, in turn, predicate the value of works on their radical subversions. And while I very loosely follow Franco Moretti's picture of generic dissemination according to which form is maintained during the accommodation of local "voices" (2011), my focus falls on

how within the relative coherence of, say, sentimental spectatorship, the significant negotiation that takes place as Pamuk reimagines Schiller is the source of the globality of the former's work—not the form's migration as such. So when Farah writes the first Somali novel or Pamuk explores the small museum as genre, I take them to be neither passively receiving "Western" culture nor actively dismantling it, but rather engaging with it self-consciously for specific ends.

That my analysis focuses on genres, such as the novel, that are generally seen to originate in the West is partially due to the limits of my own background and education. The ethical forms I discuss by no means constitute an exhaustive catalogue, and one could convincingly undertake a similar analysis by taking up a poetic form such as the ghazal. What is more, the ultimately "Western" origin of the novel is at least, in part, something of a fiction in itself, and whether one chooses to begin narrating that story from Menippean satire or *Don Quixote*, the idea of the "West" would be as much in question as the genre itself. Yet the novel can also be seen as meriting special consideration due to its status as one of the first worldwide genres, a fact which one cannot, and should not, insulate from the history of European imperialism or American hegemony. And perhaps what ultimately privileges the novel as a pathway to the problem of global culture is the way in which it so clearly raises the specter of "standardization" even when it is most engaged in imagining a commonality opposed to it.

Global Mimesis

An exhaustive account of contemporary literature's ethical forms is no more possible than an attempt to identify one, or even several, dominant modes of global culture. Thus as many critics have noted, Auerbach first among them (1969, 7-10), the kind of synthetic and synoptic project undertaken in *Mimesis* is in many ways a thing of the past. So if my title marks this dissertation as an attempt to consider, in an Auerbachian spirit, signal works that lay beyond his purview, it also contains a mild irony. For these chapters can only be fragments that refer to a much larger, more complicated whole, the compassing of which is finally impossible.

A similar impossibility obtains in the second and central meaning of my title, which describes a process of representation: the dialectic between the idea of the global and the act of mimesis. Just as global culture cannot be fully accounted for, the global is an impossible or sublime object that cannot ever be fully and finally represented. This understanding of the global is the main thrust of my argument, which aims to dissipate the certainty of dominant accounts of it—as "Mercatorian" map, as neoliberal process, or as free-market "community"—in order to consider it as something that is both myriad and "concretely visible now," in Auerbach's phrase, in literary culture. This is perhaps a weak argument in that it eschews a precise delineation of its object for a reconsideration of its various possible manifestations. Yet its power lies in returning the presiding hieroglyph of our era into the productive domain of the world's cultures. So the global can be found in 1948 in the appearance of those without rights; while in post-Apartheid South Africa it emerges

in a gathering of family and friends; and in contemporary Istanbul it can even be glimpsed in an artificial loaf of bread. The incompleteness and fragmentary quality of each of the above is evident; yet each opens up of a notion of the common that extends beyond the imagined nation. And this, perhaps, is as close as my project comes to a criterion for globality.

These instances of the global arise, as I have argued, through the form giving quality of culture—in other words, through mimesis. By mimesis, as should be clear, I intend neither a transparent reflection of things in the world, what passes, often unfairly, as "naïve realism," nor the negation of that "naïveté" in a writing, which entirely shores itself off from reality, history, or meaning—however these are conceived. Mimesis in my project has more in common with the Aristotelian sense of an active selection, shaping, and presentation of material to draw out its larger or "universal" meanings. In this it follows Rita Felski's recent suggestion that "we can think of literary conventions as devices for articulating truth rather than as obstacles to its discovery" (2008, 84-85). Crucial to my understanding of the word, then, is the idea that mimesis presents, disposes, or opens the world in specific and significant ways, which in turn shape, even if they do not fully determine, practices of reading. Each chapter approaches mimesis from a slightly different angle, finding it in works and procedures that generally do not fit the mold of modern realism. In this catholic approach to the term, I follow Auerbach's own apology for how ultimately defining "realism" would have rendered impossible his entire project (2004, 548). Yet where Auerbach finds an endpoint to the history of mimesis in a generalized and stable world realism, I read the multiplicity of his diachronic

account back into the synchrony of contemporary world literature. So understandings of mimesis that at first appear obsolescent—such as figuralism (Ch. 2) or "representative publicness" (Ch. 1)—reemerge and are reimagined as writers give a global shape to seemingly local matter.

Each term in the word pair "global mimesis" thus draws out and destabilizes the other: the attempt to represent globality leads to formal innovation, bringing the idea of mimesis to its limit; in turn, each figuration of the global revises it as idea and horizon. In this way, global mimesis can be taken to describe a dialectic in the ethical life of culture, which in the widest possible terms contributes to our understanding of the current historical era *as* global. Conceived even at this remove, global mimesis does not describe a total or exclusive conception of ethical culture or one that reaches every corner of the world. Rather, its dialectic takes place alongside local, regional, national, and religious ways of being and acting that in many ways render it barely intelligible. Yet for those who consider the global to be both around and in front of us, grasping its manifestations is particularly urgent today.

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Each chapter of my project is organized around an ethical form—Bildung, allegory, sentiment—which opens up a particular understanding of the global at specific historical junctures. Thus individual chapters bring together authors from different countries, even continents, in an attempt to show how various understandings of ethics and globality nonetheless address related problems and cohere around common forms. In organizing my project in this way, I am not arguing for a rigid typology, essential properties, or one kind of global work. On the contrary, a central

text or author in one chapter often plays a minor role in another, a fact that should highlight the malleability of literary modes and the multiple ways globality can appear without mutual exclusion. What is more, these interrelations, between forms as well as writers, emphasize the degree to which world or global literature is not only a sphere of literary circulation but also an enlivening context of cultural production.

The first chapter takes 1948 as a point of departure for imagining the global, exploring the little-known "mondialiste" activities around the United Nations General Assembly in Paris. These events united figures such as Albert Camus, André Breton, and Richard Wright around the "performances" of Garry Davis, an American activist who renounced his citizenship in the hope of bringing about world government. I read Beckett's seminal work *Waiting for Godot* (1953) in light of and in tension with these activities, showing how Beckett both incorporates the dynamic of rightless appearance into his play while displacing the Humanitätsideal of the mondialistes, and the larger historical moment, for a vision of radical interdependence. The rest of the chapter examines unpublished works by the Somali writer Nuruddin Farah, which make explicit Beckett's implicit vision of globality. In Farah's work, rightless appearance serves to interrupt the nationalist redeployment of Bildung in the postcolonial state. In turn, Farah draws upon Beckettian dialogue as a means of turning national-cultural development toward the horizon of an open-ended global interdependence.

Turning from this expansive timescale and geopolitical context, the second chapter explores the global as inhering in the way seemingly local, or even marginal,

events are opened up for a wider world, a formal process often aligned with allegory. It takes the literature of post-Apartheid as a resonant example, showing how fiction by J.M. Coetzee and Zoë Wicomb deploy a novel conception of figure as the means of mediating the ethos of their transitional moment for an audience not reducible to the new nation. I go on to suggest how a similar notion of figure can be found in works by Teju Cole and W.G. Sebald, which explore, in a different tonal register, the exemplary quality of historical events beyond what Heidegger considered the formative ethical horizon of national culture.

If the second chapter considers the global as it emerges through figuration, my final chapter explores it as a spectatorial position both represented within texts and shaped for an imagined reader. In literature and philosophy, the spectator has long been crucial for positing the ethical quality of fiction and plotting the course of cosmopolitan history. While recent criticism has approached sentiment as sympathy with embodied others, I trace an alternative genealogy of sentimental form—from Schiller to Lukács—that illuminates works by Orhan Pamuk, Sebald, and Coetzee, which conceive of sentimentalism as an orientation to historical loss. Description and spectatorship, condemned by Lukács, emerge in their writing as the means of overcoming this loss in various ways, from recovering a sense of moral agency from history's ruins, taking everyday objects as the source for a new common sense, or even by spreading affects such as dismay.

Finally, my coda follows these ethical formations of the global back to the United States in order to reinterpret the common phrase "the globalization of American culture." In particular, it looks at how playwright Naomi Wallace brings

the political landscape of the Middle East within the purview of "American" culture. Wallace's work reimagines the ethical form of recognition (*anagnorisis*) as both an acknowledgment of our intimate connections with seemingly distant others as well as a moment from which to rethink the nature and boundaries of ethical-political community.

While my project is organized around form, rather than chronology or geography, it does contain a trajectory and attempts to tell a story. The first chapter explores the transformation in the ethical form of Bildung, which in conceiving of culture as the domain of human and national development was arguably the dominant manner in which ethics and literature were coupled in the nineteenth and early twentieth-century. It tracks this transformation at important moments from the late 1940s to the early 1990s, that is, from the immediate postwar period to that which is often said to mark the full-on emergence of "globalization" with the fall of the Soviet Union. While this period has been relatively absent from accounts of global culture, understood as riven between an apolitical Euro-American postmodernism and a hyperpolitical Third-World postcolonialism, I attempt to bring writers from these spheres together, namely Beckett and Farah, finding in them a hidden tradition of the global work.

If Bildung is a two-pronged concept, encompassing, in Karl Morgenstern's seminal definition of the bildungsroman, the dual cultivation of the character as well as the reader (qtd. in Martini 1991, 18), the following chapters can be seen to reconsider each of its aspects: the second chapter explores how characters, actions, and events take on a significant or exemplary quality beyond a national horizon; the

third chapter examines the ethics of the spectator as a position within texts and one in which certain texts "place" the reader. These last chapters are not continuations of the Bildung tradition but rather readdress, along new lines, the problems of representation and reading raised in the first chapter. In addition to this attempt to revise our understanding of the historical trajectory from 1948 to 2013, my project offers an altered geography for the "globalization of culture," placing the cultural origins of the global era in places such as Paris, Chandigarh, and Mogadishu and only in my coda imagining the global as an uncanny visitor to the United States.

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Chapter 1

Bildung: Rightless Appearance and Global Dialogics in Beckett and Farah

In "The Capital of the Ruins," an essay written for Irish radio in 1946, Samuel Beckett described his work as a volunteer "Quartermaster-Interpreter" at the Irish Red Cross hospital in Saint-Lô, France. The city of Saint-Lô was almost completely destroyed during the D-Day landings, and when Beckett arrived there in August 1945 he found a "heap of rubble," a "sea of mud," and a destitute population that "would like the stuff [food and medicine], but don't want us"—a response he qualified as "very reasonable" (2011, 18). While his essay describes in detail the Irish hospital, and the work being done there, Beckett's main interest is not in a heroic narrative of foreign aid, caretaking, and redevelopment—a narrative established in places like Saint-Lô and later applied, in altered form, to the "Third-World"—but rather in the relations between the Irish and the French: "[There are] sensible people who would rather have news of the Norman's semi-circular canals or resistance to sulphur than of his attitude to the Irish bringing gifts [...] And yet the whole enterprise turned from the beginning on the establishing of a relation in the light of which the therapeutic relation faded to the merest of pretexts" (1995, 276-77). This gift relation, emerging from a situation in which "their way of being we, was not our way [...] our way of being they, was not their way," becomes the crux of Beckett's concern.

Beckett does not clearly posit a new "we" that would result from this process. Instead, he proceeds by negating the initial positions of the Irish caretakers and the

French victims, shifting attention away from "our having penicillin when they had none" toward "the occasional glimpse obtained, by us in them, and who knows, by them in us, of that smile [...] deriding, among other things, the having and the not having, the giving and the taking" (277). Beckett dwells, then, on a moment when normal distinctions have been suspended, yet also hesitates to qualify the new relations that emerge. This leads him, in turn, to question the proposed ten-year timeline for the reconstruction of Saint-Lô, indeed, the narrative logic of redevelopment as such: "Provisional is not the term it was," he writes, "in this universe become provisional" (278). If provisional describes everything that transpires at Saint-Lô, the essay extends its time-space, and the new relations provisionality makes apparent, to the universe. Thus Beckett concludes with the possibility "that some of those who were in Saint-Lô will come home realising that they got as good as they gave, that they got indeed what they could hardly give, a vision and sense of a time-honoured conception of humanity in ruins, and perhaps even an inkling of the terms in which our condition is to be thought again. These will have been in France" (279).

These final lines prefigure Beckett's major postwar writing and thus merit close attention. If at St. Lô a "time-honoured" conception of humanity appears in ruins, the terms for new thought also appear in this specific place and time. Significantly, this new thinking is not of "humanity," but rather of our "condition"—a word which implies the contingent and dependent nature of being, rather than an ideal of autonomy, and whose etymology suggests a performative act of declaring together: *con-dīcĕre.* In what follows, I will suggest that Beckett's work, in particular

Waiting for Godot (1953), similarly suspends an ideal of autonomous humanity that emerged in the late 1940s, specifically as the ground for world politics, offering instead a vision of being together conceived in the terms of the Saint-Lô essay—relationally and through the gift. In doing so, I will claim, Beckett gives shape to an ethical notion of globality, and a global work, based around interdependence and dialogue rather than autonomy and development.

These dimensions of Beckett's writing become legible when considered within the Bildung tradition of ethical and aesthetic philosophy. While the term Bildung is notoriously slippery, Hans-Georg Gadamer offers Herder's basic definition of it as a concise point of departure: "rising up to humanity through culture" (2004, 9). In relation to this description, Beckett's aim to rethink our condition from a "humanity in ruins" seems like a concrete negation of Bildung: its ideal of humanity and its narrative of development. Indeed, important discussions of the philosophical and postcolonial aspects of Beckett's fiction have often begun by reading it as a sustained critique of that nebulous subgenre the bildungsroman (Begam 1996; Bixby 2009). Beckett's critique of Bildung, according to these arguments, is directed at an eighteenth-century picture of human development through the enlightened use of reason and, in turn, the contouring of human development to the field of national culture in the nineteenth-century, what Jed Esty has called the "soul-nation allegory" (2012). If "becoming cultured (*Bildung haben*) is enabled by being rooted in a given culture (*Bildung*)" (2006, 40), as Nicholas Davey writes, Beckett's work seems to suspend this conception of culture as ethical process and ground. Nowhere is this more apparent than in *Godot*, which famously

fails to develop and takes place in what critics have come to call a "no man's land." Thus Beckett's work has been taken as the paradigm for a postmodernism that negates literature's received forms and ethical vocation in the name of radical autonomy—a claim I will address over the course of this chapter.

While Beckett's work suspends a certain *Humanitätsideal*, which Martin Swales (1978, 14), among others, has shown to underwrite Bildung's cultural forms, I depart from previous critics by suggesting that Beckett's work is best approached as a negotiation with and intervention in the ethical form of Bildung. If classical Bildung imagines culture as a pathway toward an ideal of humanity or national community, Beckett's work interrupts these itineraries by returning to two of literary Bildung's constitutive forms—appearance and dialogue. To anticipate: Beckett's play presents its audience with "rightless" characters whose status is in question, rather than given, and it emphasizes the "provisional" process of speaking and being together over any individual or social telos. In insisting on the dialogic aspect of Beckett's work, I will develop Davey's understanding of Bildung as a fundamentally dialogical process (2006, 41-45) as well as Dimitri Nikulin's notion of dialogue as a mode that is codified by dialectics but also can "interrupt" such codifications—as well as ideals of "self-reliance, autonomy, and independence" (2010, 103). Specifically, Beckett's deployment of what I call "rightless" appearance in *Godot* interrupts the dialectic whereby culture is imagined as the development of humanity and community along given paths in favor of a more open-ended dialogue. Approaching Beckett's work in these terms brings its philosophical and formal aspects in productive relation with its historicity—both its moment of composition

and later influence. The period from 1947-50 during which Beckett's major phase of writing began was one of the most important moments for cultural-developmental thinking after the Enlightenment, a second phase or apotheosis of Bildung, in which the *Humanitätsideal* and its dialectic with the nation-state was reconceived in global terms.

The reemergence of Bildung as cultural paradigm continued into the subsequent era of decolonization, as critics such as Joseph Slaughter, Jed Esty, and Pheng Cheah have cogently argued, when the project of national-cultural development was taken up in the Third-World. In particular Cheah has shown how postcolonial revolutionary cultures continued the Bildung tradition of German idealism by approaching culture as the grounds for collective freedom (2003, 2). This is manifested in works, Cheah argues, which attempt to "[open up] the people's proper body to ... organization in the nation's genesis and ongoing development" while creating images that form a national public sphere (237). The project of national development is in this way instantiated in the bildungsroman hero's search for freedom and the literary work itself becomes "a means for generating a reading public that can be a renewing basis for the nation-people" (240). The second half of my chapter explores how the Somali writer Nuruddin Farah takes up and reimagines Beckett's work in this era of Third-World Bildung. Looking at previously unpublished texts and letters, I suggest that Farah deploys "rightless" appearance, after Beckett, in order to interrupt the national ontogenesis that Cheah locates in postcolonial culture. In turn, Farah's late writing takes on the form of dialogue in order to reimagine the postcolonial search for radical autonomy as a no less radical

search for interdependence and reciprocity. Reading Farah's late work in the light of his early texts, I argue, puts pressure on recent accounts of postcolonial culture within world literature, which insist upon national culture as the primary means of achieving ethical-political self-possession.

Ranging from 1948 to 1993, this chapter thus revises a picture of postwar culture as divided between the postmodern and postcolonial, both aimed at achieving rival forms of autonomy. It suggests that an alternative notion of global interdependence appears liminally in works by Beckett and Farah. While these works renegotiate the dominant ethical paradigm of modern culture, that is, Bildung, they do not sever the tie between ethics and literature. Instead, they imagine the global work as the means of establishing a new ethical horizon for literary culture.

Representing Humanity in Midcentury Paris

Critical histories of globalization generally describe a transfer of hegemony at midcentury from the waning British Empire to the ascendant United States (Arrighi 1994). This transfer can be refigured, in institutional terms, by the decision made at the first United Nations General Assembly in London (1946) to establish the UN's permanent headquarters in New York (1952). While largely persuasive, this account of global power's trajectory occludes a brief but decisive period when Paris was the institutional center of the world—as much as such a thing is possible. Paris hosted the third session of the United Nations General Assembly in 1948 (September 30th to

December 7th), which culminated on December 10 in the passage of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR)—arguably the UN's signature achievement to this day. Paris had also recently become the home of UNESCO—considered the "'intellectual' agency of the United Nations" ("Introducing UNESCO"). (The UNESCO charter was ratified while Beckett was working in Saint-Lô, and in January of 1948 he applied for work there as a translator—a partial source of livelihood during the lean years when he remained virtually unknown as a writer.) This institutional centrality of Paris was accompanied by an intellectual and cultural ferment during 1948 that made this arguably the most significant period for imagining a global alternative to the Cold War—indeed, globality as such—before the more well-known and consequential Bandung Conference in 1955.

"Paris was then the unofficial capital of the world. All eyes were upon it" (Davis 1961, 44). These are the words of Garry Davis, who was the focal point of many of the global events during 1948 and 1949 and thus will provide an entryway into a cultural landscape from which Beckett's major work emerged. Davis, the son of New York conductor Meyer Davis, had worked as a Broadway actor before serving as a pilot during World War II. From his first mission over Brandenburg, Davis "question[ed] the morality" of bombing the German people (14-15). After the war, he became involved with the United World Federalists in New York, who, as their name suggests, militated for a more robust form of world government than that of the recently formed UN. Yet Davis soon became impatient with the UWF: "The one world—my world—was about to be blown up any day. I wanted a crusade. Not a meeting" (18-19). In his memoir from the period, *My Country is the World*

(1961), Davis describes his decision to leave the UWF, embarking on a more radical course of action:

> The World Federalists were talking when they should have been acting—urging when they should have been personally declaring themselves. The Madisons, Monroes and Jeffersons of this country, I reasoned, had not merely urged a central government for all citizens for the separate states. There had been a point at which America's founding fathers had *declared* it and literally described themselves as "Americans" and not just Virginians or Pennsylvanians [...] I began to see my rôle, my obligation to grasp an idea from the air of advocacy and plant it in the ground of action. I would bring about world government, I reasoned, precisely as all other governments had been brought into being: simply by declaring myself an actual citizen of that government and then behaving like one. (19)

Davis chose Paris as the setting to take on this new role. In May 1948 he began there a series of "dramatic gestures": first, renouncing his American citizenship at the U.S. Embassy in Paris, effectively making him a stateless person; second, camping out at the Palais de Chaillot, declared international territory for the duration of the UN General Assembly; and finally, on November 19, interrupting the General Assembly "in the name of the people of the world not represented here" (qtd. in Baratta 2004, 405). Davis's cause—known as "l'affaire Garry Davis"—became a focus of Parisian intellectual life. Albert Camus, André Breton, and Richard Wright, among other literary figures, involved themselves in Davis's actions, which were, in turn, lauded by Albert Einstein and debated in *Combat* by the likes of Jean-Paul Sartre. In the words of Joseph Baratta, Davis "was the first activist to draw eventually hundreds of thousands ostensibly in favor of world federation" (2004, 406).[i]

The distinction Davis draws above between "talking" about world government and "declaring" it, in addition to the myriad theatrical metaphors that run through his account, make clear the performative nature of his activities. This is exemplified by Davis's renunciation of American citizenship—the ironic culmination of the line of thought that begins when he decides to follow the "founding fathers." For Davis, nationalism was "man's deadliest, self-imposed, restrictive device." Willfully withdrawing from the "co-partnership of citizen and national state," in his eyes, was consonant with declaring himself a world citizen (1961, 10). While this "gesture of renunciation" was predicated upon the conventions of national and international law, its effect was to disrupt, in the hope of eradicating, those same conventions.[ii] Davis quotes one of the many exasperated officials who, when confronted with his case, groaned "According to French law [...] you do not exist [...] You are nothing, nothing, nothing!" Davis's aim, however, was to make his nullity generate an absent space in which he might appear as something. In an official statement from June 1948, he describes this absent space as a vacuum: "I must extend the little sovereignty I possess, as a member of the world community, to the whole community, and to the international vacuum of its government—a vacuum into which the rest of the world must be drawn if it is to survive" ("Statement of Renunciation").

In renouncing the national, inhabiting the extranational, and interrupting the international, Davis's performances were based on a logic of negation. These negations, for Davis and his followers, aimed to generate a new political context by investing Davis with a new status: "I began to realise that I had to divest myself of

still other appurtenances in order to become more fully human" (1961, 27). Thus Robert Sarrazac, one of his principle supporters, suggests to Davis that he build a cabin next to the Palais "to *represent* humanity"; Davis interrupts the General Assembly "in the name of the people of the world not *represented* here"; and the petitions he later hands over to Herbert Evatt, in Davis's words, "*represent* the conscience of humanity" (37, 55, 63; my emphases).

Negating one's particularity (here, nationality) in the name of universality (humanity) is fully in step with the philosophical project of Bildung (Gadamer 2004, 11)—with the important caveat that for Herder, Hegel, and others, national culture was a horizon of universality. If Davis's performances are generally legible, then, within Bildung's "rise to humanity," they nevertheless depend upon a particular sense of "representation," blithely invoked in the above-quoted passages yet never addressed in a sustained fashion by Davis or his followers. In short, how does Davis represent humanity?

We can begin to answer this question by considering arguably the most influential work in which Bildung is given literary form: Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship* (1795-96). Goethe's bildungsroman is actually largely concerned with the theater. In one of the novel's most important sections (Book Five, Chapter Three), Wilhelm writes a letter to his cousin Werner, explaining why he has abandoned the world of business for that of the theater. Wilhelm argues that his long-held "intention to develop myself fully, myself as I am" is only possible on the stage. In support of this idea, he explains that the education of the self in Germany is reserved for the nobility, and Wilhelm's letter goes on to contrast the nobleman

with the burgher. The crucial distinction has to do with the embodied meaning of the nobleman's appearance: "The nobleman tells us everything through the person he presents, but the burgher does not, and should not. A nobleman can and must be someone who *represents by his appearance*" (1989, 175; my emphasis). Since Wilhelm is not a nobleman, but wishes to be a "public person," the theater, he claims, is his only option: "only there can I really move and develop as I wish to. On the stage a cultured human being can appear in the full splendor of his person, just as in the upper classes of society" (175).

The relationship between Wilhelm's "theatrical mission" and Davis's performances becomes clearer when we consider Jürgen Habermas's commentary on Goethe's novel, which begins his seminal *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere* (1962). Wilhelm, Habermas elaborates, "seeks out the stage as a substitute, so to speak, for publicity" (1991, 14). Yet the very nature of publicity is at stake in Wilhelm's mission, since it unfolds at the precise moment when the modern, bourgeois public sphere began to emerge from a previous notion of what is public, whose light, in Habermas's elegant formulation, "Goethe one last time caught the reflection of" (13). What Habermas calls "representative publicness" structured medieval and early modern society: "This *publicness* (or *publicity*) *of representation* was not constituted as a social realm, that is, as a public sphere; rather, it was something like a status attribute" (7). As a status, publicity inhered in, was *represented* by, the nobility, giving a nobleperson's "concrete existence" or "appearance," as Wilhelm stressed, an "aura"—thus entirely distinguishing representative publicness from modern notions of representative government (7).

Public representativeness falls way as national-territorial states arise from the capitalist economy; and civil society, "the genuine domain of private autonomy" (12), comes to stand as a sphere opposed to the state. Thus Wilhelm's letter expresses for Habermas a strange, hybrid moment when "the bourgeois intention in the figure projected as nobleman [permits] the equation of theatrical performance with public representation" (14). So within theatrical Bildung, and Wilhelm's failed mission, a previous notion of representation is preserved and glimmers before the project of development is attached to the nation-state and its public sphere. We might consider Wilhelm's letter, then, as a correlative to the contemporaneous and auratic appearance of "Man" after the Declaration of the Rights of Man (1789), described here by Hannah Arendt in *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (1951): "Man had hardly appeared as a completely emancipated, completely isolated being who carried his dignity within himself without reference to some larger encompassing order, when he disappeared again into a member of a people" (1994, 291).

I will have reason to return to Arendt's comments. For now, we can reconsider Davis's performances as a reformation of representative publicity. Davis's "representation" of humanity, then, is not more direct or legitimate than a modern representative body such as the UN—far from it—but is rather of an entirely different order. It is the culmination of Davis's initial rejection of the UWF's deliberations in favor of forms of performance and declaration. This mode of representation, however, is obviously not the same as that of the medieval nobility. Inasmuch as Davis purports to embody a special status, the same status is theoretically available to any person who gives up national citizenship.

Furthermore, while the nobleman's representation was based on cultivating refinement and embodying virtue—developing oneself in Wilhelm's terms—Davis achieves his "human" status through divesting himself of cultural "appurtenances." And like Wilhelm, Davis requires a "stage" to mediate his publicity, one provided by symbolically charged spaces such as embassies, extraterritorial ground, and the General Assembly. Finally, if these performances are meant to grant Davis a status that allows him to interrupt the UN's representative body, that interruption, and the negation it intends to bring about, is directed at a new sphere of publicity: the "vacuum" of world government.

Davis was surrounded by philosophers and writers, yet the problem of what and how he "represented" seems to have received little attention. Breton is the exception, who in a number of essays from 1948-50 documented his support for Davis—as a participant in the interruption of the UN and organizer of events at the Salle Pleyel—and eventual disaffection from him. [iii] In "Un pour tous hormis quelques un" (published in *Combat,* November 20-21, 1948), Breton justified the interruption of the General Assembly, describing the UN as an organization prefigured by Kafka, which in pretending to work for the world, was in fact ready to sacrifice it for "'national' interests, although the concept of the nation has lost all historical validity" (1999, 976; my translation, here and following). While "Man [L'homme]" like a Kafka character is "mythically," "physically," and "morally" chased from the UN's bureaucratic temple, Breton argues, Davis's performances have the power to "bring everything back into question and summon the world to recognize itself [tout remettre en cause et sommer le monde de se reconnaître]" (977). They

serve as the "gestes" from France that in a previous essay Breton had aligned with the events of 1789, and which "les masses mondiales" were supposedly awaiting (975). In this way, as Breton would pronounce in other essays and speeches, Davis's action "opened a path for all of humanity" (993) and offered a prototype for the "production of symbolic acts, of a spectacular character, destined to shake the apathy of the masses" that Breton considered the second of five pillars for the achievement of "mondialisme" (worldism/globalism) (998).[iv]

Breton's mondialiste activities constitute a moment when surrealism surprisingly appears as a form of Bildung, the latter conceived generally as the emergence of humanity through such negation. In a public letter of support from the surrealist group to Davis, the conflict between individual desire and the exterior world, which in some sense forms the plot of Bildung, is said to be "resolved" by surrealism in a coming "reign of liberty" (andrebreton.org). If for Hegel this dialectic resolved itself in the universality of the state, the surrealists argue that liberty would arise through "a world [mondial] government issuing directly from the representation of Peoples [Peuples], and not from the fallacious representation of States." "Peoples" here does not signify nations, but rather an amorphous diversity within a nascent unity. Breton elsewhere describes this unity as humanity, writing somewhat paradoxically of his historical moment: "The mythic life of humanity, which unfolds on the margins of history, and, definitively, takes the latter as its prey, is today all the more powerful that it is repressed" (1999, 991). This might seem like a strange statement only months after the UDHR, yet it reveals the distance between the UN, or any other major political organization, and the politics of Breton and

many of the other mondialistes, which was anti-imperialist, anticapitalist, yet also opposed to the nation-state.

If Breton was willing to posit a mythic humanity preyed upon by these entities, he grew tired of seeing that humanity represented in Davis. While the reasons for this are many, his principle concern was Davis's increasing affiliation with Catholic figures and causes. So in October 1949, Breton criticized the idea of Davis as world citizenship's "incarnation"—"that stupid idea [which has done] ravages since the first days of Christianity" (999). And in an essay from 1950, Breton would aim to completely separate mondialisme from Davis, who had recently left Paris, through representational critique: the movement was to be in no way affected by the "defection" of a man who was a "pure and simple" "homme de théatre" (1023).

Rightless Appearance in *Waiting for Godot*

This last quote comes from Breton's "Ceinturer un monde forcené," one of his several articles that appeared in *Combat* in the spring of 1950. In a letter from the same time to art critic Georges Duthuit, Beckett comments: "Read with wonderment Breton [...] in *Combat*. What flowery stuff [Que de fleurs]" (2011, 196). Beckett goes on to ironically rehearse several moments in Breton's essay "Des taches solaires aux taches de soleil":

> Noted in Breton the singularly powerful image of the ship of humanity cast adrift by its navigator on to the "definitive reefs." To wait until the atomic age before feeling really worried, that is indeed surrealist. And that certainty of spring that did his heart good in the worst moments of the occupation. Lucky thing [Veinard, va].

The last lines refer to the opening of Breton's essay, in which he describes the consoling idea that came to him during the German occupation: "the many devastations could do nothing to stop the return of Spring, a magician great enough to lend a smile to ruins" (qtd in Beckett 2011, 199). While some readers might have found irony in the fact that Breton was far from these ruins during the war (living in the United States and Canada), Beckett's response is better understood by juxtaposing Breton's essay with the end of Beckett's Saint-Lô radio piece. While Beckett was "given" a vision of humanity in ruins at Saint-Lô—a vision which might provide terms for rethinking "our condition"—Breton imagines grass immediately growing over those ruins and, as another rite of spring, the return of "humanity."

This return is what Beckett objects to in the arguments of Breton during this period. Humanity was an ethical-political ideal, as it appears in the above essay upon which Beckett comments, but also a representational one. In this sense, Duthuit was an apt sounding board for Beckett, since his art criticism was based on a rejection of Renaissance painting for earlier forms of figuration, such as in Byzantine art. In a series of essays published in his journal *Transition* in 1948, Duthuit had described, and satirized, the rumors that Breton and Sartre were making common cause—an alliance that would lead in part to Sartre's skeptical support of the Davis affair in *Combat*. In a letter to Duthuit commenting on these

Transition essays, Beckett expressed his hope that an end might finally be made "of the pernicious illusion in which [Sartre and Breton] are at one [...] the illusion of the human and the fully realised" (2011, 86). Beckett goes on to describe, in his singular way, Antonio da Messina's portrait of St. Sebastian—"the whole thing invaded, eaten into by the human"—ending with the comment: "And to think that they intend to go through the whole thing again." Interestingly, the idea of a "fully realised" humanity is in no way the focus of Duthuit's essay. In expressing his frustration with it, Beckett is responding to the more generalized return of the *Humanitätsideal* at the time. Beckett understands this ideal explicitly within the teleology of classical Bildung, "the fully realised." His anguish over "go[ing] through the whole thing again," then, is not simply high-modernist impatience with old modes of representation. Rather it addresses the human as a braided ethical, political, and aesthetic ideal, one whose return as such, in the previous terms, was the antithesis of the rethinking of "our condition" that Beckett felt necessary after Saint-Lô and all that it stood for.

Beckett wrote this letter to Duthuit at the end of July, 1948, in the middle of Davis's performative "representation" of humanity.[v] Two months later, on September 30th, the UN General Assembly would begin its session at Chaillot, and one week after that (on the other side of Paris), Beckett began writing *Waiting for Godot* on October 9th. Beckett would finish the play several months later in January, 1949, with the UDHR falling roughly in the middle of its composition. This sequence of events should give pause over the most significant moment of "characterization"

in the play, when the tramps first consider their relation to Godot and, by extension, their "role" within the work:

> Estragon: Quel est notre rôle là-dedans?
> Vladimir: Notre rôle?
> E: Prends ton temps.
> V: Notre rôle? Celui du suppliant.
> E: A ce point-là?
> V: Monsieur a des exigencies à faire valoir?
> E: On n'a plus de droits?
> *Rire de Vladimir, auquel il coupe court comme au précédent. Même jeu, moins le sourire*.
> V: Tu me ferais rire, si cela m'était permis.
> E: Nous les avons perdus?
> V (*avec netteté*): Nous les avons bazardés.
> *Silence. Ils demeurent immobiles, bras ballants, tête sur la poitrine, cassés aux genoux.*[vi] (1971, 25)

> [E: Where do we come in?
> V: Come in?
> E: Take your time.
> V: Come in? On our hands and knees.
> E: As bad as that?
> V: Your Worship wishes to assert his prerogatives?
> E: We've no rights any more?
> *Laugh of Vladimir, stifled as before, less the smile.*
> V: You'd make me laugh if it wasn't prohibited.
> E: We've lost our rights?
> V: (*distinctly)* We got rid of them.
> *Silence. They remain motionless, arms dangling, heads sunk, sagging at the knees*. (1954, 15)]

This scene could be read as an outright rejection of political concepts, such as rights, for an existential treatment of human being—and many people have read the play, and all Beckett's work, in precisely these terms. From this point of view, the tramps act of "[getting] rid of " their rights is seen as either unrelated to the UDHR (that is, ahistorical) or as an accidental critique of the statement in its preamble and first article that all human beings are born with "inalienable" rights.

To approach what I consider, instead, the complex historicity of Beckett's play, we can consider the scene in relation to Arendt's comment from *Origins*—another seminal work written in the late 1940s—that "No paradox of contemporary politics is filled with a more poignant irony than the discrepancy between the efforts of well-meaning idealists who stubbornly insist on regarding as 'inalienable' those human rights, which are enjoyed only by citizens of the most prosperous and civilized countries, and the situation of the rightless themselves" (1994, 279). Arendt's point is that the right to have rights is guaranteed in a practical sense only by nation-states. International law, Arendt writes, does not transcend "reciprocal agreements between sovereign states: and for the time being, a sphere that is above the nations does not exist" (298). The ideal of the UDHR thus remains in reality, for Arendt, the rights of citizens. Just as the UDHR is by definition a performative, one can in a very real sense "get rid of" one's rights through another "declaration." This was precisely what Garry Davis did in renouncing his American nationality and assuming the "role" of stateless person in May of 1948. Appearing on stage in such a position, after renouncing their rights, is the stated "role" of Didi and Gogo in

Beckett's play. Attending to the performative nature of this role-play makes clear the vital connection between Beckett's play, its "plot" and characters, and overtly political actions such as those of Davis and the position of stateless people, without, in turn, asserting that these latter are the explicit representational "content" of Beckett's play—an assertion that does no more justice to Beckett's play than it does to refugees. Similarly, the performative aspect of the tramps' declaration illuminates the other "renunciations" of Beckett's oeuvre that crystallize in *Godot*, such as the decision to write in French, rather than his native English, and the play's setting in a "no man's land" that lacks a precise territorial referent.

Beckett's focus on such issues of representation invite us, in turn, to consider the representational issues that animated Davis's performances and Arendt's thought. For Davis and his followers, as we saw, giving up national ties and inhabiting extraterritorial space made one appear more human. And Arendt described the late 1940s as a moment when "'humanity' has in effect assumed the role formerly ascribed to nature or history" (1994, 298). Crucially, humanity appears, in Arendt's account as in Davis's, with the loss of rights: "The paradox involved in the loss of human rights is that such loss coincides with the instant when a person becomes a human being in general [...] *and* different in general, representing nothing but his own unique individuality which, deprived of expression within and action upon a common world, loses all significance" (302). Arendt's two-fold account of rightless appearance is worth pausing over. The rightless person represents humanity, as a status, but also represents nothing, in the

modern sense, since he or she bears no reference to, and cannot appear within, a "common world."

The common world, whose loss for Arendt is the worst deprivation of rightlessness, is a "place in the world which makes opinions significant and actions effective" (296). This concept, which Arendt first elaborates here, points to what she would later describe in *The Human Condition* as "the space of appearance," whose prototype is the Greek polis (1998, 50-58; 199-206). Yet in *Origins* the common world has a more precise referent: the political space of the territorial nation-state. Since being "human in general" and "different in general" make one easier to kill,[vii] Arendt endorses "the pragmatic soundness" of Edmund Burke's critique of the Rights of Man: "the rights we enjoy spring from the nation" (299). While Davis's representation of humanity aimed at generating world government from a "vacuum," Arendt conceived of such a government in totalitarian terms (298-99). Thus her 1950 preface to *Origins* heralds the UDHR as a "new law on earth, whose validity this time must comprehend the whole of humanity while its power must remain strictly limited, rooted in and controlled by newly defined territorial entities" (1994, ix).

The disagreement between Davis and Arendt over what and how the rightless represent—what they appear *as*—can be read back into Beckett's play. In the above scene, and in *Godot* in general, Beckett prolongs the destabilizing moment of the tramp's appearance: "*Silence. Ils demeurent immobiles, bras ballants, tête sur la poitrine, cassés aux genoux.*" The tramp's stagey slump, facing the audience, shatters the theater's fourth wall at the same time as it suspends what Beckett described to

Duthuit as "the illusion of the human and the fully realised." Indeed, the ideal of humanity is one of the play's many props. When Pozzo, the play's resident brute, first meets Didi and Gogo, he sizes up these "étrangers" against his ideal: "Vous êtes bien des êtres humains cependant. (*Il met ses lunettes*.) A ce que je vois. (*Il enlève ses lunettes*.) De la même espèce que moi. (*Il éclate de rire énorme.*) De la meme espèce que Pozzo! D'origine divine!" (31).[1] The "gag" is that such ideals are out of sync with Pozzo's treatment of his servant Lucky—treatment Pozzo has no problem describing as "peu humain" (40).[viii] The language of human idealization does little to correct cruelty or indifference. When Pozzo later falls down and needs the tramps' help, Vladimir's pontification on the humanity of their task distracts him from it: "Ne perdons pas notre temps en vain discours [...] L'appel que nous venons d'entendre, c'est plutôt à l'humanité toute entière qu'il s'addresse. Mais à cet endroit, en ce moment, l'humanité c'est nous [...] Représentons dignement [represent worthily] pour une fois l'engeance où le malheur nous a fourrés" (115).[2] Several minutes (or pages) later, the tramps finally interrupt their "vain discours" and attempt to assist Pozzo, only after he offers them two hundred francs—they fall down in the process. In short, the tramps fail to "represent worthily [dignement]" humanity—a phrase which recalls Davis's performances as well as the first sentence of the UDHR.[ix] Rather than a simple critique of the latter, such moments show how the tramps in

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[1] "You are human beings none the less. (*He puts on his glasses*.) As far as one can see (*He takes off his glasses*.) Of the same species as myself. (*He bursts into an enormous laugh*.) Of the same species as Pozzo! Made in God's image!" (19).

[2] "But at this place, at this moment of time, all mankind is us, whether we like it or not. Let us make the most of it, before it is too late! Let us represent worthily for once the foul brood to which a cruel fate consigned us!" (90).

Beckett's play appear as rightless but do not, in turn, represent a general and ideal humanity.

This sends us back to the other pole of representation in Arendt's analysis: the rightless, through their appearance, represent "nothing but their own unique individuality," which when deprived of the common world, "loses all significance." Arendt's phrasing recalls and illuminates many of the seemingly metatheatrical exchanges in Beckett's play, such as when Vladimir comments "Ceci devient vraiment insignifiant" and Estragon responds "Pas encore assez" (99)—not to mention the play's famous opening line, "Rien à faire" (9). The play's pursuit of "insignificance" and "nothing," then, can be approached as the evacuation of the common world—the political-cultural realm, which in Arendt's philosophical analysis precedes and survives human life (1998, 55-56) and which in practical terms she maps on to the nation-state (1994). Arendt suggests that only within this world or space can life become "deprivatized and deindividualized [...] into a shape fit [...] for public appearance" (1998, 50)—a formulation that elaborates her claim that the rightless represent "nothing but [...] individuality."[x]

Beckett's tramps, however, are not private individuals nor does the play, in turn, explore sheltered life. The concerns of *Godot*—waiting for employment, subjection to violence, inequality, relations with others—are those of a life exposed though not "public." And the play explicitly takes place in a world that is common—"La route est à tout le monde," laments Pozzo (32)—though not a "common world" in Arendt's sense of the term, that is, culturally restricted and politically territorialized. Here we arrive at the formal core of Beckett's play. While the

characters appear as rightless, they do not represent a clear status, a "fully realised" humanity. In turn, the tramps are eminently exposed, yet their speech and actions lack significance within any "common world" or "space of appearance." These aspects lend the play's characters and setting their distinctive liminal quality. In representing by appearance, the tramps seem to embody and project a status and sphere of publicity, as Davis did, yet both of these are left nameless and open.

In aligning the play with Davis's performances, I am not suggesting that the "vacuum" of Beckett's play is directly related to anything as concrete as Davis's world government—the utopian dimensions of which seem at odds with Beckett's resistance to definitive ends and their consolations. Instead, *Godot* suspends the moment of rightless appearance and similarly holds in suspense the form of a "common world" that would give the tramps a "shape fit for public appearance." Aligning the stage with this liminal space below but insistently related to public life and a common world is in many ways the event of *Godot*—its theater-idea, in Alain Badiou's terms (2005, 72). In doing so, Beckett does not replace a *Humanitätsideal* with an idealized indigence. Instead he draws upon the performative globalism of 1948 in order to make theater space the location for "rethinking our condition," yet outside common terms such as "humanity" or "Irish" and "French."

In this way, Beckett's play gives his audience a vision similar to the one he was given at Saint-Lô—positing its ruins, rather than "humanity" or the "common world," as the point of departure for rethinking our condition in the postwar world. Making "culture," specifically theater, the location for such a task aligns Beckett's play with the ethical form of Bildung at the same time as the play suspends its

classical trajectories: on the one hand, the rise to humanity; on the other, the individual's development within a given, delimited culture.[xi] The word Beckett opposed to the time-space of development in the St. Lô piece was "provisional," which in insisting on the temporary and conditional nature of a state of affairs, as opposed to their final form, nevertheless looks forward to an unknown future (*pro-videre*)—a correlative to *Godot*'s principle act and mood of "waiting" for something that is unqualified and the arrival of which remains uncertain. Yet within such a provisional world, one might ask, what terms does *Godot* actually provide through which to rethink our condition?

Godot conceives "our condition," I want to argue, through roughly the same terms laid out in Beckett's Saint-Lô essay: relationally and through the gift. Immediately after Vladimir announces their rightless status, Estragon asks "On n'est pas liés?" (25). Didi ignores him here and his later response, when Gogo reposes the question, is certainly provisional: "Liés à Godot? Quelle idée? Jamais de la vie! (*Un temps*) Pas encore" (28). Estragon's question, occurring where it does, not only refers to their relation to Godot but also to their role as rightless—those whose attachments are uncertain but not expunged. What is more, his question addresses the tramps' interrelation in the play: they are always on the verge of leaving each other, yet always reaffirm their bonds. It is no coincidence, then, that Gogo remembers to ask his question a second time while meditatively munching the carrot given to him by Didi (27-28). Exchanging items, such as food, establishes the relations between Didi and Gogo. But gifts also relate the tramps to the other characters: Pozzo gives Gogo his chicken bones and gives both tramps the

amusement of Lucky's thinking in exchange for their "convenable" behavior (56). Shifting relations and circulating objects are in many ways the "plot" of the play, as the characters exchange boots, hats, and, above all, language in *Godot*'s essentially dialogic structure of statement and repartee—gift and countergift.

The analogy between dialogue and the gift is literalized in the text when Pozzo attempts to reciprocate the tramp's conversation with Lucky's "thinking"—an inadequate exchange. Yet in a deeper sense, both giving and talking are means for drawing apparently distinct beings into a relation of interdependence that does not precede the interaction. I will explore this aspect of the gift later in the chapter, but for now I want to insist on the manner in which *Godot* makes the open-ended and interdependent process of dialogue take precedence over dramatic development and individual independence. Here I draw upon Dmitri Nikulin's recent efforts to distinguish dialogue from dialectics. Nikulin characterizes dialogue as an art of "*staying open* for conversation" and imagines it to be both pluralistic as well as a "live being with the other" (2010, 69, 72). Dialogue and dialectics go hand in hand in the history of philosophy, but Nikulin claims that dialectics come along as an attempt to codify dialogue into rational-developmental methods: "Dialogue [...] is abandoned as philosophically unproductive, unsystematic, and utterly accidental to the process and acts of reasoning. Philosophical thinking thus conceives of itself as having 'outgrown' confused and disoriented dialogue and having turned to monological, strict, and conclusion-oriented thinking" (72). Nikulin's claim gives new resonance to the play's famous nondevelopment, in dramatic terms, as well as my argument that *Godot* attempts to suspend a narrative of human and cultural

development codified in classical Bildung. It does so through rightless appearance but also through the nature of its dialogue.

Beyond noticing its formal constitution from dialogue, we should pause here on the specific role of dialogue within the play. Stanley Cavell has attributed a particular "sound" to Beckettian dialogue, in which "victory or salvation consists in [...] in coming up with the right answer—or rather, with the *next* answer, one which continues the dialogue, but whose point is to win a contest of wits by capping a gag or getting the last word" (1969, 127). While Cavell aptly captures the propulsive movement of their speech, his insistence on the goal of the "last" or "right" word misses how Beckett's characters come to exist together *through* dialogue. In his philosophical study, Nikulin takes *Godot* as his sole literary example, suggesting that instead of aiming for the "last word," Beckettian dialogue proceeds through a series of interruptions. Interruption is surprisingly the very spirit of dialogue, since it most emphatically "brings interlocutors together into dialogical interaction not as incommensurable and isolated individuals but as dialogical partners" (2010, 99). The seemingly insignificant "play" of dialogue in *Godot* is not only a mode of destabilizing terms such as the "the human," but also comes to constitute the tramps' condition: "On se débrouille pas trop mal, hein, Didi, tous les deux ensemble?" quips Estragon after one of their many sustained verbal volleys, "On trouve toujours quelque chose, hein, Didi, pour nous donner l'impression d'exister" (100).[3] Didi's words are serious as well as playful. They conceive of an existence together that is opposed to that which Nikulin attributes to the monological subject,

[3] "We don't manage too badly, eh Didi, between the two of us? [...] We always find something, eh Didi, to give us the impression we exist" (77)

who "tries to maintain the illusion of total self-reliance, autonomy, and independence—primarily independence from others" (2010, 103). Existence in Beckett's world, then, is dialogic—it emerges with and through others. Our condition is that we are conditioned by such dialogue, but also by our interactions with strangers (Pozzo and Lucky) and that which remains unknown (Godot). What Beckett's play provisionally affirms, then, in the midst of its negations and suspensions, is a vision of being that is fundamentally relational.

Conceiving of our condition in this way simultaneously reveals the potentially debilitating aspects of relations. Whether the tramps' being together leads to their flourishing is always in question, and the "attachments" between Pozzo and Lucky are clearly figured as a forms of dependency in the negative sense of the word. Yet the play refuses to represent an ideal of autonomy or "reign of liberty," in Breton's words, which would somehow resolve the problematic nature of interdependence. Autonomy is perhaps what Beckett objects to above all in "the illusion of the human and the fully realised," and it is what he lampoons in Pozzo's "divine" conception of his sovereign humanity, misrecognizing his clear dependence on a mere "creature" such as Lucky.

In their relationship questions of autonomy within the play intersect with its status as a literary work. Fredric Jameson has argued that Lucky's dependency on Pozzo offers an allegorical schema whereby Pozzo stands in for the British Empire, Lucky for Ireland. Yet Jameson's larger claim is that Beckett himself rejects "the externalities of the Lucky-Pozzo episodes" in favor of the "Vladimir-Estragon frame," which would evacuate all historical content in the name of literary autonomy (2013,

200-1). Jameson thus oddly endows the play with a determinate historical-political content, only to subsequently revoke that content through an entirely imputed notion of authorial "discomfort." We might understand Jameson's arguments as reflecting his own "discomfort" with the form in which the play explores the ethical and political problem of dependency. Beckett's play predates the emergence of dependency theory as an organized critique of imperial and postimperial underdevelopment. Yet in the Lucky-Pozzo relationship Beckett clearly figures this negative potential of interrelations, at whatever scale one chooses to conceive them. That one can ascribe multiple historical referents to their relationship is precisely the point of Beckett's refusal to give it only one (Britain-Ireland), just as the point of the Vladimir-Estragon "frame," I would contend, is to hold out limited hope for forms of being together based around reciprocity.

Jameson's critique of *Godot*'s incipient "postmodernism" is given new valence in Pascale Casanova's arguments about Beckettian autonomy. If Jameson criticizes the play for its apparent disavowal of Irish historical-political content, this negation for Casanova secures "the very 'purity' of Beckett's work, his progressive detachment from all external definition" (2004, 318). This autonomy, according to Casanova, is achieved through completely negating politics and history, understood in her account as always national, in the name of a literary, and formalist, freedom conferred by Paris. Beckett's work is thus the representative example of an autonomous "world republic of letters," which Casanova argues is threatened by international (that is, Anglo-American) publishing: "The 'intellectual International' imagined by Valery Larbaud, who in the 1920s foresaw the advent of a small,

cosmopolitan, enlightened society that would silence national prejudices by recognizing and promoting the free circulation of great works of avant-garde literature from all over the world, now stands in danger of being fatally undermined by the imperatives of commercial expansion" (172). In both Jameson's critical and Casanova's triumphalist accounts of postmodern world literature, autonomy spells the evacuation of national culture and politics in the name of an ahistorical and purely formalist play.

I have argued instead that central aspects of Beckett's play, specifically the tramps' rightless appearance and the play's provisional time-space, bear the traces of historical, even political, experiences which are in many ways global rather than strictly national. However, Beckett does not represent these experiences as such, but rather adapts their destabilizing features through performative declaration and the evacuation of a common world. In this way, the play holds open the constitutive dynamics of a historical period in which ethical being was being rethought in global terms. While this grants the play a relative autonomy from specific historical referents, it also has made Beckett's play particularly receptive to new historical contexts of performance, especially those in which the appearance of rightlessness is not easily resolved by folding the rightless back within the "common world" as given, but instead requires a rethinking of "our condition." Lance Duerfahrd makes a related point in his recent book on performances of *Godot* in prisons, Sarajevo, the Ninth Ward, and Zuccoti Park, wherein he argues that "Beckett's thematic discussion of poverty and his legendary theatrical, textual, and formal sparseness act together to propel the emergence of his theater on 'stages of history,' landscapes mired in the

aftermath of catastrophe" (2013, 2).[xii] *Godot* can thus be seen as singularly dependent on the meanings that its interpretation—by an audience, by its performers—bring to it, meanings that are shaped by the play's history as much as by its context of reception. In this sense, the play's aesthetics might best be understood through terms such as relationality and interdependence. And that *Godot* continues to exert an influence on world theater, beyond its moment of composition, is a function of its theater-idea, as I have attempted to describe it, not a confirmation of the apoliticism and ahistoricism of international (post)modernism.

Beckett's writing, then, is an instructive place to begin rethinking postwar world literature, since it serves as a prime example of a work whose vision of ethics and politics has been obscured by dominant critical frameworks, which conceive of these solely within the given spheres of humanist and national tradition. While the implicit global aspects of Beckett's work have thus remained largely illegible until now in literary criticism, they were quite apparent to later writers from the "Third-World," who were similarly positioned to rethink "our condition" from the ruins of the imperial world, and who were similarly confronted with the time-space of development and the problem of the foreign gift.

Global Dialogics in Chandigarh and Mogadishu

After Garry Davis left Paris, he decided that India would be his next destination. It took him years of red tape to finally travel there on his self-issued world passport, where he would become a student of Nataraja Guru (P. Natarajan) and his science of

"geo-dialectics." In 1956, Natarajan urged Davis to meet Nehru, to whom Davis would say "I've read so much of your writing and know so many of your thoughts, I feel as if I'm meeting an old friend" (1961, 124). Nehru had been perhaps the most prominent political leader to speak out in favor of world government. At a roundtable at the University of Chicago in April 1948, Nehru asserted: "I have no doubt in my mind that world government must and will come, for there is no other remedy for the world's sickness [...] It can be an extension of the federal principle, a growth of the idea underlying the United Nations, giving each national unit freedom to fashion its destiny according to its genius, but subject always to the basic covenant of world government" (1951, 399). Articulated at roughly the same time as Davis's Parisian performances, Nehru's vision of world government differed significantly from that of the mondialistes. While Davis's first gesture was to renounce nationality—"man's deadliest, self-imposed, restrictive device"—Nehru posits the nation-state as a necessary sphere for developing a collective genius, in short, Bildung.

Nehru's position is more than understandable given that India, a harbinger of worldwide decolonization, had just secured its independence from the British Empire in 1947. The urgent task of achieving independence in the former colonies was in many ways only conceivable in the form of national liberation and the state form. When Davis met Nehru in 1956, Nehru was in the process of imagining a new alternative to Cold War politics in Non-Alignment. Their meeting signifies the potential continuities between the Parisian "mondialisme" of 1948-50 and the Third-World internationalism that would begin to take shape at the Bandung

Conference in 1955, where Nehru played a prominent role. This form of internationalism was predicated on securing the newly independent nation-states from the encroachments of the Cold War superpowers. If the first principle of the Bandung communiqué was respect for human rights and the UN charter, the second asserted "the sovereignty and territorial integrity of all nations." So when Davis recommenced his "performances" in India, declaring World Government "de juris" on October 5, 1956, Nehru was far from pleased. Davis decided to leave, concluding "I did not want to injure [Nehru's] trust, especially since I was convinced that a new nation such as India did not provide an especially fertile soil for an anti-nationalistic idea like world government [...] I did not want to lose [the friendship of Indians] by pitting myself against their new and hard-won independent nationalism" (132).

During this period, Nehru's India was fast becoming a model for national development in the Third-World. And the project of an Indian modernity was given material form in Chandigarh—the first planned city of postcolonial India—which in Nehru's words was to be "A new city unfettered by the traditions of the past, and a symbol of the nation's faith in the future" (qtd. in Prakash 2002, 9). To this end, Le Corbusier was brought in as the head architect for the city. Nehru hoped that Le Corbusier's design would express the dynamism of Indian modernization. In doing so, it would provide an antidote to the traditionally "static" style of Indian architecture, which, in a 1957 lecture on the subject, Nehru argued had reflected the fundamentally "static" quality of traditional Indian society, making possible its colonization by the British (1959, 47). Le Corbusier, in turn, imagined the city as a new civilizational model based on the "humane" peasant culture of India, "poor but

proportioned," which would provide an alternative to Western modernity. Indeed, Vikramaditya Prakash convincingly shows how Le Corbusier conceived of Chandigarh as an alternative to the United Nations project in New York, from which the Swiss architect had walked away just before coming to India (Prakash 2002, 65). Le Corbusier had been involved in the same Parisian peace rallies as Garry Davis in 1949. He evoked the failure of these events to usher in an alternative to the Cold War when he proposed to Nehru the construction of a statue of an open hand in Chandigarh, which he hoped would become the symbolic representation of Non-Alignment.[xiii]

Chandigarh was thus one of the key sites where national development, Third-World internationalism, and aesthetic modernism came into contact. And it was in Chandigarh, a decade later, that the Somali writer Nuruddin Farah began his career as a writer. Farah came to Chandigarh on a fellowship to Punjab University from 1966 to 1969. At Punjab, Farah studied English literature and philosophy, encountering writers such as Joyce, Woolf, Camus, and Beckett, and in 1968 submitted to the Heinemann African Writers Series his novel, *From a Crooked Rib* (1970), widely hailed as the first Somali novel. Although Farah, in his own words, "grew into maturity intellectually" while in Chandigarh (1992, 49), his time there has received scant critical attention. This is due in large part to the fact that many of his works from this period were never published, in particular his dramatic works, although Farah considered himself at the time a playwright rather than a novelist.

Bearing titles such as "Native of the World," Farah's unpublished work explores the tensions between the imperatives of national development and a wider

interdependence by explicitly drawing upon Beckett's work. This is made manifest in the long play which was Farah's chief literary focus during his years in Chandigarh: "We Ought To Have Done Better But What Was It We Were After," later renamed "Dagger in Vacuum." In July 1969, Farah described the play to his Heinemann editor James Currey: "The play is about 20,000 words—with four characters of different nationalities—there is a Somali, an Englishman, an American Negro and a Canadian female—and the whole thing takes place inside one night" (24 July 1969, Heinemann Papers). The oneiric setting of the play in the "space of a night," Farah elaborated, derived from James Joyce's *Finnegans Wake* (1939), which served as the play's "departing point" (23 May 1970). Yet it later became a dynamic rearticulation of Beckett's *Waiting for Godot* (24 July 1969)—an affinity evinced by its four-character and two-act structure. Unlike in Beckett's play, however, Farah's characters are identified with peoples, or "nationalities." Yet the deterritorialized Beckettian time-space remains, significantly allowing the characters to interact outside of a recognizable geopolitical framework, such as the British Empire or the national-territorial state. Negating such formations of the "common world" serves to emphasize the relations between characters. Farah elaborated on this aspect in another letter: "[the play] has got two acts which don't have anything to do with each other and the whole thing is a game which they play—they let each/one another down—and there is no plot as such […] in short, it is dialogic" (8 August 1969). Farah's play, like *Godot*, eschews the developments of plot for the "game which they play." Although ludic, this structure, on the one hand, seems to resist the uptake of the characters into a unified "humanity" that would negate past and

present conflict. At the same time, the play imagines the characters through their interrelations, a dynamic Farah describes as "dialogic."

Farah insists elsewhere during this period on the formal importance of dialogue to his work. And dialogue, I will argue, gives ethical form to the global throughout his writing. But what does Farah mean by dialogic? While the concept immediately evokes the thought of Mikhail Bakhtin—to which I will return in the final section—Bakthin's work was essentially unknown outside Eastern Europe before the 1980s.[xiv] While Farah's notion of the dialogic clearly looks back to Beckett's work, in particular *Godot*, we can initially approach his conception of dialogue through Martin Buber's writing, widely read in the 1950s and 60s, which Farah might well have encountered as a philosophy student at Punjab University.

Buber's aim in his poetical-theological-philosophical oeuvre was to understand human being not from the position of isolated consciousness but rather from within its interrelations. In his most influential work, *I and Thou* (1923), he conceives of these relations as emerging through dialogue. Language establishes a "mode of existence" (1970, 54), Buber argued, and the privileged dialogic pair of I-Thou, as opposed to I-It, opens up "the world of relation" (56). In Buber's picture, such relations precede the I, so that "man becomes an I through a You" (78, 80). While this might seem like a banal point, reducible to the insight that humans and human meanings are in some sense social, Buber's larger argument is that the modern world is dominated by the I-It mode of existence, which conceives of subjects in relation to objects (including other people) and the world not as animated but rather reified: "The It-World hangs together in space and time. The

You-World does not hang together in space and time" (84). Disrupting our "normal" experience of space-time, dialogic relations are evanescent and uncanny: "You-moments appear as queer lyrical-dramatic episodes," Buber writes, continuing with ironic caution, "they pull us dangerously to extremes, loosening the well-tied structure, leaving behind more doubt than satisfaction, shaking up our security" (84-85).

Whether or not Farah knew Buber's work, such lines illuminate "Dagger," which, like *Godot*, evacuates what Arendt called "the common world." And what Buber understood as the relational nature of being bears affinities with what Farah understood as the dialogic nature of his play, in which, as he described, "the characters reveal one another through one another" (23rd May 1970, Heinemann Papers). Yet as Farah makes clear, his characters also "let each other down," a formulation which emphasizes the play's Beckettian quality more than an ideal dialogue. For Buber, the ethical meaning of such a dialogic relation is reciprocity (58), and he would later write in *Between Man and Man* (1947): "Being, lived in dialogue, receives even in extreme dereliction [...] a strengthening sense of reciprocity" (2002, 24). The relations in *Godot*, however, are often not reciprocal, tending toward dependency (Pozzo and Lucky) as well as interdependence (Vladimir and Estragon). Thus Farah's play does not so much represent an ideal moment of dialogue, in Buber's terms, but rather keeps the dialogue going in the hope that something like reciprocity might emerge.

In drawing upon Beckett's "provisional" time-space, Farah suspends the "It-world" that would limit or shape such relations. Here we can speculatively read

Farah's unpublished play back into its historical moment—speculatively, since the only traces of it currently available are in these letters. Farah's play seems to privilege open-ended dialogue over the teleology of national development. Doing so, however, suggests a vision of ethical being that takes reciprocity, rather than autonomy, as its ideal. While these terms are not necessarily mutually exclusive—nor opposed to the spirit of Bandung—Farah's dialogism, I want to argue, resists the reemergence of national-cultural Bildung in the Third World, subtly reimagining the search for independence in the terms of a fraught yet inescapable interdependence.

These terms are negotiated in *From a Crooked Rib*, the only work Farah was able to publish from his time in Chandigarh. And this first Somali novel, often understood as an exemplary work of national-cultural Bildung, appears in a new light when considered alongside the unpublished "Dagger." The novel's plot follows a young runaway nomad, Ebla, who flees an unwanted marriage in her village, seeking refuge in Belet Wene and then Mogadishu with a series of self-interested and abusive men. She finally stays on in Mogadishu with her unfaithful husband Awill for lack of anywhere else to go. Escape for Ebla is an attempt to attain freedom—"To escape. To be free [...] These were inter-related" (2006, 11)—yet it is also experienced as a loss of context, an impoverishment. And Farah would later describe Ebla as a "person who is cut off from [her] background and moving…" (1980, 49; ellipses are Farah's). Yet Farah's novel, as we will see, significantly withholds a new context in which Ebla would necessarily achieve freedom.

While Ebla's freedom is restricted by the men around her, she also comes to abandon her search for complete independence. She aspires early on to an ideal

agency, asserting: “In the future, I am responsible for whatever I do. Tomorrow [...] Tomorrow. In the future I will be myself and belong to myself, and my actions will belong to me. And I will, in turn, belong to them” (130). The repetition of “tomorrow,” putting off the achievement of full, self-possessed agency, prefigures the end of the novel when Awill and Ebla resolve to recount their infidelities the next day, repeating this deferral till “tomorrow” five times in half a page. Indeed, Ebla’s last murmured words in the novel are “Yes. Tomorrow” (163). This final echo is ironic and anticipatory: ironic, since Ebla has since abandoned her earlier hope for radical self-possession (161); anticipatory, since Ebla, in her new condition, is nevertheless oriented toward an unrepresented future. Ebla’s waiting here recalls that of Beckett’s tramps and their similar repetition of the word “tomorrow” at the end of *Godot*. And her self-description, in the novel’s last scene, as one whose “only refuge lies in indecision” aligns her new and indeterminate position with that which Farah would later ascribe to the refugee: “Somewhere between fleeing and arriving a refugee is born, who lives in a country too amorphous to be favored with a name, but [...] whose language is imbued with the rhetoric of future visions” (1993, 16).

This “nameless” country resembles more the provisional time-space of *Godot* and “Dagger” than a specific nation-state. And Ebla’s story of failed self-possession significantly emerges against the political background of impending self-determination: Somali Independence in 1960. This is why Farah sets the novel in the late 1950s, nearly ten years before its composition. Early on Ebla learns “all about the Police, Government, the white man, and the Independence of Somalia, which was approaching” (60). And yet the novel makes clear that for Ebla this impending self-

determination will not be a final refuge, for her plight as a nomadic woman will remain essentially the same. Critical accounts of the novel have generally tried to short-circuit this dilemma through recourse to the "soul-nation" allegory of Bildung, to borrow Esty's words, reading Ebla as a figure of the Somali nation—her individual experience of something akin to statelessness standing in for a broader Somali statelessness (Stratton 2002, 146). These interpretations bring Farah's novel into line with a particular conception of postcolonial culture that, like Arendt in *Origins*, posits the nation-state as the only possible context for "significance" and development.

Such allegories fail, however, when confronted with scenes like the following, in which Awill and a friend discuss Somalia's impending Independence in front of Ebla:

> "Yes, it will be especially good once you have come back and taken over the schools from the bastard Italians. Independence will bring about new life in the minds of everybody. We shall prosper and the Gentiles will perish."
> "I am longing for it. I hope I don't die before Independence Day."
> To Ebla, this did not mean much [...] The word [Independence] was now familiar to her. (98)

Ebla, we read, ignores the rest of the conversation—"she became uninterested in what they were talking about and resumed doing her hair"—because Independence does not "mean much" to her: a Somali state will not ultimately change her own state. This is not to say, by any means, that Farah was somehow inimical to Somali Independence and decolonization—a point apparent to anyone who has read his work. Rather, Farah questions the idea that this future independence, whether

politically realized or held as a guiding ideal, will secure a "new life" for those subject to forms of dependency. Fittingly, Farah expresses this concern in the above scene as a failure of dialogue: Ebla's inability, or unwillingness, to participate in the discussion redirects its ethical horizon away from an absent independence toward an absent reciprocity.

If this aspect of the novel has been lost to recent criticism, it was scandalously apparent to early readers. Indeed, after its publication Farah was interrogated by the Somali National Security at the behest of Walter Rodney, the eminent theorist of African underdevelopment. While this incident is easily glossed over, anachronistically, as part of Farah's later problems with Siyad Barré's regime, Farah recounts how Rodney attacked the novel for being "about some stupid woman thinking about her own freedom [...] when the nation is in chains [...] a bourgeois kind of novel" (2002, 37). Farah was rescued by the intervention of Amiri Baraka, who was in Mogadishu at the time. Yet both Rodney and Baraka understood the novel as a rejection of national-cultural development in favor of bourgeois individualism.

Farah's novel is no more invested in individual development at the expense of community than it is in in communal development at the individual's expense. Farah's work inhabits the liminal moment when, in Arendt's terms, human being was to "disappear" once again into a national people. Like Beckett's play, Farah's novel attempts to rethink Ebla's "condition" while holding in suspense this historical trajectory. It does so by making Ebla appear as one who is essentially rightless within the emerging nation-state—a representational strategy that Farah

reimagines after Beckett. In her first encounter with one of the many men who will "appropriate" her, Ebla appears in her full vulnerability: "Her eyes were still lowered, her hands dangling, as helpless as a man drowning. Her feet felt very heavy, as if they could not support the rest of her body" (26). Ebla's pose here precisely reproduces the stagey slump of Beckett's tramps after they declare their rightlessness: "*Silence. They remain motionless, arms dangling, heads sunk, sagging at the knees*" (15). This way of viewing Ebla is reinforced by the fact that the encounter occurs at the beginning of the novel's second section, which significantly bears an epigraph from Beckett's *Godot*.

In his most revealing discussion of the novel, Farah describes such scenes not as part of a specific political ideology—such as liberal individualism—but rather as a representational strategy of "isolation"—"like you have in the theatre" (1980, 51). Isolating characters such as Ebla, Farah suggests, makes appear "the bare nakedness of the human animal" (51). This formulation recalls Arendt's description of the stateless person outside the "common world" of the nation-state—"the abstract nakedness of being human and nothing but human"—at the same time as Beckett's staging of the tramps outside the terms of a "fully realised" humanity. Yet Farah's words also echo the manner in which Ebla consistently conceives of animal being in relation to human being: "Our lives are not more precious than those of the beasts," she remarks, "and I wonder if we don't need them more than they need us" (33). Ebla's thoughts at such moments reflect Farah's commitment to a coming democracy in which women, children, and animals "have their rights" (2002, 31). Making the rightless appear, in Farah's words, is a way of "starting with the small

and moving towards the big" (31). Isolation, then, is not an assertion of Ebla's self-sufficiency, but rather a "starting point" that leads toward "reunification" (1980, 50).

Reunification does not consist in folding Ebla back within a given "common world"—national culture—but rather is an open-ended, fundamentally dialogic process that aims at reciprocity. This dialogue clearly unfolds, on the one hand, between Somali people. The novel ends with Awill and Ebla's dialogue, anticipating future conversations "tomorrow." And Farah insisted in his publicity questionnaire to Heinemann, probably to his editors' bafflement, that the novel is almost entirely constructed out of such "dialogues" (Questionnaire, Heinemann Papers). Yet the novel, with its depiction of Ebla as a refugee within the nation, is part of a larger dialogue about "our condition" and the ethical horizon of dwelling. Here we might consider Farah's desire to have stage directions inserted into the page proofs (Alden and Tremaine 1999, 32), transforming the work into a hybrid novel-play, which would take place entirely through dialogue. The work's potential audience went far beyond Somalia, as Farah insisted to Heinemann, and was meant to include "Ethiopia, Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Saudi Arabia, Kwait [sic], India, the Soviet Union, Washington Peace Corps Office, England, Italy, and UAR"—although he was quick to add that "there will definitely [be] other organizations who will be interested" (Questionnaire). In a later interview, in which he asserts the fundamentally cosmopolitan nature of his writing, Farah describes the reader's engagement with his work as a "dialogue"—one that opens out beyond horizons of national, continental, or religious identity (1992, 52).

This global dialogism, implicit in *From a Crooked Rib*, was made explicit in "Dagger," which Farah intended to be the concluding work in the trilogy that commenced with his first novel (2002, 46). Here we might speculate why the work Farah spent so much time working on during these formative years—and which appears to have been performed both in Mogadishu and Chandigarh—was never published. When Farah sent a copy of "Dagger" to Wole Soyinka, the Nigerian playwright responded that he "found [it] very well written but too stylistically derivative" (12 October 1971, Heinemann Papers). The problem, it seems, was not so much that the play recast a literary "style," which Farah undertook self-consciously, but rather the particular Beckettian "style" explored and furthered in this explicitly global work. So when Curtis & Brown rejected "Dagger" in 1970, the publisher advised Farah to rewrite the play in the "style" of Amiri Baraka (23 May 1970).

The "style" recommended by these editors offers a stark and revealing contrast to Farah's work. This is made manifest in Baraka's play *Experimental Death Unit #1*, first performed in 1965 at St. Mark's Playhouse in New York and published in *Four Black Revolutionary Plays* (1969), the year before Farah submitted "Dagger." The one-act play opens with two homeless, and apparently drug-addicted, white men, Duff and Loco, who are clearly modeled after the tramps of Beckett's *Godot*. The tramps incomprehensible back-and-forth on humanity, beauty, and the world is interrupted by a near pornographic encounter with a black prostitute in which the three characters act out interracial fantasies of sexual dominance and debasement. The short play concludes when a phalanx of "long-haired bearded Negro youths […]

weary and full of combat" marches onto the scene, bearing a pike adorned with a bloody white head (1969, 13). The army promptly massacres the threesome, decapitating the Beckettian tramps.

While interpreting a play so calculated to shock is a perilous exercise, its meaning, parodic or otherwise, clearly depends on an allegory of black nationalist vitality, galvanized by the eradication of white decadence—a vision shaped by the politics of the American civil rights struggle and Vietnam-era resistance. While critics have interpreted the murder of Beckett's characters as Baraka's disavowal of the European avant-garde (Watts 2001, 261), the play's violent negations take on a deeper meaning when considered in the terms I have explored in this chapter. The relations staged in Farah's play between characters from different genders and races are here figured by Baraka as *necessarily* mutually degrading, as forms of exploitation that should be eliminated rather than reimagined.[xv] In this sense, the reticence of the arriving army is significant: one of the most remarkable features of Baraka's play is the black soldiers' refusal to speak with the black woman or the white tramps before they open fire on them. As execution takes the place of dialogue, the reason for the Beckettian intertext becomes clear, since Baraka's call for a radical independence, achieved in one act, is specifically launched against *Godot*'s vision of being in relation, iterative and seemingly without satisfying conclusion. In this way, Baraka's play brings into relief, through negation, the ethical dialogics of Beckett's play, which Farah would later stage in explicitly global terms and, which, in turn, the editors of Curtis & Brown would ask him to rewrite in the more legible forms of Third-World nationalism.

The Novel as Gift

In describing the globality of Beckett and Farah's work, and its tension with certain formations of national culture, I am not offering a critique of the idea of national culture in Third-World writing nor denying the current importance of the nation-state as a sphere for politics. Instead, this chapter offers a picture of the global work, its form and function, at two critical moments when the horizons of culture, ethics, and politics were being rethought. In this way, it endeavors to give a new meaning to what Jameson termed the "externalities" of Beckett's play and, in turn, reassess the externalities of certain signal works from the postcolonial world.

Indeed, the importance of dialogue in Farah's work exemplifies Eileen Julien's notion of a singularly "extroverted" African novel (2006).[xvi] What is more, it allows us to conceive of extroversion not as a compromised or conflicted state—as it appears, for example, in the criticism of Timothy Brennan (1990) and Sarah Brouillette (2007)—but rather as the ethical paradigm for works that aim to establish relations or reconceive given relations by raising the problem of reciprocity. This claim invests texts with a certain degree of agency, a kind of *mana*. In this sense, a novel or play comes to resemble a gift, in Marcel Mauss's influential account, since the gift is ensouled and animated (with *hau*) in such a way that it binds through its circulation—its outward turn (extro-version). To the animated work corresponds an animated world, the kind that emerges from Buber's I-You relation, which explicitly drew upon Mauss's earlier essay on magic (1970, 71-72). Indeed, Kojin Karatani has recently suggested that Buber's conception of dialogue

corresponds to the mode of gift exchange and the forms of community it shapes (2014, 50-54). This idea of the work as gift is made explicit in one of Farah's later, and most important, novels, *Gifts* (1993), which in recent years has become a touchstone for the discussion of the place of the African or postcolonial novel within the field of contemporary world literature. I will conclude by looking at this mature work of Farah's, reading it within the terms generated by his formative years in Chandigarh and as a bookend to my account of the global work in the postwar era.

Set in late 1980s Mogadishu, *Gifts* explores how the problem of exchange structures daily life and the world at large. The story centers on the household of Duniya, a Somali nurse, whose generosity in adopting a foundling leads to her union with Bosaaso, a wealthy Somali recently returned from the United States. The novel juxtaposes the give-and-take of Somali life under power outages and resource shortages in the later 1980s with various forms of international aid, which Farah suggests, often debilitate more than benefit the Somali people—"gifts" made in the name of development. Duniya, who would like her epitaph to read that she "distrusted all givers," insists that the wrong kind of foreign aid, while it strengthens the position of a ruling elite, can mire people in a "labyrinth of dependence" (1999, 22). Thus the novel offers a bracing critique of the IMF loans and strategic food aid that keeps "failed states" such as Somalia in debt and rulers such as Siyad Barré in power. This critique is carried out through interpolated, fictionalized newspaper clippings that describe these "gifts." Yet the idea of the gift is explored in myriad other ways as well: characters editorialize on gifts, recount parables and anecdotes, and engage in frequent, if inconclusive, dialogues on the subject. In this way, the text

is fundamentally dialogic in the manner that Farah insisted on in his first letters to Heinemann.

Gifts is also a resonant example of what Bakhtin considered "dialogization" in the novel, with its "movement of the theme [here, the gift] through different languages and speech types" (1981, 263). According to Bakthin,"we should imagine the work as a rejoinder in a given dialogue, whose style is determined by its interrelationship with other rejoinders in the same dialogue (in the totality of the conversation)" (274). While Bakhtin's argument addresses the novel genre as such, this dialogic conception of the work is thematized and made explicit by Farah. *Gifts* opens with Duniya waking from a dream: "In which Duniya sees the outline of a story emerging from the mist surrounding her, as the outside world impinges on her space and thoughts" (3). The novel's close, in which Duniya and the other characters' celebrate her impending marriage to Bosaaso, inverts the "impingement" of the opening lines: "The world was an audience, ready to be given Duniya's story from the beginning" (246). Thus the novel is conceived of both as a rejoinder in a dialogue and as a gift, and this conception transforms the world into an interlocutor.

Within Farah's critique of the negative consequences of aid, how are we to understand this dialogue, the novel as gift, and the world as audience? Peter Hitchcock has argued that Farah's narrative "gift" is the "transaction of the exotopic author with his postcolonial state" (2010, 106). This conception of dialogue encloses the audience-world in an "intimate space" in which Farah "might be read to speak directly to Africans" (119). Hitchcock thus posits a homology between the novel's

dialogic context and its critique of foreign aid: "For the postcolonial nation to exist beyond colonialism it must not give back, it must not owe, it must not acknowledge debt for that which is given" (107). While a trenchant statement on IMF loans and other abusive forms of debt, Hitchcock's reading unnecessarily limits the dialogue opened up by Farah's work, implying that in order to be genuine its reach must be restricted to a national public sphere or Africans.

A more helpful account of Farah's novel, and contemporary world literature, emerges in Pheng Cheah's recent discussion of the latter as "a world-making activity"—for which he takes *Gifts* as example. World literature, Cheah argues, "seeks to be disseminated, read, and received around the world so as to change that world and the life of a given people within it" (2008, 36). Although Cheah never explicitly aligns the agency of literature with that of the gift, he implies as much, when he describes it as "the force of a passage, an experience through which we are given and receive any determinable reality"—literature, in short, "opens a world" (35). For Cheah, this conception of the world "does not abolish national differences but takes place and is to be found in the intervals, mediations, passages, and crossings between national borders. The world is a form of relating or being-with" (30). Cheah distinguishes the world, in these terms, from the ideological construct of the globe: "the totality produced by processes of globalization [...] a bounded object or entity in Mercatorian space" (30). Cheah's idea of the world as mode of relation and being-with clearly overlaps and affirms the dynamic I have located in the global works of Beckett and Farah. Yet I want to slightly distinguish my reading of the novel, and conception of the global work, from Cheah's account by looking at *Gifts* in

light of Farah's previous writing.

For Cheah, "Farah's central theme is that a people needs to own itself before it can be responsible for its actions and its place in the world. The permanent receipt of foreign aid obstructs that self-possession." Instead, Cheah argues, "Farah associates a more salutary vision of the world with a Somalian communal form of giving" (37). I want to pause here upon the alternatives Cheah finds in the novel as indices of how he understands the worldly work: an ideal of collective self-possession and a return to Somali tradition. First, this ideal of self-possession clearly returns us to *From a Crooked Rib*—and Farah himself has commented: "*Gifts* is going back to the same story as Ebla's" (2002, 37). Yet in that novel, as we saw, Ebla's desire for self-possession was impossible outside the relational conditions of dialogue. What is more, Ebla's plight was unresolved by her absorption into the self-possession of impending Somali nationalism. While Farah emphatically resists dependency in relations between men and women, the First- and Third-World, the alternative he posits is an open-ended, and distributed, search for interdependence, not an ongoing pursuit of self-possession.

In this regard, the return of a "Somalian communal form of giving" is not a solution that leads to self-possession by going back behind modernity and globalization. Rather it is an important element in an ongoing dialogue, opened up by the novel, on the kinds of ethical relations that emerge through forms of giving. Duniya "distrust[s] all givers" in large part because she, like Ebla, was given in marriage to an old man at a young age. In other words, the problem of the gift runs through the Somali people as well as the world at large. Indeed, it is contained in

Duniya's name, which is Arabic for the lower or secular world—the "cosmos." Yet as the characters discuss at one point, Duniya's name was given to her in more than the usual sense, deriving as it does from the Arabic vocabulary of Islam: "They talked at length of traders, Arab and European, wandering the African continent, propagating their faith, making gifts of their deities and beliefs (like present-day foreign aid), presents that the Africans accepted with little question." "What was in it for the Arabs to *give* us their world-view," asks Duniya suspiciously, "together of course with an Allah-created cosmos?" (96). At the locus of self-identity and self-possession, the proper name, Duniya finds the logic of the gift and the traces of previous exchanges, dependencies, and relations. Such relations, Farah suggests, fundamentally constitute the world and our place within it. This does not mean that Duniya's suspicion is wrong headed—that she should simply accept such gifts without question. But it does mean that putting the achievement of self-possession before or outside relationality risks putting a person or people on an impossible path—forward toward radical autonomy, backward toward a pure origin.

While one might align the "global" with "cosmos" in the above quote, taking them as ideological constructs, I want to qualify as global the dialogism of Farah's novel and the vision of interdependence it articulates. By this conception, relationality and being-with do not just arise at the margins of wholly autonomous worlds. Rather they are constitutive features of the precariously open world we inhabit—an openness that requires reciprocity as its ethical horizon. Farah's figuration of Somali dependency in *Gifts*, then, is not in the sole service of the national-cultural self-possession that is explicit in Hitchcock's reading and implicit

in Cheah's. Rather, Farah's global novel is in tune with the vision of fraught interdependence that can be found in his earlier Chandigarh writing and, before that, Beckett's work. In this sense, we might even understand Somalia's appearance in *Gifts* in the terms of rightless appearance, whereby its apparent status as a "failed state" does not so much point to a future normative sovereignty within the given geopolitical order, but rather invites us to reconsider "our condition" globally. Such a rethinking would perhaps follow Beckett's vision in his Saint-Lô essay of a form of being-with that transcends the distinctions between the "having and the not having, the giving and the taking" (1995, 277).[xvii]

Gifts ends, significantly, not by asserting a future personal and political independence but rather by affirming continued relations. This is figured, on the one hand, through Duniya's impending marriage. "Don't all stories end in marriage," her daughter asks, "or the dissolution of such a union?" (246). Duniya, who distrusts all givers, comes to reforge through dialogue the "invisible chain" of her gift relationship with men into forms of reciprocity with her brother, Abshir, and lover, Bosaaso (7). Yet the conclusion also affirms the relations between the Somali people and the world, despite the dependency that has afflicted their recent history. This relation is reimagined as the world becomes an audience through the performative declaration of the novel as gift. If the novel's audience receives it as such, it must rethink itself through the relation, much like Duniya does, when in accepting Bosaaso she comes to conceive of herself as part of a potential "we"—"separable and linked at the same time" (151). Mauss's basic point was that the gift makes appear such a totality, and, as Karatani elaborates, through its exchange "a larger

community with a segmentary form is established" (2014, 50). Accepting the novel's gift, then, allows the audience-world to recognize Somali dependency as a crisis of global interdependence.

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[i] Davis's cause was adopted by the Le Front Humain, a nascent globalist movement run by French Resistance hero Robert Soulage-"Sarrazac." Sarrazac organized a "Conseil d'Avis" for Davis, which included leading intellectuals and public figures, such as Camus, Breton, and Wright (both Breton and Camus participated in the UN interruption). Davis went on to lead rallies at the Salle Pleyel, Velodrome d'Hiver (which drew crowds ranging from 12,000-20,000), and entered into discussions with Herbert Evatt, President of the UN General Assembly, and Vincent Auriol, then president of France. By 1949, Davis would affirm there had been "1,924 individual articles on [him] in France," in addition to extensive coverage in Germany and the world press, nearly 60,000 letters sent to him from around the world, and as part of the newly formed International Registry of World Citizens, he had helped issue 650,000 identification cards based on his own self-issued World Citizen ID (Davis 1961, 75-77). For a concise history of these events, see Baratta's chapter on Davis (2004, 399-20).

[ii] Davis's other performances similarly probe the limits of international law: issuing papers for a world government that does not exist; taking the declaration of the Palais de Chaillot as "international territory" as an invitation to camp there: "what better home would there be for a homeless citizen of the world?" (32). The complexities and paradoxes that arise in these moments lend his account a comic quality, and he early describes himself as a "clown" (15-16). For example, when officials attempt to evict Davis from his Palais encampment, despite its extraterritorial status, he tries to use his "*refus de séjour*" in France as an entry pass, claiming it is *only* on extraterritorial ground that he is in fact permitted to reside (33).

[iii] Breton during this period was still a leading French intellectual, the figurehead of the surrealist group as well as the last representative from its heyday in the 1920s and 30s. Expelled from the Communist Party in the 1930s, he had written a manifesto with Leon Trotsky in Mexico in 1938 and had spent the war years not in the Resistance, but rather in Martinique, the U.S., and Canada. Returned to France, he was virulently opposed to the French Communist Party (PCF), which he considered Stalinist, as well as Gaullism and "Americanization," that is, imperialism and world capitalism respectively. This embattled position led to his alliance with the likes of Camus and his support for Davis and "mondialisme" (globalism).

[iv] The other pillars, as laid out in "Discours à la Mutualité," are as follows: "1. The establishment of a Tribune of global [mondiale] conscience [...] 3. The registering of world citizens in each country. 4. The creation of specialized commissariats bringing together, at the global scale, the technicians most able to resolve today's crucial problems, such as food supply [l'alimentation], the suffering of children, and atomic

energy. 5. The election of an Assembly of peoples from the whole world constituted by one delegate for every million inhabitants" (Breton 1999, 998).

[v] Viewed from a wider angle, Beckett's letter was written during the months in which two of the most intractable political problems of the twentieth and twenty-first century took definitive shape in the formalization of Apartheid in South Africa and outbreak of the First Arab Israeli War. The ramifications of these events of 1948 will be the partial subjects of my second and third coda.

[vi] Here and following I will generally quote and discuss the French text of *Godot*, the language of which I find slightly more precise and revelatory. Long quotations of text will be followed by Beckett's English translation, and I will occasionally quote from the English when it more easily fits syntactically into my own prose.

[vii] Arendt's discussion here is in many ways at the root of Giorgio Agamben's notion of "bare life" (1998, 126-34).

[viii] The English translation is even sharper than the French: "I am perhaps not particularly human, but who cares?" (27).

[ix] "Whereas recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world..."

[x] Although it falls beyond the scope of this essay, the connection between Arendt's analysis, in *Origins*, of the rightless people's loss of the common world and her analysis, in *The Human Condition*, of "wordlessness" as a Christian ideal is worth considering, since the former discussion seems to generate the latter, yet the latter does not mention the political condition of the rightless (1998, 54-57). In a way, Arendt's trajectory here prefigures the arc of Giorgio Agamben's work from *Homer Sacer* onward.

[xi] Arendt's argument about the common ground of significance—the world that precedes, shapes, and survives us—conceives of culture in terms similar to Bildung. And as Joseph Slaughter has argued at length (2007), the trajectory of classical Bildung is ratified in Article 29.1 of the UDHR: "Everyone has duties to the community in which alone the free and full development of his personality is possible."

[xii] In addition to the performances Duerfahrd cites, I would add, with special relevance to my argument in the coda, the 2011 performance of *While Waiting*, the Arabic translation of *Godot*, performed by the Freedom Theatre in the West Bank and dedicated to the memory of their assassinated director Juliano Mer Khamis. One could also point, in a much different register, to the Beckettian moment in the fourth season of *Games of Thrones*, in which Barry McGovern—the most well-known interpreter of the Vladimir role over the last few decades—makes a cameo as a "dying merchant." His final words, meant to bring the world of *Godot* into the world of Westeros, surprisingly confirms my argument for the centrality of giving to Beckett's ethical vision: "You give me. I give you. Fair. A balance. No balance anymore."

[xiii] As Le Corbusier wrote to Nehru in a letter from July, 1955: "I am certain that by raising the 'Open Hand' in this location, India will be making a gesture which will confirm your decisive intervention at the crucial moment of machine-age evolution

and its dangerous implications... I shall end these remarks with that declaration I made in one of my books: 'Architecture is the expression of the spirit of an epoch'" (qtd. in Weber 2008, 642). Perhaps surprisingly, Nehru elected not to build the Open Hand monument.

[xiv] Even Fredric Jameson's influential work on the Russian formalists, *The Prison-House of Language* (1972), contains no mention of Bakthin.

[xv] Initial responses to the play were in many ways more troubling than its staged violence. As Jerry Watts summarizes, "Henry Lacey argued that the black woman in the play must be killed because she is a knowing participant in her own subjugation" while for "Theodore Hudson the meaning of the play was clear: blacks who choose to prostitute themselves to whites should be executed" (2001, 261-62).

[xvi] Julien describes the extroverted novel in the following terms: "What African readers and readers beyond Africa think of typically as the African novel is, I submit, a particular type of narrative characterized above all by its intertextuality with hegemonic or global discourses" (2006, 681). She intends "extroversion" as descriptive term, not one of praise or blame, and it expressly does not recapitulate the common critique that authors "'write' for a hegemonic or international audience'" (685). In fact, its movement and reach indexes its "power" (689).

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Chapter 2

Allegory: Marginal Figures and the Ethos of the Global Novel

Toward the middle of J.M. Coetzee's *Disgrace* (1999), David Lurie and his daughter Lucy take a walk through her remote property in the Eastern Cape and run up against a gate that borders it, bearing the sign "SAPPI Industries—Trespassers will be Prosecuted" (69). The sign receives no commentary, yet its message resonates across the novel. The judiciary threat recalls David's trial for sexual misconduct with a student, which precipitates his flight to Lucy's farm. The sign also grimly looks forward to the three men who will trespass on Lucy's land, robbing and raping her. This foreshadowing is ironic, since Lucy will refuse David's pleas to prosecute the "trespassers," responding that her story, "in this place, at this time," is private, not public (112). Lucy's restriction, however, is complicated by the sign's metatextual message. Founded in South Africa in 1936, Sappi is now one of the largest paper manufacturers in the world, producing pulp in nine countries and selling its products in over one hundred. Lucy's farm, we are reminded, arrives through the paper matter of the novel; today this raw material of national "imagined community" moves in transnational networks; and despite the farm's isolation, and Lucy's ascription of a private meaning to what occurs there, "this place, this time" is given to displacement.

In a recent article, David Atwell suggests that such metafictional moments "[enact] the conditions of authorship under which [Coetzee] writes" (2008, 235). The conditions that underwrite this scene could be described, in Alexander

Beecroft's terms, as "global literature": literature written in a language that transcends national and continental borders, yet which continues to represent itself as part of a national system (2008, 98-99). "Global" for Beecroft refers to an Anglophone text's sphere of circulation. Yet Coetzee's semaphore signals a further turn in our thinking of global literature, whereby the potential of circulation impinges upon the very place of the novel—its semantic shaping of character, action, and event. It thus asks us to think together the material world in which the novel moves and the literary world that the novel opens up, placing their juncture under the ironic sign of trespass, to pass beyond. Taking the sign's warning as an invitation, this chapter attempts to pass beyond the global as solely a sphere of circulation in order to look for it as emerging from certain works—even works such as *Disgrace* that appear rooted in a particular place and time.

Coetzee's novel takes place in the transitional period after the end of Apartheid—an event, which is frequently qualified as global. Yet the meaning of this use of the word is not necessarily clear: Does global simply signify the extent of interest in Apartheid's end or the widely publicized Truth and Reconciliation Commission? Does it refer to how the transitional government and TRC drew on international precedents and thus might usher in new procedures for future periods of reconciliation? Or does global also reflect the hope that new possibilities for ethical life not restricted to South Africa might, but without any certainty, emerge from this historical moment. This last idea, which I will pursue here, does justice to the manner in which recent writing from South Africa has become central to global literature (in Beecroft's sense) and world literature (in Damrosch's) precisely

because of its ethical resonance—a fact which puts pressure on the notion of ethos as restricted to "this place, this time." In positing the globality of certain South African fictions, I am not suggesting that it is historically determined in a direct sense—that the global work necessarily and exclusively emerges from contexts already deemed world-historical. Instead, I want to situate the global work at the nexus of overdetermined relations between history, figuration, and a potential world audience. In doing so, I will carry over and intensify my claim at the end of the last chapter that the global does not simply prey upon organic worlds (pace Cheah) or name such a given world's circulation (pace Beecroft) but actually inheres in a world through the manner in which it is opened up.

This emergent conception of the global impinges upon recent novel criticism, which predicates the ethical significance of the genre on its capacity to circulate difference globally. This idea informs Shameem Black's claim that border-crossing fictions place otherness on "the stage of late twentieth- and early twenty-first-century globalization" as well as David Palumbo-Liu's more ambivalent account of global literature as "the deliverance others" (Black 2010, 6). Conceiving of the global, like Beecroft does, as a field of circulation, these critics focus literary ethics on the problem of representing and acknowledging social difference. Looking for the global within the work, however, inflects ethics toward the work's capacity to open up the common—a potential that has largely been viewed with pessimism. At the end of *Mimesis*, as we saw, Auerbach augured that the modern novel's worldwide spread, and its "unprejudiced, precise, interior and exterior representation of the random moment in the lives of different people," would make apparent "a common

life of mankind on earth" (2003, 552). This common life, however, would arise at the expense of history through an "economic and cultural leveling process," what he calls in a later essay "standardization," the literary correlative of which occurs when the field of world literature intersects with the production of culture—the very crossroads marked on Lucy's land.[xviii]

In what follows, I will locate the global within certain works as their ethical potential—a notion that revisits and revises what Auerbach called a common life. Such an account of the global work raises questions around its historicity. One such issue, voiced by Lucy in *Disgrace*, is how seemingly particular experience acquires larger meaning, a "public" shape. In taking up her question, this chapter extends the previous discussion of public representation, reconceiving the figurative aspect or Bild in bildung, which, as Gadamer notes, "comprehends both Nachbild (image, copy) and Vorbild (model)" (2004, 10). Moving beyond the language of Bildung, I will describe the problem raised by Lucy as the relation between figures and their horizon, the ethos of the novel. What I call ethos has largely been articulated in the genre through type and allegory, forms which have been enlisted to describe the essentially national nature of "Third-World" writing and eschewed by ethical criticism in its emphasis on the particularity of literary others.

While often read as an allegory of the new South Africa, *Disgrace* surprisingly deploys figure as the means of making seemingly marginal actions and events ramify without restricting their ethical import to a national horizon. Elaborating this potential of figure through reference to Auerbach's early essay "Figura" (1938), whose worldly implications have been largely overlooked, and tracing its

crystallization in *Disgrace*'s famous final scene, I delineate a conception of figure that illuminates Coetzee's post-Apartheid writing as well as that of Zoë Wicomb, in addition to other global works by Teju Cole and W.G. Sebald. The salience of these works is not limited to their capacity to expose us to otherness, a task arguably performed by any text, but also inheres in their ability to give shape to what we might call globality. They do so, I claim, through marginal figures. By attending to the dynamic form and paradigmatic function of these figures, we can begin to see how the field of global literature can open up the seeming contradiction of a global ethos.

Traveling Light

Writing from South Africa has long occupied a unique position within global or world literature. The historical injustice of Apartheid was not only represented in South African writing, but, as Coetzee stated in his 1987 Jerusalem Prize acceptance speech, came to shape its very form (1992, 98).[xix] It was under unique pressure to address the brutality and fragmentation of South African life while mediating it for a wider world of readers, horrified at Apartheid's deviation from norms of political community. This world attention only increased after the transition to democratic governance in 1994 and during the subsequent Truth and Reconciliation Commission, which was, in Catherine Cole's words, "the most public and publicized truth commission the world had seen" (2010, 5). This heightened publicity impinged upon, and was articulated through, the relations between individual and

collective history. In Richard Wilson's analysis, for example, the TRC encouraged a discourse whereby the "nation is conceived of as a physical body, as a generally South African (that is, not generically human) individual projected onto a national scale"—a national-allegorical formation that will serve as a kind of foil in my discussion of global fiction (2001, 14). Whether or not one accepts Wilson's analysis, the TRC and political transition were characterized by a heightened theatricality, in Cole's words (2010, 17), that in turn allowed seemingly particular lives and events to resonant in new ways both within and beyond South Africa.

The shifting boundaries between private and public, individual and collective, national and international are explored in Zoe Wicomb's novel *Playing in the Light* (2006). Wicomb's novel takes place in Cape Town during the TRC trials in the late 1990s and unfolds through the viewpoint of Marion, a conservative and intensely private woman who comes to discover that her parents were actually "play whites." The novel's title partially derives from this hidden past, since her parents came to play a role, "whiteness," in order to take on the only acceptable form of public life under Apartheid. Yet Marion comes to decide "there was nothing playful about their condition [...] Under the glaring spotlight of whiteness" (123). This unplayful or coerced "play"—the denial of one's self and one's history—is offset by another set of associations in the title that refer to the potential of the post-Apartheid moment. Play, in this sense, describes the loosening of conventions and identities that allows history to come to light. The novel conceives of this process in theatrical terms, whereby "play" entails a willingness to take on new roles and viewpoints while "light" is the medium through which history becomes public and

shared. In this sense, the title reflects upon its own procedure of bringing an individual story, specifically Marion's, to light and, by extension, on the South African novel's ability to refract and play with the light of Apartheid's end.

If Wicomb's novel conceives the post-Apartheid moment as theatrical, it also entails new relations to the world at large. This idea is explored in the novel through the conceit of travel. Marion runs a travel agency, a business that booms as Apartheid's end offers a new image of the "Rainbow Nation" as destination and, in turn, emboldens wealthy South Africans to venture out into the world. Travel also comes to serve as a metaphor for novel reading. Marion's employee and eventual friend Brenda, an aspiring writer, suggests that reading novels is a way "to live vicariously through other people's words, in other people's worlds" (107). This vocation for the reader rhymes with the nature of the new South Africa: "Perhaps I can now keep crossing to and fro, to different places," Marion thinks, "perhaps that is what the new is all about—an era of unremitting crossings" (107). Marion is constitutionally resistant to such crossing—she is not a novel reader, nor, more surprisingly, does she "buy into the transformative power of travel" (81). But she eventually "buys in" to both, and at the end of the novel Marion travels to London and Glasgow with a stack of South African novels that she reads on trains and in hotels. ("If Marion hadn't read any there was nothing wrong with reading them abroad," the bookstore clerk informs her, "you have to read them somewhere" [189-90]). The novel is thus not only a means of travel, Wicomb suggests, but also a traveling genre, and the field of its "unremitting crossings" extends beyond the new South Africa.

If "unremitting crossing" entails the interminable encounter with alterity, such encounter is a concise description of the work recent ethical criticism assigns to novel readers. Yet this account of reading is bound by a conception of the novel as precisely the means of giving form to such a "bad infinity"—of selecting, shaping, and exposing the exemplary. The tension between these ideas comes to the fore when Marion's travels bring her to the Garnethill neighborhood in Glasgow—"a place," Marion hopes, where she will "[learn] to read" (202). There a local man shows her a series of flagstones "where stories about people's lives in Garnethill have been carved into the stone" (203). While she at first finds them charming, the stones come to evoke all her previous antipathy toward travel and the violation of boundaries. Marion wonders what "anecdote would be selected to bear the weight of presenting her to the world?" She shudders "at the thought of her life laid out in lines, carved into a stone tablet for a tourist to bend over, bum in the air, and read" (204). Marion's thoughts ironically refer to both the weight given her story through Wicomb's plotting and our own attempt as readers to derive meaning from it.

Despite her literal and imaginative travels, then, Marion maintains her distaste for the public display of private lives. This distaste turns to anger when her friend Brenda reveals, in the novel's last scene, that she has been writing about Marion's "play-white" father. His story, Brenda announces, is "the story that should be written": "Writing my own story, I know, is what someone like me is supposed to do [...] Mine is the story of everybody else in Bonteheuwel, dull as dishwater [...] Now your father, there's a story—with his pale skin as capital, ripe for investment..." The statement "should be written" inflects ethics away from "unremitting

crossings"—and the problem of their impingement on the private self—toward an imperative to capture and attend to the exemplary story, one that stages larger problems, reveals deeper meaning. The kind of novel Brenda will pursue is not aimed at mediating her own particular experience, then, or the experiences of those who share her background, but rather aims to open up a larger history through staging an "individual" story that might bear its weight.

Wicomb's depiction of the post-Apartheid moment as one of heightened theater and transit thus concludes with a sustained, if inconclusive, reflection on the kind of writing and reading best able to respond to it. While the novel, as a traveling form, has the potential to open up this history, it runs up against recalcitrant boundaries as well as the problem of how any story can carry larger meaning after historical injustice and within an era of "unremitting crossings." While Wicomb rehearses these issues in *Playing in the Light*—to which I will return in more detail later on—she addresses them through pointed and sustained reference to Coetzee's work.

Marion begins reading one of Coetzee's early novels while in transit from London to Glasgow: "Settled in the train with her bag of padkos ... Marion looks forward to starting the next novel, *In the Heart of the Country*. She finds the title inspiring; she chooses to read it as her country having a real, live, throbbing heart" (197). Marion approaches Coetzee's novel as giving access to the heart of South Africa and its protagonist as a simultaneous version of both herself and the nation. Yet Magda, the protagonist of the work, refuses Marion's attempts at such identification: "She started reading greedily, eager for the story that kept on

sidestepping just beyond her grasp, but the voices at the end are too hard, the words are indeed stone" (202). She later rereads the text, hoping that "perhaps this time Magda's stones will crack open to reveal meaning in pearly red pomegranate seeds" (202). These stony sentences rhyme with the flagstones of Garnethill, and Marion's reading lessons offer a phenomenal language for the formal problems I will explore in this chapter: Coetzee's characters and their actions at times take on a peculiar weight, seem to contain deeper, larger meaning. While this stony quality suggests their allegorical nature, the work nevertheless resists national allegoresis—the story keeps "sidestepping just beyond [Marion's] grasp." Put differently, Coetzee presents us with figures that seem to displace any determinate horizon. In what follows, I will develop these terms by looking at Coetzee's *Disgrace*, the most widely read and commented work to emerge from the post-Apartheid era as well as a signal work of what Beecroft terms global literature.

Disgrace and the Ethos of the Novel

Coetzee's novel of post-Apartheid unfolds through the eyes of David Lurie, an ageing humanities professor at Cape Technical University who is censured for sexually assaulting a female student. After a very public dismissal from his post, David seeks refuge from disgrace at his daughter Lucy's farm. Her subsequent rape by three black men during a farm attack eerily rhymes with his earlier actions, and the rest of the novel details their disagreements over how to respond to these events. Lucy decides to give up her land to her black neighbor, Petrus, while continuing to live in

her home and keeping the child conceived from violation. David writes an unperformable libretto and begins volunteering at a local animal clinic, caring for the bodies of euthanized dogs. Upon publication, the seemingly bleak national vistas offered by these conclusions infuriated many South Africans: Lucy's rape, and her subsequent "subjugation" (159), was read as an allegory for the fate of whites under the new regime, while David's actions, conversely, were scandalously illegible in the language of national politics. This reception is well summarized by the probing title of an early newspaper review by Jakes Gerwel: "Is *this* the right image of our nation?"—a question which recalls the mode of reading Marion brought to Coetzee's early work. Gerwel's question is premised on an idea that is largely sustained by accounts of global literature as solely a field of circulation: namely that the novel's task remains, in some sense, to "image" the nation.

Disgrace rehearses such a national mode of representation in its internal performance of "Sunset at the Globe Salon," a play that David attends in which his student-victim Melanie has a leading role. It is "a comedy of the new South Africa set in a hairdressing salon in Hillbrow, Johannesburg. On stage a hairdresser, flamboyantly gay, attends to two clients, one black, one white. Patter passes among the three of them: jokes, insults. Catharsis seems to be the presiding principle: all the coarse old prejudices brought into the light of day and washed away in gales of laughter" (23). Despite his surly tone, David rightly understands the play as the expression of national community: characters assume a representative status based on race and sexuality; the audience works through a troubled collective history in the innocuous setting of a salon. Shameem Black has argued that this social slapstick

ironically "signals the commitment of the novel to a darker view of an inescapable past" (2010, 235)—to be played out later on Lucy's farm. Yet the play within a novel might also be read as a mise en abyme of the very kind of national performance that *Disgrace* refuses to stage.

It is worth pausing here on the question of what such a national, or simply collective, mode of representation might entail. The staging of "Sunset at the Globe Salon," and David's interpretation of it, assumes the integral link between particular characters and a larger social or communal meaning. In novel theory, this link is most influentially articulated in Georg Lukács's theory of type. In his famous discussion of *Lost Illusions* (1837-43), Lukács describes how Lucien de Rubempré's particular fate illustrates that of post-Napoleonic France. Balzac achieves this by binding together the "totality of the social process" with the "totality of character": "The centre of the stage [Mittelpunkt der Handlung] is always occupied by the figure [Figur] whose personal, individual qualities are the most suitable for the demonstration, as extensively as possible and in transparent connection with the whole, of some important single aspect of the social process" (1950, 55). This fundamental relation of part to whole in Lukácsian realism, in Fredric Jameson's words, "may serve as a central example of the way in which the cultural text is taken as an essentially allegorical model of society as a whole" (1981, 33). Jameson, in one of the most notorious claims about the expressive dimension of global literature, redirects the thrust of Lukácsian typology to describe all third-world fiction as national allegory ("Third-World Literature")—a claim that has informed many critical responses to Coetzee's work.

What connects both type and allegory is that seemingly discrete figurations somehow point beyond their particularity, specifically as illustrations or embodiments of a totality. With an eye to the word's distant nearness to ethics, we can describe this formal dynamic as the ethos of the novel. The word ethos originally refers to both individual "character" and the general "character" of a people, place, or age, a dual focus that keeps in view the relations between part and whole, particular and general, individual and common that the novel is said to mediate. Figure is the discrete term that projects beyond its immediate outline, while the totality that secures its extended meaning is the horizon. This latter concept finds elaboration in Heidegger's thought, as do figure (*Gestalt*) and ethos, for whom the horizon is not "that at which something stops but … that from which something begins its presencing" ("Building" 152).[xx] Despite their substantial disagreements, Heidegger, Lukács, and Jameson all insist on determinate horizons. For Lukács, type depends on the "organic, indissoluble connection between man as a private individual and man as a social being, as a member of a community" (1950, 8). For Heidegger: "The poetic projection of truth that sets itself into work as figure [Gestalt] is ... never carried out in the direction of an indeterminate void. Rather, in the work, truth is thrown toward the coming preservers, that is, toward an historical group of men [geschichtlichen Menschentum]" ("Origin" 73). This is the ethical function of the artwork for Heidegger: its ability to ground a mode of dwelling, an ethos, for a historical community.[xxi]

Bringing the above terms to bear on *Disgrace* reframes the problem of its allegorical relationship to South Africa: if the novel offers salient figures, it

nevertheless withholds from them a determinate, specifically national, horizon. Characters' names do appear to evoke ideas in allegorical fashion, such as Petrus, who in Elizabeth Lowry's words would be "the rock on which the future will be built" (14). And this national destiny for black South Africans would seem to materialize through Petrus's evolution in the novel: from living in Lucy's stable, to building his own house, and finally taking over her property. Yet if Petrus appears at first to be *the* figure *of* the new South Africa, the pull towards reading what happens on the remote property in allegorical terms is marked as delusive, for example, when David describes Lucy's modest home as "the big house" (135) or when he muses on their farm attack as an image of the fate of whites "here in darkest Africa" (95). Such moments reveal failed attempts to compass the totality of social life in neat images, and in doing so they undermine any attempt to substitute Petrus's house for the big house, to rework the meaning of "darkest Africa" into a national destiny.

If Petrus cannot simply be understood as the rock of the nation, his name nevertheless indicates the text's deep concern with its own figures as ethical ground. Lucy, in particular, comes to embody a kind of groundedness. She is said to live "close to the ground" (210), a phrase which expresses her desire to stay on the land, even in a precarious position, but which also describes a way of acting without reference to abstract ideas, and in turn, not allowing one's actions to be abstracted from their surround. In this way, Lucy illustrates the problem of ethos in the novel: she exemplifies a compelling way of being that arises precisely as a response to the history of "this place, this time"; yet she seems to resist the very predication that

would make her an example *of* anything beyond herself—such as white South Africans. And Lucy's "groundedness" in the novel is in many ways matched by David's sense of his own insignificance, and the atypical nature of his actions, within the social horizon of the new South Africa. We read toward the end of the novel, when David attempts to qualify his disgrace, "He thinks of himself as obscure and growing obscurer. A figure from the margins of history" (167).

Here *Disgrace*'s refusal of national allegory has made possible its recuperation by ethical criticism, for which it has become a touchstone text. For recent novel criticism largely predicates the genre's ethics precisely on the atypical, nonallegorical nature of its figurations. This emphasis on the particular is in many ways a cogent response to adjudications of ethos—especially in Heidegger[xxii]—that make representation the expression of a binding communal being. Instead of figures that point beyond themselves to communities, ethical criticism conceives of characters as autonomous, largely private individuals—much like Marion in Wicomb's novel.[xxiii] And instead of revealing a collective horizon, novels expose us to these particular others—through "unremitting crossings."

Thus Derek Attridge has influentially argued that if *Disgrace* comments on the new South Africa, such an "allegory" remains secondary to its "singular evocation of the peculiar mental and emotional world of an individual undergoing a traumatic episode in his life" (2004, 63). David begins to care for dogs, Attridge contends, because "the conventional moral injunctions about the human community are themselves too compromised" (181-82). Such commitments are replaced by a personal idea of justice that fulfills "a profound need to preserve the ethical integrity

of the self" (187). The ethical nature of David's experience ("individual," "peculiar") is predicated on its distance from any common horizon—on the integral self *as* ethical horizon. And a similar distance determines our ethical response to David as particular, different, other—not a "model," Attridge states, "for any reader's own conduct" (190).

If conceived as political allegory *Disgrace* seems inadequate to, or even a betrayal of, the new South Africa, ethical criticism severs its ties to any collective life or future action. Yet neither way of reading the novel accounts for the hold it has exercised over readers around the world. The ethical force of *Disgrace* does not inhere simply in the challenge David's prickly particularity confronts us with, which would make it a bleak novel indeed, but rather in the compelling ways of being and acting that he and Lucy at times body forth—ways which are shaped by the world-historical event of Apartheid's end yet are not limited to a South African horizon. *Disgrace* illustrates here the problematic intersection of novelistic ethics, conceived solely as the exposure to difference, with global literature, conceived solely as a sphere of circulation. Rather than open up a new and challenging horizon for thought and action, novels simply offer a multitude of private individuals from different places. And thus the genre loses its potential as precisely the means of giving ethical form to such a "bad infinity"—the work performed by type and allegory. Yet how might the novel give form, without doing great violence, to something as nebulous as a global ethos, which necessarily exceeds any imaginable totality or communal horizon? Attending to David as "A figure from the margins of

history" opens up a conception of figure as just such an ethical form which, rather than typify given community, gives "this place, this time" over to displacement.

From Allegory to Figure

What is, after all, "A figure from the margins of history"? Most obviously, figure here refers to David as a character: the delineation of outer appearance and inner consciousness that phenomenally emerges through the novel's language. Yet the word "figure" also takes us back to a talk Coetzee gave over a decade before *Disgrace*, published in 1988 as "The Novel Today." Coetzee offers therein a polemic on the genre, juxtaposing a novel that supplements the historical disciplines by embedding their paradigms in the textured experience of everyday life with an alternative novel, one that "evolves its own paradigms" (1988, 3). The talk abounds in what Coetzee calls "figures" (3, 4), which at one moment compare the speaker to "a member of a tribe threatened with colonization," and at another moment compare stories, much more surprisingly, to cockroaches. Thus the talk employs a second meaning of figure as rhetorical device, a deviation from standard language usage for surprising effect, and loosely aligns figure's action with the novel's paradigmatic function. We find a third use of figure in Coetzee's 1991 lecture "What is a Classic?" which he writes with and against T.S. Eliot's 1944 lecture by the same name. At one point Coetzee comments upon this structure, stating that he is "using Eliot the provincial as a pattern and figure of myself" (2002, 9). Coetzee's use of figure in this instance is overdetermined, activating several layers of the word's

deep history. Pattern is actually a synonym of figure, a meaning that derives from the translation of the Greek word schema [σχῆμα] into the Latin *figura*. Yet figure here carries a more precise, even technical meaning. Eliot is a type to which Coetzee belongs. To state the relationship explicitly, Eliot prefigures Coetzee.

Coetzee's use of figure in this last instance, and the evolving uses that made the word central to cultures from the Mediterranean world and beyond from antiquity through the Middle Ages, are elaborated in Auerbach's seminal essay "Figura," a text that in more ways than one served as a point of departure for *Mimesis*.[xxiv] In a philological tour de force, Auerbach locates in figura a rich semantic history with a shifting emphasis on appearance, representation, and interpretation. The word's earliest meaning, "plastic form," signals its phenomenal properties; yet even in its early acceptation, figura is never static, but always implies something "living," "dynamic," "incomplete," and "new." As it is reshaped by the translation of Greek philosophical terms, such as *typos* [*τύπος*] and schema (which for Aristotle included the mimic gestures of actors), figura begins to fill out into the "universal, lawful, and exemplary" at the same time as it takes on the precise contours of "statue," "image," and "portrait" (1973, 15-16). Figura finally assumes the rhetorical meaning familiar to us as figures of speech in Cicero and Quintilian: moments of language use that are "particularly developed in a poetic or rhetorical sense" (26).

The meanings of dynamic form, exemplary shape, and rhetorical deviation are later historically inflected by Christian hermeneutics in the notorious practice of figural or typological interpretation, which reads persons and events from the Hebrew Scriptures as figura that are fulfilled in the New Testament. In Auerbach's

words, "*Figura* is something real and historical which announces something else that is real and historical. The relation between the two events is revealed by an accord or similarity" (29). This is the technical sense in which Eliot is a figure for Coetzee in the 1991 lecture; more than similar types, in the sociological or even Lukácsian sense of the word, the two are typologically related. This is a historical relationship, although one which does not conform to modern notions of historical causality. In the figural mode, "events are considered not in their unbroken relation to one another, but torn apart, individually, each in relation to something other that is promised but not present" (59). Thus the figure, Auerbach writes, contains a "deeper meaning in reference to future things" (35).[xxv]

This relation based on similarity rather than causality, and the insistence on the historicity of figures in certain Christian commentators, leads Auerbach to posit a sharp distinction between figure and allegory (30, 34-35, 54-55, 63). While in allegory and symbol "at least one of the two elements is a pure sign," writes Auerbach in a later essay, "in a typological relation both the signifying and signified facts are real and concrete historical events" (1967, 111). As it pertains to the historical practice of Christian hermeneutics, Auerbach's distinction was and remains controversial.[xxvi] Yet I wish to retain it, drawing out its potential, since attending to the specific meanings of figure can illuminate those aspects of Coetzee's writing, and global literature, that have been obscured by the influential accounts that approach these in terms of the utterly particular or strictly allegorical.

Figure opens up a character, action, or event to relations based on similarity, allowing it to refer, as it were, beyond the immediate contours of person and place

without thereby reducing its essential historicity. It does so through the dynamic of displacement that obtains everywhere in the word's history: from figure's diversion of ordinary language to its dispersal of historical meaning. Displacement here does not mean the negation of self or place. Rather it describes the literary means through which the ethical horizon of each is suspended, through the salient form of figure, making small moments and small worlds into commonplaces for future thought and action. In this sense, displacement also refers to figure's power to transport the reader into what we might call, after Heidegger, "the openness of beings" ("Origin" 64).[xxvii]

All the meanings of figure discussed above—phenomenal appearance, rhetorical deviation, gestural performance, and historical type—inform the line "A figure from the margins of history" and crystallize at the end of *Disgrace* in a scene that has become a *locus classicus* of contemporary ethics,[xxviii] yet whose force arises precisely through attenuating individual perspective—through staging figure.

"A figure from the margins of history"

In the latter half of *Disgrace*, David volunteers at the clinic run by Lucy's friend Bev Shaw, caring for the bodies of euthanized animals—a task, to echo Lucy, that falls nowhere "on the list of the nation's priorities" (73). In the final scene, David brings in a three-legged dog, with whom he has a special bond:

> He can save the young dog, if he wishes, for another week. But a time must come, it cannot be evaded, when he will have to bring him to Bev Shaw in her operating room (perhaps he will carry him in his arms, perhaps he will do that for him) and caress him and brush back the fur so that the needle can find the vein, and whisper to him and support him in the moment when, bewilderingly, his legs buckle; and then, when the soul is out, fold him up and pack him away in his bag, and the next day wheel the bag into the flames and see that it is burnt, burnt up. He will do all that for him when his time comes. It will be little enough, less than little: nothing. (219-20)

Here, as elsewhere, the reader inhabits David's mind, for *Disgrace* models the "interior" and "personal" mode of representation that Auerbach claimed, at the end of *Mimesis*, would characterize the world novel. Yet the formal articulation of David's perspective begins to slightly fissure as he imagines what will be the dog's end. Up to now the motivations of other characters, such as Melanie, Petrus, and Lucy, have been enigmatic. Yet here, subtly, David's actions become similarly opaque: "a time must come," we read, but we are not told why the dog must be euthanized like the others, or why it must be today. The imperative "must" eludes the reader, since David now seems to follow a call somehow external to his consciousness. The subsequent lines reflect this, strangely poised as they are between David's internal musing (placed in parentheses, signaled by "perhaps," as though suggesting a diegetic separation) and an imaginative description of a scene in which he "must" take part. This paragraph on its own could be a powerful conclusion to the novel; it takes us imaginatively through the dog's end and David's

care for the body, even offering his stark interpretation of these events: “It will be little enough, less than little: nothing.”

And yet the novel does not end here. Retreating from the imagined incineration, the text now depicts David as he first brings the dog into the operating room—the space that is significantly called “the theatre” (142, 219):

> He crosses the surgery. “Was that the last?” asks Bev Shaw.
> “One more.”
> He opens the cage door. “Come,” he says, bends, opens his arms. The dogs wags its crippled ear, sniffs his face, licks his cheeks, his lips, his ears. He does nothing to stop it. “Come.”
> Bearing him in his arms like a lamb, he re-enters the surgery. “I thought you would save him for another week,” says Bev Shaw. “Are you giving him up?”
> “Yes, I am giving him up.” (220)

As David enters the “theatre,” the text becomes theatrical: actions are described in a bare language, uncolored by David’s consciousness. David’s speech is similarly reduced, and the dialogue falls into call and response: David laconically responds to Bev’s questions and literally calls the dog. The only words that imply an expressive, rather than simply designative, depiction of the scene occur in the simile “like a lamb.” Given the novel’s focalization, the simile would seem to “come” from David. Yet this scene, through its transition into “theatre,” is subtly different from what has come before. The simile does not so much belong to David, otherwise reticent at this moment, as to the scene itself; the reader is not seeing “with” David, but is rather presented with an enigmatic tableau in which David takes part.

This tableau recalls Abraham "giving up" his son Isaac in Genesis 22. Through this reference, and the reader's sudden distance from the inner workings of David's mind, the end of *Disgrace* bears fewer affinities to what Auerbach considered the subjectivist endpoint of the world novel than to the scene he famously placed at the origins of "Western" representation: Abraham's sacrifice, "fraught with background" (2003, 12), in which the space of ethical injunction, the divine "must," remains just beyond representation. By heeding the injunction, in Edward Said's gloss, the "figure of Abraham" comes to incarnate "promise" (2003, xx), and his actions, rather than being self-evident, elicit interpretation. Perhaps the most famous example of figural interpretation reads Isaac, who stands in for a sacrificial lamb in Genesis 22, as the figure of Christ, the lamb of God. In "giving up" the dog, David appears in the figural line that stretches back through Jesus to Abraham's offering. The simile "like a lamb" relates the end of *Disgrace* to these "events," and the various, sedimented meanings of figure are drawn out in the scene. For the simile is itself a figure in the rhetorical sense, "an image, similitude" (OED, 21b). And the emphasis on simile at the end of the novel—David describes Lucy's precarious position as "like a dog," then carries the young dog "like a lamb" (205, 220)—reworks the figural dynamic, which connects seemingly discrete phenomena "by an accord or similarity." Simile reveals such relation on the immanent plane and as a literary act, forging a connection by first displacing each element from its usual semantic context.

In this way, figure becomes the vehicle of the scene's ethos—its mode of articulation *and* displacement. Abraham's offering of Isaac became the occasion for God to renew the covenant, made in Genesis 12 and 13, that his offspring would

possess the land. The end of *Disgrace*, through Lucy's decision to give up her land, gestures toward, but does not represent, an alternative relationship to place, predicated on potential commonality. This new "covenant" is extended by David to nonhuman animals in a reversal of the Abrahamic scene: David does not "give up" the dog as a sacrificial substitute for his daughter—as a "pure sign" or metaphor. Nor is the animal's demise an allegory for the fate of whites in Africa. Rather, his insistence on treating this dog like the others paradoxically affirms the similitude and singularity of every life, and death, whether human or not. While both Lucy's and David's gestures are grounded in the history of Apartheid and its regimes of "propriety," their figural quality displaces the horizons of self and nation, transforming "this time, this place" into a commonplace for the thinking of a larger dwelling.

In his book on the ethics of global literature, Palumbo-Liu argues for the limits of the scene's figures: "it is not *all* humans who are now *like* dogs, but specifically the older white male intellectual in post-Apartheid South Africa" (2012, 66). By this account, the reach of David's act is necessarily bound by his social personhood; and to attend, rather, to how his gestures ramify would be to view him as representative of all humans, as ahistorical allegory. Such a choice, to which the present chapter proposes an alternative, is articulated by Emmanuel Lévinas in his 1950 essay "Persons or Figures." Lévinas therein denounces Paul Claudel's use of Christian hermeneutics in *Emmaüs*, in which he predicates the dignity of characters in the Hebrew Scriptures, according to Lévinas, on their capacity to reference "a drama operating on a miraculous level, in some mythological and sacred realm"

(1997, 121). Yet this justified critique leads Lévinas to a suspicion of figure as such,[xxix] as he simultaneously seizes upon and rejects its performativity: "Are we on a stage, or are we in the world … We distrust the theatre, the petrifaction of our faces, the figure that our person weds. We distrust poetry, which scan[s] and bewitches our gestures. We distrust everything which, in spite of us, throws up a deceptive illusion in our lucid lives" (163). Rather than a synonym for face, the source of Lévinasian ethics, figure is its contrary. And this opposition leads to further: between world and stage; action and gesture; lucidity and play. Seen through the norms of personhood, or the lens of social theory, figure's salience appears suspect, its density delusive. History, Lévinas argues, is replaced by allegory: "instead of *being*, man *figures* [au lieu d'*être*, l'homme *figure*]." On the one hand, this lapidary statement expresses Lévinas's conviction that the theatricality of figure erases being. Yet we can alternatively conceive of figure as unfolding "*at the place* [au lieu] of being." World and stage, then, would not be separate, rival domains. And figure could be approached as a form of *staging* world, of opening up history to relationships of "accord or similarity" that link a novel's scene, both rooted and performative, with the scene of its reading, wherever it might be.

Auerbach's "Figura" provides insight into such a reading process. As the Hebrew scriptures circulated in the late-antique Mediterranean and medieval Europe, writes Auerbach, figural interpretation rendered their world vital to people who felt far removed from it: "In its original form, as law book and history of so foreign and remote a nation, it would have been beyond their reach" (1973, 52). Thus Christians read the scriptures, obscuring their original purpose, as written "for

our sakes" (51). This is the hermeneutic for which Lévinas rightly takes Claudel to task. Yet Auerbach stressed that such considerable losses made new meaning, and immediacy, possible: "What the Old Testament thereby lost as a book of national history, it gained in concrete dramatic actuality" (51). Biblical mimesis and late-antique figuralism do not determine the modes of writing and reading I have described; rather they prefigure them. And Auerbach's words provide a theoretical correlative to the distinction *Disgrace* draws between various ways of *staging* world—between, on the one hand, the national stage of "Sunset at the Globe Salon" and, on the other, the "theatre" in which David "gives up" the young dog.[xxx] Not a stage in any literal sense, the final scene takes place in a highly performative space that the novel opens up for its far-flung readers: it renders the seemingly private moment of a particular individual, grounded in "this place, this time," both "concrete" and "dramatically actual."

It does so by depersonalizing action. The penultimate paragraph, as I suggested above, exhausts David's focalizing perspective in his interpretation of the care he will give the dog: "It will be little enough, less than little: nothing" (220). "Nothing" here marks the depletion of David's ethical vocabulary, and the suspension, in a formal sense, of ironic consciousness. In this it rhymes with Lucy's earlier decision "[t]o start at ground level. With nothing ... no property, no rights, no dignity," an abnegation of the markers of personality that opens up her way of being to David's figure—"like a dog" (205). In the final scene, "nothing" reappears as the dog licks David's face: "He does nothing to stop it." This last instance of the word

opens up David's action for the reader, displacing its interpretive horizon beyond the language and world of the work.[xxxi]

The formal movement of these concluding paragraphs is figured in the small drama of the two sentences that guide this chapter: "He thinks of himself as obscure and growing obscurer. A figure from the margins of history." The attenuation of subjectivity in the first sentence prepares the figural leap of the following phrase. "Figure" here does not simply refer to David; it is also a precise description of what the end of the novel offers. Significantly, the words do not form a complete sentence, but rather a fragment, cut off from the subject-verb construction in the previous sentence, "He thinks," that would moor it in David's mind. This is a fitting rupture of syntax, for figure is in one sense a radiant fragment, and in the figural mode "events are considered not in their unbroken relation to one another, but torn apart, individually, each in relation to something other that is promised but not present" (1973, 59). As a figure, the novel's close displaces its world, summoning us to relate it to our own. While David's and Lucy's separate but related gestures are grounded in the history of South Africa, as figures they impel the thinking of a "common life" that takes place both within and beyond it. This is not the "standardized" life that Auerbach, at the end of *Mimesis*, worried the coming world order would impose and the novel reflect—a product of what David refers to in *Disgrace* as "the great rationalization" (3). Rather it is a commonality born out in provisional ways of being and acting that the post-Apartheid era brings to light and that the global work opens up through figure.

Against Fulfillment

This conception of figure should not be confused with the representation of fulfillment, just as the new South Africa does not erase the injustice of the past nor constitute an end to history. The illusion, and danger, of such fulfillment is a focus of *Playing in the Light*, and in returning to Wicomb's work I will begin to show how the figural dynamic I have located in *Disgrace* informs other works of global literature.

Searching for clues to her parents' past, and their motivations for "playing" white, Marion discovers a Sunday-school card cherished by her mother, Helen. The card is inscribed with Acts 8:32-33: "As a sheep led to his slaughter or a lamb before his shearer is dumb, so he opens not his mouth. In his humiliation justice was denied him. Who can describe his generation? For his life is taken up from the earth" (118). The passage comes from Phillip's conversion of the Ethiopian eunuch, and Marion wonders "Did her mother know that the eunuch was quoting from Isaiah? That the repetition is about the fulfilment of a prophecy?" She decides that "the card leads nowhere. There are no leads [and] is struck by the paucity of her parent's lives" (118-19). Marion's judgment keeps her from realizing that the eunuch's conversion, in Helen's mind, was a figure for her own "becoming" white—a "fulfilment of prophecy" that masks a deep racial shame: "Like the signs and wonders of Acts of the Apostles, the miracles when men and women rose and made their beds and started their lives anew in fresh tongues, so Helen was remade" (144). Fulfillment as purification, Wicomb suggests, often serves to whitewash the past.

Yet the Biblical passage leads in directions beyond both Marion's and Helen's purview, revealing the historical project of Wicomb's novel. The passage from Isaiah quoted by the eunuch, one of the primary texts of Christian figuralism, prophecies the Lord's deliverance of Israel—the "suffering servant" to whom justice has been denied. Marion's discovery of her parents' past, indeed, the whole plot of the novel, is set in motion by her desire to do justice to their former family servant Tokkie, whose funeral went unattended when Marion was a child. Tokkie, Marion comes to learn, was in fact her grandmother, Helen's mother, forced to silence this connection in order to stay on with the family. The work of the novel, to borrow the language of Isaiah and Acts, is to do justice to the "suffering servant" by "describing her generation," she whose life was "taken up from the earth" unmourned. If in Isaiah the servant's salvation transforms Israel into a "light unto the nations" (49:6), Wicomb's novel imagines the new South Africa's moment "in the light" not as a fulfillment that absolves "the burden of history," but rather as a heightened historicity: for history, writes Wicomb, "reaches out gawkily for affinities" (152). Playing in the light, in other words, extends history's reach.

This is an apt description of the figural dynamic I have located in the global work. And such affinities are at play in the novel's penultimate scene, which subtly "repeats" the funeral "party" which was never held for Tokkie (33). Upon Marion's return from Scotland nearly all the characters, white and black, once estranged and now reunited, assemble for a surprise party. Enlivened by the festivities, Marion's aged father, the former "play white," breaks into song—"Afrikaners is plesierig dit

kan julle glo/Hulle hou van partytjies en dan maak hulle so"—only to be scolded by his sister, Elsie, a former ANC activist:

> Ag no sis, Boetie John, don't go spoiling the party with Boere nonsense, Elsie says, bearing a tray, and he laughs uproariously, tapping her behind with his stick.
> Man, in this New South Africa we can play at anything, mix'n match, talk and sing the way we like. Because of freedom, he explains.

The air John sings is from an old Boer folksong, sampled by singer Karen Zoid in her 2001 hit "Afrikaners is Plesierig"—a refrain of ethnic-national identity recast for the post-Apartheid moment. The lyrics do more than depict the Boer, offering as well a strange form of invitation: "Afrikaners are fun / This you must believe / They enjoy a party / And then they go like this [dan maak hulle so]." The final line, in its original folk form, traces an Afrikaner ethos, but now, to borrow a phrase from the novel's preceding page, "the words carry a say-after-me force" (210)—they invite one into an open-ended figural relation. "Going like this," in the setting of the novel's party, is to "play at anything, mix'n match, talk and sing the way we like." Those who are invited to "go like this" are not just Afrikaners, nor necessarily South African, since this kind of play, "playing in the light," does not have a clearly national horizon: we are warned, only two pages before, "that one should be wary of so-called national characteristics" (211). So the scene figures a way of being together opened up by Apartheid's end, inviting its far-flung readers to similarly "go like this," yet it does so through evoking the history of Apartheid, recalling both the unmourned dead and past forms of injustice—"Boere nonsense"—that stubbornly live on in the present. In this sense, Wicomb's scene is not one of national fulfillment, but is rather a global

figure—"reach[ing] out gawkily for affinities," playfully calling for remixing, repeat performance.

The playful tone of Wicomb's party offers a stark contrast to the gravitas of *Disgrace*'s concluding scene. Yet both constitute "unconsummated images," to borrow a phrase from Atwell's recent discussion of Coetzee's fiction, for the figural dynamic eschews precisely any representation of fulfillment, of a fully realized ethos. Yet as figures they necessarily point to, and open up, the possibility of ethical significance elsewhere. And in this sense their "last horizon" is not "the space of ironic, reflexive, and metafictional self-scrutiny" (2008, 238), as Attwell claims of Coetzee's work. Rather figure's last horizon is the world, or better, the "the world of readers" (*Lesewelt*), to adapt the term Jürgen Habermas has employed to describe what preceded the demarcation of modern publics (1989, 26), and national literary systems.

We can actually see the material trace of figure's reach in this "world" by briefly returning to Teju Cole's *Open City*. While writing towards a figure of human-animal likeness in *Disgrace*, Coetzee was simultaneously exploring it in a series of invited lectures around the world, given in the guise of Elizabeth Costello, his literary double. Costello's words, and David's action, are surprisingly given new place in Cole's novel as its narrator Julius, a Nigerian transplant to the United States, walks in lower Manhattan near the grounds of the former World Trade Center:

> I felt conspicuous, the only person among the crowd who stopped to look out from the overpass at the site. Everyone else went straight ahead, and nothing separated them, nothing separated us, from the people who had worked directly across the street on the day of disaster. When we descended the stairs into Vesey Street, we were hemmed in on both sides by a chain-link fence, penned in, "like animals" stumbling to the slaughter. But why was it permitted to treat even animals that way? Elizabeth Costello's nagging questions showed up in the strangest places. (2011, 59)

In this only scene at the site of 9/11, the event that hangs over the rest of Cole's novel, the narrator's thoughts subtly turn to the shape of collective life in its wake. At one moment he stands out "conspicuously" from the crowd of people, only to fall into a nebulous mass, bound only by the "nothing" that separates them. This "nothing" echoes the "nothing" of David Lurie's action in its call for an ethical language beyond the individual self and the particular world of the work. The figure "like animals," drawn from Coetzee's fiction, provides a response, bringing together, if only momentarily, the disparate group into relations of likeness. Yet this figure of collectivity does not aim to establish a new communal ontology, but rather to ground future thought and action: "why was it permitted to treat even animals that way?" Through displacement, the Coetzeen figure "show[s] up in the strangest places." And "ground zero," whose name argues for its preeminent historical particularity, is brought into surprising relation with the various auditoriums around the world where Coetzee spoke as Costello as well as the post-Apartheid landscape from which his words emerged. By entering into this constellation, it, too, is displaced from a solely American imaginary.

This dynamic of displacement, conceived in the widest terms, is one of the ways in which something like a collective horizon is opened up in global literature for its world of readers. If type and allegory refer beyond themselves to a delimited horizon, the specificity of global figures is the manner in which they do not complete the picture, radically insisting on their own partial, disjunctive nature. The paradox that this entails corresponds to the problem of figuring, and thinking, an enlarged collectivity and commonality after the histories of violence from which texts such as *Disgrace*, *Playing in the Light*, and *Open City* emerge.

Of Density and Lightness

How do such figures reference a collective horizon that they nonetheless do not fully delineate? Rather than attempt to fully resolve this paradox, I will conclude by returning to the phenomenal description of figure we first glimpsed in Wicomb's novel. The terms Wicomb put forth there—the density of stone, the light of history—receive a surprising and instructive parallel elaboration in the writing of W.G. Sebald, whose prose narratives employ figure as the means of staging a historical world, in the wake of violence, in order to open up a collective horizon. In a 1993 interview, Sebald aims to distinguish this mode of writing from other forms of historical inquiry: "What historical writing cannot achieve is to produce a metaphor or allegory of a collective historical trajectory [eine Metapher oder Allegorie eines kollektiven Geschichtsverlaufes]. But metaphorization first makes history sharable [empathetisch zugänglich]" (2012, 85; my translation here and

following). The quote raises the very questions around which this chapter has turned: How can literary devices such as metaphor or allegory open up action and event, insofar as both are commonly understood as forms that erase, or in the very least sublate, historical particularity? What kinds of collectivity might be said to emerge from such writing?

What Sebald means by "allegory" in the above quote is clarified in another interview, in which he describes his particular brand of realism: "The realistic text should to some extent venture into allegorical narration, must to some extent condense into allegory [in Allegorien verdichten muß]. In this way it must give half concrete, half abstract figures [halb greifbaren, halb abstrakten Figuren geben]" (2012, 107). Sebaldian allegory, then, is not a one-to-one correspondence, but rather an occasional condensation (*Verdichtung*), whose prefix suggests a heightened or perfected form of writing (*Dichtung*). What is noteworthy in Sebald's description is the emphasis on this thickening, on the *giving* of coiled figures, rather than on the fixed meaning that such figures delineate. This indeterminacy is of course born out in Sebald's prose, which depicts historical particulars in such a manner that they seem to refer to world-historical events such as the Holocaust, or European imperialism, yet are simultaneously not figures *of* them—what one critic describes as the "insufficient" nature of his metaphors (O'Connell, 2013).

While they are ubiquitous in his writing, the distinctive nature of Sebaldian figure is perhaps most evident at the end of *Austerlitz* (2001), his last, most celebrated work—which I will return to in more detail in the following chapter. The text follows a nameless narrator as he listens to and records the story of Jacques

Austerlitz, a scholar of architecture in England who learns late in life of his Jewish-Czech identity and of his birth parents' fate under the Nazis. In the final scene, the narrator returns to Breendonk fort near Antwerp, the city where he first met his eponymous interlocutor, and reads a gift from Austerlitz, Dan Jacobson's *Heshel's Kingdom* (1998), in which Jacobson describes his family's flight from Lithuania to South Africa and his later attempt to recover their traces in Europe after World War Two. Weaving the words of others into his tale, Sebald recounts how Jacobson spent his early life in Kimberley, South Africa, near its diamond mines:

> Most of the mines, so I read as I sat opposite [so las ich an meinem Platz gegenüber] the fortifications of Breendonk, were already disused at the time, including the two largest, the Kimberley and De Beers mines, and since they were not fenced off anyone could venture to the edge of those vast pits and look down to a depth of several thousand feet ... The chasm into which no ray of light could penetrate was Jacobson's image of the vanished past of his family and his people which, as he knows, can never be brought up from those depths again. (2001, 297-98)

In Jacobson's stirring image, the mine becomes a metaphor for the loss of his family's past and, by extension, that of European Jews. Sebald, practicing the hospitality that characterizes his oeuvre, gives place to this image without, however, making it his own. His own figuration of the mine is subtly different: it becomes a figure by way of its fictional contiguity to the Breendonk fort—literally "placed" opposite the fort through Sebald's locative clause—and thus enters into the web of European militarization, capitalist accumulation, and African imperialism with which the fort, and Antwerp, were already obliquely connected. The mines bring

their own past within this constellation, launching Cecil Rhodes's noxious empire and fueling the Anglo-Boer wars, which invented the very camps in which Austerlitz's mother will later perish in Theresienstadt. Indeed, the mines at Kimberley, and the racist labor laws codified there, in many ways gave birth to the South African nation from whose history Coetzee's and Wicomb's writing emerges.

If through the reach of these references the mine condenses into figure, this same extent precludes any clear horizon that would give the mine a determinate, allegorical meaning. Sebald describes the striking of this fragile balance, in a 1996 interview, as his writerly ambition: "To write heavy things [die schweren Dinge] in such a way that they lose their weight [ihr Gewicht verlieren]. I believe that only through lightness are things shareable [nur durch Leichtigkeit Dinge vermittelbar sind] and that all that has a leaden weight burdens the reader in a manner that makes him blind [die ihn blind macht]" (2012, 124). Considered alongside Sebald's earlier discussion of allegory, the passage offers an evocative paradox: through figural condensation (*Verdichtung*), the already heavy thing becomes surprisingly light. And lightness imparts the potential to be communicated (*vermittelbar*), to be displaced without losing historical density. This kind of lightness, Sebald implies (and here *leuchten*, and Sebald's English, seem to shine through), allows the blind reader to see.

Who is this reader? And what is the collective history (kollektive Geschichtsverlauf) to which such figures refer? If for Heidegger a horizon always belongs to a national-historical people, a people "founded" through the thrust of figure (*Gestalt*), one cannot so circumscribe the history illuminated through the co-

presence of Breendonk fort and the Kimberley mine. Such a collective, it would seem, only begins to take shape in the nameless narrator-reader—neither South African nor Jewish. More precisely, it emerges through the way he reads and the figural writing that guides it. Literature exists, said Sebald in his last speech before his untimely death, "perhaps only to help us remember, and teach us to understand that some strange connections cannot be explained by causal logic" (2006, 204). While on the surface a relatively unambitious, and singular, statement of vocation, it precisely describes a literature that does not purport to represent a totality, nor take refuge in the particular, but rather makes the work of writing and reading the forging of figural connections.

Global Figures

Sebald's narrator models the careful attention to Austerlitz's, and Jacobson's, story that ethical criticism rightly encourages, just as David Lurie's care for the euthanized dogs exemplifies a powerful response to nonhuman others. Yet the works I have considered in this chapter do not simply present us with alterity but rather invite the "strange connections" that Sebald describes and Cole's narrator draws. In this, they gesture toward what I have described as ethos, a common, if incomplete, horizon of being and acting that rescues the meaning of events from the merely personal and particular. Suggesting that global literature figures such a horizon does not entail a facile universalism. Nor does it imagine fiction's relation to a "common life" in terms of "standardization." Rather it recognizes that the work of

Sebald's fiction is not simply to describe historical events, but to allow them to refer beyond themselves, becoming in some sense "our" history—a process that I will examine more in the following chapter. In the same way, Coetzee's fiction does not simply describe private responses to Apartheid's end, but makes the "nothing" of David's action, just like the "nothing" with which Lucy begins her new life, elicit an ethical language, beyond the work, whose sphere of articulation is no longer national.

A disused fort and mine at opposite ends of the earth, a man euthanizing dogs in the Eastern Cape, a mixed reunion of family and friends in Cape Town, a crowd in lower Manhattan—these are not types within any clear totality, nor allegories of a historical people. Rather they are marginal figures, which serve nevertheless to illuminate thought and action beyond their immediate worlds. In this sense, they might also be described as paradigms, especially with reference to Giorgio Agamben's account of paradigm as "neither universal nor particular, neither general nor individual" but rather a singularity which by "showing itself as such produces a new ontological context." To claim that global literature serves such a function inflects our conception of its ethics away from its role as "other maker" toward what Heidegger considered the artwork's ability to establish a style and open up new possibilities for being—its essentially paradigmatic nature according to Hubert Dreyfus's gloss (2005, 415; see also Young 2001, 50-51). Yet this is precisely the ethical force that Heidegger withholds from modern works that "no longer flow from the formative limits of a popular and national world" and instead

"belong to the universality of global civilization, whose constitution and institutions are formed and guided by scientific technology" (2013, 122).

This chapter has argued that global literature begins to carefully undertake such an ethical function through its partial, proleptic, and necessarily marginal figures. Literary works, seen in this light, do not simply move within a global sphere, but have the potential to stage what we might call globality—giving it shape in the smallest of actions and the incomplete horizon they open up. The idea that works actively manifest a globality that is not otherwise self-evident revises the widespread conception of the global as a stable content or ideology, an "instituted perspective" continuous with empire and consonant with neoliberal globalization (Krishnan 2006).[xxxii] And it suggests that while global literature might incorporate from social theory "global paradigms such as the network" (2007, 218), as Rebecca Walkowitz has cogently shown, the ethical force of a global work inheres in its ability to "evolve its own paradigms," to borrow Coetzee's phrase from the "The Novel Today." Such a claim does not separate writing from the historical conditions of its emergence nor from the world in which it moves. Rather, it insists upon the worldly agency of global literature—its potential to give ethical form to the presiding hieroglyph of our era.

[xviii] "Man will have to accustom himself to existence in a standardized world, to a single literary culture, only a few literary languages, and perhaps even a single literary language. And herewith the notion of Weltliteratur would be at once realized and destroyed" (1969, 3).

[xix] Coetzee's comment opens out to the many debates about the relation between his writing and the politics of Apartheid, specifically the supposed political irresponsibility, or ambiguity, of his writing. This critique was famously lodged by Nadine Gordimer in her review of *Life and Times of Michael K* (1983), in which, she argues, "the organicism that George Lukács defines as the integral relation between

private and social destiny is distorted" by Coetzee's protagonists (1984). As Gordimer's comment suggests, debates about the "engaged" nature of Coetzee's writing have often turned on questions of type and allegory. While I lack the space here to address Coetzee's work before *Disgrace*, or fully rehearse the criticism of these works, my discussion of figure is meant as a response to these arguments.

[xx] My use of horizon is related to but not identical to that of Gadamer, who describes historical understanding as the fusion of our horizon with that of previous "situations" or "traditions" (2004, 301-5). If horizon in this hermeneutic tradition is largely discussed in terms of reception, my focus is on the horizon of intelligibility that is projected and limned within the work.

[xxi] For particularly illuminating discussions of the artwork's relation to ethos in Heidegger's thought, see McNeill (2006, 118-22) and Young (52-60). While Julian Young argues that ethnicity does not determine Heidegger's sense of community (2001, 52), the linguistic-cultural totality to which he refers is clearly national (Lacoue-Labarthe 1990, 108, 114).

[xxii] This is, of course, the perennial question of the relation between Heidegger's theory of art and his association with National Socialism. Of those accounts that draw a strong connection between the two, Phillippe Lacoue-Labarthe's remains the most rewarding.

[xxiii] In addition to Attridge's influential arguments along these lines, this conception of character has become a common feature of the new ethical criticism, as Dorothy Hale elegantly summarizes: "This is the ethico-political basis of novelistic aesthetics. The representation of character in the novel is never free of the threat of instrumentality, either from the subjective source of narration or from an objectification posed by literary design. Fictional characters are produced as 'human' precisely by the perceived limitation from both sources that novelistic form places on their autonomy" (2009, 903).

[xxiv] In the epilogue to *Mimesis*, Auerbach identifies the figural nature of medieval realism as one of the book's three guiding ideas (2003, 554-55). In his 2003 introduction, Said suggests that *Mimesis* literally departs from figura, which structures the opposition between Homer's Odysseus and the "figure of Abraham" in its famous first chapter (xx-xxii). And Jacob Hovind has recently argued that Auerbach's literary method in *Mimesis* elaborates a modernist "figural hermeneutics" (2012).

[xxv] Affinities between Auerbach's account of figure and Benjamin's conception of allegory are perhaps more than incidental. Benjamin and Auerbach were friends, and they remained in correspondence even after the latter left for Istanbul (Auerbach 2007). At the time of his death, Auerbach's library contained all of Benjamin's major published works, including an original edition of *The Origin of German Tragic Drama* (1927) (Kahn 2009, 57).

[xxvi] Auerbach defended it against Ernst Robert Curtius's criticisms in "Epilegomena to *Mimesis*" (1953) (2003, 566-70). For recent discussions, see Biddick and Librett.

[xxvii] Heidegger's word for displacement is *Verrückung*. To submit to it means: "to transform our accustomed ties to world and to earth and henceforth to restrain all usual doing and prizing, knowing and looking, in order to stay within the truth that

is happening in the work" ("Origin" 64). For a discussion of this aspect of Heidegger's thought, and its relation to the artwork's ability to "found" a people, see Young (2001, 36-38, 50-52).

[xxviii] Coetzee occupies a central place in Attridge's work as well as Timothy Bewes's reorientation of ethics toward the problem of shame. *Disgrace* and its conclusion feature prominently in both Shameem Black's and David Palumbo-Liu's recent books on the ethics of contemporary fiction.

[xxix] In her excellent book on Lévinas and literature, Jill Robbins concisely summarizes his reaction: "it is not just the figures of figural interpretation that are said to cover up the ethical. It is as if figures themselves were unethical, as if anything that *plays* were ethically suspect" (1999, 50).

[xxx] The two "theatres" are explicitly, if subtly, contrasted when David last attends a performance of Melanie's play: "Until two years ago the Dock Theatre was a cold storage plant where the carcases of pigs and oxen hung waiting to be transported across the seas" (190). If one of the hidden places where animals are killed is transformed here into a theater, the end of *Disgrace* brings this action to center stage. And the trailing phrase "across the seas" is yet another metonymic link that figures the final scene's displacement.

[xxxi] Patrick Hayes, in his important book on Coetzee, argues that "nothing" here constitutes a refusal of the novel's power to bring anything about beyond placing the future of South Africa in "productive suspense" (2010, 221-22). While I find persuasive Hayes's claim that the nothing marks the point at which "something" might emerge, I argue here and in this chapter's following section that the figural force of the scene obtains in opening up the sphere for this emergence beyond the form-giving horizon of the nation.

[xxxii] Critics have argued that the novel genre helps shape this historical perspective. Mariano Siskind, for example, calls this the "novelization of the global," whereby the novel constructs images of a "globalized world" of bourgeois production (see my introduction; 2010, 338). According to John Marx, contemporary Anglophone novels do not so much picture a globalized world as administer a postliberal worldview.

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Chapter 3

Sentiment: Global Spectatorship in Pamuk, Sebald, and Coetzee

In a colloquium on tourism at Stanford University in May 2004, J.M. Coetzee read a piece of short fiction entitled "The Farm." The story describes the sentiments of an unnamed protagonist for his family's farm in the Karoo region of South Africa. The first half of the narrative recounts the man's early fascination with a patch of bare land on the farm covered with rocks, which as a child he thought of as a fairy circle, but later learns is a floor for threshing—a lost, therefore enigmatic, activity. As an adult, he ruminates on an old photograph of the site—"If the photograph could come to life, if the two grinning young men were to pick up their rifles and disappear over the rim of the picture, he would at last have it before him, the whole mysterious business of threshing" ("The Farm")—and on the historical changes that have rendered threshing, and the way of life in which it fit, obsolete. In the second half of the story, friends from America come to visit the man, and at their urging they all stop at an "old-style Karoo farm," called "Nietverloren," Afrikaans for "Not Lost," where this lost way of life is reenacted. The visit leaves the man bitter, with "The bitterness of defeated love. I used to love this land. Then it fell into the hands of the entrepreneurs, and they gave it a makeover and a face-lift and put it on the market. This is the only future you have in South Africa, they told us: to be waiters and whores to the rest of the world. I want nothing to do with it."

In the introduction to his reading, Coetzee situates the story in relation to the loss of indigenous cultures, tourism in post-Apartheid South Africa, Chicago School

economics, and the global market. While social theory has much to say about these developments, Coetzee states, what it does not address "is the question of my dismay, and the dismay of thousands of other people, the quality of my dismay, and what I am to do with or about that dismay, if *dismay* is the best word for it" ("Tourism"). In a cancelled section of the introduction, he elaborates further on the appropriateness of the word: "To such discussions [of globalization] I bring nothing, however, but a certain feeling […] The name, the provisional name, that I have given it is *dismay*, a loss of heart, a disablement, a loss of power, from the root *magan*, to have the power, to be able." The last sentences of "The Farm," whose atmospherics resemble Gabriel Conroy's vision at the end of James Joyce's story "The Dead" (1914), crystallize this sentiment: "A light grade of sorriness sits over the whole country, like cloud, like mist. But there is nothing to be done about it, nothing he can think of."

If the "The Farm" explores the specific sentiment or affect of dismay, we can also approach it through the idea of the sentimental. The American friends' desire to visit "Nietverloren" could be dismissed as sentimental—merely touristic, subtly exoticizing. Yet the protagonist's youthful interest in the threshing circle, and his embittered attachment as an adult, can also be described as sentimental in a less pejorative sense: a care for the past. This concern with seemingly lost ways of life, and Coetzee's extended discussion of South Africa's Bushmen in his introduction, participates in a larger conversation about the status of indigenous practices and local cultures under globalization—when subjected to what Auerbach called "standardization" and Lévi-Strauss "disintegration." A sentiment similar to what

Auerbach and Lévi-Strauss felt is the partial subject of Coetzee's story: the dismay someone "on the outside" might feel at the loss of such practices and cultures—a feeling, Coetzee states, that is potentially shared by many people around the world. In describing this sentiment, indeed, in opening it up for readers, the story itself can be approached as sentimental, drawing upon a particular genealogy of the term in philosophical aesthetics. This last conception of the sentimental, as inhering in the work's ethical form and articulating its globality, will be the subject of this chapter, which explores how the sentimental emerges not only in Coetzee's story, but in other significant works of contemporary world literature, specifically the prose narratives of W.G. Sebald and Orhan Pamuk's multimedia project *The Museum of Innocence* (2008).

The idea of global sentiment immediately evokes affective attachments across national borders, specifically sympathetic ones. In a recent article that explores "sentiment for a small world," Shameem Black defines sentimentality as the "emotionally suffused experience of sympathy for others" (2009, 270). In considering sentimentalism as an ethical *form*, that is, as necessarily emerging through texts and objects, I engage a long tradition that has seen the workings of sympathy as central to the novel genre, specifically in its realist mode. George Eliot, in *Adam Bede* (1859) and "The Natural History of German Life" (1856), offered perhaps the most powerful vision of how literary realism, by acquainting us with the individuals in our midst, can connect us to others through the "fibre[s] of sympathy" (2008, 197). This nineteenth-century vocation for the realist novel lives on in Martha Nussbaum's contemporary defense of the "narrative imagination" (1997)

and seems to receive historical confirmation in the fact that Adam Smith's *Theory of Moral Sentiments* (1759), the first systematic account of sympathy, was published in the wake of the English novel's modern emergence in *Clarissa* (1748), *Tom Jones* (1749), and *Tristram Shandy* (1759-67).

While my aim is not to deny the important historical and formal connection between sympathy and narrative fiction, I am interested in how Pamuk, Sebald, and Coetzee deploy other aspects of the diffuse sentimental tradition in order to give shape to a very particular kind of spectatorship—one that attends less to embodied others than to historical loss as a global process. The spectator emerges in these works, on the one hand, as a privileged position through which the interconnections between tourism, transit, and culture become apparent—as we previously glimpsed in Wicomb's *Playing in the Light*. At the same time, the spectator is a key figure in a long literary and philosophical tradition, who determines the ethical meaning of modern genres as well as the very possibility of cosmopolitan history. Global sentimentalism, in my analysis, does not exclude the workings of sympathy, but is characterized by its concern with the traces of the past rather than others in the present; artificiality rather than immediacy; and reflexivity rather than realism. So while Nussbaum argues that sympathetic reading allows a level of involvement with others that is not that of the "casual tourist" (1997, 88), the works I explore are inextricably caught up in the touristic. And rather than approach the sentimental in literature as "emotionally suffused experience," to borrow Black's words, I follow James Chandler's recent discussion of the sentimental as a "disposition" and his claim that the sentimental revolution in the eighteenth century was "not just about

new kinds and levels of feeling but also about new ways of ordering works and organizing the worlds represented in them" (2013, xiv).

In what follows, I will a trace a particular aspect of this sentimental *dispositio* from Friedrich Schiller to Georg Lukács, that is, from arguments about romantic poetry to the world novel, and then show how contemporary works by Coetzee, Pamuk, and Sebald reimagine key aspects of sentimentalism in order to give form to the global through spectatorship or, from a different angle, to a global spectator. The spectator is usually defined in contradistinction to the actor, explicitly in Schiller's and Lukács's writing, and in the works I examine the position of the spectator emerges both in relation to loss as well as to the problem of how to act in the present to address it. Yet my claim is that these texts deploy sentiment as a means of overcoming loss, first through its description but even more so through a common or community sense that might emerge from this sustained and potentially collective attention. In this way, global sentimentalism imagines a spectatorship that is potentially continuous with, and even prepares, forms of action, although it does not necessarily provide its guide or guarantee.

Sentimental Form: Spectatorship and Description

Sentiment and the concept of the sentimental are central to European thought of the mid to late eighteenth century, describing forms of affective mobility—as in Smith's theory of sympathy—and often connected to physical displacement—as in Sterne's *Sentimental Journey* (1768). While sympathy and tourism are core features of the

sentimental, its theorization as a literary mode begins with Friedrich Schiller's 1795 essay "On Naïve and Sentimental Poetry." Schiller's aim is to identify two tendencies in literature, and the essay turns on a juxtaposition of the naïve and sentimental that roughly maps on to realism and idealism, the natural and the artificial, tradition and modernity, Greek and modern art. More than a style, the sentimental is in the first place a moral response to a "natural" world that is distanced and in some sense lost—a natural world, crucially, that includes ancient culture and traditional custom as well as children, animals, and plants. The literary manifestations of this moral response encapsulate for Schiller modes of feeling. The sentimental is thus a braided ethical, aesthetic, and affective form that carries with it an anticipatory dimension. Schiller writes: "They *are* what we *were*; they *are* what we *should become* again. We were natural like them and our culture should lead us back to nature along the path of reason and freedom" (1981, 22).

What arguably defines Schiller's notion of the sentimental is a reflective, and self-reflexive, form of spectatorship. The position of the spectator is constituted by a vision of nature as external to the self and as a closed totality. As Lesley Sharpe explains "[Schiller's] use of the word 'nature' predominantly means not the phenomena themselves, but the phenomena regarded as part of an abstract notion of nature's completeness and regularity ... its innocence, perfection and harmony" (1991, 177). Two aspects of this sentimental spectatorship are particularly crucial for its critical and literary afterlives. First, it entails a new awareness of artifice, specifically the artificiality of synthetic objects. Schiller illustrates this awareness through contrast with Greek art, specifically its mode of description: "The Greek is

indeed in the highest degree exact, faithful, detailed in the description of nature, but yet no more and with no greater participation of the heart than in the description of a costume, a shield, a suit of armour, a household utensil or any mechanical product. In his love for the object he seems to make no difference between what exists through itself and what exists through art and the human will" (33). Second, the sentimental poet is newly self-aware: he "reflects on the impression which objects make on him, and the emotion into which he is transposed and into which he transposes us is based only on that reflection" (42). In other words, the sentimental mode is self-reflexive. Identifying this reflexivity, in James Chandler's estimation, is the enduring contribution of Schiller's essay, which "serves as a reminder that the sentimental is a mode or mood defined not by a simplistic form of sincerity but rather by a complex form of modernity, one that brings difficult questions of virtuality and fictionality into play" (2013, 11).

While one can hardly exaggerate the historical impact of Schiller's essay, its account of spectatorship later informs the theory of world fiction in a crucial manner that has gone largely unremarked through its influence on Lukács's conception of realism. Written in the middle of his polemics over realism, Lukács's 1935 essay "Schiller's Theory of Modern Literature" argues that in juxtaposing the naïve and sentimental, "Schiller arrives at a feeling for the problematical character of literature in capitalist society and stands at the threshold of the solution of the stylistic problems of modern realism" (1969, 127). Schiller's error, however, is to take Greek art as his paradigm for realism, ignoring its stirrings among his contemporaries (108). Lukács accounts for Schiller's turn to Hellenism as an

attempt to "save the development of bourgeois literature from an impending inartistic deterioration into petty detail which is merely accurately observed" (117). That is, Lukács reads Schiller as a precursor in his struggle against naturalist fiction, since Schiller, in his theory of the sentimental, was able to identify the difficulty of expressing the real in modernity. Yet in Schiller's theory, writes Lukács, "the problem appears turned upside down in an idealistic manner" (119). In short: Schiller fails to recognize that "the sentimental mode of feeling is precisely the foundation of modern realism" (131). "Turned right side up ... in a materialistc manner," Schiller's theory becomes a "permanent achievement for the theory of realism" (120).

So just as Marx turned Hegel on his head, Lukacs's theory of realism, then, will do the same to Schiller's theory of the sentimental. This inversion does not simply rename as realist the sentimental mode Schiller identified as idealist. Instead, Lukács will eventually remap the naïve and sentimental as two competing modes of realism. He does this, I want to claim, and without referring once to Schiller or to the sentimental, in his important essay from 1936, "Narrate or Describe?" Therein Lukács uses the notion of spectatorship to drive a wedge within the concept of realism, dividing novelists who favor narration from those who favor description:

> In Scott, Balzac or Tolstoy we experience events which are inherently significant because of the direct involvement of the characters in the events and because of the general social significance emerging in the unfolding of characters' lives. We are the audience to events in which the characters take active part. We ourselves experience these events.

> In Flaubert and Zola the characters are merely spectators, more or less interested in the events. As a result, the events themselves only become a tableau for the reader, or, at best, a series of tableaux. We are merely observers. (1970, 116)

This distinction articulates the novel genre's post-1848 position vis-à-vis world capitalism. Description is the mode for an era in which epic significance and the potential for social struggle is lost: "the poetic level of life decays—and literature intensifies the decay" (127). More than divergent styles, description and narration are contrasting approaches to reality—approaches which Schiller described more than a century earlier: "Sentimental poetry means the birth of retirement and stillness and it also invites one to seek these; naïve poetry is the child of life and leads one back to life" (1981, 67).[xxxiii]

Just as the sentimental poet contemplated an externalized nature, naturalist description, for Lukács, views social life from the outside (127). And the artificiality that besets the sentimental poet's relation to nature is carried over in Lukács's essay in the novelist's relation to the everyday world and its objects: "The more naturalistic writers become," Lukács claims, "the more they seek to portray only common characters of the everyday world and to provide them only with thoughts and speech of the everyday world ... the description declines into the strained artificiality of a synthetic art. The characters have no connection at all with the objects described" (133). In description, then, "Lifeless, fetishized objects are whisked about in an amorphous atmosphere" (133), and interior states of mind are similarly objectified and disconnected—they become "still lives" (130).

The still life is the governing metaphor of Lukac's polemic against novelistic description, and in a passage wherein he denounces the same reflexivity that characterized the sentimental mode, the conceit receives its fullest elaboration: "a succession of subjective impressions no more suffices to establish an epic interrelationship than a succession of fetishized objects, even when these are inflated into symbols. From an artistic point of view, the individual pictures in both cases are as isolated and unrelated to each other as pictures in a museum" (134). Description turns characters and readers into spectators, the novel into a museum. More than a critique of post-Flaubertian realism, this claim envisions a dialectical turn that would dissolve description and its sentimental antecedents: "When [proletarian] revolt is represented in literature, the still lives of descriptive mannerism vanish, and the necessity of plot and narration arises of its own" (145). Lukács was thus calling for a particular kind of world novel that did not exist, and here it is worth recalling that "Narrate or Describe?" first appeared in the multilingual Soviet journal *International Literature*.

After this alternative genealogy of the novel's sentimental form, emphasizing the problems of spectatorship and description over the dynamics of sympathy, I want to make clear a couple points. My aim is not to further Lukács's critique, nor contest what he says about Zola. Instead, I want to turn Lukács's theory of description on its head, so to speak, in order to suggest that Lukács stood at the threshold of a global sentimentalism, but did not recognize its weak idealist potential. Second, in tracing this development in contemporary works of world literature, I am not suggesting that they are naturalist or anthropological. Rather,

the works I examine realize Lukács's museum-related metaphors for naturalism, giving a further turn to the spectatorial form of the sentimental. As a quick example of this, we can recall Coetzee's story and its protagonist's interest in the lost everyday world of the threshing circle, evoked by its fragmentary rocks. This sentimental structure is made explicit when the act of looking, as though at a picture in a gallery, is described within the work: "If the photograph could come to life, if the two grinning young men were to pick up their rifles and disappear over the rim of the picture, he would at last have it before him, the whole mysterious business of threshing." In what follows, my interest will be in the strange animacy or spirit of sentimental objects, such as this photograph almost "com[ing] to life," and in the trope of crossing, from past to present, but also from spectatorship to involvement, whose potential these works both stage and withhold.

The Novel as Museum

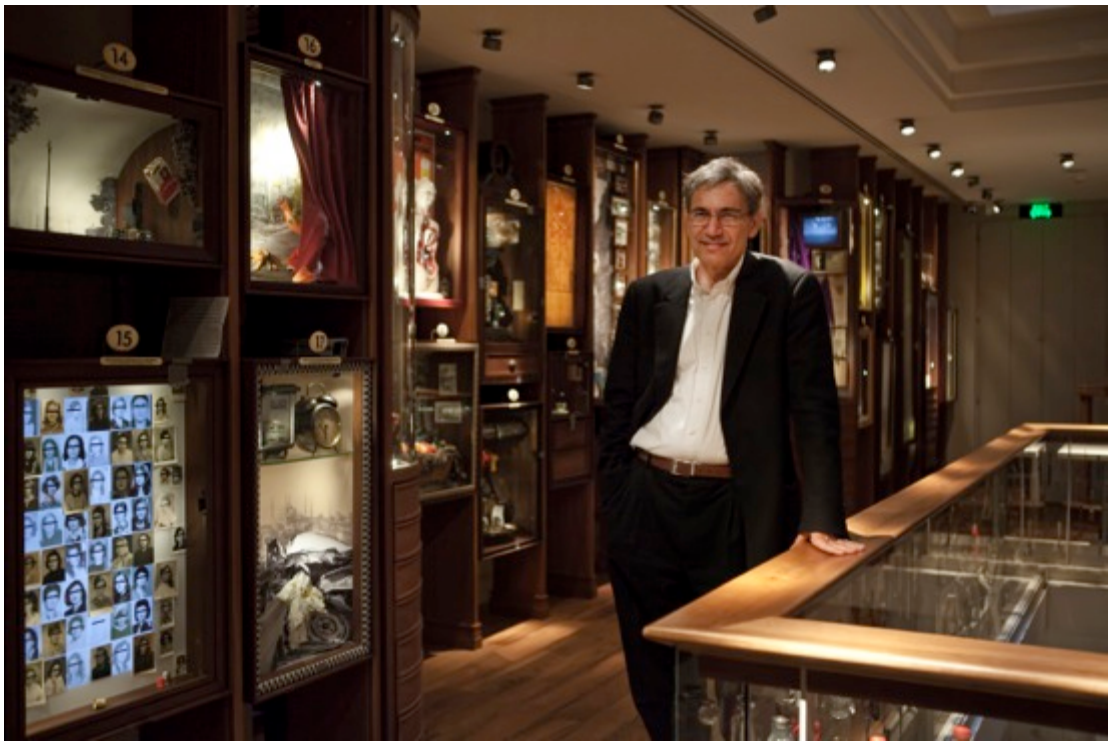
I will return to Coetzee's story at the conclusion. The best place to begin a discussion of sentimentalism in the world novel is perhaps Orhan Pamuk's 2009-10 Norton lectures, published as *The Naïve and Sentimental Novelist*. In their epilogue, Pamuk describes the lectures' genesis during a sentimental journey of his own: "In 2009, after air flights in Rajasthan were canceled as a result of the global economic crisis, I traveled with Kiran Desai in a hired car across the golden-hued desert between Jaisalmer and Jodhpur. On the way, amid the heat of the desert, I reread Schiller's essay and was filled with the vision—almost a mirage—of writing this book. I wrote

these lectures in Goa, in Istanbul, in Venice ... in Greece ... and in New York" (2010, 189). On its own, the passage points to several facets of global sentimentalism: the spread of sentimental discourse beyond Europe; its persistence during an era of globalization. But what I want to pursue in the rest of this chapter is a deeper synthesis of these ideas: a notion of the global that emerges precisely through the ethical form of the sentimental as it is taken up by writers both within and beyond Europe. Rather than rehearse Pamuk's theories, however, I will try to grasp the sentimental nature of his fiction, taking as my example the work that he suggests motivated his lectures: *The Museum of Innocence* (181).

The Museum of Innocence is a tripartite project, which, according to Pamuk, gestated some thirty years: it comprises, first, a novel, published in Turkish in 2008 and since translated around the world; second, a five-story museum in the Çukurcuma neighborhood of Istanbul, opened in 2012; and, third, that museum's catalogue, published in 2012 as *The Innocence of Objects*, in which Pamuk describes the entire project. The novel unfolds from the mid-1970s to early 2000s through the eyes of Kemal, a member of Istanbul's Westernizing elite. On the eve of his wedding to Sibel, an ideal match from the same social circle, Kemal has an affair and falls deeply in love with his poor, younger cousin Füsun. Lacking the courage to call off his wedding to Sibel, and then ruining their marriage through his despondency, Kemal returns to Füsun, who has since remarried in order to preserve her honor. Kemal enters into a protracted and celibate second "courtship" of his cousin, during which he visits her at her family home several nights a week, surreptitiously pocketing hundreds of objects in order to recall his love during the hours of her

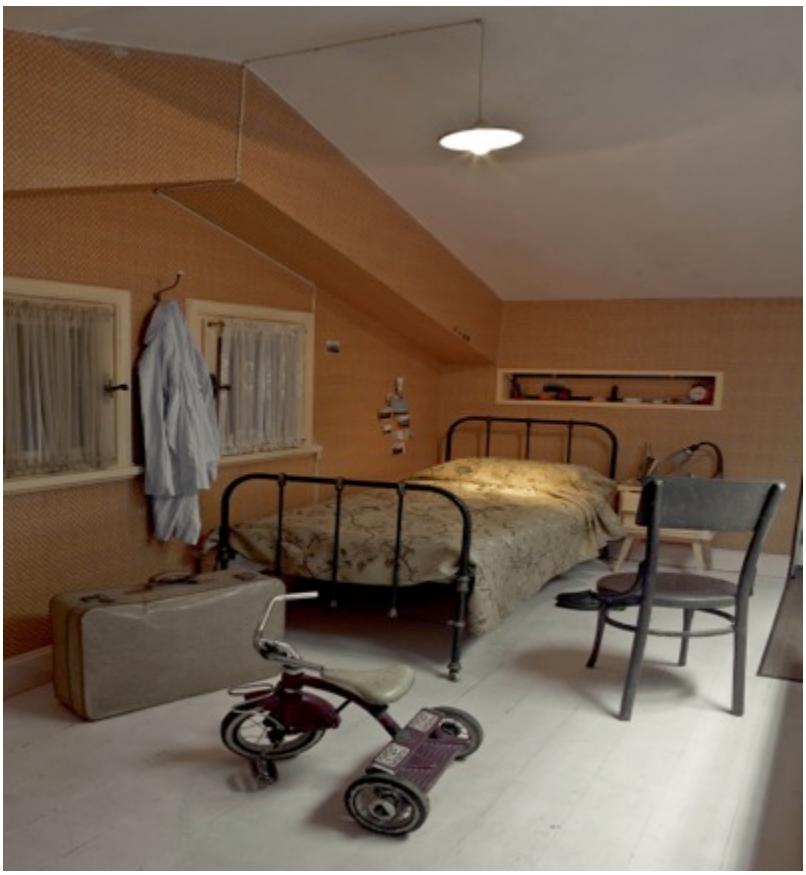
absence. After Fusun's untimely death, Kemal visits the world's museums, transforms Füsun's home into a museum for his purloined objects, and enlists Pamuk, in the novel's final scenes, to write his story.

So the novel is about the founding of the museum, and the museum instantiates the material world of the novel. To each chapter corresponds a display case, nearly eighty in total, in which found and made objects are artfully arranged [Fig. 1: Press photos, here and following: http://www.masumiyetmuzesi.org]



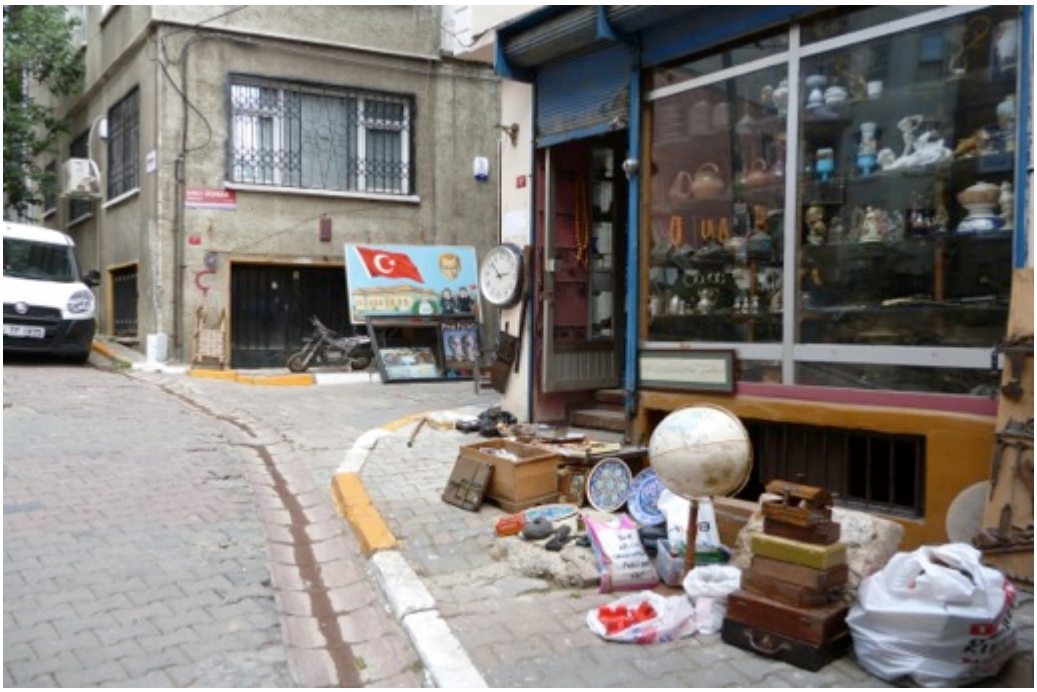
The museum supposedly occupies the Keskin family home in Dalgiç Sk., and on its top floor the visitor discovers Kemal's makeshift room, where he spent his final days surrounded by Füsun's objects, narrating his story to Pamuk [Fig. 2]. Yet Kemal's longing for his lost love is only one aspect of the work's sentimentalism. Many of the

objects in the museum were collected by Pamuk from the brocanteurs in Çukurcuma and are meant to evoke the lost everyday life of Istanbul [Fig. 3]. In this way, the


[Fig. 2]

neighborhood itself serves as a sentimental object. While today it is a mix of artists, tourists, professionals, and the large working-class population of Tophane, Pamuk describes his attraction to its streets in the 1990s, when "they were still as poor, ruined, and unkempt as they had been in my childhood" (2012, 23). Pamuk's fascination extended beyond the quarter's flagstones to its "crowded, animated life," populated by "Gypsies, by those now unemployed after fleeing the war in Eastern Anatolia, by the Kurds, by the poor, and by African immigrants" (24). And this eclectic mix is only the latest social iteration of a neighborhood that once housed the city's many Greeks, expelled in the 1950s, and whose abandoned homes in turn

recall for Pamuk the Ottoman era, which the same nationalist sentiment sought to erase for much of the Turkish Republic's history.



[Fig. 3: Author's photo]

Pamuk's fascination with the neighborhood's historical layers is worth pausing over, since it partially intersects with a particular affective state that he has described in his nonfiction writing on Istanbul: *hüzün*. *Hüzün*, Pamuk writes, is a "cultural concept conveying worldly failure, listlessness, and spiritual suffering" (2004, 89). While it has long roots in Islamic culture, for the Istanbullu it is a form of melancholy that arises from living among the remnants of Ottoman civilization: "these ruins are reminders that the present city is so poor and confused that it can never again dream of rising to its former heights of wealth, power, and culture" (101). In Pamuk's analysis, *hüzün* is an explicitly communal, rather than individual,

affect, and it erodes the individual's will to act against historical "decline," giving such a loss of agency emotional depth: "*Hüzün* does not just paralyze the inhabitants of Istanbul; it also gives them poetic license to be paralyzed" (104). Unlike Lévi-Strauss's *tristesse*, to which Pamuk compares the feeling, *hüzün* does not belong "to the outside observer." Yet the Western gaze can fuel its negative consequences. For Turkey's destruction of its Ottoman past during "modernization," Pamuk suggests, can be understood as the desire to overcome *hüzün* (103), and this internal destruction is paradoxically encouraged by external appreciation: "Western observers love to identify the things that make Istanbul exotic, nonwestern, whereas the westernizers among us register all the same things as obstacles to be erased from the face of the city as fast as possible" (242).

Hüzün is thus a structure of feeling that follows an "Orientalist" or postcolonial dynamic: it registers the loss of a "premodern" culture at the hands of the modernizing nation-state, with Western involvement serving as the catalyst. Pamuk's writing, often concerned with Ottoman culture and Turkey's relation to the West, might be seen to evince this particular form of melancholy, in particular his museum project, which in Erdağ Göknar's words offers "material recuperation for spiritual loss" (2012, 322). Yet while it attends to the remnants of Istanbul culture, and feelings of loss, *The Museum of Innocence* gives form to a sentimentalism, which I want to distinguish from *hüzün'*s communal paralysis as well as its sharp divide between Ottoman and Republican, East and West, spectator and actor. I will flesh out this claim in the second half of the essay. For now, we can begin to see how the museum's spectatorial mode departs from that which characterizes *hüzün.* For one,

its focus is not on the remnants of a "golden" Ottoman culture, but rather on a mixed and constantly evolving working-class neighborhood. And while *hüzün* describes the soulful experience of living simultaneously cut off from the past and steeped in its ruins, the museum aims at a process of preservation that crucially involves the spectator and which is mediated by the recovered, and soulful, object.

Pamuk describes his desire for involvement and the auratic quality of the museum's objects in its catalogue: "The lyricism of backstreet museums fueled my dreams. Were I to set up a museum in one of these shabby neighborhoods, displaying the objects that had characterized daily life in Istanbul, I would not mind the absence of visitors [...] More important was my growing attachment to the streets of Tophane, Çukurcuma, and Cihangir, and my desire to preserve them somewhat but also to become involved in their daily life" (2012, 29). Pamuk's aim, then, is to preserve an everyday that is partially lost, partially distant, but also to become part of its life. The museum localizes and shapes this experience of spectatorship: "The attachment I felt to the neighborhood and its streets was merging in a strange way with the impulses of the painter trying to reemerge from the depths of my soul and the emotions I'd felt in European museums. This sentiment took control of me..." (30). The language of the soul is crucial to the sentimental form of the museum: "The more I looked at the objects," writes Pamuk, "the more I felt as if they were communicating with one another. Their ending up in this place after being uprooted from the places they used to belong to and separated from the people whose lives they were once part of—their loneliness, in a word—aroused in me the shamanic belief that objects too have spirits" (52). The

disconnection of objects from their lifeworlds that Lukács lamented now endows them with a new soulfulness in Pamuk's account.

The uprooted object is the focus of the museum's installations and the source of its sentimentalism. Kemal recounts that he first realized how to display Füsun's objects in the Museu Frederic Marès in Barcelona upon seeing its "sentimental collection" of "barrettes, pins, earrings, playing cards [etc, etc]" (2009, 501). And it is in the Musée Gustave Moreau in Paris that Kemal, "seized by a passion almost religious," decides to convert Füsun's home into a museum: "Once converted, the house became a house of memories, a 'sentimental museum' in which every object shimmered with meaning" (497).[xxxiv] The primacy of the object extends beyond the museum to the novel. The physical book takes on a secondary objective life as a ticket to the museum, containing a page that is stamped upon entry, saving readers the price of admission. This feature marks the text as both distanced from its objective world—the museum collection, the streets of Istanbul—but also makes it the imaginative and literal point of access to these places.

Within the narrative, the museum's objects take on a strange life, as Kemal frequently refers to them and the impressions they might make on his reader-visitors. In the thirty-ninth chapter, for example, the breakfast Kemal shares with Sibel the morning after he confesses his affair suddenly assumes an objective status:

> We had breakfast in the sitting room, which after the party looked like a war zone, at the table where my parents had sat across from each other for more than thirty years. Here I display an exact replica of the loaf I bought from the grocery store across the street. Its function is sentimental, but also documentary, a reminder that millions of people in Istanbul ate no other

> bread for half a century (though its weight did vary) and also that life is a series of repeated instances that we later assign—without mercy—to oblivion. (192)

Much could be said about the relationship between text and museum in this passage, but I select it as an illustration, a concretization, of everything Lukács objected to in descriptive realism. Kemal's narration is literally interrupted as the daily loaf takes center stage, which in turn serves as a precise sign of the "naturalist" concern with the everyday. Yet the uprooted, artificial nature of the object, which fueled Schiller's pathos and Lukács's critique, is not concealed but rather exaggerated in the scene. The loaf is marked as a replica, like all the food in Pamuk's museum, and removed from its yeasty substance, and the breakfast table, it is both an instantiation of the everyday as well as its precise negation, since the everyday is by definition perishable—caught up within rather than removed from the flow of time. So if the novel genre "gives the bounded world of everyday life its particularity, its magic, and its soul" (2007, 236), as Pamuk suggests in a 2005 lecture, sentimental description bears the object across the bounds of the everyday, investing it in the process with a new soulful quality. The uprooted, artificial thing becomes a transit point, as it were, between its original world and that of the spectator.

Still Lives and World Spectatorship

If these objects, in novel as well as museum, resemble what Lukács called "still lives" [Fig. 4], they are nonetheless particularly animated. I will discuss the specific quality of their animacy in the following section, but for now I want to show and consider

[Fig. 4]

how the sentimental dynamic is not unique to Pamuk's project, but crucially informs other signal works of contemporary world literature. In particular, the writing of W.G. Sebald has explored with unusual depth the ethical position of the historical spectator, giving ascendance to the act of description and bringing his work in thematic and formal alignment with archival and museum spaces. In his last lecture

before his untimely death, Sebald unintentionally echoes Lukács when he describes his overarching literary method as "adhering to an exact historical perspective, patiently engraving and linking together apparently disparate things in the manner of a still life" (2005, 210). This literary method is invested by Sebald with an ethical valence in the famous concluding lines of the same lecture: "There are many forms of writing; only in literature, however, can there be an attempt at restitution over and above the mere recital of facts and over and above scholarship" (215). Sebald here distinguishes "the mere recital of facts" from a form of literary writing that aims at restitution. In an earlier essay, which prefigures this idea of restitution, Sebald conceives of such writing as "a form of resistance" and centers it on the act of description: "The description of misfortune includes within itself the possibility of its overcoming [Die Beschreibung des Unglücks schließt in sich die Möglichkeit zu seiner Uberwindung ein]" (1994, 12). So while Sebald's work fulfills Lukács's metaphors for sentimental writing, he invests the literary "still life" and description with ethical potential—resistance, overcoming, restitution.

First, what does it mean for Sebald's writing to tend toward still life? We can begin to answer this question by looking at a scene from his 2001 prose fiction *Austerlitz*—a scene which resembles in many ways the sentimental form of Pamuk's museum project. *Austerlitz*, we recall, tells the story of Jacques Austerlitz, a scholar of architecture who discovers late in life that he came to the United Kingdom by *kindertransport*. Halfway through the narrative, Austerlitz travels to Czechoslovakia in order to learn the fate of his birth parents under the Nazi regime. Archival traces lead him to Terezin, where his mother perished in a concentration camp. Stunned by

the town's apparent return to ordinary life, and unable to find further traces of his mother, Austerlitz pauses before a brocanteur:

> I could see nothing but the items on display in the window ... But even these four still lifes obviously composed entirely at random, which appeared to have grown quite naturally into the black branches of the lime trees standing around the square and reflected in the glass of the windows, exerted such a power of attraction on me that it was a long time before I could tear myself away from staring at the hundreds of different objects, my forehead pressed against the cold window, as if one of them or their relationship with each other must provide an unequivocal answer to the many questions I found it impossible to ask in my mind. (2001, 195)

Austerlitz's spectatorship culminates in a long description, punctuated as a sequence of questions, in which he asks after the meaning of the objects, ranging from globe-shaped paperweights and a Japanese fan to a fishing rod and an "endless landscape painted around a lampshade" of a quietly running river (196). The description ends on a porcelain statue of a hero on horseback who grasps an "innocent girl already bereft of her last hope" in order to "save her from a cruel fate not revealed to the observer" (197).

The statue serves, on the one hand, as an allegory of Austerlitz's attempt to "rescue" his lost mother. Yet it also offers a metacommentary on the status of objects in Sebald's fiction and the sentimental nature of the scene: "They were all as timeless as that moment of rescue, perpetuated but forever just occurring, these ornaments, utensils, and mementoes stranded in the Terezin bazaar, objects that for reasons one could never know had outlived their former owners and survived the process of destruction, so that I could now see my own faint shadow image barely

perceptible among them" (197). The process of destruction refers to the Nazi's destruction of the Jewish people and the others interned at Terezin. The objects' survival points to the lives and lifeworlds that were lost at the same time as they mediate a form of "rescue" whose nature is not stated so much as revealed by the sentence's final clause: "so that I could now see my own faint shadow image barely perceptible among them." In this sense, while they form a "still life," these "timeless" objects are animated, or timeful, as deposits of historical injustice.

Eric Santner elegantly describes this dynamic as Sebald's "spectral materialism": "a capacity to register the persistence of past suffering that has in some sense been absorbed into the substance of lived space, into the 'setting' of human history. What Hegel called 'objective spirit,' the institutional accretions of moral and political life across time, includes, in Sebald's work, the 'spirits' of those whose suffering in some fashion underwrote that objectivity" (2006, 58). If institutions, places, and above all material objects can contain this spirit—a spirit neither identical with nor wholly dissimilar to that of Pamuk's uprooted objects—it is dialectically related to the receptivity Santner locates in Sebald's characters. Extending Santner's analysis, we can see that ensouled matter in fact beckons, even creates, a spectator—"so that I could now see my own faint shadow image barely perceptible among them." And, crucially, this spectator need not be historically related to the objective world—recognizing in it, in any straightforward way, his personal or national history.

This aspect of Sebald's writing is obscured by the seemingly personal nature of Austerlitz's search—a point to which I will return. Yet the mobility, and ultimately

globality, of the spectator is apparent in his earlier prose fiction *The Rings of Saturn* (1995). This singular work follows the Sebaldian narrator on a walking tour of the Suffolk coast, during which discrete and dormant sites and objects open out into textured visions of world history. The narrator's chancing upon an abandoned railway track over the river Blyth, for example, leads to a reflection on the Opium Wars and the Dowager Empress Tz'u-hsi, while a BBC documentary watched in Southwald engenders a chapter on Eastern European empire, African Imperialism, and Irish rebellion through the linked stories of Joseph Conrad and Roger Casement. The emergence of these interconnections requires the spectator as much as the mediating objects and sites. So sitting on a bench overlooking the water near Lowestoft, the narrator recounts: "I felt as if I were in a deserted theatre, and I should not have been surprised if a curtain had suddenly risen before me and on the proscenium I had beheld, say, the 28th of May 1672—that memorable day when the Dutch fleet appeared offshore from out of the drifting mists, with the bright morning light behind it, and opened fire on the English ships in Sole Bay" (1998, 76). The narrator's spectatorship, made explicit through theatrical metaphor, is not an appreciation of history's "great" events. His thoughts turn to the suffering of those in the battle, of which no "eye-witness" accounts or pictorial representations remain. Beyond sympathizing with this suffering, however, the spectator's reflection serves to situate it within world history, specifically the transfer of world hegemony from the Dutch to the English: "It is certain, however, that the decline of the Netherlands began here, with a shift in the balance of power so small that it was out of proportion to the human and material resources expended in the battle" (78).

This mode of spectatorship in *The Rings of Saturn* has two profound effects, and their interrelationship is crucial for understanding the sentimental nature of Sebald's writing as a whole: first, the narrator's incapacitation; second, the emergence of a concept of world history. The text opens by describing the narrator's paradoxical frame of mind during his walking trip in August of 1992: "in retrospect I became preoccupied not only with the unaccustomed sense of freedom [*freizügigkeit*] but also with the paralyzing horror that had come over me at various times when confronted with the traces of destruction, reaching far back into the past, that were evident even in that remote place" (3). This strange dialectic between feeling "carefree" [*ungebunden*] and morose eventually leads to the narrator's hospitalization, a year after the beginning of his trip, "in a state of almost total immobility [*Unbeweglichkeit*]" (3). How the narrator emerges from this state is unclear, although his "recovery" is connected to the work of assembling his notes and writing the trip's account.

This written record culminates, in the work's last pages, in an overarching vision of world history. After recounting the development of sericulture from the Silk Road to Nazi Germany, the narrator concludes by drawing out a historical trajectory from his disparate materials: "Now, as I write, and think once more of our history, which is but a long account of calamities, it occurs to me that at one time the only acceptable expression of profound grief, for ladies of the upper classes, was to wear heavy robes of black silk taffeta or black crêpe de chine" (296). This moment in the final paragraph is the only occurrence of the words "our history" in the text. Yet this collective vision is realized through a pessimistic plotting. The resulting

worldview, emerging from "the traces of destruction," is related to the narrator's passing from mobility to immobility—a descent that seems to startlingly confirm Lukács claims about a literary mode that leads one from life to stillness. This is not a turning away from life, however, because of its failure to match the spectator's ideal—the dynamic central to Schiller's and later Lukács's understanding of sentimentalism. Rather, the narrator's paralysis derives from the problem of imagining a form of agency that could emerge from a global spectatorship that is uniquely attuned to historical loss.

To grasp this core problem of Sebald's writing, we need to reconstruct the ethical dimensions of the narrator's position in *The Rings of Saturn*. Freedom [*Freizügigkeit*] here is not simply the feeling of fulfilled wanderlust, but rather indicates a kind of ethical capacity. To feel free [*Frei-*] in this sense recalls Immanuel Kant's tracing of morality back to the "idea of freedom" in the *Groundwork of the Metaphysic of Morals* (1785) (1997, 54). As free, autonomous beings, Kant argues, we should conceive of ourselves as legislating universal laws through the maxims that guide our actions. Our ethical agency thus bears within it a reference to what Kant famously calls the "kingdom of ends." As Christine Korsgaard comments, Kant's argument can be variously construed: "The kingdom of ends may be conceived either as a kind of democratic republic, 'a systematic union of rational beings through common laws' which the citizens make themselves; or as a system of all good ends, 'a whole both of rational beings as ends in themselves and of the ends of his own that each may set himself'" (1997, xxv). If Kant's moral philosophy takes freedom as its ground and the kingdom of ends as its horizon, the latter concept

clearly links it to his philosophy of history—although for Kant morality must remain independent of history's movement.

Hannah Arendt has pursued this confluence furthest in her lectures on Kant's political philosophy, which were to serve as the core of the final volume of *The Life of the Mind*. Arendt argues that the age-old conflict between the partial vision of the actor and the enlarged vision of the spectator is resolved in Kant's philosophy, in which "the maxim of the actor and the maxim, the 'standard,' according to which the spectator judges the spectacle of the world, become one" (1982, 75). Arendt links here our judgments as spectators with our capacity as actors in the world: "One judges always as a member of a community, guided by one's community sense, one's *sensus communis*. But in the last analysis, one is a member of a world community by the sheer fact of being human; this is one's 'cosmopolitan existence.' When one judges and when one acts in political matters, one is supposed to take one's bearings from the idea, not the actuality, of being a world citizen and, therefore, also a *Weltbetrachter*, a world spectator" (76). So while history is the realm of necessity and morality of freedom, Arendt nevertheless posits a feedback loop between our status as world spectators, mediated by our *sensus communis*, and as worldly actors, guided by the idea of cosmopolitan existence.[xxxv]

What, specifically, is the idea of our cosmopolitan existence? This is where Kant's philosophy of history—as elaborated in works such as "Idea for a Universal History from a Cosmopolitan Perspective" or "Toward Perpetual Peace"—enters our discussion of spectatorship and agency. Kant's aim in these essays, as Allen Wood argues, is to conceive of the course of history as a theoretical object and then it bring

into line with our practical concerns as moral-political beings (2006, 245). Kant locates in history a natural teleology, which, in spite of individual actions, one can hope will tend toward a state of being like that in the kingdom of ends. So he asserts in the eighth proposition of "Idea for a Universal History": "One can regard the history of the human species at large as the realization of a concealed plan of nature, meant to bring into being an internally and, to this end, externally perfect state constitution, as the only condition in which nature can fully develop all of its predispositions in humankind" (2006, 13). Setting aside the complexity of such a proposition as regulative idea, what is crucial to my discussion of Sebald is the mechanisms through which such a "perpetual peace," as Kant would later call it, will be achieved: first, an unsociable sociability by which the course of greater antagonisms will bring more people within a shared legal organization (for example, the United Nations); second, increasing commerce [*Verkehr*] between peoples that will establish relations based on peace rather than war (2006, 146). Kant does not minimize the violence wrought by unsociable sociability, and in positing the peaceful tendencies of Verkehr (which comprises association as well as trade) he simultaneously denounces imperialism and settler colonialism in Africa, Asia, and America (147). Yet Kant does assert that trade first brings peoples into peaceful relations with each other (88) and considers this a *progressive* development that leads humans away from hunter-gatherer societies to agricultural and modern civil societies.

Returning to Sebald's work, Verkehr is in many ways the overriding concern of *The Rings of Saturn*. And the Sebaldian spectator takes a very different view of it, here while traveling by plane:

> And yet [people] are present everywhere upon the face of the earth, extending their dominion by the hour, moving around the honeycombs of towering buildings and tied into networks of complexity that goes far beyond the power of any one individual to imagine, from the thousands of hoists and winches that once worked the South African diamond mines to the floors of today's stock and commodity exchanges, through which the tides of information flow without cease. If we view ourselves from a great height, it is frightening to realize how little we know about our species, our purpose and our end, I thought, as we crossed the coastline and flew out over the jelly-green sea. (91-92)

The frightening view from above is crucially informed by the spectator's view on the ground of the "traces of destruction"—a perspective which leads him to conclude, at one point, that the "much-vaunted historical overview" arises from standing on a "mountain of death" (125). In other words, attending to the extent and remains of our unsociable sociability and taking a critical look at Verkehr in modern world history forces the Sebaldian narrator to posit our course as a "long account of calamitites," not one of moral-political progress. In a very real sense, then, an ethical concern with historical injustice impairs the narrator's moral capacity by closing the future as a cosmopolitan horizon of purposive action. This impairment arises through the contamination of the idea of Verkehr, which is why the narrator's Freizügigkeit— a word that can be understood to join moral freedom with freedom of movement—becomes immobility.

Spectatorship as Overcoming

The narrator's fate should not be viewed in solely personal terms, but rather as a reflection on the historical moment of Sebald's writing—a point that is rarely emphasized in accounts of his work as post-Holocaust or postcolonial. While the spectator's gaze is directed at the past, the present of Sebald's major work is the 1990s, when Verkehr, it was widely said, had finally triumphed through European unification and economic globalization. In writing the history of Verkehr, Sebald's aim is not to mourn the lives that paved the path of our progress, but to suggest that such loss contaminates and determines the present in ways we cannot fathom. He states this time and again in regard to the historical silence that accompanied the "miracle" of Germany's reconstruction after the war.[xxxvi] Put simply, adopting the position of the spectator for Sebald is an ethical as well as historical requirement, yet one which in turn leads him to question time and again our ability to rationally organize a better future.[xxxvii]

Adopting the position of world spectator, then, comes to impair one's capacity as a worldly actor—a sundering of the cosmopolitan confluence Arendt found in Kant's thought and an apparent confirmation of Lukács arguments about the sentimental stance vis-à-vis world capitalism. One could respond to the Lukácsian argument that describing the history of Verkehr constitutes a mode of "resistance" in itself, or that description leads the narrator and reader toward deaths that live on (Santer's "spectral materialism") and thus partially away from a

present death in life. Yet I want to argue, beyond these salient points, that Sebald's late writing begins to imagine a position of ethical and political agency from within the debilitating history of Verkehr, in the process partially rehabilitating its ethical dimensions. This develops upon Verkehr's capacity to engender what Kant envisaged in "Toward Perpetual Peace" as a new common sensibility[xxxviii]: "The growing prevalence of a (narrower or wider) community [*Gemeinschaft*] among the peoples of the earth has now reached a point at which the violation of right at any *one* place on earth is felt in *all* places [daß die Rechtsverletzung an *einem* Platz der Erde an *allen* gefühlt wird]" (2006, 84).

Sebald begins to undertake this in *Austerlitz*, the last book to appear in his lifetime. Grasping this aspect of the work requires us to see Austerlitz's seemingly personal story within larger terms, specifically, in relation to Verkehr. In the important opening scenes, the Sebaldian narrator first meets Austerlitz in 1967 in the waiting room of the Antwerp Centraal Station. The station is a highly symbolic space—as is the waiting room—and Austerlitz spends several pages explaining its significance, in particular, how Louis Delacenserie modeled its dome after the Pantheon in Rome: "even today, said Austerlitz, exactly as the architect intended, when we step into the entrance hall we are seized by a sense of being beyond the profane, in a cathedral dedicated to international trade and traffic [Welthandel und Weltverkehr]" (2001, 10). Austerlitz further points out how the "deities of the nineteenth century" are emblazoned in the dome: "mining, industry, transport [Verkehr], trade, and capital" (12). Within this pantheon, the emblem for "Time" surprisingly "reigns supreme." The reason for this, Austerlitz comments, is that the

standardization of time in the nineteenth century made possible the ascendance of Weltverkehr: "It was only by following the course time prescribed that we could hasten through the gigantic spaces separating us from each other" (12). Yet this seemingly open dimension of shared time projects a false sense of possibility, since Austerlitz's discussion of the Antwerp station's construction—during the age of Belgian imperialism—is prefaced with this significant clause: "at that time, now so long ago although it determines our lives to this day [unser Leben bis heute bestimmenden Zeit], King Leopold..." (9).

That the narrator discovers Austerlitz waiting in a cathedral to Weltverkehr is no minor detail, for the darker side of its history is contained in the secret of his name. The closing scenes with Austerlitz in the book take place around the Quai D'Austerlitz in Paris, which, as he finally comes to learn, was once the site of the principle depot and transit point for all the goods the Nazis stole from the Parisian Jewish community: "For the most part the valuables, the bank deposits, the shares and the houses and business premises ruthlessly seized at the time [...] remain in the hands of the city and the state to this day. In the years from 1942 onwards everything our civilization has produced, whether for the embellishment of life or merely for everyday use, from Louis XVI chests of drawers, Meissen porcelain, Persian rugs and whole libraries, down to the last saltcellar and pepper mill, was stacked there in the Austerlitz-Tolbiac storage depot" (289). Austerlitz's identity, his subjectivity, is shaped by this hidden history. And in a deeper sense, he is the site of its greatest intensity—its embodiment or relic, as it were.[xxxix] While this history is immediately that of the injustice done to the Jewish people, it is also in a sense that

of Verkehr. This confluence is in keeping with Sebald's constant aim to constellate the Holocaust within world history, rather than exceptionalize it: "The whole history of the architecture and civilization of the bourgeois age," Austerlitz asserts at one point, "pointed in the direction of the catastrophic events already casting their shadows before them at the time" (140). In other words, the Centraal Station prefigures the Austerlitz-Tolbiac depot.

The dual meaning of Austerlitz—as person, as historical "site"—allows us to reconsider Sebald's conception of a literature that aims at restitution. On the one hand, Sebald's phrase echoes the shift in legal and cultural understandings of history since World War II, according to which restitution names the need to rectify injustice by returning "actual belongings that were confiscated, seized, or stolen, such as land, art, ancestral remains, and the like" (Barkan 2001, xix)—that is, the contents of the Austerlitz depot. Yet what Sebald's literary method ultimately aims to restore, I want to claim, is a position of ethical agency and the possibility of an open future to the spectator. Here I develop upon a comment, which Sebald scribbled in English in his notes to *Austerlitz* at one point during its composition: "Austerlitz is now a person in his own right" (Mappe 14, Sebald Papers). Becoming a person does not simply refer to Austerlitz recovering his personal history, but also, and most importantly, the emergence of a moral-political subjectivity from the fraught history of Verkehr.

What does it mean for Austerlitz to attain such a personhood? Like the narrator of *The Rings of Saturn*, Austerlitz undergoes several breakdowns; yet these are largely caused by ignorance of his past. The most acute breakdown occurs in

1959, when as a young man he passes out in the Paris metro near the Austerlitz station (that is, above the site of the depot). Waking up in the Salpêtrière, Austerlitz states, "I could remember nothing about myself, or my own previous history, or anything else whatsoever, and as I was told later I kept babbling disconnectedly in various languages" (270). Austerlitz's plight here is individual at the same as it evokes a larger historical condition—that of a cosmopolitanism alienated from itself. Although he slowly recovers, this alienation determines his lonely and unhappy existence. This all changes late in life when Austerlitz accidently steps into the waiting room at the Liverpool train station, suddenly remembering his arrival there by Kindertransport a half-century before. At this precise moment of entry and recovery, we read: "I felt, said Austerlitz, like an actor [Schauspieler] who, upon making his entrance, has completely and irrevocably forgotten not only the lines he knew by heart but the very part he has so often played" (134). This is the first description of Austerlitz as an actor in the book, and thus the scene inverts our initial encounter with him as a spectator in the waiting room of the Centraal Station—in addition to the spectatorial metaphors we saw previously in *The Rings of Saturn*. In recovering his past, Austerlitz comes to occupy the formal position of one who acts or, better, performs. Crucially, this new role is unscripted, which suggests an easing of the determinative influence his unknown history previously exerted upon him, giving him the feeling of "only now being born" (137).

In other words, recovering his past opens up Austerlitz's future. This is a process that enacts Austerlitz's theory of time—a recurrent focus in the narrative. "It seems to me then," Austerlitz remarks late in the text, "as if all the moments of

our life occupy the same space, as if future events existed and were only waiting for us to find our way to them at last, just as when we have accepted an invitation we duly arrive in a certain house at a given time. And might it not be, continued Austerlitz, that we also have appointments in the past [...] ?" (257-58). The waiting room is a spatial metaphor for this notion of time, according to which we walk into appointments in the future, which are at the same time encounters with our past. While this dynamic seems to suggest a future that is predetermined, it is presented as contingent—Austerlitz's discovery of the waiting room is a matter of chance—and its effect in the work is paradoxically to return Austerlitz to a position of agency: the more appointments he keeps with his past, the more the horizon of his future opens up. Thus at the end of the work, when Austerlitz sets off to look for traces of his father and his former love, Marie de Verneuil, he has actually freed himself from the past's hidden hold upon him. And the reader is left for the first time, as Austerlitz leaves London and Paris for unnamed parts of the world, with the sense of a character whose future actions are as unknown to him as they are to us.

The opening up of Austerlitz's future indicates the recovery of an ethical subjectivity from the history of Verkehr—a subjectivity, then, that is not predetermined by the past, and which is characterized by Austerlitz's mobility at the narrative's close: his Freizügigkeit. If this is an overcoming of paralysis, it is achieved through sentimental spectatorship and also through Verkehr. Austerlitz comes to terms with the past precisely through his travels to places such as Paris, Terezin, and Antwerp, which resemble the narrator's pilgrimage (*Wallfahrt*) in the *Rings of Saturn*. What is more, his recovery is realized not only by entering into

places such as the Liverpool station or the Quai D'Austerlitz, but also through his association with characters such as his teacher André Hilary, his lover Marie de Verneuil, his nanny Vera, and above all, the Sebaldian narrator himself. Each character, significantly, is of a different nationality, and what distinguishes the narrator, who crucially allows Austerlitz to relate his story (43), is his complete lack of any personal connection to him. The narrator's listening is surely not devoid of sympathy with Austerlitz's plight, although it does not follow the characteristic forms of "emotionally suffused" identification. It evinces instead a careful attention to another that serves to link two separate lives. This linkage models, albeit on the smallest of scales, the expansion of a community [*Gemeinschaft*] attuned to the violation of right, which Kant considered the ethical potential of Verkehr. It does so not as a supranational organization, like the UN, but as a lived relation between people and the world that is perhaps best described as a communion—another meaning of Verkehr.

At a wider scale, this expansion is arguably the work of *Austerlitz* as literature—orienting readers as spectators toward injustice but also shaping a subjectivity and sense of an expanded community that emerges from such a shared past. This can be conceived of as a form of restitution—a restoration not of the people, objects, or lifeworlds that are lost, but of the notion of an open future and a community sense, which, Sebald suggests, are called into question when we fully face history. Admittedly, opening up these horizons is not the representation of individual or collective action in the present that Lukács called for from the worldly novel, and Sebald at times casts doubt upon the potential for large-scale rational-

purposive action to effect salutary change[xl]—a wariness shaped by the course of modern European history he takes as his subject. Yet I have argued that his work begins to imagine a form of spectatorship that is continuous with, rather than cut off from, agency and the future. Indeed, his writing suggests that such spectatorship is the only hope for restoring these goods to the present from history's grasp.

Common Sensibility

While less focused on historical injustice, Pamuk's museum project makes a related appeal to a "common sense"—a sensibility mediated by the animacy of objects that supposedly unites all humanity. We encounter the most resonant example of this in the central chapter where Kemal learns that Füsun has remarried. Recollecting himself after this shock in the Keskin bathroom, Kemal steals the first objects that will later make up his museum: "As I surveyed the small toilet [...] I saw myself in the mirror, and from my expression I had a shocking intimation of the rift between my body and my soul [...] I now understood as an elemental fact of life that while I was here, inside my body was a soul, a meaning, that all things were made of desire, touch, and love, that what I was suffering was composed of the same elements" (2009, 242). Kemal next hears a song from his youth playing nearby, the singer's melancholic yet hopeful voice blending in with his reverie: "With the help of this singer, I thus lived through one of my life's most profoundly spiritual moments standing in front of the bathroom mirror; the universe was one, and one with all inside it. It wasn't just all the objects in the world—the mirror in front of me, the

plate of cherries, the bathroom's bolt (which I display here), and Füsun's hairpin (which I thankfully noticed and dropped into my pocket)—all humanity was one, too" (242). The uprooting of soul from body, made palpable in the mirror image, affords Kemal a moment of oneness with the objects and beings of the world, but also with his past. In the display case corresponding to this chapter, the same effect is offered the museum visitor, who standing before a sink with toiletries can see her own reflection in the bathroom mirror, while the noise of running water and music passes through holes cut in the case bottom. In a moment that recalls Austerlitz in front of the Antikos Bazaar's vitrine, reflective play brings the observer into line with the object world. Yet here, much more than in Sebald's text, the museum spectator becomes part of the scene, which is both an utterly personal epiphany as well as an assertion of the unity of "ensouled" matter.

At first glance, the reader-visitor at this moment appears to be placed in a position to sympathize with Kemal—an idea which returns us to the main line of the novel's ethics as it extends from Eliot to Nussbaum. Sympathy, as Smith described it in his *Theory of Moral Sentiments*, is not the capacity to feel what another feels, but rather to imagine what we should feel in a similar situation. James Chandler points out how Smith frequently metaphorizes our capacity to create an external point of view—to become what Smith calls an "impartial spectator"—as a mirroring process (2013, 173). Smith describes: "We begin, upon this account, to examine our own passions and conduct, and to consider how these must appear to them, by considering how they would appear to us if in their situation. We suppose ourselves the spectators of our own behavior, and endeavor to imagine what effect it would, in

this light, produce upon us. This is the only looking-glass by which we can, in some measure, with the eyes of other people, scrutinize the propriety of our own conduct" (2002, 131). In a related manner, Smith imagines a "human creature" growing up in a state of nature as being deprived of a social looking-glass: "All these [the propriety of his conduct, the beauty of his mind, his physical beauty] are objects which he cannot easily see, which naturally he does not look at, and with regard to which he is provided with no mirror which can present them to his view. Bring him into society, and he is immediately provided with the mirror which he wanted before" (129). This is why Smith argues that "savages," as he terms the native peoples of North America, are less prone to sympathy than their European counterparts (240-42)—a statement so at odds with history that Kant, despite his teleological view of progress, would have recognized its scandalous falsity.

Whether or not we are invited to sympathize with Kemal, more than sympathy is at play in the above scene of reflection. In bringing the mirrored visitor into the Keskin's bathroom, the display case relates her to its dense object world, the preservation and arrangement of which is the museum's raison d'être. For Smith, however, sympathy does not draw us into the material or cultural circumstances of others; indeed, the impartial spectator is meant precisely to rise above these contingencies. Smith pays no attention to the sentimental potential of objects, predicating our practical interest in them on their utility and our aesthetic interest on their beauty. This dual interest leads us, Smith claims, to seek "the pleasures of wealth and greatness." While Smith describes this as an often-deluded search for "frivolous" utility, our desire for objects is nonetheless a salutary ruse of

history: “It is this deception which rouses and keeps in continual motion the industry of mankind. It is this which first prompted them to cultivate the ground, to build houses, to found cities and commonwealths [...] which have entirely changed the whole face of the globe, have turned rude forests of nature into agreeable and fertile plains, and made the trackless and barren ocean a new fund of subsistence, and the great high road of communication to the different nations of the earth” (2002, 215). In other words, the desire for objects drives Weltverkehr, in Smith’s parlance the “wealth of nations,” the negative consequences of which, as commentators have long noted, are to be mitigated by increased sympathy with others’ suffering in an expanding civil society—a formulation which should not be collapsed into the community sense that Arendt found in Kant’s philosophy or that I located as a potential within Sebald’s fiction.

The ensouled objects in Pamuk’s museum, however, do not drive the desire for possession and creative destruction, but rather serve as sites for shared sentiment. Kemal’s hope for the museum elaborates on his epiphanic moment in front of the bathroom mirror: “The power of things inheres in the memories they gather up inside them, and also in the vicissitudes of our imagination, and our memory [...] These soaps formed in the shape of apricots, quinces, grapes, and strawberries remind me of the slow and humble rhythm of the routines that ruled our lives. It is my devout, and uncalculating, belief that such sentiments belong not just to me, and that, seeing these objects, visitors to my museum many years later will know them, too” (2009, 325). On the one hand, Kemal’s “devout belief” is surely naïve, for one cannot literally inhabit the emotional texture of a lifeworld by seeing

an object that once belonged to it. The thrust of such passages, however, is not simply to ironize Kemal, but rather to orient the novel-museum, and the reader-visitor, to the possibility of a form of shared sentiment mediated by objects.

This appeal to a common sensibility is not the same as we find in Smith's sympathy or the other Scottish "common sense" philosophers, who focus on a moral sense that arises above the material world through social intercourse. The distinction becomes clear in Henri Bergson's discussion of *le bon sens*, which Gadamer points to as a modern extension of the "common-sense" tradition: "while the other senses relate us to things, 'good sense' [le bons sens] governs our relations with persons" (qtd. in Gadamer 2004, 23). Instead, Kemal's material, and at times quasi-mystical, conception of shared sentiment has more in common with the Swabian pietest Friedrich Oetinger, for whom common sense, in the words of one commentator, was "a sense in the true meaning of the word" (Kuehn 2004, 270): "the sensus communis is concerned only with things that all men see daily before them, things that hold a society together" (qtd. Gadamer 2004, 24). What distinguishes Pamuk's appeal to shared sentiment from Oetinger's religious conception of social bonds, or Giambattista Vico's *sensus communis* of the prepolitical *gentes*, is that the things which hold a given society together have the potential to link those who do not strictly belong to it.[xli]

Kemal's notion of a common sense mediated by objects intersects with and illustrates Pamuk's writing on the globality of the novel. In his Norton lectures, Pamuk posits that "the universal suggestiveness and limits of novels are determined by [the] shared aspect of everyday life" (2010, 46). Yet rather than insist upon the

formative limits of language and custom, Pamuk locates the everyday within sensibility: "What we feel when we open the curtains to let the sunlight in [...] when we brush our teeth, when we hear the sound of thunder [etc]—our sensations are both similar to and different from those of other people. The similarities allow us to imagine the whole of mankind through literature, and also enable us to conceive of a world literature—a world novel" (49). Before and alongside acts of sympathetic identification with others, the material world grounds a common sensibility, is a sensory commons, as it were, which has the potential to unite through sentiment—understood both as physical and emotional affectivity.[xlii]

On the one hand, Pamuk's claim here aligns with Auerbach's at the end of *Mimesis* that the world novel would take as its subject a new "common" everyday life.[xliii] For Auerbach, we recall, this "common life" was the product of an economic and cultural "leveling process"—a "standardization" of the world's divergent cultures that arises through what we might now call Verkehr. Indeed, Pamuk's examples here and in the museum—toothbrushes, elevators, watches—are in many ways the products of an expanding modernity: iterations of the "standardized" salt shaker that Kemal imagines at one point in Paris and Beirut, New Delhi and the Balkans (2009, 509-10). Yet if the objects Pamuk displays bear affinities across modern cultures, they are also often unique and intimately intertwined with the lives of people living in a particular time and place. Pamuk takes Auerbach's vision a step further, bringing these background objects to the foreground and offering them as a potential source of sentimental bonds that are not predetermined.

These bonds are not the same thing as a communal feeling such as *hüzün.* While *hüzün*, in Pamuk's description, arises from the juxtaposition of past "greatness" with present poverty, Kemal argues that displaying common objects transforms one's everyday life into a source of "pride" rather than "shame" (518). And in a manifesto that accompanies the museum catalogue, Pamuk suggests that it might serve as a prototype for small and "modest" museums "that honor the neighborhoods and streets and the homes and shops nearby"—as opposed to large museums, which he argues are created by the state in order to glorify national cultures (2012, 56-57).[xliv] While *hüzün* was for Pamuk a sentiment that was restricted to the Istanbullu—and exacerbated by the Western spectator and the cultural politics of East and West—the museum presents objects as conduits for sentiments that might be shared by diverse spectators, drawing them into the texture of an everyday life that is both unique to a neighborhood as well as related to a larger "everyday" with global proportions.

The spectator's relation to the everyday life that novel and museum open up is similar to Kemal's relation to the Keskin household and their neighborhood. In chapter fifty-five, Kemal describes how the "multitude" of the Çukurcuma neighborhood "did not coalesce into the sort of united community one saw in the traditional Muslim neighborhoods of Fatih, Vefa, and Kocamustafapasa," yet he finds within it "a sort of connectedness, a tentative solidarity, or at the very least the buzz of shared experience" (290). Kemal, and the museum spectator, partially participate in this buzz. They do so through what Kemal describes later in the same chapter as "sitting" (*oturma*), which means among other things, "to pay a visit," to "drop by," or

"to spend time with someone" (295). Kemal states that his notion of "sitting" perfectly describes his indefinable role in the Keskin family and their neighborhood. "Unlike those intellectuals who deem it a solemn duty to deride the people and who believe that the millions of people in Turkey who talked of 'sitting together' every evening were congregated to do nothing, I, to the contrary cherished the desire expressed in the words 'to sit together' as a social necessity amongst those bound by family ties or friendship, or even between people with whom they feel a deep bond, though they might not understand its meaning. Here I display a model of Füsun's apartment in Cukurcuma..." (296). There are significant differences between the Keskin's world and Kemal's, between an actual apartment in Curkucuma and its "model" in the novel and museum. Yet the notion of sitting together links these seemingly disparate worlds—giving them a "sort of connectedness" through the "buzz of shared experience."

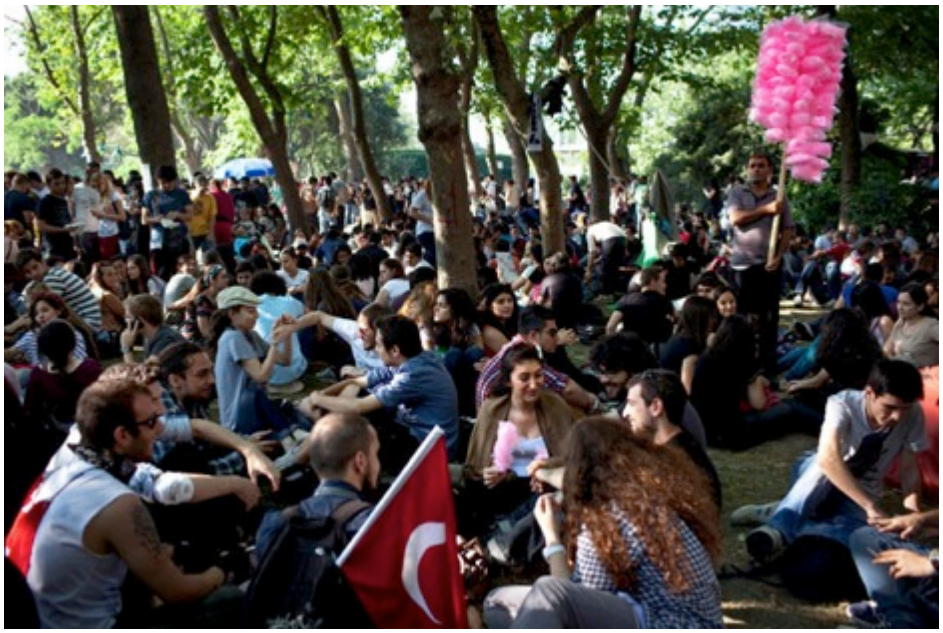
Kemal says that "sitting together" might look like "doing nothing"—much like visiting a museum or reading a novel. And postcolonial criticism has often suggested that these later activities are caught up in complex forms of exoticism, contributing, in part, to forms of paralysis such as *hüzün*. Yet I have tried to suggest that the museum, through its sentimentalism, is an attempt to overcome such paralysis, through what Kemal calls "pride" and Pamuk "honoring" a neighborhood. And in a larger sense, the formation of sentimental bonds, and the articulation of an everyday sensibility that is both local and global, can be seen as continuous with the valuation and preservation of distinct ways of life. In this sense, the expansion of a "common life" that Auerbach bemoaned could be seen to engender forms of solidarity that

work against blind processes of "standardization." And small museums such as Pamuk's serve as sites where Verkehr, to risk a pun, leads to forms of care—not only for individuals, but for the fragile ways of life, and material worlds, that shape sentimental communities.

In this way, Pamuk's museum project partakes of the same spirit as his support of the 2013 Gezi park demonstrations in Istanbul. These protests began as resistance to the plan to destroy one of the city's beloved common spaces in order to build an Ottoman-themed shopping center. The planned shopping center, which weds the "creative destruction" of economic growth to the assertion of an anachronistic communal identity, offers a foil to Pamuk's museum, based on preservation and the articulation of new social bonds. And Kemal's defense of the obscure agency of "sitting together" (*oturma*) is put in a surprising new light by the image that accompanied Pamuk's June 2013 editorial in the *New Yorker* in support of the antigovernment demonstrations [Fig. 7]. In this brief essay, Pamuk shares a "personal story" to make sense of the events for his far-flung readers. He recounts how in 1957 the city aimed to chop down a cherished chestnut tree on his street: "When the time came for the tree to be cut down, our family spent the whole day and night out on the street, taking turns guarding it. In this way, we not only protected our tree but also created a shared memory, which the whole family still looks back on with pleasure, and which binds us all together" (2013). Today, Pamuk writes, "Taksim Square is Istanbul's chestnut tree."

Pamuk's essay aims to create sentiments that we might share, imagining the tree and the park as potentially common objects. Displacing them, through writing,

gives them a new "soul." This is a vision of the material sources of sentimental bonds that drives the museum project and is at odds with the Erdogan government's neoliberal vision of place and community: "They don't like trees, because trees don't generate a profit," states Cemal Özay, former head gardener of Gezi park in a recent article in the *Guardian*. "Even the smallest city gardens and parks are now seen as a possibility for investment" (Letsch, May 29, 2014). Against the privatization of everyday life, Pamuk's work stresses its potential to shape a common sense—an idea which perhaps returns us, albeit in a much altered form, to Kant's notion of an earth that was originally held in common, a commonality which might be seen to live on in the expansion of our sensibility. Sitting together, Pamuk posits, is a manner of forging these sentimental bonds, although their meaning might not be familial, as Kemal states, or even national, but rather elude definition.



[Fig. 7: photograph by Holly Pickett/Redux; *New Yorker,* June 5 2013]

Spreading Dismay

If Pamuk explores the expansion of sentimental bonds, what specific sentiments might the global work open up? Addressing this question by way of conclusion, I want to return to Coetzee's story "The Farm," and its sentiment of "dismay," which seems in many ways hostile to tourism and the position of the spectator. In a concluding section to the introduction at the Stanford colloquium, Coetzee frames the story as participating in a broader discussion of how to keep "body and soul together in a globalized world" ("Tourism"). The aspect of globalization he focuses on is the destruction of indigenous lifeworlds and their simulacral reappearance to cater to tourists. While this applies to the story's titular farm, in the introduction Coetzee takes the South African Bushmen as his example. Beyond criticizing the treatment of indigenous peoples, he puts into question the Kantian view of historical progress, entertaining the alternative possibility: "There is a view, a minority view but not one I would dismiss out of hand, that says that the turn from hunting and gathering to agriculture has been, in the long term, a calamitous one; that in the Bushman of old, as in other hunter-gatherers, we see the embodiment of a right, correct, just relation to our earth" ("Tourism"). The dismay this vision of history provokes is exacerbated by the manner in which many Bushmen feel compelled to stage traditional culture in order to survive in a global economy: "The two options I am offered—on the one hand, standing by and mourning the dying of yet another culture; on the other hand, buying a ticket to watch the resurrection of that culture as a simulacrum—seem to me equally dismaying."

The spectator's dismay in Coetzee's description responds to a loss of agency within the culture itself. This disablement is the subject of philosopher Jonathan Lear's book *Radical Hope* (2006), which examines the survival of nomadic Crow culture in the face of "cultural devastation": specifically after its confinement to reservations in the late nineteenth century and subjection to assimilationist U.S. policies. Lear asks what becomes of practices such as the Sun Dance, a Crow prayer for military victory, when the martial world that gave such acts ethical meaning is gone: "This is not something that can intelligibly be performed now. At best, one could perform 'it' as a nostalgic gesture: an acted-out remembrance of things past" (2006, 37). Lear later describes the nostalgic gesture as "sentimental" (58) and suggests that there remains a fundamental ambiguity about whether surviving practices such as the Sun Dance are merely "a Disneyland imitation of 'the Indian'" (152). Yet the aim of Lear's book is not to offer a critique of the Crow culture that survives, but to describe how their leader Plenty Coups was able to transform and carry over Crow practices as their lifeworld was being destroyed. Lear finds in Plenty Coups a radical hope in a conception of the good that somehow extends beyond its actual embodiments in the existing Crow world: "Precisely because Plenty Coups sees that a traditional way of life is coming to an end, he is in a position to embrace a peculiar form of hopefulness. It is basically the hope for *revival*: for coming back to life in a form that is not yet intelligible" (95). Revival, in this sense, is not a restoration of what once was. To hope for revival is radical, writes Lear, "in that it is aiming for a subjectivity that is at once Crow and does not yet exist" (104).

Just as Coetzee's dismay responds to a sentiment "within" a dying culture, so in his story can be found a correlative to what Lear calls radical hope. A former colleague of Lear's at the University of Chicago, Coetzee provided review comments for Lear's book, praising how it shows "that besides the glamorous alternatives of freedom or death there is a third way, less grand yet demanding just as much courage: the way of creative adaptation." I want to suggest that there is a concomitant third way beyond the spectatorial dilemma that Coetzee describes in his Stanford introduction—between merely watching cultures die and buying a ticket for their simulacral reappearance—that involves something like "creative adaptation" ("Tourism"). Coetzee attempts to overcome his individual dismay by giving it literary, specifically sentimental, form in the story.

In a hand-written note on the top of the Stanford introduction, Coetzee describes it as a "polemical excursus on globalization" and "The Farm" as a reformulation of the polemic as fiction—a distinction crucial to Coetzee's project as sentimental. Specifically, the story explores his sentiment of dismay and "what I am to do with or about [my] dismay," noting that the market "factors feelings of dismay and betrayal into the equation." Divided into two parts, the first half of the story, which describes the man's youthful interest in the farm and the eventual end of farming on the Karoo, concludes with a radical questioning of this historical trajectory: "What did it mean for the land as a whole, and the conception the land had of itself, that huge tracts of it should be sliding back into prehistory? In the larger picture, was it really better that families who in the old days lived on the land by the sweat of their brow should now be mouldering in the windswept townships

of Cape Town? Could one not imagine a different history and a different social order in which the Karoo was reclaimed, its scattered sons and daughters reassembled, the earth tilled again?" ("The Farm"). The second half of the story, which describes the trip with his American friends to Nietverloren, ironically realizes the man's desire for a "reclamation" of the land, yet now in a purely nostalgic form. The earlier call to imagine "a different history" is now replaced by the lament: "There is nothing to be done about it, nothing he can think of."[xlv] Focused on the man's self-reflexive distance from a lost way of life, and describing his apparent lack of agency vis-à-vis world capitalism, the final scene seems to crystallize the sentimental spectatorship that Schiller and Lukács describe.

Yet there is more to be said about this conclusion. If the poet, in Schiller's words, is the "preserver" (*Bewahrer*) of nature, the sentimental writer who attends to its loss becomes nature's "avenger" (*Rächer*). Thus the sentimental, for Schiller, as well as for Coetzee, Sebald, and Pamuk, is concerned with justice, and its particular notion of justice derives its force from the past. In this it differs markedly from the "justice" Coetzee describes at the end of his story's introduction: "The market, as University of Chicago economists keep telling us, is blind, like justice and like fate" ("Tourism"). Instead, sentimental justice arises precisely from seeing—from spectatorship. In Coetzee's story, the way of life on the Karoo becomes a source of justice in that it calls into question the present way of life: "the windswept townships of Cape Town." Yet to try to "reclaim" the Karoo, to revive or resurrect it *exactly as it was*, is not an act of justice, but rather dissipates its vengeful force. This form of revival turns the specter into a simulacrum—it aims to mollify the

sentiment of dismay, while Coetzee's story, as an avenger, seeks rather to spread it: "Jane is sorry. He is sorry. All of them are a bit sorry [...] A light grade of sorriness sits over the whole country, like cloud, like mist."

As mentioned at the outset, Coetzee's close recalls the climactic conclusion to Joyce's "The Dead," in which Gabriel Conroy's "soul swooned slowly as he heard the snow falling faintly through the universe and faintly falling, like the descent of their last end, upon all the living and all the dead" (1992, 224). Yet the stories share more than weather patterns, since the mode of historical haunting I describe above is powerfully figured in Joyce's close, when Gabriel, an Irish "West Briton," imagines the ghost of his wife's former lover, Michael Furey (a west-Irish Erinys, or avenger), and undertakes an imaginative "journey westward," to Ireland's Karoo, as it were. Famously, this imagined return and journey take on precise rhetorical form through Joyce's repeated use of chiasmus, "falling faintly [...] faintly falling," which as a verbal crossing figures Michael's and Gabriel's crossing over the boundary of living and dead: "He was conscious of, but could not apprehend, their wayward and flickering existence. His own identity was fading out into a grey impalpable world." Chiasmus is a figure of crossing, but also internal mirroring, as each verbal element crosses over to its opposite position. In Joyce's story, such "crossing" brings the complacent, complicit Gabriel not only into touch with "Gaelic" Ireland, but more importantly with a history of Irish suffering and rebellion partially "embodied" in Furey.[xlvi] Joyce does so not in the name of reviving Irish culture as it was—"Just as ancient Egypt is dead, so is ancient Ireland," wrote Joyce in a lecture from 1907 (2000, 125)—but

rather in the hope that such a specter might inspirit the present, dissipating the paralysis that *Dubliners* takes as its subject.

Coetzee's close is no less rhetorically precise than Joyce's, repeating "sorry" at the end of seven successive clauses in the final paragraph. An example of epistrophe, literally "a turning about," the close figures a collective turning back, reflecting both upon what was lost and upon the sorriness of the present state of affairs. This use of epistrophe is balanced by the repetition of "nothing" near the beginning of successive clauses—"I want nothing to do with it [...] Nothing to be done about it, nothing he can think of"—an example of anaphora, literally "to carry back, to bring up." Each successive repetition of "nothing" carries the reader back to the previous, giving a greater semantic density to the word, offering it up for our consideration, as it were. Indeed, the repetition carries us back to the first paragraph of the story, in which the narrator recalls his puzzlement at the patch of land he will later learn to call a threshing floor: "a circle of bare, flat earth ten paces across, its periphery marked with stones, a circle in which nothing grew, not a blade of grass" ("The Farm"). If "nothing" grows here, this empty space elicits the young man's imagining that it is a fairy circle and later drives his quest to discover its historical purpose. So while "nothing" grows in the circle, this nothing nevertheless gives rise to "something" in the man's thought and action—a dynamic that Patrick Hayes has described as central to Coetzee's fiction (2010), and which we encountered, in an altered form, at the end of *Disgrace* in the "nothing" of David Lurie's treatment of the dog.

The "nothing" at the end of the "The Farm"—"nothing to be done about it, nothing he can think of"—becomes a similar site "in which nothing grew." Here, however, we are in the position of the young man—a "we" that includes South Africans, but also the audiences around the world, including those in the United States, France, and Australia for whom Coetzee read the story. "Nothing" here describes the man's, and anyone's, inability to undo the passing of time that constitutes historicity—to fully restore or revive what has been lost. And it also describes Coetzee's personal dismay, caught between "mourning" and "buying a ticket." Yet through a "creative adaptation," the limit of his personal thought and action, its "disablement" or "nothing," might give rise to something. In this sense, I would suggest, the close of the story contains a shadowy chiasmus or figurative crossing, as the man's concluding action and thought mirrors that of Coetzee's audiences and the story's readers. Yet in this crossing, beyond the page, lies the possibility of an inversion or translation of terms, whereby our mirrored thought and action might make something of nothing.

This potential is located precisely in the sentiment of dismay, the "quality and antecedents" of which Coetzee posits as the partial subject of "The Farm" ("Tourism"). If dismay names a feeling of disablement, as Coetzee insists in the Stanford introduction, it simultaneously creates the desire for its dissipation. The point of sharing such a sentiment, then, is not simply to make others unhappy or disaffected—to lead them away from life toward stillness. Rather it aims to orient others both to a problem within the field of action as it is currently construed and to an unknown *ablement* that currently lies beyond the individual's imaginative and

agential resources. Sharing a sentiment such as dismay is thus not a guide for action nor its guarantee. Yet it might be considered a minor agency that entails the hope for something beyond dismay. Like the object of Plenty Coup's radical hope, this something cannot be named by Coetzee, since it necessarily resides beyond the horizon of what the story can say—the temporal horizon of the knowable. Yet its conditions of emergence are globally dispersed and in some sense collective, arising through the literary negation of a purely individual "dismay." The story's close puts its readers in a position where they are haunted by a past, indeed many pasts, that should not be simply mourned and cannot be restored, yet are called to impinge upon whatever good the future might hold. This temporal structure recalls the Sebaldian problem of restitution. And it continues and reimagines the ethical form of Schillerian sentimentalism: "They *are* what we *were*; they are what we *should become* again" (1981, 22). This becoming, however, is not an impossible return to the past, to what was the "land's conception of itself" and its concomitant subjectivity. Rather this becoming, which can only be before us, is global. Global not in the sense of a resignation to the globalization that asks one to "mourn" or "buy a ticket," but as the name of the unnamed something that grows from this historical ground.

Coetzee's story does not offer a solution to or reassurance about the course of history in the present—"the windswept townships of Cape Town" or, as he elaborates in the introduction, a "national liberation" that has fallen prey to the "new world order." And its description of sentiment, a subjective if shareable state, is not the narrative mode that Lukács called for in world fiction. Yet if narration is

fundamentally a temporal phenomenon, giving form to past, present, and future, the sentimental works I have examined could be seen as interventions within its terms. They reorient the present toward a largely marginalized or ignored past (whether moments of historical injustice, everyday life in a working-class neighborhood, lost lifeworlds), making it impinge upon whatever good the future might hold. In doing so, they put into question the prevailing narrative of how our present will usher in the future: the story of Verkehr and what Coetzee refers to as "the end of history" ("Tourism"). If this reorientation arises from the position of the spectator, shaped by the sentimental work, I have argued that these works attempt to imagine this position as continuous with or chiastically related to the actor. If the fruit of such action must lie beyond the world of the work, global sentimentalism exerts the minor agency of preparing its ground.

[xxxiii] Lukács's arguments about description and the spectatorial quality of post-Flaubertian realism develop on his discussion of reification in *History and Class Consciousness* (1923). Therein Lukács famously argues that the objectification of relations that characterizes reification leads to a situation in which labor activity "becomes less and less active and more and more *contemplative*"—one facet of the "*contemplative* nature of man under capitalism" (1971, 89, 97). In the book's central essay, "Reification and the Consciousness of the Proleatriat," Lukács's brief discussion of Schiller's essay marks a key turning point—"It is in Schiller's aesthetic and theoretical works that we can see, even more clearly than in the systems of the philosophers [...] the need which has provided the impetus for these analyses" (138)—and Lukács's 1935 essay would spell out Schiller's importance in more detail. The 1936 arguments on description thus appear as a mature elaboration of these ideas specifically in relation to literary form, although any mention of Schiller and sentimentalism has surprisingly fallen away.

[xxxiv] I note here that the word "sentimental" does not appear in the original Turkish, since it does not exist in the language. In the above passages, sentimental is a translation of *duygusal*. Yet the sentimental structure of feeling is clearly at play in both novel and museum, put into play by these "shimmering" objects.

[xxxv] Arendt, of course, is reading Kant's "community sense" against his intentions, since he famously restricted its use to matters of aesthetic judgment. Yet if Kant's *sensus communis* is, in Sophia Rosenfeld's gloss, "the source of a social feeling, a

sense of sharing something with others, that Kant described as the 'necessary condition of the universal communicability of our knowledge" (2011, 223), Arendt is perhaps not mistaken in wanting to connect it to Kant's sense of the "original compact" of a common earth or an expanded sensibility toward violations of right (1982, 74-75). For a recent appraisal of Arendt's reading of Kant, see also Annelies Degryse (2011).

[xxxvi] An explicit example of this occurs in Sebald's Zürich lecture "Air War and Literature," where he situates his discussion of the Allied bombing in relation to Germany's "economic miracle" and contemporary discourse around European unification: "In addition to these more or less identifiable factors in the genesis of the economic miracle, there was also a purely immaterial catalyst: the stream of psychic energy that as not dried up to this day, and which has its source in the well-kept secret of the corpses built into the foundations of our state, a secret that bound all Germans together in the postwar years, and indeed still binds them, more closely than any positive goal such as the realization of democracy ever could. Perhaps we ought to remind ourselves of that context now, when the project of creating a greater Europe, a project that has already failed twice, is entering a new phase, and the sphere of influence of the Deutschmark—history has a way of repeating itself—seems to extend almost precisely to the confines of the area occupied by the Wehrmacht in the year 1941" (1999, 13).

[xxxvii] Again, the end of the "Air War" lecture provides a concise example of this line of Sebald's thought, in which he questions, but does not deny, Alexander's Kluge's hope that the bombings might have been averted or that attending to them might prevent similar destruction in the future (1999, 63-68).

[xxxviii] In calling this a "common sensibility," again I am following and expanding upon Arendt's reading of Kant rather than his own arguments about the *sensus communis* in aesthetic judgment.

[xxxix] Clearly, the importance of this name, and how it fits into the pattern of the book, cannot be overstated. Among Sebald's source materials for *Austerlitz* at Marbach is a long, heavily underlined article on the construction of the Bibliotheque Nationale, the depot Austerlitz, and the transportation of Parisian Jews from Die Zeit Magazin (24 January 1997). The article appeared in the same year in which Austerlitz, in the fiction, first learns of the depot while working at the BnF. Austerlitz name also evokes the unsociable sociability of the Napoleonic Wars, just as Marie de Verneuil's name recalls an important battle in the Hundred Years' War.

[xl] For example, Austerlitz comes to the conclusion, while considering the "Cartesian" monstrosity of the new BnF, "that in any project we design and develop, the size and degree of complexity of the information and control systems inscribed in it are crucial factors, so that the all-embracing and absolute perfection of the concept can in practice coincide, indeed ultimately must coincide, with its chronic dysfunction and constitutional instability" (2001, 281).

[xli] As the following paragraphs will show, Pamuk's project in this way deviates from the modern tendency to map the sphere of common sense, however conceived, to the nation. As Rosenfeld describes in her excellent book on the subject, throughout the nineteenth century "the value of the common sense of the nation became part of

the creed of the modern state itself, which eagerly tried to promote loyalty and social cohesion among the newly politicized masses regardless of whether that state had more authoritarian or more democratic tendencies" (2011, 237).

[xlii] Here I would distinguish my argument from Axel Hönneth's in his recent reconsideration of Lukáscian reification, shorn of its direct critique of world capitalism, in terms of recognition (which bears many affinities with sympathy). In Hönneth's understanding, "reification means that we have lost sight of our antecedent recognition of [...] persons; whereas when we speak of our relation to the objective world, the term signifies our having lost sight of the multiplicity of ways in which the world has significance for those we have antecedently recognized" (2008, 64). In other words, our care for the object world is entirely mediated by our sympathetic identification with other people. While this offers a significant upgrade to Smith's view of objects, Pamuk's museum suggests a more direct connection between uprooted objects and the sensibility of spectators, not limited to an entirely intersubjective sympathy with those persons for whom they form the texture of everyday life.

[xliii] Significantly, Auerbach's arguments about the everyday and a "common life" in the concluding sections of *Mimesis* were written in Istanbul. Indeed, his most elaborate discussion of the everyday as concept (later truncated in "The Hotel de la Mole") occurs in a little-known 1937 essay on Madame Bovary—"On the Serious Imitation of the Everyday"—which appeared in the journal of the Edebiyat Fakultesi (Faculty of Letters) at Istanbul University (Auerbach 2005). Its discussion of the everyday offers a kind of foil to Lukács's contemporary essay on post-Flaubertian realism, and its context of composition highlights how Auerbach's arguments about the everyday were shaped by modernization in Turkey.

[xliv] A foil for Pamuk's museum—although it does not follow the grand model of the Louvre—is the Atatürk Museum in nearby Şişli. Like the Museum of Innocence, the Atatürk Musuem inhabits a home where the "Father of the Turks" once lived. Yet its interior could not be more different, entirely dedicated to military victories—particularly over the Greeks—and all written in Turkish. Pamuk subtly marks the distance between the two museums in the display case for Chapter 31, where a map of the places that reminded Kemal of Fusün indicates the Atatürk Museum, although it is never mentioned in the novel.

[xlv] Here it is interesting to consider "The Farm" alongside Coetzee's critical writings on Olive Schreiner's representation of the Karoo in *The Story of an African Farm* (1883). Coetzee suggests that Schreiner's farm "is a figure in the service of her critique of colonial culture," one which asserts "the alienness of European culture in Africa" and attributes "unnaturalness to the life of her farm. To accept the farm as home is to accept a living death" (1988, 66). While I lack the space here to consider the merits of Coetzee's reading of Schreiner, the protagonist's imagined farm in Coetzee's story appears less as a figure of colonial settlement than as an avatar of the "Old World" ideal against which, Coetzee argued, Schreiner writes: "The farm is not simply a house or settlement in a fenced space, but a complex: at one and the same time a dwelling place, and all the creatures that participate in that economy"

(65). Which is to say that as much as the protagonist's care is for the material practice of threshing, it is infused with the ideal of an alternative *oikos*.

[xlvi] Kevin Whelan explores Joyce's story in relation to the biological and cultural devastation caused by the Famine, arguing that "Furey can [...] be taken as symbolic of a vibrant, passionate life which has vanished" in its wake under the influence of British Imperialism and Roman Catholicism (2002, 70). Frank Shovlin traces the less elegiac dimensions of the story, whereby the journey Westward entails a recovery of Irish uprisings in 1691 and 1798 (2012).

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Coda

Recognition: "the dependencies of this world"

After tracing formations of the global from Paris to Mogadishu, Cape Town to Istanbul, I want to briefly return to the cultural location where we began: Cole's "American" novel *Open City*. Here its narrator Julius, on a sentimental journey to Brussels, discusses world politics with his Moroccan friend Farouq:

> I think you and America are ready for each other, I said. As we spoke, it was hard to escape a feeling that we were having a conversation before the twentieth century had begun or just as it had started to run its cruel course. We were suddenly back in the age of pamphlets, solidarity, travel by steamship, world congresses, and young men attending to the words of radicals. I though of, decades later, Fela Kuti in Los Angeles, the individuals who had been formed and sharpened by their encounters with American freedom and American injustice... (2011, 126)

Julius proposes an encounter between the United States and someone who, while not a political subject of that country, nonetheless finds his life as an Arab subtly shaped by its power. In doing so, Julius experiences a sudden illumination, or recognition, of how their conversation participates in a longer history of encounter, connection, and collectivity beyond cultural and national horizons. Farouq, however, refuses the invitation, stating "I have no desire to visit America, and certainly not as an Arab, not now, not with all I would have to endure there"—a response Julius understands quite well.

Farouq intuits that as an Arab he will not be treated with dignity in the United States—both a failure of hospitality and a failure of recognition. While Cole's novel in no way discounts this justified concern, it nonetheless implies that Farouq, who dreams of reestablishing a *paysage moralisé* in the Middle East, might also have gained something from the encounter—might also have had something "awakened" in him like the radicals from previous generations who traveled through the United States. Yet if Farouq and America are not yet ready for each other in Cole's narrative—"No, not yet ... No, not there," to echo E.M. Forster—Cole's novel nonetheless mediates the encounter in an altered form, bringing Farouq's refusal within the purview of the "American" novel while marking it as one moment in a longer, hidden history of pamphlets, solidarity, travel, and congress.

In other words, Cole's novel articulates a sense of the global within American culture while at the same time showing that it has already had an uncanny, little acknowledged residence there. By way of conclusion, I want to pursue this idea, which inverts the meaning of the widespread phrase—"the globalization of American culture." This phrase expresses the dominant understanding of the relationship between globality and culture, a shadow narrative to the one I have pursued in this project, whereby American culture assumes a hegemonic influence—a correlative to its military and economic power—over the diverse cultures of the world. While this has been articulated in many ways, from postwar fears about the "Americanization" of Europe to Benjamin Barber's slogan of a coming "McWorld" (1996), it also informed Auerbach's idea of "standardization." His programmatic essay "Philology and *Weltliteratur*" (1952; 1969) was written

from the postwar United States, where as a founding theorist of comparativism Auerbach foresaw an age in which Cold War politics would impinge upon and attempt to reshape the world's cultures: "All human activity is being concentrated either into European-American or into Russian-Bolshevic patterns; no matter how great they seem to us, the differences between the two patterns are relatively minimal when they are both contrasted with the basic patterns underlying Islamic, Indian, or Chinese traditions" (1969, 3). Since the triumph of the "European-American pattern" and the rise of English as a global lingua franca, Auerbach's fears have seemed all the more prescient.

We could consider this the cultural wing of neoliberal globalization, a vision that both captures the reach of U.S. cultural influence at the same time as it probably exaggerates the degree to which U.S. power depends upon cultural homogenization. An alternative interpretation of the "globalization of American culture" might describe how U.S. culture comes to reflect these same processes "at home," or as Paul Giles has cogently argued, how the United States can be considered "as one of the objects of globalization, rather than as merely its malign agent" (2011, 23). In what follows, I will pursue a slightly different understanding of the "globalization of American culture," which I will take to describe how an ethical notion of the global emerges within contemporary culture from the United States. We can begin to see this in works that acknowledge the grim realities of U.S. power in the world but imagine such critical acknowledgement as part of the affirmation of our interdependence.

I will attempt to show how this notion of the global emerges in literature through the ethical form of recognition. Recognition is another multivalent word, much like sentiment, whose meanings range from the spheres of literature and philosophy to psychology and politics. While I briefly pointed to a failed process of recognition in Cole's novel, we can best approach the dynamic of recognition that interests me through J.M. Coetzee's description of the United States in a 2010 letter to Paul Auster as "a country which, inasmuch as it is a world-hegemonic power, is in an important sense my country too, and everyone else's on the planet, but with the important proviso that the rest of us don't get to take part in its political processes" (2013, 199). Coetzee's claim is that even as a citizen of places such as South Africa or Australia his life is affected by U.S. power; yet he has no political power, in turn, to intervene in its processes.

This predicament in which a subject is denied representation or rights has been explored in recent years through the politics of recognition. While it does not exhaust the political meanings of recognition, Coetzee's scene is one in which he is not recognized—specifically, he is denied "respect" and equal status—in his interaction with another party whom he recognizes as holding some authority over him. In addition to this failure, another process of recognition is at play in the letter, whereby the reader—perhaps Paul Auster, myself, or another American—comes to recognize an unacknowledged connection with Coetzee through his statement. This idea of recognition as discovery could also describe a wider response to the letter's revelation of a whole global political sphere that is currently lacking: Coetzee cannot

be recognized in the way he feels necessary because the proper "space of appearance," to borrow Arendt's terms, does not exist.

Here the political notion of recognition, related to the acknowledgment of equal rights, intersects with the literary notion, a moment of significant discovery about one's self or place in the world. In linking these notions of recognition, I follow Rita Felski's example who has shown how the moment in reading where "something that exists outside of me inspires a revised or altered sense of who I am" can connect with claims for "acceptance, dignity and inclusion in public life" (2008, 25, 29). Describing the political ramifications of the way early audiences identified with Hedda Gabler, Felski draws the following conclusion: "The moment of self-consciousness, of individual insight, is simultaneously a social diagnosis and an ethical judgment; a response to a work of art interfuses personal and public worlds; the desire for knowledge and the demand for acknowledgment are folded together" (36). In rehabilitating the notion of recognition as the dynamic interplay between the other and the familiar, Felski questions the emphasis on radical alterity in accounts of literary ethics influenced by Lévinas's thought, according to which the singular and irreducible nature of the wholly other shatters our intellectual frameworks and makes the process of recognition one of conceptual violence (26-27).

This emphasis on the "wholly other" informs Shu-Mei Shih's essay "Global Literatures and the Technologies of Recognition," wherein she criticizes the process whereby the "West" becomes the agent of recognition and the "Rest" its object. While Shih cogently points out moments of misrecognition in critical accounts of

non-Western literatures, such as Jameson's infamous argument about national allegory, she comes to find a pernicious and reductive form of recognition at play in nearly every synthetic account of world or global literature, ranging from attempts to imagine larger literary systems to multiculturalism to postdifference ethics. In place of these efforts, Shih argues for a critical practice intently focused on deconstructing all universalisms as it engages, without appropriating, the other "à la Levinas" (2004, 29). What such an "engagement" would actually entail is far from clear; nor is it clear why any critic would undertake it within the critical context Shih describes. Equally troubling is the manner in which Shih's argument rests on a series of more dubious "recognitions" than she diagnoses ("recognition," in her words, being "the cognition of that which is already known and predetermined"; 27). The "global" in global literature, in her estimation, is the same as that in "economic and cultural globalization" and postdifference ethics is seen to be identical with "older paradigms of universalism, with records of violence" (16, 29).

Against Shih's account, I will explore an ethical notion of the global that arises in literary works precisely through the form of recognition. Recognition, in this sense, entails the fraught attempt to engage with others, where the possible discovery of the familiar, or the common, does not lead to conceptual or political complacency but is instead the precise source of the work's ethical challenge. This follows Felski's notion, after Ricoeur, of innovation and familiarity as related moments in aesthetic response (38), yet my specific argument about recognition approaches it first and foremost as an ethical form within the work. In this, I develop upon the Aristotelian concept of *anagnorisis*, which names the moment in a drama

where the action turns upon a character's unsettling discovery, often of a forgotten aspect of the self or unknown familiarity with others (see, for example, Murfin 2003, 17). In particular, I am interested in moments where the recognition of something "in common" seems to call for a new notion of the commons—a rethinking of the nature or boundaries of ethical-political community.

Recognizing the Visitor in *The Fever Chart*

While this dynamic roughly obtains in Coetzee's letter, my analysis will focus on a part of the world where such recognitions are more urgently needed: the Middle East. Specifically, I will examine how American playwright Naomi Wallace brings its fraught political landscape on to the "Anglo-American" stage in her theatrical triptych *The Fever Chart: Three Visions of the Middle East* (2009). *The Fever Chart* is composed of three short one-act plays: *A State of Innocence* (first performed in 2004); *Between this Breath and You* (first performed in 2006); and *The Retreating World* (first performed in 2000). As an ensemble *The Fever Chart* has been performed in the United States, Egypt, France, and England, where Wallace, a native of Kentucky, now makes her home.

I will discuss each play in the order they are performed in *The Fever Chart*, which begins with two plays addressing the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The first, *A State of Innocence,* takes place in a zoo in Rafah in the Gaza Strip, or, following Wallace's stage directions, "Something like a small zoo, but more silent, empty [...] a space that once dreamed it was a zoo" (2009, 6). As this description indicates,

Wallace's plays have an oneiric, otherworldly quality—yet each has at its core an actual historical event and historical material, which shapes and breaks through the dreamlike action. On the one hand, the plays' surreal quality subtly marks the degree to which they are mediations of these events—presented in English, written by an American. Much more importantly, the strange time-space is central to the play's ethical and political vision, as we will shortly see.

The play unfolds through dialogues between a middle-aged Palestinian woman, Um Hisham Qishta, a young Israeli soldier, Yuval, and an older Israeli architect, Shlomo. Yuval patrols this strange zoo, in which every night the animals lose pieces of their bodies: "By afternoon the pieces have grown back, only to be torn away again" (13). He is visited there by Um Hisham, who attends upon the place as if in vigil, and Shlomo, an avatar of Shlomo Gur-Gervosky, inventor of the *Homa Umigdal* or wall-tower model of Zionist settlement. The three enact, in a displaced, ludic manner, the power dynamics of Israeli settler colonialism. Shlomo quotes Ariel Sharon on the need to enlarge Jewish settlements: "everything we take now will stay ours ... everything we don't grab will go to them" (14). Yuval, unsettled by the stranger Um Hisham's knowledge of him, rehearses the politics of the checkpoint: "How do you know my name, lady? Remember that (*Quotes*) 'The one who comes to kill us, we shall rise early and kill him.' I'm not afraid of you. Are you a terrorist?" In this way, the play's title ironically refers to a lack of innocence in the history of the Israeli state. And as this "structure of power suddenly becomes visible" (Kushner 1998, 258), the play performs the function Wallace assigned to her dramaturgy in an earlier interview with Tony Kushner.

The play thus allows us to recognize the structure of power in place, and this process unfolds through misrecognition. To Yuval's question—"Are you a terrorist?"— Um Hisham "playfully" responds: "Palestinorist. Terrestinian, Palerrorist. I was born in the country of Terrorist. I commit terrible acts of Palestinianism. I eat liberty from a bowl on the Wall. Fanatic. Security. Democracy" (9). Mashing together words and buzzwords, she destabilizes what we might call, after Judith Butler, the frames through which Palestinian lives are recognized and marginalized (2010, 1-15). Yet this wordplay alights on a formulation—in many ways only possible in English—that carries a different charge: "terrestinian," one who belongs to the earth (*terra*). Pausing on its meaning brings us toward a different kind of recognition—that of a common terrestrial origin that unites all the characters. The word thus recasts, in a new vocabulary, the political question of who owns the land.

This form of recognition, the startling discovery of something in common, returns in a more developed manner at the end of the play. Um Hisham tells Yuval about the death of her daughter—killed by an Israeli bullet while tending to pigeons on her roof—and in the final moments she reveals to him that he is also dead, killed in her home by sniper fire while ransacking it for (nonexistent) weapons. Moments before he was shot, Yuval had called off his fellow soldiers from beating Um Hisham's husband, and as Yuval dies, she holds him in her arms. "Then I am in hell," Yuval remarks, at the moment of discovery. "No Yuval," Um Hisham responds, "You are in the Rafah zoo. The one that still lives in our minds. And every day I'll come here and visit you, as I visit my daughter" (23). The play's anagnorisis thus obtains

in Yuval's recognition of his death. More importantly, his discovery of their momentary connection in his dying moments is figured as part of a larger recognition of commonality. This is made clear when Um Hisham first tells Yuval of his death by sympathizing with his mother: "I think of your mother. I don't want to, but I do. We had pieces of life in common. In our children. Our children were our pieces of life. Now we have pieces of death. In common" (22).

The role of mourning woman is long-standing in tragedy, familiar, for example, from Euripedes's *Troades*, and by invoking it the play might seem to appeal to common places about the universality of a mother's love or our shared mortality. Yet Wallace insists on the specificity of what is held in common—both mothers have lost a child from an "enemy's" bullets—and the communion between Yuval and Um Hisham is not an erasure of political conflict, but a fleeting moment that only arrives ambiguously at the end of the work. Indeed, Um Hisham's last words in the play are a refusal to sing again for Yuval what she sang as he died in her arms. And it is only as he dies again, as the moment is reenacted for the audience, that she complies: "*Then Yuval slowly turns his head as though the song is calling to him from some long distance. Then one of his knees gives way and he slowly sinks to the ground. He lies on his back, still. Um Hisham finishes her song. Then she turns her head and stares at the dead Yuval. In this fleeting gesture/moment, they connect. Blackout*" (24). The play's anagnorisis does not move beyond politics and history for the rarified air of a common humanity. Rather it reveals a specific suffering in common and a concrete moment of connection that had been forgotten. Returning as it does when Yuval is already "dead," the ramifications of this moment are at best uncertain.

The play's moment of recognition enacts Wallace's aim, laid out in a 2013 essay in *American Theatre*, to take "the tradition of the unexpected guest who provokes a revelation [...] one step further: the Other and ourselves should not be seen as the foreign facing off against the familiar [...] we already know the unknown even if we didn't know we knew it" ("Let the Right One In"). That is, the encounter with the unfamiliar can destabilize our understandings about other people and the world. But it can also lead to a deeper recognition of an uncanny familiarity and involvement—what is "in common." Wallace elaborates: "We are already and always complicit, interconnected, and related to the stranger, the Other, the unfamiliar." This ethical-political vision, I am arguing, plays out in the anagnorisis in Wallace's work. What is more, it informs her choice to write characters who are non-white and non-Anglo-American—"all of us must take the risk to represent anyone and everyone"—and, crucial for my discussion, to bring places such as Rafah, West Jerusalem, and Iraq onto the "American" stage.[xlvii]

Wallace describes this as an ethical practice of hospitality, yet she explicitly distinguishes it from the notion of the Other in Levinasian thought: "I am not summoning the overly esoteric otherness in the philosophy of Emmanuel Levinas, the stranger who shatters and consumes us, but rather noting the ones who enter the landscapes of our stage, and the ones who are refused its geography." The stage becomes here a space—or "neighborhood," in Wallace's words—where an alternative vision of the common, even community, can appear through recognition. Turning defenses of radical otherness and critiques of postcolonial exoticism on their heads, Wallace advocates the need to expand our sense of the neighborhood

we actually inhabit and cogently points out the startling manner in which "mainstream culture suffocates our awareness of the inherent connection, however tenuous, between you and me. Between LA and Afghanistan. Between Kentucky and Sudan. Between Jenin and New York. Between Pakistan and Cleveland. Between you and you and you."

As should be clear, recognizing an "inherent connection" does not reassure those involved nor necessarily resolve their conflicts. Indeed, in *A State of Innocence* recognition comes too late—Um Hisham's daughter is already dead, as is Yuval. Recognition in this sense is not a face-to-face encounter or a revelation in the nick-of-time, but rather a haunting—the dead Yuval of the zoo, the living Um Hisham of Yuval, and Shlomo, in a way, of them both. This haunting shapes the repetitive time-space of the play: the dying and regeneration of the animals; the repetition of Shlomo's visits ("Go," says Um Hisham, "You will come visit again tomorrow. I always expect you"); and Um Hisham's appointment with Yuval: "And every day I'll come here and visit you, as I visit my daughter" (21, 25). Such lines highlight how the oneiric, repetitive time-space of each play in *The Fever Chart* reimagines that of Beckett's *Godot*—an affiliation that Wallace makes explicit in the last play, *The Retreating World,* when its Iraqi monologist names *Waiting for Godot* as an example of the works being liquidated from the once replete Baghdad libraries.[xlviii] While the Beckettian time-space corresponds in a way to the experience of Palestianian waiting, and the liminal visibility of their world, Wallace draws upon Beckett, and here I return to my argument from the first chapter, in order to reimagine the Israeli-Palestinian relationship in terms of fraught interdependence.

While Yuval, and Tanya in the following play, are caught up in a sense of their independence, they come to recognize the problem of Israeli-Palestinian interdependence through dialogue. In this way the formal composition of Wallace's plays follows the dynamic I located in Beckett and Farah's work. Yet it also returns us to Buber's notion of dialogue, which must be addressed again here since Buber was both a leading thinker of Zionism as well as one of the most outspoken critics, within Israel, of its relations with the Arab people of Palestine. Buber was an early advocate of the need for a binational solution, and in texts such as "Dialogue on the Biltmore Program" he brought his philosophy to bear on the political issue. Published in the 1944 issue of *Be'ayot*, the dialogue casts Buber in the role of "Traitor" opposing the "Patriot" who advocates for uncontrolled Jewish migration to Palestine in order to establish a majority there—what the "Traitor" identifies as an attempt to deny the Arabs "collective political equality" (1983, 162). Buber's dialogue ends not with resolution between the two positions, but rather with the "Patriot" lamenting "Really, it's impossible to talk with you" (164). Buber here dramatizes, in dialogic form, his critique of David Ben-Gurion's call to make Jewish immigration (*aliyah*) the realization of a majority as well as his overarching critique of the idea of partition and a sovereign Jewish state. Against the political terms of majority and minority, Buber called for a radical conceptual innovation to the problem of "two nations living together in one place" (167), claiming that their resulting manner of being together would have ramifications beyond Judaism and the Middle East: "a pioneer's step [...] towards a juster form of life between people and people" (184). Buber argued for the return of Arab refugees (279) and

advocated for the common interests and common homeland of the two peoples, approaching their possible future together in terms of a covenant, union, or federation (222), but not as a community—which, as he argued in *I and Thou,* arises through a "living, reciprocal relationship to a single living center," the divine Thou (1970, 94).

The second play in *The Fever Chart*, *Between this Breath and You*, stages Israeli-Palestinian interdependence in more intimate, if troubling, terms. It takes place in the "waiting room" of a clinic in West Jerusalem, another nod to Beckett, where Mourid, a Palestinian man in his forties, has sought out Tanya, a twenty-year-old Israeli nurse. Following the dynamic of the unexpected visitor, Tanya does not recognize Mourid—"Before tonight, I had no connection to him whatsoever"—while he insists: "We are unbearably intimate" (39). The play's anagnorisis turns on Tanya's discovery that the lung transplant she received for cystic fibrosis came from Mourid's son Ahmed, a child killed by Israeli soldiers. In one of the play's more surreal moments, Mourid manages to convince Tanya of her donor's identity when he seems to manipulate her lungs through his voice: "Now do you believe me, Tanya?" he asks, "Now do you know on whom you depend to breathe?" (48). While these lines recall Hegel's master-slave dialectic, the economic interpretation of which is partially represented through the play's third character, Sami, an Arab Israeli who sweeps the clinic's floors, the relationship between Tanya and Mourid goes beyond the otherwise cogent critique of exploited labor.

Breathing, its action and sound, becomes the governing conceit through which the play reimagines the nature of interdependence. Early in the play, before

Tanya "recognizes" him, Mourid explains: "Did you know, Tanya [...] that wind has no sound? What makes the sound are the things it touches—branch, cliff, roof. All that rushing is the contact between one thing and another. Without that meeting point between two worlds, the harshest wind is silent" (34). The sound of wind, which makes its presence meaningful in human terms, is thus irreducible to either of the two worlds—of wood, of wind—from which it emerges. The two worlds here bear reference, of course, to Tanya and Mourid's relationship. Yet it is the idea of their absolute separation that sustains the misery of the one world they actually share. Thus Mourid asks several pages later "Do you think this is the only world?" a question which becomes a minor refrain in the play. These images coalesce at the end in the play's longest, most arresting speech, wherein Tanya contemplates her mortality:

> On my break here at work, I usually go to the park. I close my eyes and sit very still until I am no longer there, just the breathing. And all the world is condensed into the fuel of oxygen, sliding in and out of my chest like the hands of God, working me, working my clay into a form that has no material existence, but is as solid and as palpable as this flesh. What is a good heaven? Yes. I'm afraid. But I imagine it to be a place of floating, where breathing is a continuous, circular motion, unchecked by the dependencies of this world. (*Beat.*) That space where exhalation ends, before the next breath begins. That's where I want to— Where I want to— [...] (51)

Tanya's imagined "world" returns to Mourid's image of the meeting point between branch and wind. Yet here sound is not created, but life itself, as breath inspirits clay to create a being that "has no material existence" yet is as "solid and palpable as this flesh." Life thus appears as a good utterly irreducible to its constituent parts—

Tanya's inhalation and Ahmed's lungs. And Tanya's heaven bears an ambiguous relationship to this living, interdependent world. To be "unchecked by dependencies" might entail a utopian form of copresence, free of friction and sound. Yet the soundlessness between exhalation and inhalation is also surely the silence of death.

The play ends with Tanya's lungs constricting and Mourid guiding her through discomfort and fear with a breathing lesson. In this way, the ending negates the given world of unrecognizing separation—"Because this is not the only world," Mourid responds, the first time Tanya asks why he helps—at the same time as it forestalls Tanya's death, her otherworldly "heaven." The second time that Tanya asks why Mourid helps, he responds, in the last spoken lines of the play, "Because you are. My son"—a blurring of words and worlds which gives over to the play's concluding sound: "*Together they begin a slow inhalation. Then an exhalation. The sound of their second inhalation is even deeper and seems to come from all around them. Before this second inhalation reaches its peak, the lights go black, and there is silence*" (53).[xlix]

The breathing lesson, I would suggest, is not an allegory with a determinate horizon but rather a global figure—in the sense I explored in the second chapter. As such, its import is uniquely open to interpretation, yet it allows us to conceive of the living element of a possible world, which arises at the jointure of seemingly separate ones and is irreducible to their constituent "pieces." This is an image that provisionally fulfills, or refigures, Buber's hope that historical conflict would give way to a radical reconception of political categories, illuminating "a juster form of

life between people and people" (184). Edward Said gave powerful voice to this possibility, arguing, at the end of his life, for a binational solution: "There can be no reconciliation unless both peoples, two communities of suffering, resolve that their existence is a secular fact" (1999, 38). For Said, and Buber, this meant granting equal political rights to Palestinians within a shared state, allowing each group the "right to practice communal life in its own (Jewish or Palestinian) way." While fully in accord with such a vision, *Between this Breath and You* might also be understood as playing off the shared genitive object in Said's phrase "two communities *of suffering*" (my emphasis), figuring the possibility of a larger, but nonexclusionary, community that would derive its living element not from a divine center or secular state but rather from what emerges through its suture. Recognition of what is already "in common" thus leads to a possible rethinking of the nature of community—a rethinking which could depart from the uncanny image of transplanted lungs or even from the troubling "secular fact" that Buber lived out his life in Jerusalem in the Said family home.[1]

Of course, what is perhaps most *unheimlich* is that the nature of the conflict and its potential for community is refigured by Wallace—who is neither Palestinian nor Israeli. In this way, *The Fever Chart* as a global work participates in the same strange logic of the transplant staged in the second play—calling into question received ideas about the organicity of culture. This "outside" involvement is entirely in keeping with Wallace's dramaturgy, indeed, with the history and core dynamics of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict from the 1917 Balfour Declaration to UN Resolutions 181, 242, etc. And as Said, along with nearly every other commentator, notes time

and again, the course of the conflict in the postwar period was and remains fundamentally shaped by U.S. political power. Buber highlighted this general political dynamic in 1947, when he described how the "international political complex has drawn the conflict between Jews and Arabs into the churning interplay of its forces and made use of it for its own ends" (1982, 201).

Recognizing the problem of this involvement, however, does not mean that resolution lies in disengagement. Thus Buber urged in a 1957 circular in line with the post-Bandung politics of Non Alignment: "Israel should choose the way of '*active neutralism'* by calling on all nations of the world, East and West, to join in exploring ways and means for the solution of a problem endangering the peace of the Middle East and the world, which can only be solved when *all* the peoples of the region and all the great powers combine in a constructive effort: the problem of the Arab refugees" (1982, 278).[li] The historical task for Americans, writes Wallace in a 2007 essay, is not only to heed this kind of call but to recognize their prior involvement: "To visit the Occupied Territories, the West Bank, and Gaza as theatre writers is not simply an exercise in forging links between ourselves and the Palestinians. Rather, it is to realize that we, as Americans, are, on an intensely intimate level, already fused, through the overt involvement of our government with the history of these people. *The challenge, then, is to recognize this*, and ultimately to do something about it that makes a motion in that long hard struggle for peace" (2013, 268; my emphasis). In this way, the recognitions that emerge from Wallace's plays are not limited to their characters, but also involve the audience-world in discovery. Here the stage begins

to resemble, although it can never replace, the commons whose absence Coetzee identified in his letter to Auster.

Such a commons is most closely limned in the final play of *The Fever Chart*, *The Retreating World*, which departs from the previous two as a monologue that takes place in Iraq in 2000. The title refers, in part, to the sanctions against Iraq after the First Gulf War—the world's abandonment of it, its becoming unworldly—which rendered it, as the monologist Ali states, "a nation of 'unpeople'" (65). Ali, a collector of pigeons, describes the effects of the sanctions on the Iraqi people, intermeshing his need to sell his pigeons for food with its human costs: "Five thousand pigeons die a month because of this blockade. No. (*Beat*.) Five thousand children die a month because of this blockage ... I will count to five thousand and then perhaps you will see how many five thousand is" (62). The "you" here and elsewhere is the audience, whom Ali haunts much like Um Hisham, Shlomo, and Mourid haunted their dialogic partners in the previous plays.

He tells the audience of the present state of the country but also of the horrors he survived during the war, specifically when American troops fired upon his contingent of surrendering soldiers: "Out of hundreds, thousands in that week, a handful of us survived. I lived. [...] The dead are dead. The living, we are the ghosts. We no longer say good-bye to one another. With the pencils we do not have we write our names so the future will know we were here" (66). Ali's friend Samir—"if love is in pieces, he was a piece of love" (62)—did not survive the firing, struck by an antitank missile while walking hands in the air: "I could not," remembers Ali in the play's dark denouement, "I could not recognize. My friend Samir. A piece of his spine

stuck upright in the sand" (66). This failure to recognize the person from the piece, which haunts Ali, is put to the audience in the play's final moment. Holding up a bucket, Ali concludes: "These are the bones of those who have died [...] I have come here to give them to you for safekeeping (*Beat*.) Catch them. If you can" (67-68). In place of bones, white feathers fly out at the audience, "gifts" which enjoin it to recognize the "unpeople" behind them.

The work of recognition in the final play is thus not part of its mimesis but an ethical task explicitly put upon the audience. Whether our living relation to the play's people and events is discovered, and acknowledged, is entirely up to us. Beyond reframing the important question of which lives can be mourned (Butler 2010), this unique recognition—taking place beyond the stage—bears a weak potential in its relation to future violence. In Chapter 14 of the *Poetics*, Aristotle describes the best kind of tragic plot as one in which the anagnorisis takes place before the tragic act of violence can occur: "someone about to do something irremediable through ignorance undergoes recognition before doing it" (1972, 4.1453b34-36). Sheila Murnaghan, in her excellent discussion of mimesis and anagnorisis, describes why this kind of recognition was deemed superior to other moments of dramatic insight: "What really interests Aristotle about *anagnorisis* is the way that recognition can forestall *pathos*, the way it can prevent an act of violence from taking place, and the way it supplants that act of violence as the main event of the play" (1995, 763). The visiting specters of Wallace's plays, it is clear, have not come to reassure us, presenting past acts of violence that can no longer be prevented. Yet in putting the audience in position to recognize the various

"unpeople" with whom it is intimately related, such a recognition might overcome the cycle of historical violence, becoming "the main event of the play." Tragically, the kind of recognition Wallace's play called for in 2000 did not occur.

Globe/Earth

The global emerges in Wallace's plays not simply as an encounter or connection with other people and places, but rather as a recognition of an intimate, troubling involvement. This uncanny notion of what is "in common," I am suggesting, corresponds to the position of the global in relation to American culture and power: it arrives late as an ethical visitation, only to reveal a participation that was already there. Of course, this idea does not deny the transnationalism and cosmopolitanism of previous "American" generations—the memory of which returns to Cole's narrator in his conversation with Farouq—but rather posits global recognition as a coming to self-consciousness of this ethical position in the world.

Elaborating on the idea of a self-conscious globality, I want to briefly consider a recent turn in Judith Butler's thought, whose ideas have both informed and offered a contrast to my reading of Wallace's plays. While Butler predicates the ethical moment on the failure of given frameworks of recognition, and stresses that "precariousness itself cannot be properly *recognized*" (2010, 13), the process of discovering a troubling intimacy or involvement with others is fully in keeping with her work.[lii] And Butler elaborates upon this dynamic in a recent essay, which attempts to develop an ethical vocabulary able to describe "what is happening when

one part of the globe rises in moral outrage against actions and events that happen in another part of the globe, a form of moral outrage that does not depend upon a shared language or a common life grounded in physical proximity" (2012, 135).

Butler wants to identify this as a form of ethics, yet one that puts pressure upon both the communitarian idea that we are only bound by proximity (geographical, linguistic, cultural) and the competing notion that we are "only bound to those who are human in the 'abstract'" by prior consent (138). She derives her account of ethics from moments when one encounters other people and places in media images, encounters not unlike those staged and opened up through Wallace's plays, and I will quote her at some length as she describes a dynamic similar to that which has been the subject of this coda:

> In one sense, the event is emphatically local, since it is precisely the people there whose bodies are on the line. But if those bodies on the line are not registered elsewhere, there is no global response, and also, *no global form of ethical recognition and connection*, and so something of the reality of the event is lost. It is not just that one discrete population views another through certain media moments but that such a response *makes evident* a form of global connectedness, *however provisional*, with those whose lives and actions are registered in this way. In short, to be unprepared for the media image that overwhelms can lead not to paralysis but to a situation of (a) being moved, and so acting precisely by virtue of being acted upon, and (b) being at once there and here, and in different ways, accepting and negotiating the multilocality and cross-temporality of ethical connections *we might rightly call global*. (138; my emphases)

The strange temporality of Butler's description, in which recognition and connection inhabit the same moment and an initial response "makes evident" a seemingly

liminal connectedness, rehearses the process I located in Wallace's plays, extending it beyond the context of Anglo-America's involvement in the world. Yet what interests me above all in the passage is how Butler concludes by "rightly" calling this ethical moment "global," a notion of the global, which arises precisely through the "form" of recognition/connection. This is clearly a very different understanding of the word from that which we first encountered in the work of Krishnan, Cheah, Siskind, and many other influential thinkers in the humanities and social sciences who have conceived of it as a synonym for neoliberal globalization. Yet if Butler is in a position in 2012 to name the global as a self-conscious form of ethical life, this act has been subtly preceded and prepared by literary works over the past half century that have given the global ethical form, making it "concretely visible," even if it has passed unnamed and unrecognized.

Butler derives her vision of global ethics in part from Arendt's thought, for whom, Butler claims, "the unchosen character of earthly cohabitation is [...] the condition of our very existence as ethical and political beings" (2012, 143). The idea of unchosen earthly cohabitation finds its counterpoint, I think, in the choice or recognition that Auerbach made in 1952 at the end of "Philology and *Weltliteratur*": "our philological home is the earth: it can no longer be the nation [...] We must return, in admittedly altered circumstances, to the knowledge that prenational medieval culture already possessed: the knowledge that the spirit [*Geist*] is not national. *Paupertas* and *terra aliena*" (1969, 17). Famously Auerbach distinguishes this knowledge of "poverty" and "foreign ground" from that of the cosmopolitan by quoting Hugo of St. Victor: "He who finds his homeland sweet is still a tender

beginner; he to whom every soil is as his homeland is yet stronger; but he is perfect to whom the entire world is a place of exile." Auerbach glosses the quote in the essay's last words: "Hugo intended these lines for one whose aim is to free himself from a love of the world. But it is a good way also for one who wishes to earn a proper love for the world." The historical conditions that led Auerbach at midcentury to posit the earth, in the same paragraph, as both philological home and place of exile were also faced and addressed by writers from Beckett to Wallace, Coetzee to Cole. I have tried to show how in giving ethical form to the global, their works have offered provisional, compelling, and unfulfilled visions of a "common life" that arises from these same conditions—an imperfect labor against a "perfect" exile.

[xlvii] Wallace's point is clearly not that one should carelessly represent other peoples and places. For example, in regard to the subject of this coda, Wallace has organized multiple trips of playwrights to the Occupied Territories, meeting with Palestinian artists and directors such as Abdelfattah Abusrour and the late Juliano Mer Khamis. (She later collaborated with Abusrour (and Lisa Schlesinger) on the play *Twenty-One Positions: A Cartographic Dream of the Middle East*). In addition to her literary and political activism, Wallace extensively researches her subjects and has working relationships with scholars such as Ismail Khalidi (for an introduction to Wallace as activist and playwright, see Cummings and Abbitt 2013). Still, despite one's best intentions, she insists "There are thousands of ways we can trip and flounder" when one represents others.

[xlviii] Shlomo, of course, resembles Pozzo both in name and character. In pointing out the crucial Beckettian aspect of these plays, I am not only taking up and extending my argument from the first chapter, but also addressing a lack in current Wallace criticism no doubt due to Beckett's reputation as a "disengaged" playwright. In the only critical collection on Wallace's work thus far (Cummings and Abbitt 2013), there are a dozen references to Brecht, obviously an important influence, but none to Beckett.

[xlix] Wallace's conclusion powerfully reimagines Beckett's shortest theatrical work, *Breath* (1969), in which the all-surrounding sound of one inhalation and exhalation

are matched up with the stage's gradual lighting and darkening, concluding, after only seconds, with silence and darkness (1984, 209-12).

[l] Uri Davis offers a much darker reading of this tenancy and a more critical appraisal of Buber's engagement with the Palestinian cause (2004, 172-73). My aim is not to hold up or assess Buber as a model for an appropriate response to the conflict, rather to consider his response, *from within Zionism*, as it relates to my larger argument about interdependence and dialogue within Wallace's play. When Said once again took up the binational solution late in life, he frequently identified Buber, Judah Magnes, and Arendt as Jewish precursors. He did so probably for reasons of strategy as much as affinity. In his most detailed discussion of the three I can find, Said says this about recent Israeli criticism of the state's treatment of Palestinians and this criticism's relation to these earlier thinkers: "I don't want to appear negative or critical of it. A lot of it is an intra-Jewish debate, not something that's taking place between Palestinians and Israelis. It's taking place within, as it did in the case of Magnes and Arendt and Buber, the Zionist or Jewish camp. There were attempts to reach Palestinians. But the situation was so polarized, and the British playing such a Machiavellian role, and the leadership of the Zionist community [...] were also such clever politicians that these individuals, who in the end *were* individuals, really didn't have much of a chance. It was a rather restricted debate. I don't think one should overemphasize it" (2003, 9). As to the anecdote Davis attributes to Said, no citation is provided and I have not been able to track it down elsewhere.

[li] What the circular called for specifically is the following: "We propose that the Israeli Government should make a solemn declaration that it is prepared to allow the return to its territory of Arab refugees—without fixing any definite figure—and to pay compensation under the condition that all the interested parties (the Arab states, the refugees, the UN, and the great powers) will cooperate with Israel in the discussion and execution of plans for the resettlement of the refugees in Israel and the Arab states" (1982, 279)

[lii] Shih enlists Butler at the end of her critique of recognition, but Butler's account of the term, favoring "apprehension" over it, is more complicated, even paradoxical, than Shih allows. For example, the above-quoted, seemingly emphatic phrase from *Frames of War* is preceded by her argument "that there ought to be a more inclusive and egalitarian way of recognizing precariousness" (2010, 13). So Butler concludes: "Indeed, there ought to be recognition of precariousness as a shared condition of human life (indeed, as a condition that links human and non-human animals), but we ought not to think that the recognition of precariousness masters or captures or even fully cognizes what it recognizes. So although I would [...] argue that norms of recognition ought to be based on an apprehension of precariousness, I do not think that precariousness is a function or effect of recognition, nor that recognition is the only or the best way to register precariousness" (2010, 13).

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