Global Narrative in Electronic Modernity

Jap-Nanak Kaur Makkar
Toronto, Ontario, Canada

B.A., University of Toronto, 2010
M.A., University of Toronto, 2011

A Dissertation presented to the Graduate Faculty
of the University of Virginia in Candidacy for the Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

Department of English Language and Literature

University of Virginia
August, 2018

Abstract

My dissertation examines a number of global novels in light of "electronic modernity." Referring to both the conceptual shift involved in the displacement of "reason" by "rationality" after 1948, and the practical shifts ensuing from the application of electronic principles to computing after 1945, "electronic modernity" is a periodizing concept drawn from recent historiographies in economics and science and technology studies. In chapters on Ruth Ozeki's *A Tale for the Time Being* (2013), J.M. Coetzee's *Diary of a Bad Year* (2007) and Kazuo Ishiguro's *Never Let Me Go* (2005), I examine how literary form develops as it renders historical changes, such as the newly-felt prevalence of practices originating in the cybernetic sciences ("automation," "interactivity" and "prediction"). I argue that these novels offer a space in which cybernetic principles are represented, debated and disputed; framing global literature as a discourse that is instrumental to the current techno-economic regime (i.e., a means of achieving pre-decided ends), I draw on thinkers such as Theodor W. Adorno, Max Horkheimer and Jürgen Habermas to suggest that the canon's disruptive potential may rest in its ability to reform instrumentality.

For Kamal Roop Makkar and Lakhbir Makkar

Table of Contents

Acknowledgements

I am the grateful beneficiary of intellectual and professional guidance from Mrinalini Chakravorty, Sandhya Shukla and Rita Felski. Mrinalini Chakravorty, my advisor, has been a relentless advocate for this project, as well as its most incisive critic. For her patience with me as I fumbled and failed to define my own topic and aims, I will remain grateful for the duration of my career; for the example of professional and ethical integrity she sets, I will remain privately grateful to her for longer. Continually, she pressed me to answer difficult questions about the relationship between aesthetics and techno-capitalism, and this dissertation stands for the process of coming to formulate an answer for her.

Sandhya Shukla encouraged me as I flopped on the job market, tutored me in style before my dissertation talk, and called me to account for my lack of regard for my authors' historical context. From her friendship and her dissent, I have learned lessons of the highest caliber. I am indebted to Rita Felski's signature generosity, philosophical acumen and creative ingenuity. In several places, she shaped the argument by pushing it in provocative directions; and her willingness to engage with committed interest a position that differs from her own is a testament to her excellence as a mentor, colleague and friend.

Because they offered their attention, skepticism and critique, I am grateful to Victor Luftig, Clare Kinney, Bruce Holsinger, Siva Vaidhyanathan, Debjani Ganguly and

Introduction

The Argument

This dissertation examines global Anglophone fiction in the context of technological development, with a focus on practices associated with cybernetics and electronic computing. I draw from recent work that shows how cybernetics and computing contribute to the making of the neo-imperial present, a period, inaugurated in 1945, that I call "electronic modernity." I argue that global literature functions as a site of negotiation, a space in which cybernetic principles are represented, debated and disputed.

A discipline created in the milieu of wartime research and funding, cybernetics has been accurately defined as the science of "control or prediction of future action" (Halpern, *Beautiful Data*, 41). The classical, but less helpful, definition is by Norbert Wiener: "[My colleagues and I] have decided to call the entire field of control and communication theory, whether in the machine or in the animal, by the name *Cybernetics*, which we form from the Greek κυβερνήτης or steersman" (*Cybernetics*, 11, emphasis original). Consolidated by mathematicians, psychiatrists, physicists, engineers such as Wiener, Warren McCulloch, Claude Shannon, Arturo Rosenblueth, Stanford Beer, John von Neumann, cybernetics came together as a conceptual system in the 1940's, 1950's and 1960's at a number of Anglo-American institutions (including Bell Labs, the RAD lab at MIT, the RAND Corporation in Santa Monica, and the Macy conferences in New York City). At the time of its conception, it was designed to be applicable to the study of all sorts of phenomena, from neural transmitters to war planes.

And though little practiced under that name today, its legacy has reconfigured the human sciences, political theory and policy, governance and economics. Given precisely the fact of its wide, trans-disciplinary acceptance, cybernetics—for our purposes—is best understood as an influential conceptual framework.

In this paradigm of thought, objects remain ontologically opaque to the observer in a laboratory, but examination can proceed on the premise that the object's behavior will be necessarily repetitive and redundant (an indisputable fact in cybernetic sciences). Due to the refinement of techniques like statistical modeling, entities can be "understood" by the cybernetic worldview—where "understanding" does not suggest grasping the elemental matter out of which things are made, nor the principle of causality by which they operate. Rather, entities are "understood" if cyberneticians can correctly calculate through models of statistical likelihood the way in which an entity will behave. Entities are entirely "understood" if their future action can be fully "predicted."[i] One critical consequence of cybernetics is that this science flattens all differences between entities— machines or humans—insofar as it presumes that "both machines and humans could speak the same language of mathematics" (Halpern, *Beautiful Data*, 43). More disturbingly, however: in implying that statistical techniques apply equally well to the behavior of humans, machines, and objects, cybernetics shifts the emphasis away from questions of nature or essence in scientific inquiry, stressing instead the accuracy of anticipated prediction (see Galison 1994).

Cybernetics stresses our ability to "predict" over our ability to "understand"; when it migrates to the human sciences, it instructs us to perfect our statistical models, and brings into disfavor the methodologies stressing historicist enquiry and deliberative

engagement. Insofar as some parts of the applied sciences, the human sciences, political policy and economic research have accepted these principles, cybernetics is responsible for a robust trend toward data acquisition, data mining and statistical management in each of these fields. And such a trend requires machines to do most of our work. As architect (and MIT Media Lab founder) Nicholas Negroponte wrote in *The Architecture Machine* (1970), machine "intelligence" is necessary in order to "[deal] with large-scale problems," such as problems in handling "large amounts of specific and local data" (quoted in Halpern, *Beautiful Data*, 11). Thus, machines, in this episteme, become instrumental for recording information, mining data and finding patterns. Moreover, they have also assumed a position of critical importance in *interpreting* and *delivering* response.

Following the lead of prominent historians of science such as Orit Halpern, Peter Galison, Lorraine Daston and Paul Erickson, I see this field as facilitating a movement from "ontology" to "pattern" (as covered in Chapter 1, on Ozeki) "understanding" to "prediction" (also covered in chapter 1, on Ozeki) and "reason" to "rationality" (Chapter 3, on Ishiguro).[1] What these historians and I see as a three-pronged "movement" or shift should not be taken an epochal claim that announces the supersession of ontology, understanding and reason by their more cybernetic counterparts; rather, I am suggesting that in the post-1945 period the latter terms have achieved a relative dominance alongside the former, given especially that so much technological infrastructure reflects technical rationality. The privilege accorded to, say, rationality over reason also changes the

---

[1] Chapter 2, on Coetzee, focuses on property and literary form. While the chapter in its current state doesn't comment on cybernetic history, it does explain how digital copyright has helped solidify divisions between the global North and South—an abiding concern in this dissertation. An expanded and revised version of this chapter will investigate the relationship between digital rights management and cybernetics; I am grateful to Siva Vaidhyanathan for this valuable insight.

processes by which the global South is produced as an object of knowledge and as a military target, and how the global North is produced as an agent capable of exercising will; it is here that I will make my main intervention.

My project extends the discussion on the relationship between global literature and inequalities pertaining to the global North and South. In *Feeling Global: Internationalism in Distress* (1999), Bruce Robbins helpfully points out that the fellow-feeling, or "cosmopolitanism," that is specific to the global North is integrally entangled with the post-1945 American militarism that renders the world knowable. Working originally with Foucault's knowledge/power nexus, Robbins reminds us that the "bombsight perspective" provided by American hegemony (not to mention American technology and guns) also "provokes a longing to overcome these distances" (2-3). I take Robbins to assert that while the brand of internationalism experienced today may indeed be linked to "a guilty history of Eurocentric universalizing" and American interventionist practices in the world, still the concept of "cosmopolitanism" has political uses for the Left (98). (And in this gesture, he seems to prefigure Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak's reminder, in *Death of a Discipline* [2000/2003], that Area Studies has its origins in the Cold War era, but this does not prevent it from participating in a process that recasts "the languages of the Southern Hemisphere as active cultural media rather than as objects of cultural study" [6-9].) Robbins gets at the ambivalences that result when we've cultivated a global consciousness due to military contact, an ethical sense shaped by war photography, an expanded horizon through televised bombing campaigns. Cybernetics is another item that could be included in this series of military-media technologies; since it applies a set of apparatuses and systems built on a unique epistemology, cybernetics

elaborates or modifies the self/Other binary that informs Robbins's analysis, as well as the analyses of so much global and postcolonial literary criticism.[ii] For this reason, I will be arguing that the intersection of literature and post-1945 technological history helps us see how the Northern lens on the Southern Other is currently produced.

Literature may be an institution that facilitates "internationalism" between peoples of the world—a way of practicing, or flexing, sentimental attachment toward subjects beyond the boundaries of one's own nation—but my dissertation illuminates how such exercises in sentiment happen even while literature develops a vocabulary for describing a new logic of technological and economic development. (As I suggest later on in this introduction, unevenness between the global North and South can be exacerbated and sustained even while we harbor fellow-feeling.) More importantly, this project shows that cybernetics--as well as its subsequent iterations in machine learning and artificial intelligence--is a paradigm that depends on aesthetics. One need only recall the litany of urban or industrial designers (George Nelson), architects (Gordon Pask, Cedric Price, Nicholas Negroponte), electronic artists (Roy Ascott), sculptors (Wen-Ying Tsai), filmmakers (Charles and Ray Eames) and photographers (György Kepes) influenced by cybernetics to see that cybernetics has been a project of reforming perception, vision and visibility. Aesthetics, therefore, has been and is still a critical site of negotiation for principles emerging from the cybernetic paradigm. By the same virtue, however, aesthetics is an important means of disrupting the cybernetic paradigm. Thus, the question for anyone working at the intersection of aesthetics and technology becomes: what figurative techniques in cybernetics help produce the world as a target? And how can aesthetics, or its non-cybernetic variant, develop strategies of counteraction,

disruption, challenge? After defining a key term for this project ("electronic modernity"), I explore questions of aesthetics and technology through the help of thinkers like Theodor W. Adorno, Jürgen Habermas, Gayatri Spivak and Rey Chow, before arriving at a provisional conclusion about the critical potential of global literature.

"Electronic Modernity"

My decision to coin a phrase like "electronic modernity" needs some justification. In this section I outline the technological trends and practices to be grouped under the name "electronic modernity," and in the following section, I describe my approach to the socio-historic construct of "modernity," contextualizing it in relation to the approaches of Max Horkheimer and Theodor W. Adorno, Herbert Marcuse and Jürgen Habermas.

I use the phrase "electronic modernity" to refer to the post-1945 period, which has seen a paradigm of computation and cybernetic research begin in Anglo-American locales, and from there grow to envelop and influence economic and technological development happening on a transnational scale. I begin with 1945, using the year as a rough reference to the application of electronic principles to computing (though this was a fragmented process taking place over the early 1940s). And I contend that the cybernetic or operations research that was computing's context and contributory continues until today. Practically speaking, the use of "electronic modernity" is that the phrase helps me put together the findings of a number of historiographers (mentioned serially below), who point to the lasting influence of mid-century cyberneticians and describe the consequences of a world reformed on cybernetic ideas.

"Electronic modernity" describes a confluence of intellectual and practical tendencies in technological history. It describes the conceptual shift involved when we move from scientific practices aimed at uncovering "ontology" to scientific practices that "black-box" the object of scrutiny, a shift identified in Peter Galison's landmark essay on Norbert Wiener, "The Ontology of the Enemy." Electronic modernity includes Philip Mirowski's insight that post-1945 economics has reformulated itself around an economic agent who is seen primarily as a "processor of information," due to a influence of the "cyborg sciences," which he describes loosely as the "modes of thought and machines… forged in British and American military settings" (6-7), which have as their most significant representative John von Neumann, cybernetician and mathematician. Electronic modernity encompasses the trend to privilege "rationality" at the expense of "reason"—a phenomenon that Paul Erickson, Judy L. Klein, Lorraine Daston, Rebecca Lemov, Thomas Sturm and Michael D. Gordin (hereafter Erickson et al.) date between 1945 and the early 1980's (3). The latter set of scholars, whose findings are collected in *How Reason Almost Lost its Mind: The Strange Career of Rationality*, give special attention to cybernetics in their history (John von Neumann and Oskar Morgenstern earn extended consideration), and see the reign of rationality in "human sciences (variously grouped and sub-grouped as the social or behavioral sciences, flexible terms with many competing definitions)—political science, economics, sociology, psychology, and anthropology" (2-3).

But though these historians stamp an expiry date to "rationality," Orit Halpern, Robert Mitchell and Bernard Dionysius Geoghegan show in a recently published article that the rule-based thinking that gained cultural predominance in the Cold War survives

in a new form. Now called "smartness," this descendent of Cold-War rationality involves the following trends in policy and governance:

> [the] integration of human beings and machines into a seamless 'internet of things' that would generate the data necessary for organizing production and labor, enhancing marketing, facilitating democracy and prosperity and—perhaps most important of all--for enabling a mode of automated, and seemingly apolitical, decision-making that would guarantee the survival of the human species in the face of pressing environmental challenges. (107)

The mandate to be "smart" involves generating data, collecting data, and using data to outsource decision-making. Smartness accepts the decentralization of "agency and intelligence by distributing it among objects, networks, and life forms," which are seen as better means of achieving results than "deliberative planning" (108). Thus, because Halpern et al. locate smartness "as a decisive moment in histories of reason and rationality," a phrase like "electronic modernity" can help us name the negotiations between reason, rationality, and smartness that are currently taking place in the world of contemporary technological development.

To close this definitional section, I would like to give an illustrative example of the conceptual shifts and inequities that the phrase "electronic modernity" should suggest. I take the details from Orit Halpern's recent essay, "Resilient Hope," in which she links together speculative extraction to environmental degradation in West Bengal, India. Describing the scene at the river-beds at the base of the Himalayas in Siliguri, West Bengal, Halpern explains that boulders and sand were recently removed in order to create

infrastructure for concrete roads. Since the road is part of a planned "silk road" project, it invites massive speculation ("Resilient," 92). Halpern reflects:

> The most striking element of this environment, for me, was to witness the intense forms of environmental and human devastation wrought through the endless effort to mine sand from riverbeds in order to fuel the purported construction boom within the locality, the new Asian Highway projects that will tie these regions of India to Chinese-held Tibet, Bangladesh, Nepal and, more broadly, the wide-scale realestate speculation currently happening throughout India. ("Resilient," 92)

Rivers will be devastated in the aftermath of this developmental project, which itself has "no clear endpoint"; but neither the ill-defined objective nor the shoddy work-plan will obstruct the speculative mechanisms from doing their work. Rather, the construction was financially leveraged "long before the ground was even broken," the debt to the state was credit-debt swapped "by large investment banks located in global financial hubs of Mumbai and even more likely New York, Frankfurt and London" ("Resilient," 93).

The point is not that computers are behind this form of extraction of value from the global South (though they are). More shockingly, Halpern helps us see that there is a technical rationality that structures this form of extraction—a technical rationality with a history. Applying systems theorist C.S. Holling's concept of "resilience" to development trends, Halpern shows that the state of underdevelopment in Siliguri results when you have a marriage between computational techniques of money-making, and the will to manage crisis states (such as the destruction of Himalayan flood-planes) and not resolve them. "Resilience" denotes that it is possible to "assimilate shock and traumatic events… while maintaining consistent operability, functionality and organization through time"

(99). According to Holling, "resilience" is the "measure of the persistence of systems and their ability to absorb change and disturbance and still maintain the same relationship between populations or state variables" (14). Because resilience accepts that "disturbances" can change a system, but that recovery or even just persistence after such a change is possible, the concept works as a justification for crisis, preventing real resolutions from materializing; giving the example of budworm in forests, he writes "the budworm forest community is highly unstable and it is because of this instability that it has enormous resilience" (Holling 14-15).

Halpern's discussion shows how the global South has been reframed as a crisis-prone region that is nevertheless capable of producing value. This example illustrates that the inequities of the contemporary moment have to do with development and underdevelopment, yes, but also with a new conceptual apparatus that I have been calling "electronic modernity."

The Question of Modernity

Comments on my conception of "modernity" are in order. What are modernity's characteristics, hallmarks, and tendencies? How does it operate as a framing concept or lens in this dissertation? And how does "modernity" help to enframe or explain the set of global novels with which I work? To pinpoint the attributes most relevant to my project, I turn to Theodor W. Adorno and Max Horkheimer, and Jürgen Habermas, who each described the tendency of modern reason toward corruption and decline. And each of these philosophers responded to the ascendance of technocratic consciousness in the current era by developing a theory of resistance or counteraction.

I begin by close-reading an episode from *The Dialectic of Enlightenment* that I see as illustrative of several points of the general argument. In the introductory section of their book—which lays the philosophical foundations for what follows—Adorno and Horkheimer discuss the "intertwinement of myth, power and labor" through an interpretation of the Sirens episode in Book XII of *The Odyssey* (25). As the Sirens know "of all that has ever happened on this fruitful earth," and because they captivate the listener with their song, they stand for a mythic relationship to past, according to which we experience the outlived past as "something living" in the present (25). Where the Enlightenment uses history in the service of the present, rendering it "useful knowledge" or "[the] material of progress," mythic times construe the past as a vibrant, vital entity, an agent that leaves impressions in the now with lines of force (25). Odysseus, as a precursor of the calculating capitalist, responds to the Sirens by controlling their contrarian logic. He orders his sailors to block their ears with earwax, to tie him to a mast and keep him tied there, and to untie him under no condition. As Adorno and Horkheimer write:

> Odysseus's idea [is] equally inimical to his death and to his happiness… He knows only two possibilities of escape. One he prescribes to his comrades. He plugs their ears with wax and orders them to row with all their might. Anyone who wishes to survive must not listen to the temptation of the irrecoverable, and is unable to listen only if he is unable to hear. Society has always made sure that this was the case. Workers must look ahead with alert concentration and ignore anything which lies to one side. The urge toward distraction must be grimly sublimated in redoubled exertions. Thus the workers are made practical. The other

possibility Odysseus chooses for himself, the landowner, who has others to work for him. He listens, but does so while bound helplessly to the mast, and the stronger the allurement grows the more tightly he has himself hound, just as later the bourgeois denied themselves happiness the closer it drew to them with the increase in their own power. What he hears has no consequences for him…. (26)

What's salient about the episode is how it positions the shipmates in relation to the Sirens' mythic song. If Odysseus maintains access to what they have to say, then he does so on the condition that the song (which stands for art) can't count as knowledge, a condition that is met when he limits his own sphere of action in advance. And if workers forfeit access to art, which expresses alternative modes of inhabiting the world, they do so in order to ensure the continuation of life for themselves and their oppressor within the same system that recommends the division of labor. Thus, Adorno and Horkheimer conclude: the workers "reproduce the life of the oppressor as a part of their own, while [Odysseus] cannot step outside his social role [because art doesn't count as knowledge]" (27). The encounter between ship and Sirens is organized, pre-calculated, in a way that ensures that what is contrarian or Other to Enlightenment—the Sirens' mythic song—is contained in advance of their having met with it, and in a way that delimits especially the terms and means of access to myth. The pre-organization of labor and access ensures that the Sirens' lure "is neturalized as a mere object of contemplation, as art" (27).

Insofar as Adorno and Horkheimer help us glimpse in the *Odyssey* a rationalist (and instrumentalizing) division of labor, this passage illustrates their overarching point: "Myth is already enlightenment, and enlightenment reverts to mythology" (xvii). A classical epic expresses the logic of post-1800, modern society, while contemporary

culture installs idols and fetishes resembling mythic ones. The episode illustrates also that the distinction between "substantive reason" and "instrumental reason," a distinction maintained by Enlightenment thinkers and one which is frequently upheld in modern philosophy, is frequently conflated by Adorno and Horkheimer. The consequence of such a conflation is severe: "reason" isn't an appropriate resolution of *a priori* categories of thought and the objective reality (as it was in Kant), or an individual citizen's means of advocating the common good in spheres that permit exercise of public reason (again, as in Kant). Rather, reason is frequently *interested* activity, in which our personal investments determine our advocacy—our ends pre-decide our work. The *Dialectic*'s position results from the conviction that processes of rationalization usually work in favor of one class or another, and thus the position implies that "reason" is a faculty with a political character, which is itself capable of political domination.[iii] In Adorno and Horkheimer's characterization, then, modern reason has the potential to manifest as instrumentality, and has had that potential trans-historically, from myth to Enlightenment. However, I hasten to add that reason is still the only faculty capable of securing liberation—even in Adorno and Horkheimer's *Dialectic*; to ignore the emancipatory potential of reason would be to detach it from the dialectical movement that Adorno and Horkheimer strive to clarify. Though *Dialectic* helps us recognize that domination is immanent within reason, then, this text also conveys that no other tool exists for critiquing processes of rationalization that subject the many to the power of the few.

  As I've already stressed, the *Dialectic*'s interpretation of the Sirens episode demonstrates how art becomes the domain of radical critique in modernity. As they write: "As long as [art] does not insist on being treated as knowledge… it is tolerated by social

praxis in the same way as pleasure" (25). The subtle ambiguity, however, is whether it is the division of labor (and other forms of rationalization or class domination) in modern society that secures the impotence of art by restricting the means of access as well as its influence, or whether it is art's self-assumed impotence that solidifies the divisions that constitute class domination. As I go on to argue below, with the help of Rey Chow: what kind of critique of the usual order limits its own efficacy, its own instrumentality, its own status as usable knowledge? (In asking this question, I'm intentionally playing with the blurry and difficult distinction between instrumentality and usable knowledge, two concepts philosophers might want to keep separate but for my purposes is better understood on a spectrum.)

In the 1968 essay, "Technology and Science as 'Ideology'" Habermas offered a supple reworking of Marcuse's framework and Adorno and Horkehimer's interventions. As this essay captures Habermas's most remarkable contributions to the Frankfurt school of critical theory, and because it shows his indebtedness to and slight departure from the positions of the Frankfurt school, I use the essay to offer a brief overview of his take on modern reason. In this text, Habermas endorses the corrective and progressive powers of modern reason, and locates the tendency toward social decline in the diminishing role given to "interaction" over time.

Habermas begins by criticizing the intellectual maneuver by which the Frankfurt school "[fuse] of technology and domination, rationality and oppression" (240). Rejecting the necessity of the link between reason and domination, Habermas rejects also his predecessors' proposed solution, a solution that holds "social emancipation [follows from] a complementary revolutionary *transformation of sciences and technology*

themselves" (240, emphasis added). If the "secret hopes" of Walter Benjamin, Max Horkheimer, Theodor Adorno and Herbert Marcuse are to *reform* and *rebuild* scientific thought, then such hopes are baseless according to Habermas, given Arnold Gehlen's conclusions about the history of technological development (241). In Habermas's and Gehlen's view, technological development follows a line of development rooted in the body of the human organism: "At first the functions of the motor apparatus (hands and legs) were augmented and replaced, followed by energy production (of the human body), the functions of the sensory apparatus (eyes, ears and skin), and finally by the functions of the governing center (the brain)" (241). The need to innovate technological instruments "corresponds" to the structure of "purposive-rational action"—which is defined by Habermas as *a decision, a choice, made between alternatives on how to organize social forces* and is opposed to *debates over how to be ruled and which values our social forces should espouse*; thus, because a very important structure of action (purposive-rational action) corresponds exactly to current technical instruments, "it is impossible to envisage how, as long as the organization of human nature does not change and as long therefore as we have to achieve self-preservation through social labor…we could renounce technology, more particularly *our* technology, in favor of a qualitatively different one" (241).

In what is perhaps his most distinguishing position, Habermas believes technology—or instrumental action, or technical reason, etc.—does not have a political character in and of itself. To better see how this is the case, we'll have to inspect the essential concepts undergirding his system, especially the concepts "work" and "interaction." Work stands for the operations of "purposive-rational action," i.e.,

"instrumental action […] governed by technical rules based on empirical knowledge […which] impl[ies] deductions from preference rules (value systems) and decision procedures; these propositions are either correctly or incorrectly deduced" (244). Thus, an example of "work" would be the actions to be taken after the method of distribution of health-care institutions in a given region has been decided; here, the "work" actions (or "purposive-rational action") would not concern itself over preference rules or value systems governing the distribution method, but would rather limit itself to producing an accurate deduction from an existing value system. If it were decided that health-care centers be distributed relative to population density, then "work" would pertain to the deduction of the number of health-care centers to be built in the region, etc. In contrast, "interaction" signifies "communicative action, symbolic interaction" (244). Habermas explains:

> [Interaction] is governed by binding consensual norms, which define reciprocal expectations about behavior and which must be understood and recognized by at least two acting subjects. Social norms are enforced through sanctions. Their meaning is objectified in ordinary language communication. While the validity of technical rules and strategies depends on that of empirically true or analytically correct propositions, the validity of social norms is grounded only in the intersubjectivity of the mutual understanding of intentions and secured by the general recognition of obligations. (244)

Because "interaction" is a domain of action premised on communication, debate and social norms, it brings into play notions such as "intersubjectivity" and "mutual understanding."

As a mode of human behavior, it is present, alongside purposive-rational action, in every kind of society: traditional, early capitalist and late capitalist. (Note that Habermas does not use the latter two terms.) If purposive-rational action dominates in a limited way in only certain subsystems (administration, economics, etc.) of society, and if that society's means of legitimation are mythical, religious or metaphysical, then it should be said that that society's character is "traditional" (246). When economic forces (which are synonymous with purposive-rational action) begin to threaten the legitimating efficacy of religion or myth, and when the capitalist mode of production ensures the "*permanent* expansion of subsystems of purposive-rational action" and thereby overturns tradition, then we have crossed the threshold to modernization and entered early capitalism (247). At this stage, "the rationality of language games, associated with communicative action, is confronted at the threshold of the modern period with the rationality of means-ends relations, associated with instrumental and strategic action" (247). This stage permits a modicum of Habermasian "interaction," or political debate over society's means of legitimation (though Marx's analysis showed that such political exchange was really just symptomatic of the economic base). But over time this well-functioning early capitalist society turns into a technocratic one: a society based on technical reason or purposive-rational action. In this last stage, "politics now takes on a peculiarly negative character, for it is oriented toward the elimination of dysfunctions and the avoidance of risks that threaten the system: not, in other words, toward the *realization of practical goals* but toward the *solution of technical problems*" (252). In other words, technological development within capitalism has led to a stage in which governance is directed toward compensating for the dysfunctions of the free market, not toward higher-

level debates whether free market is an entity by which we should be governed. Habermas's conclusion is that previously, politics had practical substance; now, within the current stage, we have eliminated "practical questions and [precluded] discussion about the adoption of standards; the latter [i.e., discussion about standards] could emerge only from a democratic decision-making process. The solution to technical problems is not dependent on public discussion" (252). In sum, we have entered an era in which debate over *how we should be ruled* has been inhibited at the cost of improving upon techniques of rule (to which we never consented); this is how technology and science achieve the status of "ideology."

Though Habermas agrees that the current conjuncture manifests the rise of "technocratic consciousness," still he argues that the remedy is achieving the right proportion between "interaction" and "work" in a society. In his view, Adorno, Horkheimer and Marcuse have only "obscured [the objective of critical theory] with the notion of the political content of technical reason" (243). The task is to "determine in a categorically precise manner the meaning of the expansion of the rational form of science and technology… to the proportions of a life form, of the 'historical totality' of a lifeworld" (243). This is why I asserted earlier that, in Habermas, technical reason has no political character in itself, but if contained within the right number of subsystems can co-exist alongside a healthy public sphere. Note the difference between this position and the positions of Adorno, Horkheimer and Marcuse, who are more likely to see a latent quality of domination within reason (and who see potentials of instrumentality in objective reason).

In addition to Habermas's recovery of instrumental reason (i.e., his recasting of it as politically neutral), Habermas's view abandons class analysis altogether. Though he provides a historical justification for his renunciation of the labor theory of value, still his philosophy fails to get at the nature of class and imperial domination as it currently exists. According to his essay, technology and science become independent sources of surplus value in the current stage of capitalism, and their achieved independence therefore invalidates the labor theory of value. He writes:

> Technology and labor become a leading productive force, rendering inoperative the conditions for Marx's labor theory of value. It is no longer meaningful to calculate the amount of capital investment in research and development on the basis of the value of unskilled (simple) labor power, when scientific-technical progress has become an independent source of surplus value, in relation to which the only source of surplus value considered by Marx, namely the labor power of the immediate producers, plays an even smaller role. (253)

In his critique of the labor theory of value, and in the insight that technological development produces surplus value independently of labor power, Habermas thus abandons also the traditional tools of critique within the Marxist tradition. And, while his philosophy leaves behind the traditional means of critiquing power, it adopts untraditional, pragmatic means of reform: communicative action.

Arguably, for critics interested in developing a vocabulary for contemporary power, Habermas's proposal for progress—which consists of achieving the right ratio between instrumentality and symbolic interaction—falls short. But what seems undeniably useful is his attempt to recover instrumentality. Because he shows that

instrumentality (or technical reason) is proper to the human organism, and therefore that it cannot be abandoned as such, Habermas's work pertains to my project, which will comment on instrumentality in both cybernetic development and in aesthetics (see my points on Rey Chow below).

At the same time, Adorno and Horkheimer's project has the appeal of identifying the forms of domination that the exercise of reason entails. In an attractive method—a method that exemplifies what ideology critique can do at its best—they show that reason, even when it appears to operate on behalf of the common good and in a disinterested manner, has interests. Reason acts on behalf of the power of the manager, the supervisor, the capitalist, the exploiter. Their critical philosophy is a powerful resource for any global South scholar who wants to show up Northern pretenses to objectivity.

My uses of "modernity" are influenced in half-measure by Adorno and Horkheimer, and in half-measure by Habermas. My intention in deploying "modernity" as a concept is to call to mind all of the following ideas: that the exercise of reason is always an interested, instrumental exercise, but that it need not work in favor of the capitalism but can instead be redirected toward revolution; that instrumentality is a human faculty, which can sometimes be politically neutral, and under a Marxist program of work, revolutionary; and finally that capitalism, from its early to late stages, demonstrates an increase in technocratic consciousness. The significant implication here is that if instrumentality can be redirected to progressive, Left ends; our job, as progressive critics, would be to install a program of revolutionary action, capable of disruptively displacing the current neoliberal one. Thus, whereas Adorno and Horkheimer argued that critique can happen in art (Enlightenment's Other, carrier of myth), and

Habermas holds that critique can co-exist alongside processes of instrumentalization (i.e., through maintaining the domains of communicative action), I have tried to suggest how critique (or progressive change) may take place by redirecting instrumental reason toward our desired ends.

One note before I conclude this section: I refuse the aesthetic exceptionalism that characterizes Adorno and Horkheimer's project, as will become abundantly clear in the following. For my own work, art is an instrumental object: currently it makes money for a lot of people; it includes means-to-end thinking, and authors are means-to-ends thinkers; it is quantifiable, in terms of surplus value, and it is predictable, since the literary market runs on trends and social capital; and global literature achieves a number of ends for the global North (by affirming the North's moral righteousness, etc.). And, above all, it is all the more instrumental because it has pretenses to non-instrumentality (see comments below on Rey Chow).

Global Literary Studies

Scholars of world literature and global literature have long been managing the problem of an unequal distribution of power—in representation, in distribution and exchange, and in geopolitics. In these discussions, inequality is an issue that pertains to uneven development, *and* an issue of literature and literacy—what is read, how it is evaluated, how it is discussed, how it is valued. According to Pascale Casanova's *World Republic of Letters*, modern literature materializes in a "world literary space"—inaugurated around 1500--which is irreducible but analogous to the system of modern capitalism, insofar as the former is also constituted by a system of relationships between center and periphery,

the powerful and the powerless. In the world literary space that Casanova identifies, Paris functions as "capital," developing the means of legitimation, system of valuation and aesthetic modes and standards for which the postcolonial countries vie. In a similar vein, Franco Moretti borrows from the world-system school of economics (i.e., Braudel and Wallerstein) to hypothesize the existence of a single but "profoundly unequal" system of world literature (54). Intriguingly, for Moretti, the solution to the inequality is to reform the conceptual categories and methods of literary analysis—as he writes so memorably, "world literature is not an object, it's a *problem*, and a problem asks for a new critical method" (55); by incorporating "distant reading" methods in scholarship, literary historians can correct for the power relations that prevent access to Southern literatures, and which keep Pakistani or Zimbabwean novels from influencing the Northern academy's account of the novel. (Of course, with Casanova in mind, we could correct Moretti by pointing out that inequality amongst national literatures isn't an issue of literary method, but rather an issue of the aesthetic forms that are associated more or less with modernity.)

In addition to Casanova and Moretti, a number of other critics, concerned specifically with the nature of global literature, have turned our attention to the importance of market determinants on fiction. According to the latter group, market forces shape the production, distribution and sale of the global literary text as well as its content. As Joseph Slaughter writes in *Human Rights Inc.*, there is a "metropolitan literary […] appetite for Third World Bildungsroman that turns multicultural, postcolonial reading into a kind of humanitarian intervention--a market-forced imposition of certain literary norms that are almost compulsory" (35). Graham Huggan, in *The*

Postcolonial Exotic, diagnoses the "strategic exoticism" through which authors of the formerly colonized world meet the metropolitan audience's touristic demand for cultural difference; he asks in this book, "To what degree is the recognition—the cultural capital—of postcolonial writing bound up in a system of cultural translation operating under the sign of the exotic?" And, integrating a concern for cultural capital with real capital, he goes on to ask: (viii) "How, within this process, do postcolonial writers/thinkers contend with neocolonial market forces, negotiating the *realpolitik* of metropolitan economic dominance? How has the corporate publishing world co-opted postcolonial writing, and to what extent does the academy collaborate in similar processes of co-optation?" (viii). While Huggan focuses especially on the philosophical paradox at the crux of postcolonialism as a discourse (which he calls "the postcolonial exotic"), Sarah Brouillette shifts the emphasis slightly more toward the publishing conditions of postcolonialism, as well as the techniques of postcolonial authorship, in *Postcolonial Writers and the Global Literary Marketplace*. Sarah Brouillette argues the postcolonial literature is entirely an "effect" of expansion in publishing industry, inasmuch as it is an outcome of the acceptance of niche marketing and servicing recently made possible due to technological reorganization in the industry. She writes: "As a niche developed in tandem with general market expansion in the publishing industry, postcolonial literature is especially compromised… While [postcolonial authors are] by all means irrevocably implicated in the expanding global market for English-language literary texts, [their authorship] is not threatened in any straightforward way by association with commercial expansion and mass production" (3). The threat has waned, and "talk of saving literature from 'reduction' to commodity status is now scarcely

possible," because the postcolonial niche was essentially a symptom of commercial expansion in publishing in the 1970's (3). Here, I take her to mean that while conditions of artistic autonomy have held for the greater part of modern history, the late-twentieth-century expansion of commercial control has led to a reconfiguration of the relations within the "literary field," thus sometimes allowing for the dispensation of the guise of autonomy (especially by the postcolonial writer, whom she considers "compromised," or complicit in market operations). As she explains:

> [Postcolonial authors] do not seek to separate themselves from the commercial or economic spheres – the basis of those 'corporately owned' images –but rather to interact with various forms of politicized interpretation and reception that are imbricated with transnational culture and capital. …[I]gnoring the political implications of the niche marketing of postcolonial literature leads us away from this important emergent trope of authorial self-consciousness: the trope of self-authorization through awareness of the political uses or appropriations of one's works. (74)

In a manner similar to Slaughter and Huggan, Brouillette finds that the representational strategies of the global canon align with and solidify an existing economic reality (in her case, it is the reality of the Northern media industry). Thus, whether the postcolonial text contains a trope of "authorial self-consciousness" or relates a coming-of-age story that reifies the rights-bearing subject, it makes a symbolic contribution to a market structured by metropolitan aesthetics, Western taste-makers and Northern conglomerates. In sum, the postcolonial text circulates in an industry structured by economic inequality, and deploys a set of representational strategies that index Northern cultural and ideological

values (contained multiculturalism, human rights, etc.).

The Southern Other

To this mix, we might add the literary-theoretical comments of Bruce Robbins's *Feeling Global*, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak's *Death of a Discipline* and Rey Chow's *of the World Target*, even though these monographs don't take the global literary canon as their object of inquiry. However, as specialists of comparative literature, postcolonial theory and aesthetics, and area studies (South Asia, in Spivak's case, and East Asia, in Chow's case), Robbins, Spivak and Chow each propose sophisticated theories on the epistemic production of the Other, reflecting on how the knowledge and literary systems of the West determine our relationship to the subaltern. Their insights, therefore, pertain to the debates within global literary studies.

As mentioned briefly above, Robbins argues that the American regime of neo-colonialism produces cosmopolitan sensibilities at the same time that it inflicts war on regions that it seeks to bring under its hegemony. Robbins sees in the current organization of global power potentials for the extension of fellow-feeling. In *Feeling Global*, Robbins discusses the association between "worldliness with world war, the desire to know with the view through a bombsight, a wider horizon with the altitude of an aircraft" (2). He asks evocatively of all of us located in the global North, but particularly Americans: "What does it mean to take your slant on things from a B-17?" (2). Where Robbins offers a productive set of questions for my own field, still missing from his account is a critical analysis of how literature and literary studies, humanistic methods, and universities might be corroborating with American militarization. Because, in his

schema, knowledge produced in the midst of war is not tainted by an undercurrent of aggression; cosmopolitanism is possible, it seems, because we feel truly, sincerely, even when we hold the other at gunpoint. To put it in terms that might have been deployed by Adorno, Marcuse and Habermas, Robbins believes that (cosmopolitan) reason can be exercised by citizens of an empire, though it may be imperial instruments of domination and value extraction that bring the Other close enough to be seen. It is this nexus—the nexus of knowledge/power, reason/domination—that Gayatri Spivak's *Death of a Discipline* and Rey Chow's *Age of the World Target* address more adeptly. These two texts offer original recommendations to theorize the nexus at which the production of knowledge about the Other intersects with power exercised over the Other, leaving the former tainted.

Spivak's *Death of a Discipline* tackles the future orientation and direction for comparative literature, noting the following points that pertain to the current academic context: the problematic origin of area studies in the aftermath of the Cold War; the problematic tendency of "old comparative literature" to prioritize European languages over non-European ones; and the lack of care in cultural studies for linguistic training or close reading. What subtends her concern for comparative literary studies as a discipline, of course, is the reality that an objectifying gaze is continually applied to the formerly colonized world. Her solution, in general terms, is that global Northern readers should look through the eyes of the other at ourselves; she suggests that we "stand rather as reader with imagination ready for the effort of othering, however imperfectly, as an end in itself" (13).

More specifically, she argues that we must preserve "the best of old Comparative Literature: the skill of reading closely in the original… and consider the resources of Area Studies, specifically geared for what lies beyond the Euro–U.S." (6). According to Spivak, an imagination trained by literature can better manage an ethical paradox at the core of Western modernity, a paradox she explicates through Derrida's *The Politics of Friendship*, the paradox of "un-decidability" between the self and Other. As Derrida explains in reference to Carl Schmidt's friend-enemy distinction:

> …even before the question of responsibility was posed to us, of speaking one's own name, of countersigning such and such an affirmation, etc., we are caught, the ones and the others, in a sort of heteronomic and dissymmetrical curvature of social space, more precisely of the relationship with the other: before all organized *socius*, before all *politeia*, before all determined "government," before all 'law.' Prior to and before it, in the sense of Kafka's before the law. (230)

Given that one cannot access the Other directly (which in Derrida and Spivak is called "the law of curvature of social space"), an act of political decision-making must happen in the mode of "perhaps." This "un-decidability" of what the Other means, of her mode of thinking, of her intention—these obscurities are not "deterrent[s] to politics" (30). Rather, "The difference between "left" and "right" begins after this structurally shared 'madness' of the political" (30). In view of this fundamental uncertainty about the Other, Spivak, with Derrida, suggests "the philosophical position of being called by the other be accessed by its inscription into political responsibility" (30).

Literature achieves this: it helps to inscribe into political responsibility the activity of being called by the other. Spivak shows us as much in each of her close readings,

demonstrating through Woolf and Coetzee that their texts grant us a "liberty" to be moved along elsewhere, "by a provisional surrender in the self's stereotype, never complete…" (42).

> This precarious and temporary transfer of agency, earned through imaginative attention, is how the habit of reading and writing as robust allegories of knowing and doing may come to supplement, fill a hole in as well as add to, the decision-making authority of the social sciences. (42)

If the self/Other dilemma is a paradox that gave shape to the origin of politics (is the Other a friend? Or an enemy?), a paradox revived in every act of political decision, then the deconstructionist asks us to remember the fact of "un-decidability" over the Other, and be thus informed in ethical actions. In acts of imaginative making, Spivak holds, we learn the "undecidability" of the Other, and thereby hold the door open for other futures "to come." Spivak's is a recommendation in which literature—free of the ideological entrapments that constrain universities or humanistic methods—can train the imagination, because of its particular status as a non-instrumental discourse in modernity. While cultural studies, area studies and comparative literature may be blinkered by their historical positioning and context, literature escapes their entrapment. As she says in her lectures: "literature is what escapes the system" (52). I do not meant to suggest that Spivak believes literature to be free of ideology. Rather, her philosophical orientation is one that treats the literary text as exceptional by its constitutive non-instrumentality—a position that follows from a twentieth-century re-interpretation of Kantian aesthetics. This isn't really a fault in any one of her projects, but really a point that speaks to her philosophical system (and deconstruction).

Rey Chow, in contrast, takes issue with literary autonomy (or the notion of literature's exception), and in doing so produces a trenchant critique of the deconstructionist methodology that informs Spivak's argument. Chow recommends that we begin to recognize in poststructuralist claims on behalf of literary autonomy or aesthetic "disruption" a guilty corroboration in a bigger structure of thought—self-reflexivity. Self-reflexivity, according to Foucault, was a compensatory position through which literature could reclaim cultural privilege or self-importance, after language failed to function as a matrix that could ascribe meaning to things. As he defines it: it is the tendency of language to appear "folded back upon the enigma of its own origin and existing wholly in reference to the pure act of writing" (Foucault *Order*, 327). Where the world moved to an over-technologized and over-bureaucratic state, literature's compensation was to craft a sphere of self-reference; it would be impotent to accomplish ends in the real world, but it would venerate non-instrumentalism by becoming its last figure. But insofar as literature, humanistic methodology, and indeed disciplinary regimes after 1945 co-opt self-reflexivity as the cornerstone of pure reason, according to Rey Chow, self-reflexivity is behind a rather guilty "epistemic scandal": it facilitates imperialist actions from which it has consistently looked away. Chow asks us to consider how, precisely by the suspension of questions of reference, post-1945 literature and post-45 knowledge systems strengthen the divide between the economically rich and poor. Because self-reflexive philosophies ascribe injustice to the operation of instrumental reason, derive their own legitimacy from the appearance of injustice, and do little to ameliorate its effects, they become its belated accomplice.

In light of Chow's provocative thesis, we cannot look away from the affiliation that self-reflexivity in methodology and literature has with neo-imperialist actions abroad. Insofar as literature and literary theory have taken up the position of "self-reflexive"—that is to say in-efficacious—discourses, they have done so while technical rationality originating in the cybernetic sciences has entered spheres such as economics, political theory and policy, governance and bureaucracy. All such dissemination has domestic as well as international implications. Thus, I cannot help but wonder the cost at which the presumed impotence of literary and theoretical work comes.

Here, we should also keep Joe Cleary's literary-historical points in mind. He proposes to historicize our recent, critical preference for the ironic and de-familiarizing text. As he notes, over the period of its existence postcolonial studies has favored modernist-associated terms such as "hybridity, polyphony, pastiche, irony, and de-familiarization rather than realist-associated conceptual categories such as historical transition, class consciousness, and totality" (265). Cleary contextualizes this bias by showing that at the time of its disciplinary institutionalization postcolonial critics' tastes were influenced by a Cold War split, according to which the Soviet Union laid claim to the legacy of realism, while the United States espoused modernism as it "safeguarded the autonomy of art from Soviet-style cultural engineering" (263).

Pairing Cleary and Chow, we should recognize our preference for the disruptive, de-familiarizing text as a preference that valorizes the non-instrumental in modernity. But this preference for non-instrumental discourse happens at the same time that instrumental reason—cybernetic rationality—enters so many our places of work, our disciplines and systems of knowledge, our infrastructure, our daily life. And, as I show in

the example of Siliguri, West Bengal, such a rationality changes the forms of control over the Global South. That "self-reflexivity" has been a strategy for professing literature's own weakness while allowing cybernetic rationality to run free—that may be one more reason to see literature as accomplice to inequality.

Given all of the above considerations—which are considerations of the global literary market, global literary aesthetics, literature as a modern institution and literature disciplinary field at Northern universities—I will tentatively suggest global literature may well be the endeavor to think through a new logic of uneven development (i.e., cybernetics), in a form that itself extends economic unevenness. Given that it makes the incomprehensible comprehensible ("rationality," "prediction," "pattern"), the global literary text performs a function—it has *use* and can be *instrumentalized*. In this project, I have taken global fiction to be a canon structured by the inequalities that pertain to the market and current copyright (Chapter 2), but also a canon that forges a cultural grammar to make cybernetic reason easier to understand (Chapter 1 and 3). What emerges, then, is a picture in which global literature is consolidated by factors such as the Northern control over the technologies of publishing and the international law, and which, in its thematic content, reflects on techniques of exploitation, making cybernetic means of control legible by giving them narrative form. As I elaborated earlier in this introduction, the difference between the global North and South—self and other, colonizer and colonized—is an important theme for global fiction; and perhaps the endeavor to think through a new logic of technological control, in a literary canon that itself exemplifies economic unevenness, shows us that the North may be using literary form to better understand or even refine its means of exploitation. Take the case of the casual reader,

who, before she picks up the global novel, knows that she will be pleased with what she finds—its lifeworld reflecting both the modern aesthetic modes with which she is familiar, and the technical rationality by which her own social institutions are run. The reader is "interested" then, in several senses: because she is implicated in its aesthetic procedures; because its procedures serve her interests and *not* the Other's; and because her sensorium learns to accommodate and accept a technical rationality oriented towards Southern control. Therefore, the global reader is a compromised reader, a means-to-end reader, incapable of critical distance on the aesthetic object—as the disinterested, Kantian observer should be. It remains to be seen whether the novel's instrumentality can be redirected toward a progressive program of action.

My hypothesis on the instrumentality of the global novel has the advantage of avoiding aesthetic exceptionalism (a charge I make against Spivak and Adorno and Horkheimer) and also the advantage of recognizing the fact that global Northern power informs Northern aesthetic and knowledge production (which Robbins's cosmopolitanism and Habermas's reason fail to sufficiently recognize). Further research—including three planned chapters on Hari Kunzru's *Transmission* (2005), Joe Sacco's *Footnotes in Gaza* (2009), and NoViolet Bulawayo's *We Need New Names* (2013)—will allow me to test and extend this hypothesis.

Literary Rationale

The authors analyzed in this dissertation have received the attention and acclaim of global literary scholars (who have a role to play in shaping the discourse of post-colonialism), Northern taste-makers (reviewers in literary magazines and newspapers),

prize committees (Coetzee and Ishiguro are Nobel and Man Booker winners, and Ozeki is a Man Booker nominee), and the publishing industry (each of their books' rights are held by Penguin Randomhouse, which is part of Bertelsmann, one of the largest mass media companies on the planet). Therefore, their authorships point to the institutional processes of vetting and validation that were the objects of Brouillette's critique. And the strategies deployed by the three novelists—distantiation, de-familiarzation, irony, meta-fictional commentary, disruption and magic realism—also reflect unevenness of literary capital, insofar as these are the techniques favored by metropolitan critics. But, more than just reflecting economic unevenness of the publishing industry—and signaling that unevenness through their narratives or form—these novelists are uniquely placed to comment on Otherness and exploitation.

That is, while Ozeki, Coetzee and Ishiguro are indisputably the affiliates of a global Northern educational and production system (Coetzee received his PhD in English at the University of Texas-Austin, Ishiguro received an MA in Creative Writing at the University of East Anglia, and Ozeki trained in classical Japanese literature at Nara University, Japan), they each maintain a position of "adjacency" in relation to the traditionally-held centers of power. Because Ishiguro and Ozeki's narratives deal in significant ways with the intellectual and socio-cultural traffic between Japan and the West, and because they frequently tackle issues of stereotyping or racism, they are capable of commenting incisively on strategies of "Othering" that are part of Western thought. Thus, Ozeki's *Tale for the Time Being* integrates her critique of the technical rationality that is one of the main instruments of the war on terror (a rationality based on the principles of "prediction" and "black-boxing") with a critique of racialized Othering,

which she shows to be a component of World War II as well as contemporary conflicts in Afghanistan and Iraq. And Ishiguro's career-long interest in Otherness manifests in *Never Let Me Go*, where the narratorial strategy (which I call a strategy aligned with "rationality" not reason, in that it refuses to comment on internal drama) proves how a population that has internalized its own exploitation might speak about itself. Ozeki and Ishiguro's identity as diasporic subjects arguably helps them look askance at the technical rationality, and thereby see more incisively its potentials for Othering and abuse.

And Coetzee, as a beneficiary to South African apartheid and Euro-American domination, has also produced its most excoriating critiques and self-conscious reflections, perhaps due to the fact that he originates from Africa, where "conquest and settlement…almost totally" (Interview, *Dagens Nyheter*). In an attempt to position himself socio-politically and ideologically, Coetzee gave this astonishing statement:

I am a late representative of the vast movement of European expansion that took place from the sixteenth century to the mid-twentieth century of the Christian era, a movement that more or less achieved its purpose of conquest and settlement in the Americas and Australasia, but failed totally in Asia and almost totally in Africa. 1 say that 1 represent this movement because my intellectual allegiances are clearly European, not African. I am also a representative of the generation in South Africa for whom apartheid was created, the generation that was meant to benefit most from it. What the correct relationship ought to be between a representative of this failed or failing colonial movement, with this history of oppression behind it, on the one hand, and the part of the world where it sought and failed to establish itself and the people of that part of the world on the other

hand, is the subject of your question… My response, a dubious and hesitant one,

is that it has been and may continue to be, in the time that is left to me, more

productive to live out the question than to try to answer it in abstract terms. When

I say I have "lived out" the question I mean I have lived it out not only in day-to-

day life but in my fiction as well. (Interview, *Dagens Nyheter*)

As evident in this interview answer, Coetzee's understands his own position as one in

between Euro-American allegiance and allegiance with the colonized. It is a position of

double-mindedness, or, in David Atwell's words, "intimacy and detachment, in equal

measure" (230). Coetzee's estrangement from the global dominant is present in each of

my authors.

I have identified in Ozeki, Coetzee and Ishiguro the potential to be uniquely

critical of Northern hegemony while being its product. I have selected them for this

dissertation because certain biographical facts make them uniquely capable of distance

and dissent. But, as the analyses below demonstrate, the authors' critical attitudes do not

prevent their novels from working on the side of technological control. And while the

chapter on Ozeki is the most positive in its valuation—since it argues that *Tale for the

Time Being* counteracts the subjectivism inherent in cybernetics—still the novel performs

the functions of disseminating cybernetic rationality and training the reader in the

intricacies of its operation. In this project, my method has been to track the relationship

between aesthetic strategy and technical rationality. More specifically, I discuss

principles of technological control such as subjectivism in the Ozeki chapter, property in

the Coetzee chapter, and rationality in the Ishiguro chapter; and while Ozeki's novel

advances an anti-racist agenda, while Coetzee demonstrates in *Diary* the danger of

speaking for Others, and while Ishiguro's stages the perversions of exploitation, still their novels use that moral righteousness as a strategy to excuse the fact of their aesthetic and institutional dominance. If in Western thought the game has always been to achieve a workable balance of moral right and dominance (think of Nietzsche's indictment of Western morality in *Genealogy of Morals*, or Europe's "civilizing mission" in the colonies, or America's self-justifications of righteousness in ensuring liberal democratic freedoms), then the global novel proves its usefulness or "instrumentality" because it shows us the most recent iteration of moralism and might. (Again, my hypothesis about the "use" of global fiction is stated in the speculative mode, pending further analysis.)

Chapter Outline

In the first chapter of this dissertation, "Reality Check: Ozeki's *Tale for the Time Being* and Omniscience," I examine Ruth Ozeki's third novel, *Tale for the Time Being* (2013), which hinges on the strained relationship between Naoko Yasutani and her father, Haruki. In order to mediate the divide that separates these two characters, and to counteract some of the cybernetic tendencies of development, *Tale* fashions a form of narration that returns us to the possibilities of omniscience and objective knowledge (as far as each of these are still possible). I argue that in laying down a route to omniscience, the novel criticizes the foundational premises of cybernetics, which can be taken as a scientific correlate to modernist doubt. Through a discussion of Norbert Wiener's relationship to Sigmund Freud (and Henry James and Joseph Conrad), I show how cybernetics developed as a consequence of its acceptance and elaboration of the modernist attitude to reality. And, in contrast to the literary debate that has tried to

determine Ozeki's position by discussing themes such as interconnectedness and cosmopolitanism, multiculturalism, food and environment, I suggest that Ozeki's is foremost a politics of literary form. By discerning what her form is doing, scholars can figure out where she stands on issues of (techno-economic) globalization. I argue that Ozeki's form invites the reader to identify with an omniscience perspective—despite the fact that there is no single omniscient voice that unites different parts of the book. This omniscience--which is assembled by stitching together the ephemera collected in the novel (including emails, diaries and secret diaries, letters, etc.)—refutes the forms of subjective enclosure that I identify in both the modernist literary tradition and cybernetics.

This chapter's importance is that it shows how cybernetics presents a modification of self/Other dialectic, a fundamental component of Western thought. Cybernetics begins by accepting the Freudian-modernist view of reality, which itself stresses subjectivism in experience that makes the Other increasingly inaccessible, but from these Freudian premises elaborates a framework that might be better categorized as "postmodern." Cybernetics exacerbates the alienation inhering between self and other, worsening the relationship as it has been traditionally understood, by making the Other totally opaque and unknowable; not even a projection of the interested subject, the Other's ontological make-up drops out of view altogether.

In "Coetzee's Formalism, Literary Proprietorship and Digital Copyright," I show that elements of J.M. Coetzee's *Diary of a Bad Year* (2007) re-enact authors' and lawyers' arguments, from several legal cases, to advance the rights of ownership. Eighteenth-century authors pointed to aesthetic form to establish an irrefutable link

between an individual's cognition and their literary creation, furnishing the courts with the logical justification for intellectual property; in the late twentieth century, copyright owners promulgated the notion that digital technologies multiply the threat of illegal copying, and in doing so shifted the balance of copyright laws in favor of authors. I show that *Diary of a Bad Year* recapitulates these instances of proprietary logic in such a manner that its own formalism seems to join in with the currently dominant trend to defend the rights of copyright owners. While the diegetic world of *Diary* critiques technical rationality—as when it excoriates Alan, the neoliberal tech-wizard—I argue the novel's formalism corroborates some of the premises of techno-economic development.

This chapter addresses the issue of how the relationships of power that predetermine the global "literary field" (or "world literary space") have an impact on how well texts circulate across borders. I show that institutional structures, such as the international regime of copyright law (which strongly favors the copyright holders) and the corporatization of publishing, have rendered the "formally-oriented" text more favorable as a commodity. In my formulation, a text espousing modernist values of autonomy and formal complexity does not, as WReC (or the Warwick Research Collective) insist, "[encode] the captialisation of the world," relaying either how the experience of underdevelopment is tied up with overdevelopment, or how "commodification [insinuates] itself into the fabric of everyday life" (18). Rather, in my formulation modernist formalism is part of the structure of literary power in the corporate-copyright regime, which suppresses literary texts that are formally experimental or message-driven (and I am thinking particularly of Sonali Perera's work on working-class writing here).

In the third chapter, "Ishiguro and the Post-45 Turn to Rationality," I interpret the stylistic transition that distinguishes Kazuo Ishiguro's early novels (in particular, *A Pale View of the Hills* [1982] and *An Artist of the Floating World* [1986]) from *Never Let Me Go* (2005) as a transition that correlates with the historical turn to rationality "at the expense of… reason" (Erickson et al. 2). Examining the techniques by which *Never Let Me Go* prevents us from understanding Kathy's interiority, I argue that *Never* is a novel written in the "descriptive" mode, insofar as it fails to demonstrate the dialectic between internal drama and exterior event that was thought to characterize novels. Using Georg Lukács's distinction between narration and description, and drawing especially on the Kantian elements of his view, I contend that Kathy H., our narrator, tries but ultimately fails to bestow events with meaning, because literary "meaning" requires the operation of a psychic force that realizes itself in its encounter with the world. I identify a similar relationship between event and mind in the work of cyberneticians such as Gregory Bateson, Leon Festinger, John von Neumann and Oskar Morgenstern, who in their seminal works present impoverished pictures of subjective interiority—presuming the practice of "rationality" but not Kantian or Enlightenment "reason."

Taken together, my project introduces new terms to describe economic and technological "development," at the same time that it shows how the North is retooling its apparatuses to render the South a more pliable object of study and value extraction. Literature plays a part in extending Northern forms of control, especially when it upholds the pretense of innocence.

CHAPTER 1

Reality Check: Ozeki's *Tale for the Time Being*
and Omniscience

Introduction

A subplot of *Tale for the Time Being* (2013) features Oliver (Ruth's partner) at work on

an ecological art project. In a conversation with a minor character, Callie, Oliver reveals

that the project involves him in planting tree species native to the "Eocene" era, a period

between 56 to 33.9 million years ago. But since his reforestation activity included species

that were technically "invasive" to Cortes Island, British Columbia, a logging company

cleared his trees and another party placed the property under a covenant. "The covenant

holder wants me to stop planting, but I'm arguing that given the rapid onset of climate

change, we need to radically redefine the term native and expand it to include formerly,

and even prehistorically, native species" (120).

Oliver's art consists in formulating a pragmatic response to the crisis of climate

change, and for clarity on its theoretical premises, we might turn to Oliver Kellhammer's

artistic statements. Kellhammer, the real-life model for the character and Ruth Ozeki's

real-life partner, explains in the essay "Neo-Eocene": "[The *Ginkgo* and the *Metsequoia*]

and other anciently native trees prevalent during the Eocene Thermal Maximum might

have what it takes to survive the warmer conditions we have already begun to

experience."

Why not bring them back on a larger scale to the areas they once lived in, so they

can fill the niches that will be left behind as the more heat-sensitive present-day

species begin to decline? Wouldn't this be somehow artificial? Of course it would.

Yet modifying our earth's environment has already been our species' greatest

legacy--so much so that the age in which we now live has been dubbed the

Anthropocene in reference to the ubiquity of our impact. ("Neo-Eocene," 198-

199)

What Oliver proposes—and Kellhammer proposes (if I can briefly make a leap from

fictional character to reality)—is to *accept* rather than *reverse* the consequences of human

impact on the environment. According to this view, the onset of the present crisis has

been so "rapid," that an effective response requires altering the environment in line with

crisis conditions, not altering the forces feeding the crisis. Humans must accommodate

themselves (and fellow life-forms) to warmer climates; better that than to hope for caps to

emissions, which will be nearly ineffective if implemented today.

Critics are likely to mistake Oliver's aesthetic philosophy for Ozeki's own. This,

despite her novels' concerted efforts to situate opinions in the mouths of characters

whose perspectives are an outcome of their socio-cultural background. Thus, when

Ursula Heise examines the representation of "invasive species" in Ozeki's *All Over*

Creation (2002), she explains the salience of the trope, by arguing that in the novel's

imaginary, advocacy of plant variety on a farm is the equivalent of advocacy of inter-

cultural and racial diversity in a nation-state. Heise's analysis is problematic, though,

because her case rests on the credibility she grants to a single character's perspective—

Lloyd Fuller's. A religiously-devout character, Lloyd encourages farmers to plant

exotics, not only because of the xenophobic, "racist" implication of denying a home to exotics, but because "anti-exoticism is Anti-Life" (67). Clearly, Lloyd's views are meant to be observed in their particularity, taken as a specific instance of how a pro-Life stance (usually a socially conservative position) can converge with progressive-multiculturalist views on race as well as biological diversity. Lloyd is a curiosity of historical accident, a shocking example of how conflicting historical forces can contribute to the making of a contradictory character (he is open to cultural mixing and cultural difference due to his experiences in Japan while with the American military, but he subscribes to the rural-religious conservatism endemic to Idaho). And in the steady attention the novel pays him, we understand Ozeki's authorial interest in the historical-realist perspective the novel can facilitate. But Lloyd's views should not be mistaken with the author's.

I open with an account of Oliver's aesthetics because his views *contrast* with the novel's, as I will go on to show. Though the thematic recurrence of "invasive species" in *All Over Creation* and *Tale for the Time Being* may persuade us that Ozeki does indeed view the topic favorably, and though Oliver's sympathetic portrayal may incline us to read his views as the novel's own, it would be shortsighted to substitute character for the author. In this chapter, I will be proposing—alongside Allison Carruth, who criticized Ursula Heise's interpretation along similar lines[iv]—that we should look to Ozeki's *forms* to understand her political positions.

After examining elements of its narration, I find that *Tale for the Time Being* seeks to *reverse* a (technological) crisis, while Oliver sought to *accept* his climate-related one. Considering the novel in light of the history of post-World War II cybernetics and computation, I argue that *Tale* describes the ethical crises that ensue when cybernetic

principles such as "black-boxing" and "prediction" infiltrate the economic and political spheres, and even interpersonal sociality and private lives. That is, though "black-box" and "prediction" were part of conceptual schemes consolidated by cyberneticians for use in the applied sciences (computation, electrical engineering, robotics), such concepts now seep into ordinary life and reconstruct our intimate relationships. As I will show, *Tale for the Time Being* is centrally concerned with the impact of the post-WWII laboratory on our interpersonal sociality.

A discipline created in the milieu of World War II research and funding, cybernetics has been accurately defined as the "science of [the] control [of actions] or [the] prediction of future action" (Halpern, *Beautiful Data*, 41). Consolidated by mathematicians, physicists, engineers such as Norbert Wiener, Claude Shannon, Warren McCulloch, Stafford Beer, John von Neumann, it was widely applied to help conceptualize not just technological phenomena, but also events in the social, political, economic spheres. Cybernetics came together as a conceptual system and a set of practices in the 1940's and 1950's, and though little practiced today under that name, its legacy has reconfigured the social and human sciences. Given precisely the fact of its trans-disciplinary acceptance, cybernetics—for our purposes—is best understood as an epistemology.

In this chapter, my method will be to closely scrutinize some cybernetic principles espoused by Norbert Wiener, and to close read some parts of Ozeki's third novel; in doing so, I will show that *Tale for the Time Being* espouses an alternative to cybernetics—an alternative way of knowing and inhabiting the world.

Tale for the Time Being represents an innovation in literary form. Despite the skepticism and subjectivism promulgated by literature after modernism over the greater part of the twentieth century, and despite the subjectivism that is inherent in the cybernetic view of life, *Tale* fashions techniques of narration that aim to construct views beyond subjective enclosure. The novel refurbishes our desire to understand the real—both what is evident to the senses and what lies beneath—even while the novel acknowledges limitations of perspective, and even though it has to resort to tropes of magic realism in places. Insofar as *Tale* ventures to create a partial omniscience (not in any represented or narratorial agency, but in the person of the reader), it revives our ambition to know broadly, deeply.

In the following, I make three claims. My first claim, as I have already suggested, is that *Tale* fashions a form of narration that returns us to questions of objective truth, as far as it is knowable. Claim 2: in laying down a route to truth, the novel criticizes the foundational premises of cybernetics, which can be taken as a scientific correlate to modernist doubt. Through a discussion of Norbert Wiener's relationship to Sigmund Freud, I show how cybernetics developed as a consequence of its acceptance and elaboration of the modernist attitude to reality. Finally, claim 3: in contrast to the critical debate that has tried to determine Ozeki's position by discussing themes such as interconnectedness and cosmopolitanism, multiculturalism, food and environment, I suggest that Ozeki's is foremost a politics of literary form. By discerning what her form is doing, we can figure out where she stands on issues of (techno-economic) globalization. As I will be arguing, Ozeki's novel invites the reader to identify with an omniscient perspective—despite the fact there is no single omniscient voice that unites

the different parts of the book. This omniscience--which is assembled by stitching together the ephemera collected in the novel (including emails, diaries and secret diaries, letters, etc.)--refutes the forms of subjective enclosure that I identify in both the modernist literary tradition and cybernetics.

Modernist Views: James, Conrad, Freud, Wiener

a. Three Scenes of Love in Literary Modernism

To give us a taste of the subjectivism characteristic of the modernist mode of narration, Michael Levenson quotes at length from *The Nigger of the 'Narcissus'* (1897):

> They watched the weather and the ship *as men on shore watch the momentous chances of fortune.* Captain Allistoun never left the deck, *as though he had been part of the ship's fittings.* Now and then the steward, shivering, but always in shirt sleeves, would struggle towards him with some hot coffee, half of which the gale blew out of the cup before it reached the master's lips. He drank what was left gravely in one long gulp, while heavy sprays pattered loudly on his oilskin coat, the seas swishing broke about his high boots; and he never took his eyes off the ship. He kept his gaze riveted upon her *as a loving man watches the unselfish toil of a delicate woman upon the slender thread of whose existence is hung the whole meaning and joy of the world.* We all watched her. (36-37, italics mine)

The crew of the 'Narcissus' are here engaged in an act of observation. Men (the crew consists of men) watch the ship, the weather, Captain Allistoun, and then the ship again. Narration follows their collective eye, and the reader sees as much and as little as they see. Apart from reports of direct action (i.e., the steward delivering a cup of hot coffee, of which

the Captain takes one long gulp), three similes—which I have marked off in italics—are the other main source of information in the passage. As Levenson writes, the use of simile is key because it gives the impression of having "evoked" a psychological state that is then hypothetically attributed to the perceived object. By the repeated pattern of evocation, we may infer the passage prefers evocation to the imposition of a psychological state that would be associated with naming the noun ("anguish," "anticipation," "love"). As Levenson says:

> We are not told that the crew 'anguished' over the weather, only that they watched it 'as men on shore watch the momentous chances of fortune.' Nor are we told that the captain loved the ship, only that his gaze resembled the way 'a loving man watches the unselfish toil of a delicate woman….' Conrad here clings fastidiously to externals: he is reluctant to assign emotions directly to characters. Whereas his Victorian predecessors had allowed themselves unrestrained access to a character's consciousness, Conrad here inclines to restrict his attention to the directly available sensory surface. (5)

Conradian narration demurs to describe the Captain's love for the ship, because that would be to proceed on a kind of license it doesn't have. Noting that the captain's gaze toward the ship resembled the way "a loving man watches the unselfish toil of a delicate woman" resituates the emphasis on the narrator's observation. The shift in emphasis changes the meaning: the meaning of the passage isn't really that the captain loves the ship; the meaning is rather, *it looks to us* as if his gaze resembles the gaze of a man in love with… etc. Thus, if modernist narrators grip fastidiously to an object's externals, they signal by that gripping that its internal make-up is unavailable for description—that the narrating

consciousness can report on only a limited amount of information. Surely, if the narrator could presume to know Captain Allistoun more fully, it would break the barrier and penetrate his insides. But a certain strand of modernism consists precisely in the installation of a barrier that blocks epistemic access to the other.[v]

There are, of course, a number of modernisms, and some with a more genial relationship to objective reality. Modernism cannot be equated with subjective enclosure (or "subjectivism," as I will be calling it), because modernism was never a singular conceptual system. It evolved over decades and geographical regions, and it was internally differentiated. Indeed, even *The Nigger of the 'Narcissus'* espouses a number of sophisticated positions—as Levenson goes on to show, when he points to the valuation accorded by the novel to a character like Singleton, and the corresponding values of unreflexivity, "unconsciousness" and "submission of duty" (33). Moreover, in clarifying how self-awareness and individualism can fuel the possibility of a mutiny on a ship, the novel seems to make a plea for the contrasting principles of community, discipline and standards—that is, *physis* [nature, laws of physical reality] over *psyche* (31).

Thus, Conrad cannot be consigned to an exclusive affiliation with consciousness, a seeming implication of my commentary so far. But in the account of literary modernism that follows, I will be suggesting that Conrad does belong to a genealogy of thought— which begins with Walter Pater and reaches a crescendo through the work of Henry James and Sigmund Freud—that is prized for assembling a set of narrative or theoretical strategies to manage an increasingly troubled relationship to the real. These "strategies" include a variety of subjectively-oriented narrators (exploiting modes like stream of consciousness, free indirect discourse, and third-person narration that focalizes through the limited

viewpoint of a single character); and, roughly, these subjective narrators correspond to a subjectivist position in epistemology, which emphasizes the personally-mediated, contingent quality of connections made by an individual with the world. Thus, though there is contrasting evidence that Henry James, Joseph Conrad and Sigmund Freud sought to formulate socially responsive work, articulate a concern for social totalities, and re-fashion an approach to objective reality after the crisis of mediation, this evidence should not let us ignore the subjectivist consequences of their rhetorical solutions. (And though there might be a dynamic tension between social-orientation and individualism within modernism, its individualism, and the literary techniques that support this position, will be my focus.) To bring out the isolating and subjectivizing qualities of their rhetoric, I will be adding two scenes of observation--one from James, and another from Freud—to the scene of observation with which I began.

According to Ian Watt, the relationship between Henry James (1843-1916) and Joseph Conrad (1857-1924) is one of intensification—where the younger stylist refines the techniques of the elder to intensify their impact. Chafing against the strictures of third-person narration, which espoused the principles of "distance, impersonality, and omniscience," Henry James aspired to give the reader of *What Maisie Knew* a "closeness" with "Maisie Farange's groping awareness of the horrors of the adult world" (Watt 164). But Conrad represents a departure from omniscience that is much more "extreme and overt":

> [Conrad's Marlow breaks with tradition] in the interests of a dual concreteness of
> visualization—dual because Marlow not only tells us what he saw and heard in the
> past, but as readers we see him telling his auditors about it in the narrative present.

With Marlow, in fact, James's registering consciousness is wholly dramatized as regards both the tale and its telling; it is also internalized in the sense that it is as fully adapted to the direct relation of the individual's inner thoughts and feelings as to the description of the external world. … *This total subordination to the subjective limitations of the vision of one particular character is very different from James, and Conrad emphasizes the limitation by giving both Marlow's personal presence and the occasion of his narration a fully described impressionistic particularity in space and time.* (Watt 164, italics mine)

Among the commentaries on the influence of Henry James on Joseph Conrad (who referred to the former as "*cher maître*"), Watt's analysis stands out. Not only is his more developed than William Tindall's, who calls Marlow "a kind of bearded Maisie" (276), Watt's also has the advantage of explaining how the exploitation of Marlow, as a consciousness responding to a theatrical situation taking place in the narrative present, more closely aligns with the dictates of impressionism, which as a movement was designed to demonstrate that *events* (or "*externals*") gain meaning—or fail to—as they relate to *consciousness*. As Watt clarifies for us: Marlow is primarily an innovative device that helps Conrad repurpose that narrative present as a site of ongoing mediation, adding to the mediation already being reported through Marlow's remembered discourse.

The "device" of Marlow may be the finest for suggesting the levels of mediation that go towards constituting moments of our lived reality; but as far as discrete scenes of observation go, among the most famous is the climactic moment of James's *The Ambassadors* (1903), a discussion of which will help us add detail to the sorts of subjectivism propounded in literature. Near the tail-end of James's novel, Lambert

Strether embarks on a dilatory tour for days through the French countryside, pursuing the "artless" intention of enjoying French "ruralism"—which he cannot help but experience as mediated, as if the scenes were part of a painting. The scenes are "the background fiction, the medium of art, the nursery of letters; practically as distant as Greece, but practically also well-nigh as consecrated" (James 380). It is in this setting—in which, contrary to the usual causal order, nature imitates art—that he comes to a realization that is the climatic achievement of the plot. Upon recognizing a boating couple as Chad Newsome and Madame de Vionnet, in a realization whose onset is slow, he finally lets himself see the erotic interest that unites the two.

> --a young man in shirt-sleeves, a young woman easy and fair, who had pulled pleasantly up from some other place and, being acquainted with the neighbourhood, had known what this particular retreat could offer them. The air quite thickened, at their approach, with further intimations; the intimation that they were expert, familiar, frequent—that this wouldn't at all events be the first time. They knew how to do it, he vaguely felt—and it made them but the more idyllic, though at the very moment of the impression, as happened, their boat seemed to have begun to drift wide, the oarsman letting it go. It had by this time none the less come much nearer—near enough for Strether to dream the lady in the stern had for some reason taken account of his being there to watch them. She had remarked on it sharply, yet her companion hadn't turned round; it was in fact almost as if our friend had felt her bid him keep still. She had taken in something as a result of which their course had wavered, and it continued to waver while they just stood off. This little effect was sudden and rapid, so rapid that Strether's sense of it was separate only for an instant

from a sharp start of his own. He too had within the minute taken in something, taken in that he knew the lady whose parasol, shifting as if to hide her face, made so fine a pink point in the shining scene. It was too prodigious, a chance in a million, but, if he knew the lady, the gentleman, who still presented his back and kept off, the gentleman, the coatless hero of the idyll, who had responded to her start, was, to match the marvel, none other than Chad. (James 389)

Narration imitates Strether's own attention, and the series of events enclosed therein (her sharp remark, Strether's own sharp start, the shifting parasol) *follow* on Strether's own realizations, reported to the reader a fraction of a second *after* the movements of Strether's own mind. That is, while narration remains largely sympathetic to Strether's view-- reproducing his blind-spots and describing the aspect of events as they shift from "seeming" intimations and impressions to incontestable reality—the narrator *also* alerts the reader of being an independent entity, of having written the *récit* at a moment apart from Strether's experience. The reader realizes as much when she reads: "This little effect [of Marie's remark] was sudden and rapid, so rapid that Strether's sense of it was separate only for an instant from a sharp start of his own" (James 389). If the sharpness of the woman's remark triggered a start for Strether, and if the two starts could be held separate by his mind for "only an instant," then we can infer by the implied timing that narration, here, is independent of Strether. That is, given the narration's extended focus on the boating woman and her directions to the man on board, and given the belatedness of our look back to Strether's reaction, the narration discloses its own autonomy (or difference) from Strether's line of sight.

But the independence of the narrator should not lead us to believe that we're reading the dictations of the authorial hand. Instead, as I will be arguing, the independence asserted in relation to Strether actually encourages the reader to interpret the scene as if it were one of Strether's own private dreams. In my view, the narrator's independence mimics the independence of the narratorial stream of a dream. And Strether's limited viewpoint stands for what his own limitations would be, were he in a dream. By this, I mean to suggest that the episode is justly understood as inviting a full identification with Strether's subjective state, a dream state in which the delayed recognition has the quality of fantasy.

"It was a sharp fantastic crisis that had popped up as if in a dream" (390): this line immediately follows the climactic recognition on the river bank. And it has the effect of recasting the scene as a fantastical one, helping the reader to frame the recognition not as an occurrence in our shared reality but as part of a protagonist's imaginary. Indeed, Strether is forced to realize intimacy between the pair—though intimacy is something he has *already seen* (everyone knows of Chad and Marie's affair), but only *refused to comprehend*. The real recognition, in essence, is not of placing the couple as Chad and Marie, but instead of transvaluing all earlier observations as misrecognitions.

According to an important reading by Ross Posnock, Strether's experience is one of opening the self to the "trauma of otherness" (235). Applying the Benjaminian concept "traumatophilia" to understand the character's behaviour over the course of the novel, Posnock notes the protagonist's inclination to seek out "traumatic encounters of difference rather than sameness" (235), a drive that is fuelled by Strether's view that the present is not the same as the past. Posnock's effective reading explains the extent to which Strether

changes during his European tour, the facts that he relinquishes a mission to bring Chad back to Woollett, Massachusetts, and begins to dally in Parisian scenes, beauty and values. (But note, in passing, that a reading that conceives of Strether as "open to otherness" seems to disagree with my own contention—that the scene encourages total identification with Strether's subjective state.) According to Posnock, Strether's experiences are therefore characterized by his permeability to difference, the shock by the river being the most iconic of the number of shocks he receives throughout the book. Significantly, the "traumatophilia" that is typical of his characterization is heightened in the climactic scene by situating Strether first in the French country-side, "[basking] in the grass, loafing like a veritable Whitman" (Posnock 235). This state, one that Posnock paints as "infantile," has the effect of "maximiz[ing] shock, thus fulfilling his deeper need to experience the trauma of otherness" (236). Concludes Posnock: "Remaining infantile and feeding on shock is Strether's way of maintaining the pre-Oedipal volatility of his curiosity" (236).

Maud Ellmann can help us clarify the Freudian vocabulary of Posnock's take. Pressing the point that Strether receives the recognition as a shock, though in fact all of the details (and their significance) should have been absorbed already by his psyche, Ellmann writes: "Strether has already dreamed what he has disavowed, and that the 'figures' in the boat have 'popped up'…--from the depth of his unconscious" (*Nets* 56). As suggested by this wording, Ellmann holds the narratorial discourse, too, to be closely identified with an unconscious dreaming, the pair's "popping up," their "filling a want" (56), suggestive of the subjective enclosure that constitutes not only the observer viewpoint, but *psyche*. Posnock, according to Ellmann, is right to stress Strether's inclination to trauma, but a critical element of trauma is *déjà vu,* which is completely missing from Posnock's

discussion. That is, while it may be that Strether, by the river, undergoes a traumatic change again, the change is a function of not his radical openness to the object he observes, but rather a function of contemporaneous processing of prior experience. As Ellmann reminds us, in connection to Strether, the Freudian child…

> …too young to understand spectacle of sex, experiences trauma only by deferred effect, when archaic traces of the primal scene are unexpectedly reactivated in the present. Freud's notion of *Nachträglichkeit* or deferred action therefore captures the temporal ambiguity of Strether's trauma, which is unexpected yet implicitly fore-seen, fore-dreamed. *Rather than confronting the irreducibly other, as Posnock proposes, Strether confronts the 'uncanny,' the unknown known, or that which James calls the 'intimate difference.* (*Nets* 56-7, italics mine)

Not the irreducibly other, but a thing that is somehow known, and not recognized. The temporality of the unknown known, and the narrator's participation within that temporality, are precisely what indicate that the scene should be taken as a dream, or unconscious, narration. As a relay of a very subjective (unconscious?) form of seeing and realizing, James's narratorial report mimics the subjective quality of Freudian uncanny.

<p style="text-align:center">***</p>

From Jamesian Freudism to Freud himself. My last scene is one of accidental observation, critical in the annals of modernism: the primal scene. Already mentioned by Ellmann above, the primal scene features a young infant who when viewing his father and mother engaged in intercourse, learns through this act of observation two routes to pleasure.

Let us consider one of the fundamental situations in which desire is felt in infancy: that of a child observing the sexual act between adults. Analysis shows, in the case of persons with whose life history the physician will later be concerned, that at such moments two impulses take possession of the immature [*unmündigen*] spectator. Where the latter is a boy, one is the unique impulse to put himself in the place of the active man, while the other, the opposing tendency, is the impulse to identify with the passive woman. Between them these two impulses exhaust the pleasurable possibilities of the situation. (S.E. 14, 54)

Freud's passage uses "identification" as a technical term to describe the impulse that "possesses" the young infant, and if it is precise, then "identification" suggests a conveyance of the infant's sympathies and sentiments directly *towards* or *into* the object observed. The crux, however: identification is bi-polar and two-fold, directed toward the mother and the father. A split relationship to the scene observed introduces the first problem in feeling for (and entirely accessing) the object. Moreover, it is not identification that will recur to the individual each time that he engages in pleasure thereafter. What will be remembered is the disunity of desire, its conflictual nature when originally experienced. The primal scene is critical for the complex that it leaves, the complex of a "constitutive disunity" (Weber 51), a disunity coloring every future encounter.

In *Requiem for the Ego: Freud and the Origins of Postmodernism*, Alfred Tauber places Freud in a philosophical genealogy. Descartes may have instituted a crisis by setting up a divide between subject and object—since object is reduced to a "perception" and "representation" for the ego, whose perspective is "singular" (xi)—but Freud aggravated the crisis. The latter established a system in which the singular, assured ego turns on *itself*,

and cannot escape the self-reflexive inspection of the singular and assured force. As Tauber writes: "[Freud's ego] is the ego of Kant, whose autonomy, even in the Freudian context, sustains the effort to know and, more, to know the truth, by steadfastly holding on to the potential (and the integrity) of its critical faculties. However, this construction is fraught with difficulties, because the object of interpretation, the subject herself, must be presented (as a representation) to an undefinable conscious homunculus whose reflexive regression comes to no end" (xii). Thus, when the ego subjects itself to self-inspection, or (what is the same) when the ego makes an object of itself for self-scrutiny, then it necessarily makes a "representation" of itself, losing something of its integral essence in re-constructing itself as an image.

An adult's relation to the primal scene, experienced in infancy, is an instance of the way in which we "make an object of the ego," and thus constitute the ego as obscure to itself. As suggested above, the primal scene may provoke a powerful physical reaction in the moment it happens, but this is not matter of lasting consequence. When the subject recalls the event in adulthood, discovering then its conflictual and obscure nature, she feels not only that the mother and father (and their pleasure) recede from her view, but also elements of her own constitution.

The analysis, thus far, has turned on a few scenes of observation. Men watch a their captain watching his ship, as a lover observes his beloved (Conrad). A man watches a couple on a boat (James). A child watches sex between his parents (Freud). In each of the above examinations, I have stressed the obscurity of the object observed, and, by way of explanation, pointed to the excessively subjective quality of the narratorial discourse. From the use of simile to suggest impenetrability of the object, to dream narration, to events

constituted in the psyche, not in their phenomenal reality—these are scenes of observation that variously imply the subjective character of all experience. An implication follows: writers of the early twentieth-century promulgated a number of subjectivist solutions to a widening crisis, a crisis in which the capacity toward objective knowledge had fallen in doubt.

b. Brief History of Cybernetics

When, on September 20, 1940, Norbert Wiener volunteered himself[vi] for military research toward anti-aircraft defense systems, and soon after commenced his service alongside neurophysiologists and doctors at the RAD (or Radiation) Lab at MIT, he proceeded on principles that arose from the same epistemic framework as Joseph Conrad's, Henry James's and Sigmund Freud's. As I will be showing in this section on the origins of the WWII science, cybernetics accepts the blindspots of knowledge that were naturalized in the Freudian scientific system (that is, a scientific system forged in the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century), as well as Conrad's and James's literary systems.

By late 1940, Allied (primarily United Kingdom) military effort had concentrated its resources on the crisis of the German fighter plane, spurred specifically by the Battle of Britain (which took place from July to October of 1940, a dating that does not include the Blitz). Though the Germans' *Luftwaffe* (the branch of the armed forces responsible for aerial warfare) was not a developed force, its strength was its flexibility, its ability to expend airpower to support ground offensives as well as "medium-range interdiction of enemy rear zones," to high-air ("air superiority") efforts (Buckley 127). Although

Luftwaffe's main "superiority" plane, the *Messerschmitt* Bf109, was eventually outmatched by the British Royal Air Force (RAF) planes, the "technical and doctrinal efficiency of the *Luftwaffe* was such that [in the period 1939-1941] it was far more capable of carrying out a strategic bombing campaign than the British" (Buckley 126). Hence some of the Germans' "early success," and the corresponding overestimation of German ability by the British.

In the Battle of Britain, aerial warfare had entailed an assault conducted by thousands of German aircraft, leading to 6,954 British civilians dead by the end of September 1940 (Gilbert 136). But, due to the weaknesses inherent in the *Luftwaffe* fleet, and due to the effectiveness of "Britain's low-frequency radar [that helped it detect] German bombers flying across the channel from occupied France" (Kline 19), the British defended against the onslaught with success. Influenced by these circumstances, in late 1940, the US's National Defense Research Committee, headed by Vannevar Bush, established the Radiation (RAD) Laboratory at MIT, specifically with the aim of developing "high-frequency, microwave radar" (Kline 19). And though the U.S. joined the war effort in December 1941, researchers at the RAD lab perceived a Nazi invasion as imminent, and hence also resolved to respond to German aerial tactics. The RAD Lab would serve as headquarters for Wiener's work on information theory and cybernetics, all of which was initiated by the hypothetical scenario of how an Allied "gunner" would best shoot to kill an enemy plane (Kline 19).
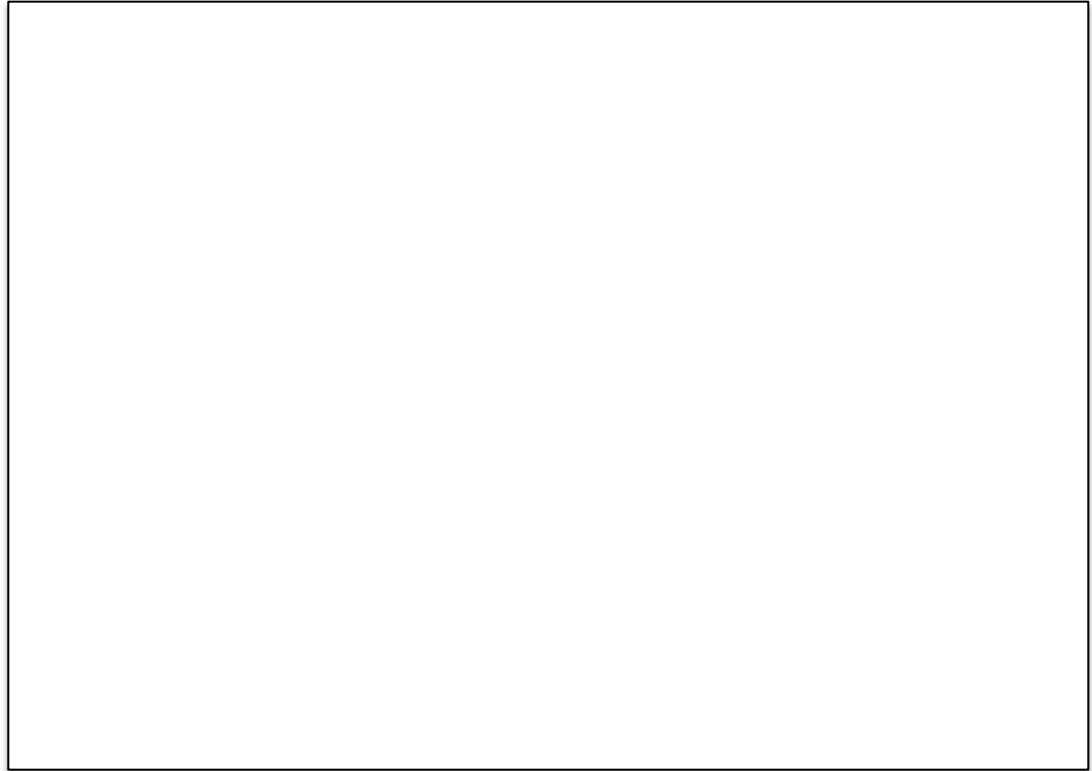
Fig. 1: Image of UK's Royal Air Force (RAF) "gunner" (or anti-aircraft gun) being used during Nazi raid. RAF Museum. [vii] Photograph redacted prior to dissertation upload.

American physicist and mathematician Norbert Wiener, while commissioned by the RAD Lab, proposed to build a mathematical model of the behavior of enemy aircraft. According to historians Ronald Kline and Peter Galison, Wiener worked with engineer and active pilot Julian Bigelow, technician Paul Mooney and "a 'Miss Bernstein,' who did the calculations as the group's computer" (Kline 19; see also Galison 236). [viii] The team, unusually small by Laboratory standards, had the aim of using "electrical networks to determine, several seconds in advance, where an attacking plane would be and to use

that knowledge to direct artillery fire" (Galison 234). Other means of predicting a plane's trajectory already existed, so Wiener's innovation was not in his decision to build a gunner that could fire predictively, but rather to perfect an existing methodology by accounting for a variable hitherto not considered: the pilot-and-plane's pattern of behavior.

It is helpful to hear about Wiener et al's series of laboratory experiments. The first series of experiments were meant to mimic the raw data streams of an enemy plane's trajectory that would enter anti-aircraft predictor (or "AA" predictor). This experiment involved, first, the projection of a white light on a laboratory wall, representing the "target" and another light spot of color guided by a control stick that was given to an "operator" (the experiment's stand-in for the pilot). The operator was told to follow the white spot on the wall, bringing their own light in line with the target light. But the control stick was "sluggish" and "difficult," in order to "create precisely the disassociation between kinaesthetic sense and visual information that the pilot had to face in the theater of war" (Galison 237). Conducted with a number of operators, this experiment generated a variety of data streams, and suggested some important features of the prediction formula that would best be materialized in the AA predictor.

Galison gives us a more detailed picture of the steps involved in designing the prediction formula:

Imagine a number of flight paths (ten, for example) that all coincide for a given segment of their trajectory but may differ after a given time, t. Now pick a point in space where we expect a plane to be at, say, $t + 2$ seconds. For any such predicted point we can calculate the square of the difference between the

predicted point and the actual position of the first plane at $t + 2$ seconds, and we can do the same for the other nine planes. The point for which the sum of squared errors is minimized is what Wiener calls the best prediction. It turned out that prediction worked rather badly for one operator based on another operator's data, but any given operator was enormously self-consistent. (237)

That is, when Wiener's prediction formula was applied using the data stream of operator x's own past behavioral data, then the predicted coordinates were more accurate than when using operator y's behavioral data to understand operator x. The data showed that any given control-stick operator tends to behave consistently over a number of trials, though different operators showed no behavior correlations among each other. The predictor, then, was programmed from "statistical input from the pilot's past performance, [making the predictor] a kind of learning machine" (238).

Fig. 2: Wiener et al's anti-aircraft predictor. Photograph redacted prior to dissertation upload.

It is important to remember the materiality of the objects we are currently discussing (see Fig. 2). Wiener's AA predictor was a mechanical machine, and would have been hooked up (mechanically) to the Allied gunner (pictured in Fig. 1), the former emitting electric signals to direct the latter to fire an anti-aircraft shell at the specified coordinates. Though the principles proposed by Wiener are digital (indeed, he is proposing to model individual behavior through self-learning algorithms), the machine that manifests his proposals is made of a mess of vacuum tubes, resistors and condensers. That is to say, though we are not yet at the year of the electronic personal computer, 1941-1942 was the year when some of the principles that define computing today were proposed.

For Peter Galison, whose "Ontology of the Enemy" is the landmark essay on Wiener's early work, the predictor experiments represent the origins of the "cybernetic vision," according to which there is "a new understanding of the human-machine relation, one that made [human], calculator, and fire-power into a single integrated system" (235). To Galison, cybernetics is significant for blurring the distinction between human and machine, because the prediction algorithm implemented by Wiener's machine operates on a "behaviorist" view of action. Behaviorism—which was, by then, a codified method in the biological and psychological sciences—suggests that we analyze the functionality of an event (what happens—in phenomenological terms), before analyzing the event's "actual constitution," or ontological mechanism. Its methodology supposes that we know the action a unit is designed to perform (plane will evade the gunner), before we know how the unit works or why it performs such an action (the specific strategies known to the pilot; pilot's training in strategy; plane's technical constitution; etc. [Galison 246]). The behaviorist recasting of scenario usually involves "black-boxing" an event or

apparatus, so that its internal mechanisms, constitution and motivations become obscure to the observer; consequently, "black-boxing" entails that we rely instead on the manipulation of phenomenal information. Thus, in Wiener's experiments, the behavior of the enemy pilot and the enemy plane are, first of all, conflated as the behavior of a single entity, one whose constitution and motivation are not clear to the observing gunner. And, since the motivations/mechanisms of the entity are not clear, its future action cannot be represented as a function of the pilot's intentionality or the plane's capability. The only means for modeling future action is past behavior.[ix]

Galison's essay stresses the birth of "man-machine single system" in cybernetics, a "posthumanist" conception that is made possible by Wiener's acceptance of behaviorism. Galison remarks most pointedly on the troubling consequences of conflating the differences between a plane and its pilot, and he sees Wiener's behaviorism as a means to get there. But Galison's former student, Orit Halpern, helps us understand that the really breathtaking crisis is not in a posthumanist conflation, but in the way that Wiener's experiments led to the mathematical modeling and engineering materialization of behaviorist theory. As she writes:

> For the antiaircraft project, engineers and mathematicians, using early computing devices, began to view the gun and the plane behaviorally—which is to say that while the internal organization was opaque, unseen, and potentially different, *the behavior or action was intelligible and predictable*. The world, therefore, became one of black-boxed entities whose behavior or signals were intelligible to each other, but whose internal function or structure was opaque, and not of interest. (44, italics mine)

A gun, controlled by the Allied forces, would be built on the principle that *though it cannot presume to know or understand the behavior of the bomber pilot, still the gun could make a reasonable estimate of the bomber's likely behavior, based on the bomber's past behavior.* The chilling point is that while we may not understand how the enemy Other thinks—really, the causal principle by which the Other moves—still we can know enough to act according to our own interests. Behaviorism, when given a material form through a set of cybernetic practices, becomes a way of managing uncertainty and un-knowability.

It is a cybernetic innovation to propose that an enemy in an encounter is ontologically opaque, or a "black box." And it is also a cybernetic innovation to suggest that unknowability is not a deterrent to aggressive response. Because in the concrete situation of an attack, we can't be sure how the bomber thinks, according to cybernetics, but it is in the Allies' interest to respond nonetheless.

It is important to recognize that cybernetics is based on an internalization and elaboration of the Freudian viewpoint. As Orit Halpern points out, Freud's program was to make memory a problem that is experienced in the present, not a true reference to a lived past. (And, as we have seen, the primal scene is something that gains meaning when it is recollected in the present, not when it is experienced in the past.) Because cybernetics has as one of its preconditions the disassociation between "behavioral data" and "lived reality," because cybernetics trusts the record of the past over the experience of the past, it is therefore evident that psychoanalysis "contributed to the very possibility of technicizing of perception, and even thought" (53). According to Halpern, since both cybernetics and psychoanalysis believe in emptying past experience of experiential

fullness (including the empathy, identification or the psychic force experienced in the past), they both make the past a record that can be operationalized for future action.

Strictly speaking, cybernetics is not Freudian, but an advance on Freudianism—we may say, a way of making post-modernism out of modernism. When speaking of the obscurity of every object, Wiener explained how cybernetics was an extension of Freudian notions:

> [O]ne interesting change that has taken place is that in a probabilistic world we no longer deal with quantities and statements which concern a specific, real universe as a whole but ask instead questions which may find their answers in a large number of similar universes. . . . This recognition of an element of incomplete determinism, almost an irrationality in the world, is in a certain way parallel to Freud's admission of a deep irrational component in human conduct and thought. (*Human Use*, 7, 11)

As he remarks here, cybernetics aligns with psychoanalysis as its "parallel": whereas Freud saw an "irrational component" in the human, cybernetics perceives an obscurity or irrationality in the object world itself. Thus, if Freud's advance was to render the self inscrutable, then it is a cybernetic advance to universalize the inscrutability to cover the object world. More positively, however, cybernetics formalizes a set of practices that make all of reality exploitable despite epistemic limitations. We might profitably, then, add another scene of observation to the series we have analyzed: the viewpoint from the crosshairs of a gun, as it observes an enemy plane. In this cybernetic scene (as in the primal scene), the subject cannot really access the object observed—because the motivations of the enemy pilot and the capacity of the plane are obscure; better to defer to

the behavioristic model of analysis, and make a judgment on Allied action based on observable data-points indicating past behavior. As Galison wrote, this is a "world picture" in which "nodes of communication interact by the exchange of orders or commands. According to the cyberneticist, the world is nothing more than the mutual internal relations of these incoming and outgoing messages--ultimately cybernetics carries, on Wiener's own account, a 'quasi-solipsistic' vision of the universe" (256). And Galison goes on:

> As the windowless monads [of Wiener's writing] suggest, and as Wiener's own proclamation of quasi-solipsism made explicit, the cybernetic philosophy was premised on the opacity of the Other. We are truly, in this view of the world, like black boxes with inputs and outputs and no access to our or anyone else's inner life. (256)

Cybernetics is an infinitely universalizable episteme. It seeks to reframe *every* encounter by "black boxing" the other (and, here, Galison and Halpern are in agreement). It stresses our ability to "predict" future action over our ability to "understand" internal constitution; it stresses that we perfect our statistical models, not engage with empathy. Insofar as the applied sciences, social sciences, political science and economic research have accepted these principles, cybernetics is responsible for the general trend toward data acquisition, data mining, statistical management, and automation in each of these fields. Indeed, cybernetics is the primary reason that the applied sciences--such as engineering, medicine, and computing and robotics—could accept the subjectivist relation to truth in the midcentury, and still prescribe strategies for action, exploitation and knowledge production.

Ozeki's Alternative

a. First-person Point of View

Tale for the Time Being--a novel keenly aware of the research programs guiding tech-companies--dramatizes the ways in which "black-boxing" corrodes the possibility of empathy and intimacy. But as it analyzes the influence of "black-boxing" in the interpersonal sphere, *Tale for the Time Being* also offers, through its mode of narration, an alternative relation to reality. Its mode of narration, which stiches a variety of perspectives through emails, letters, diaries and other ephemera, strives towards an "accidental omniscience," which ultimately challenges cybernetic practices that prescribe response despite epistemic limitations. In this section of the chapter, I argue that Ozeki's *Tale* fashions a form of narration that overcomes the subjectivism that has become characteristic of writing after modernism; and more precisely, I show that subjective enclosure and omniscient perspective are two positions in the narrative, and Ozeki repurposes the institution of the novel to achieve the latter.

Part of the backstory is set in Silicon Valley in the late 1990s and early 2000s. Haruki Yasutani worked as an interface developer in Sunnyvale, California (the origin of the computer and video gaming industry), before he was fired from the company and forced to relocate his family to Tokyo, Japan, in 2000. Haruki's work, during his Sunnyvale years, establishes a robust link between the novel world and cybernetic epistemology, especially since he was privy to cybernetic principles of development, against which he took an ethical stand. As he grew to sense the moral dubiousness of his own work for the unnamed gaming company, Haruki approached Dr. Rongstad Leistiko

(a psychology professor at Stanford) for insight on human psychology. In an email he writes to Ruth, Leistiko describes his conversation with Haruki in the following way:

> [E]ventually I managed to piece together his story. While his company was primarily involved in interface development for the gaming market, the U.S. military had an interest in the enormous potential his research might have for applications in semi-autonomous weapons technology. Harry was concerned that the interface he was helping to design was too seamless. What made a computer game addictive and entertaining would make it easy and fun to carry out a massively destructive bombing mission. He was trying to figure out if there was a way to build a conscience into the interface design that would assist the user by triggering his ethical sense of right and wrong and engaging his compulsion to do right…. Needless to say, technology design is not value-neutral, and military contractors and weapons developers do not want these kinds of questions raised, never mind built into their controllers. (307-8)

Leitiko's account can be read in two ways. It is possible that Harry objects to the misappropriation of his interface designs by the military, but stands by the use of his interfaces for gaming purposes (in games such as *Half-Life*, *Alien* or *Doom*). But it is also possible that after Haruki learns of partnerships between the military and Silicon Valley (i.e., after he learns of the "military-industrial complex"), Haruki rethinks his decision to design interfaces in which killing is "addictive" and "entertaining."

It is a matter of consequence whether or not the novel (or a character in the novel) believes that representations are dangerous of themselves, or dangerous only if they will be misappropriated by the military. When, near the end of the novel, Haruki explains his

ethical qualms to his daughter, Naoko, he seems to indicate that for him the issue was the former. That is, he objects not just to the currently existing socio-historic arrangement, in which the military partners with private industry to fuel innovation (though he clearly does criticize the "military-industrial complex"). More, Haruki seems to object to the formal principles of the interface, the means by which the viewer is placed by the interface, because these formal arrangements have an implication for the way we think about sentient life of the Other.

> "My interfaces were really good," he said. "They were so much fun. Everybody enjoyed playing them." He had this wistful, faraway look in his eyes. "We were prototyping first-person operator perspectives. They called me the Pioneer of POV. Then my company signed an agreement with a U.S. military contractor. They were going to apply my interfaces in designing weapons controllers for soldiers to use."
>
> "Wow," I [Nao] said. That sounded pretty cool, too. I didn't say so, but he heard it in my voice. He dug the plastic toe of his slipper in the bare patch of sand below the swing and brought it to a stop.
>
> "It was wrong," he said, leaning his body forward into the chains that held up the swing. "Those boys were going to kill people. Killing people should not be so much fun." (387)

Ozeki's narrative positions Haruki as one of the pioneers of first-person point-of-view, and thus explicitly embroils him, knee-deep, in cybernetic history. Orit Halpern has already demonstrated the lineage from cybernetics to POV-interfaces--so I will rehearse only the most relevant points here. As Halpern points out, the first "fully [interactive and digitally] responsive" environment, which linked digital information to video footage, is

usually thought to be the Aspen Interactive Movie Map, built by ArcMac, the precursor

to MIT Media Lab ("Algorithmic," n.p.). As a video map that could be controlled by

computer commands inputted through a controller (commands such as "stop," "left" and

"right"), Aspen Movie Map is the first form of the technology that led to first-person

shooter games, military simulations and Google Earth (Halpern "Algorthmic," n.p.). In

order to simulate immersion in Aspen, Colorado, MIT's ARCMAP filmed public

pathways by strapping cameras on top of cars. Nicholas Negaroponte, the head of

ARCMAP and an architect-designer whose design philosophy was heavily influenced by

cybernetics, said that "he wanted so much footage so that the effect would be seamless."

(Halpern "Algorithmic," n. p.)[x]
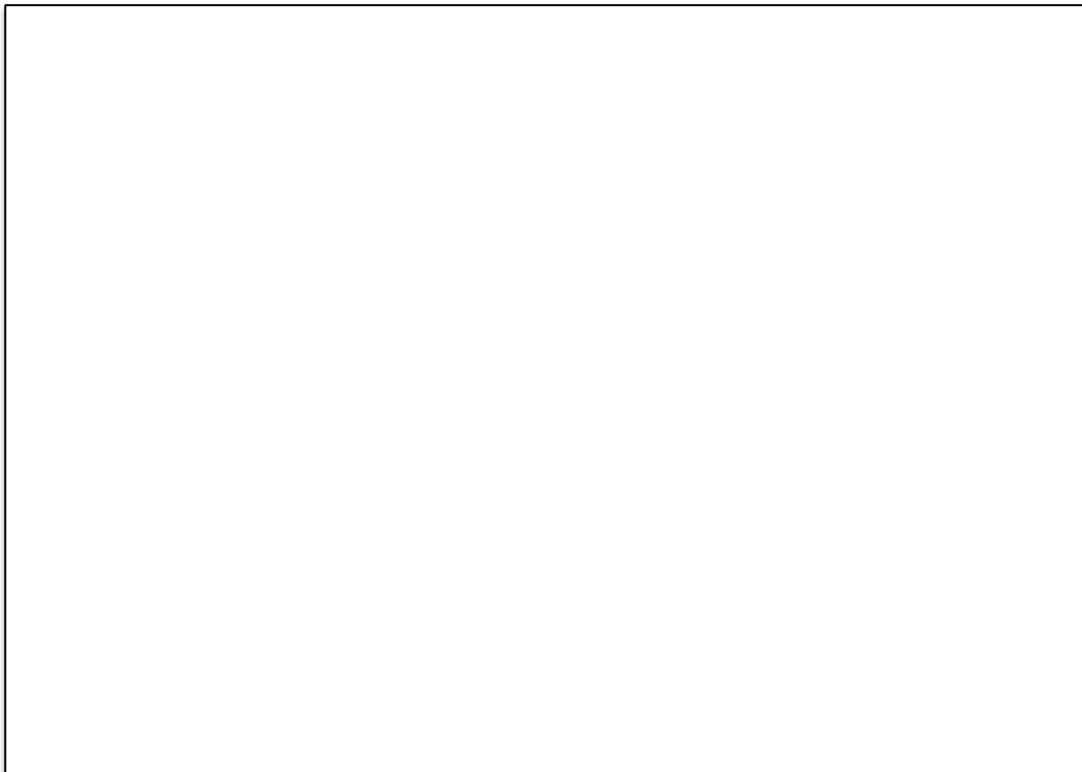
Fig. 3. Operator using the Aspen Interactive Movie Map.c. 1980. Computer History Museum. Note the point-of-view graphic. Photograph redacted prior to dissertation upload.

Haruki fears seamlessness in 2000, whereas Negraponte strove for it in 1978. But seamlessness is only part of the crisis, a greater problem emerging from the principles that contributed to the development of the interface, which is designed to train the human operator in formulating a behavioral approach to the objects seen. The interface is a technology that trains the human operator in "feedback perception"—that is, in ways of thinking that resemble the prediction algorithm that was programmed into Wiener's AA predictor. As Halpern has already helped us see, the behaviorist mode of relating to reality moves us away from questions of *ontology*—"what might this Other consist of, or be moved by?"--to questions of *prediction*—"what will this Other do next?" A person operating the Aspen Movie Map, a first-person shooter game, or a drone toward a target in a faraway desert country---in all these situations, a person is encouraged to dis-identify with the object perceived, and behave predictively on the information available onscreen.

Haruki senses that cybernetic interfaces make the Other opaque. In a moving passage, he evokes the conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan as conflicts between an un-feeling pilot and a war-target rendered inhuman. Though he does not use vocabulary such as "behaviorism" or "action prediction," he describes the pilot's actions as unhinged from reality:

At the time those young boys were carrying out their missions, it would all feel unreal and exciting and fun, because that's how we designed it to feel. But later on,

maybe days or months or even years later, the reality of what they'd done would

start to rise up to the surface, and they would be twisted up with pain and anger and

take it out on themselves and their families. (388)

Moreover, Haruki considers the perniciously subjectivizing tendencies of his designs as a

contributor to the ethical dilemma. It is precisely because he chafes at their subjectivizing

qualities that he yearns for a grander control-mechanism, "a reality check," to implement

on top of the interface (387). During his exchange with Naoko near the end of the novel,

he describes his desire for a "reality-check," as she narrates to us:

> He told me how he fell into a deep depression and stopped sleeping at night. He
>
> tried to find someone to talk to about his feelings. He even went to see a California
>
> psychologist. He kept bringing up the issue at work, too, trying to convince the
>
> members of his development team to let him program some kind of reality check
>
> into the interface design, so that the poor pilots would wake up and understand the
>
> madness of what they were doing, but the military contractor didn't like this idea,
>
> and his company and team members got tired of hearing about his feelings, so they
>
> fired him. (387-8)

A lot depends on what is meant by "reality check," because this is the means by which

the programmer wants to build in the capacity for moral judgment or self-reflection.

Likely a reality check is a means of disrupting the immersive quality of the interface, but

it is hard to imagine how interfaces—given the individualizing and subjectivizing

epistemic system from which they emerge—can be capable of that. Why should it be

helpful to diffuse a situation in which the observer makes a prediction about the object

perceived, when what's problematic is not so much the missing context, but rather the

formal relationships between observer and observed? However, Haruki's ambition can be clarified (at least in principle) by returning to and further analyzing his conversation with Dr. Leistiko.

As mentioned earlier, the two engage in a dialogue (all of which is reported to Ruth in an email) on the nature of conscience after Haruki approaches the Professor with this work dilemma. Haruki feels he has no conscience, and Dr. Leistiko replies that Haruki does, because he has expressed reservations about the military's intention to repurpose his video game interfaces for drone technology. And to this Haruki replies:

> "No," he said. "That is not conscience. That is only shame from my history, and history can easily be changed."
>
> I [Dr. Leistiko] didn't understand and asked him to explain.
>
> "History is something we Japanese learn about in school," he said. "We study about terrible things, like how the atom bombs destroyed Hiroshima and Nagasaki. We learn this is wrong, but that is an easy case because we Japanese people were the victims of it.
>
> "A harder case is when we study about a terrible Japanese atrocity like Manchu. In this case, we Japanese people committed genocide and torture of the Chinese people, and so we learn we must feel great shame to the world. But shame is not a pleasant feeling, and some Japanese politicians are always trying to change our children's history textbooks so that these genocides and tortures are not taught to the next generation. By changing our history and our memory, they try to erase all our shame.

"This is why I think shame must be different from conscience. … Shame comes

from outside, but conscience must be a natural feeling that comes from a deep

place inside an individual person…." (308-309)

By framing history as a changeable narrative, Haruki points out that an entire conceptual

system that is seemingly objective can partake in prejudice, bias, and other problems of

perspective. Note, however, that this realization--a recognition we can place within the

modernist and postmodernist toolkit--does not lead him to abscond the objective

standard. Against the "shame" that is a reactionary response to the tone or arc of a

historical narrative, Haruki counter-poses the keywords "ethics," "moral right," or

"conscience," which to his mind have a deep affinity with truth. He holds out for the

latter standard—that is, knowledge of truth--as a possibility.

All of this relates to the "reality check" Haruki describes in this conversation with

Nao. We can safely deduce that Haruki would prefer a mode of entertainment built

around a higher standard, not just a standard of shame, duty, or historically-contingent

understanding. He would like, somehow, to escape the trappings of subjectivism, as well

as the errors in judgments that follow from the manipulations of history, and refute the

behaviorism of the interface with absolute truth. He yearns for it.

And *Tale for the Time Being* provides it, in its form. In the following section, I

show how the ephemera collected in this novel contribute to a diversity of perspectives,

which, as a collocation, suggest an "accidental" or "partial" omniscience of perspective.

This perspective, since it is an assemblage and not a unity, arguably satisfies Haruki's

criteria for truth.

b. Accidental Omniscience

In *Beginnings: Intention & Method*, Edward Said advanced a thesis that distinguished strongly between what he called the "classical novel" and the "modern novel." Whereas the first type comprehended writers like George Eliot and Charles Dickens, as well as associated 'classical' writers like Soren Kierkegaard, the latter writer was typified by stylists such as "Joyce, Conrad, Mann" and associated modern thinkers such as "Freud, Nietzsche, Yeats." To Said, the difference consists in the privilege each type grants to writing as a discourse. The former writer sees writing as a "secondary" discourse, observing a relation of subordination to the usually Judeo-Christian "image" or "idea" that enjoys a higher order of reality. But the modern novelist:

> begins each work as if it were a new occasion…. The order proceeding from [the modern novel's] beginnings as I have described them cannot be grasped adequately by any image at all. While the process of writing a 'classical novel' and the course of its plot may be comprehensible within an image of time unfolding, as a family unfolds and generations are linked, in reading *The Wasteland* or the *Cantos* the critic cannot find, let alone create, an image according to which the writer or his subject can be understood. …With the discrediting of mimetic representation a work enters a realm of gentile history, to use Vico's phrase for secular history, where extraordinary possibilities of variety and diversity are open to it but where it will not be referred back docilely to an idea that stands above it and explains it. In other words, there is only one order of reality for writing (not two—idea/image and writing) that includes the production

of meaning, the method of composition, the distribution of emphasis, as well as

the tendency to produce mistakes, inconsistencies, and so on. (11-12)

Said, of course, situates the novel as part of a history of transformations, framing the struggle between classical and modern as a struggle to secularize the institution of the novel. In the classical text, "the relationship between [religious] truth and its artistic version is dialectical"---that is, though we may have in the "aesthetic a maximum degree of freedom," still we never lose sight of the "aesthetic's rewording of the religious" (87). Thus, when in *Great Expectations* Dickens situates Pip's act of charity as the "germ" of his later experiences, the author is engaging in an aesthetic "reduplication" of the "charity we associate with Christ's ministry and agony" (99).

Haruki longed for precisely the kind of authority that comes from "prior" texts acting as guarantors of meaning (such as the Bible, in Said's conception). But, according to Said, the project of the modern novel is precisely to strive toward plots that make no reference to a pre-existing authority. Making the humanly act of writing identical to authority, the modern text seeks no external guarantor for the moral significance of the events described, or the efficacy of its own moral decrees (because every plot, even or especially a secular one, expresses the exercise of moral judgment). Said's conception of the modern plot fits with *Tale for the Time Being*, insofar as Ozeki's novel rejects third-person omniscient narration, and insofar no prior text pre-determines or prefigures its arrangements. There is no all-seeing voice within this book (as in a Dickens novel), as it cannot imagine a single penetrative agency that could connect the internal psyche of its diverse cast to the socio-historic circumstances (or "objective laws governing society," in Lukács's words). But if we follow the turns of *Tale*'s narration, we do get the feeling

that it is the *reader* who achieves a kind of "accidental" or "partial" omniscience. *Tale*'s plotting works to reveal information to the reader, frequently generating motivation (or mechanisms) that might bring ephemera to Ruth's consciousness. The collocation of ephemera, when assembled, inject a number of narrative perspectives into the novel, and build an omniscience, which, if not synthetic, still achieves a broken unity that helps to pin meaning down in shared reality. The reader, able by the end to see events through a number of angles, cobbles her own omniscience, and in this position she acts as the novel's guarantor—or "reality check."

Let's see how this works in the novel—first, through Nao's diary, the most prominent example of an intrusion of voice through reproduced ephemera. When it washes up on the shores of Cortes Island, British Columbia, the diary relays Naoko Yasutani's story to Ruth Ozeki (double for the author herself) and Oliver Kellhammer (character double for the author's real partner). Through the diary, Ruth and Oliver learn that "Nao," a 16-year-old schoolgirl living in Tokyo around 2002, intends to commit suicide soon after she finishes penning the "life-story" of her great-grandmother. Nao fails to tell that story, however, using the diary to record troubling events in her own daily life instead. Her difficulties stem from her father (Haruki or "Haruki #2"), a computer interface designer who had worked in Sunnyvale, California, until he was fired by his gaming company, and forced to return with his family to Tokyo, Japan. Her father becomes recluse—a *hikikomori*—who experiences a great reluctance to work due to depression and self-isolation, and who tries to kill himself repeatedly. Nao's mother accepts work in a publishing company to support the family, and Nao becomes the target of bullying, leading to her own thoughts of suicide. Upon learning these details, Ruth and

Oliver undertake a search for Nao, contacting former friends of Haruki's (such as Dr. Rongstad Leistiko), pursuing clues, and decoding all of the materials that were transported to Cores Island along with the diary (a secret French diary, which turns out to be composed by "Haruki #1," Nao's great-uncle). The portion of the novel that unfolds in sections titled "Ruth" describes the couple's search for Nao, suggesting also that as Ruth uncovers details about the Yasutani family, she changes the past as it was recorded in Nao's diary. In a remarkable episode, Ruth enters Nao's story (though it could also be, more plausibly, Ruth's own dream), and dissuades Haruki #2 from committing suicide by explaining the decision's impact on Nao. This event adds length to Nao's diary, which implies that Ruth's reading and recovery efforts have altered the past as it was actually experienced by the Yasutani's. The novel ends with Ruth and Oliver coming to terms with their incomplete knowledge of Nao's whereabouts, but reconciled that this incompleteness (in their own understanding, in the novel's plotting) will have to be "good enough" (401).[xi]

Nao's diary is narrated in the nearly-solipsistic first-person, as is thought to be characteristic of a 16-year-old's style. But since her diary divulges her alienation from her family, bullying culture among Japanese adolescents, her father's suicidal plans, and her own turn to suicide, it also offers views of structural realities beyond the scope of individual experience. Oliver provides a helpful gloss of Nao's diary when he comments in the following way on her being bullied:

> "How could the school allow that to happen? How could that teacher participate?... "But it makes total sense," Oliver said, glumly. "We live in a bully culture. Politicians, corporations, the banks, the military. All bullies and crooks.

>They steal, they torture people, they make these insane rules and set the tone….
>
>"Look at Guantánamo," he said. "Look at Abu Ghraib. America's bad, but
>Canada's no better. People just going with the program, too scared to speak up.
>Look at the Tar Sands. Just like Tepco. I fucking hate it." (121)

The intimate violations described through Nao's limited lens are recursive recapitulations of broader crises in the historical present. But, in addition to contributing an intimate view of a life lived far away, Nao's diary also adds to the book by suggesting the presence of a higher-order agency. Because the novel begins not with Ruth's narration, which unfurls over the diegetic present, but with Nao's voice, which was transcribed in the diary around twelve years prior. The novel begins, therefore, with an instance of analepsis (or flash-back), a reversion to a time prior to true diegetic time, and thereby signals that the organizing agency behind the novel is separate from either of the narrating agencies present in the "Ruth" sections or the "Nao" sections. From the beginning, then, the novel is an assemblage of two perspectives that are never synthesized by an omniscient, singular voice. Because the reader begins with Nao, not with Ruth, she (the reader) is invited to identify with the higher-order agency operating above any one of the assembled perspectives.

A second item of ephemera: Leistiko's email replies to Ruth's inquiries. As we already know, Leistiko's emails do much to demystify Haruki's motivations and "mechanism." Because Nao's diary positions her father as a virtual "black-box," whose ontological being is inaccessible to his family (due to his depression), Leistiko's experiences provide critical insight into the character. His emails, already discussed above, are necessarily written in the first-person, and as such, they are marked by traits

such as memory, perspective and bias. But it is precisely due to their distinction from Nao's view—their adjacency from her perspective—that the emails make a real contribution to the story. Through Leistiko, we see how Haruki appeared to a Stanford University professor:

> A slight Asian man carrying a messenger bag was standing there. He was dressed somewhat casually in khaki pants, a sports jacket, and sandals with socks. I thought at first that he might be a bike courier, but instead of handing me a package, he bowed deeply. This startled me. It was such a formal gesture, at odds with his casual dress, and we are not accustomed to bowing to each other at Stanford University. (306)

In passages like these, we see Haruki not as a wayward father, but as a young man navigating the difference between America's Silicon Valley and Japanese work culture. We get the character from a perspective that we could not achieve through his daughter's reflections. Though, regrettably, Leistiko makes a rather strange (seemingly class-based or race-based?) association between the person outside his door and a "bike courier," it's still details such as the ones he gives that add personal inflection into the set of perspectives assembled. Needless to say, the ultimate picture of Haruki that Leistiko supplies is one of an upstanding professional of the highest moral character.

Finally, our third ephemeron: Haruki #1's "secret French diary." Nao's great-uncle, a philosophy student drafted to be a kamakazi pilot during WWII, documents his dissent in a secret diary (written in French) that is inexplicably transported to Ruth and Oliver, along with Nao's diary. Haruki's diary, which was magically included in the package, was not part of Nao's lived reality until *after* Ruth's dream of having spoken to

Haruki #2; notably, in one portion of the dream narration, Ruth imagines leaving Haruki #1's diary behind at Old Jiko's Buddhist temple. Thus, it is through this magical causality—in which present changes past—that Haruki #1's letters reach their destination, to members of his own family. Only through Ruth's (and arguably, the novel's) intervention do Haruki #2 and Naoko learn that Haruki #1 dissented against the war effort, and rejected the kamakazi mission. He elected to dive into the ocean and drown, without hitting the Ally target. As the secret French diary announces:

> What I have to tell you now, I cannot write in any official document that may be read or intercepted. I have made my decision. Tomorrow morning I will wrap my head tightly in a band that bears the insignia of the Rising Sun and fly south to Okinawa, where I will give my life for my country. I have always believed that this war is wrong. I have always despised the capitalist greed and imperialist hubris that have motivated it. And now, knowing what I do about the depravity with which this war has been waged, I am determined to do my utmost to steer my plane away from my target and into the sea. (328)

Upon learning of Haruki #1's decision, Haruki #2 and Nao commence in their long-deferred confessions to each other (and I have already quoted heavily from this exchange). These are confessions whose deferment provides the structure for the story, but which needed, as their facilitator, information such as the kind contained in Haruki #1's diary. Haruki #1 provides, in the authority of their ancestral past, a pre-figuration for their own rage against the structures of the post-1945 capitalist and imperialist world. And, thus assured by ancestral prefiguration, seeing his own rage against injustice mirrored in his ancestor's , Haruki #2 shares that when he rebelled against his Silicon

Valley company, he too made a decision that was comparable to "diving into a wave." Haruki explains to Nao: "I understood how he felt, you see? Haruki Number One made his decision. He steered his airplane into a wave. He knew it was a stupid, useless gesture, but what else could he do? I made a similar decision, also stupid and useless, only my plane was carrying our whole family. I felt so sorry for you, and for Mom, and for everyone, on account of my actions" (388). The dialogue that ensues also leads Nao to share more details about her bullying, and eventually the two resolve a conflict in which they were previously opaque to each other.

Thus, through a collocation of all ephemeral sources, the reader acquires information that is not available to any single perspective or person. The novel engages a kind of plotting that is geared towards gathering ephemera, since so many of the events in the "Ruth" sections are structured around Ruth and Oliver's quest to know more about Nao. Ultimately, the plotting does cobble a kind of "incomplete omniscience," a higher view of what happened. The effect is that readers do become capable of seeing a form of causality or conditioning in socio-historic time; readers learn something of the post-1945 techno-capitalist globalization. But they achieve this wide view when omniscience becomes a function of willed assemblage, willed into being partly by a single character (Ruth) and partly the invisible organizing agency. The novel implies, perhaps, that omniscience, though no longer a given, can be achieved through the *work* (the will) of the novel.

Conclusion

I began this chapter by discussing three scenes of observation, taken from the pages of modernism. Men watched a captain and their ship. A man watched a couple in a boat. A boy watched his parents have sex. But as I've proceeded, I've added two more, from the history of cybernetics: the view from the cross-hairs of a gun toward an enemy pilot; and the view of a video-game player or a drone pilot. In all this, I have delineated a genealogy in which the modernist relationship to reality (emphasizing subjectivity and mediation) transforms into a behaviorist stance, which thereby influences scientific applications that reproduce behaviorism. Against the behaviorism that is implicit in this lineage of thought, Ozeki posits the appeal of an assembled and impartial omniscience. Modest in its ambition, Ozeki's omniscience seems not to belong to a higher order of reality, as would be characteristic of the 'classical novel'; nor does her omniscience have any of the conservative implications with which realism is usually criticized. Rather, Ozeki's willed omniscience simply revives the appropriateness of knowing before acting, and stokes the will to know more, and more deeply.

CHAPTER 2

Coetzee's Formalism,
Literary Proprietorship and Digital Copyright

Introduction

A writer knows nothing of "decoy ducks or duckoys," but as he sits at his desk, a character of his own invention supplies him with details of how they are bred in the fen country around the coast of Lincolnshire, and then employed to lure and entrap the fowl of Holland and Germany. Before the crash that turned him "halt" Paul Rayment had never met a woman named Marianna, but Elizabeth Costello (his creator) invites him to remember that years ago he took her photograph, in his studio, on her birthday. Taken from J.M. Coetzee's short story "He and His Man" (2003) and the novel *Slow Man* (2005), these two instances signal a cleft separating the understanding of a character and that of his author. A cleft such as theirs implies defects in the practice of mimesis, which in a more perfect state would keep the author's hand tethered to patterns in reality. In the Australian phase of Coetzee's writing, it is this "cleft," the sign of imperfect mirroring, that emerges with distinctness as the primary crisis to be explored. If, in either of these cases, there is a discrepancy between the author's understanding and the character's, then the story's solicitation in neither is to decide what really happened (is the character speaking the truth, or the author?), nor to explain how the character can know more or differently than his author. The story says, rather: look how far the literary can revise the

rules of reality, as it forgoes a consideration for causality or objectivity. Look how the literary is capable of re-scripting the ordinary.

Imperfect mirroring fits within Coetzee's overall project, according to which art must carve out its own space in culture, refusing conditions that would constrain any other discourse. In "The Novel Today" (1987), Coetzee distinguishes between a category of fiction oriented towards historical or mimetic accuracy, and an alternative category to which his own fiction belongs, novels that rival history. Novels of the first sort aim to capture the first-hand experience of life lived alongside notable historical events, while the latter strive toward unbounded autonomy (3). In prioritizing accuracy the former novels subordinate themselves to historiography, while the second group challenges the cultural authority granted to history as a discourse, or objectivity as a principle. Coetzee's two categories are isomorphic with the literary-historical divide usually thought to hold between realism and modernism. Stylists of the latter kind operationalize formal obstruction to build in reflexive distance between reader and representation, suspecting that a quantum of fictionality helps weave history; hence their contrast to realists, who support sympathetic identification with characters and truth claims, and sustain the ambition to add to the reader's awareness by telling it like it is. For Coetzee there are dubious risks to accepting the historical narrative or its claim to objective truth (for what if the seeming truth is not really true?); and it is in the face of darker possibilities that Coetzee holds up literary techniques that throw into relief history's tendency toward manipulation.

Recent critics continue to use Coetzee's opposition, as when Mike Marais differentiates between "social realism" and "modernism" (159), or when Sarah

Brouillette situates Coetzee's work in a "transcendental-poetic" tradition, which she distinguishes from the "socio-cultural" tradition (112-113). As I go on to say, Coetzee's opposition between "novels of historical accuracy" and "novels rivaling history" maps onto classic accounts of the differences between realism and modernism, according to which the realist text (due to its willingness to mask its own status as an artificial creation) serves a public, referential purpose that the aesthetically-oriented text refuses (due its adherence to autonomous, non-social codes).[xii]

I frame things differently than Coetzee. Aesthetic strategies such as Coetzee's come at a cost. Whatever their intention, their effect is to turn away from social obligation, the demand that art listen to life as it is really lived. The demand can achieve undeniable poignancy—as when David Attwell so touchingly places the demand for realism (or socially responsive writing) in the mouths of South African students, before making the following admission: "there might be an intimate or inescapable connection between a wounded historical memory and the representational practices associated with mimesis. In which case, no amount of nuanced positionality on the part of the author can displace it" ("Africa as Sign," 68). It is in sympathy with this demand that this chapter offers a critical appraisal of Coetzee's aesthetics; in the following, I trace the connections that inhere between Coetzee's repertoire—which includes imperfect mirroring, irony and self-reflexivity—and the substrate of legal and economic power through which that repertoire gets some of its communicative force.

History consolidates the literary object—including its strategies of irony and self-reflexivity—as a specific kind of modern phenomenon. My contention is that aesthetic strategies such as imperfect doubling cannot, of themselves, act as critical maneuvers

capable of "showing up" claims to power—"showing up" history as myth, or "showing up" our relation to objectivity as interested. Learning to see aesthetics apart from other discourses requires cultural training; moreover—and here is the critical point—aesthetic strategies such as Coetzee's have a specific lineage that situates them in socio-cultural relationships of power or taste.

My method will be to link Coetzee's aesthetic repertoire and legal-economic context; and it will produce three consequences. First, it will short-circuit Coetzee's art of internal complexity, and affix the value of his formal experiments not by positing their ethics (a common and important maneuver in Coetzee criticism), but by making sense of their actual, real-world effectivity. As I interpret *Diary of a Bad Year* (2007), a key work in Coetzee's Australian phase, I argue that facets of the novel rehearse arguments made in courtrooms, and I show that this rehearsal, taking place in the cultural sphere, helps to strengthen industry or proprietary endeavors to consolidate property rights, happening in the legal sphere proper. The majority of the plotting unfurls around a characterological opposition between JC and Alan, each of whom serves as allegory for his own worldview; but the ideological opposition is in the end undercut through formal play. By revealing how this structuration of the novel rehearses some principles articulated during the debate on digital copyright, and by linking Coetzee's formalism to debates on eighteenth-century intellectual property and contemporary trends in publishing, I argue that Coetzee's novel behaves as an advocate for the culture of proprietary authorship[xiii] and the literary genius.

In prioritizing the complexity of the literary creation, Coetzee's novels draw attention away from content and towards their own artificiality, or form. Since literary

form was critical to establishing a socially recognizable relationship between author and text, "formalism" [xiv] such as Coetzee's re-enacts a historical function of form—a function that is primarily proprietary.[xv] Moreover, if formal elements helped to define literature at the incipience of the legal-aesthetic regime in the eighteenth century, then the assertion made on behalf of form today also performs *new* and *additional* cultural tasks specific to today's legal and economic conditions. Thus, a second consequence of this chapter's analysis will be to demonstrate the linkages between formalism, as a historical and contemporary practice, and proprietorship.

Thirdly, this chapter writes against ethicist positions such as Derek Attridge's, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak's or Rita Barnard's,[xvi] and adds to the body of more skeptical takes on Coetzee, strengthening positions such as Benita Parry's. Parry has argued that Coetzee's formal techniques of estrangement "inadvertently repeat exclusionary colonialist gestures which the novels also criticize… despite the fictions' disruptions of colonialist modes, the social authority on which the rhetoric relies and which it exerts is grounded in the cognitive systems of the West" (150). For Parry, aesthetic strategies like estrangement are embedded in a hierarchical system of taste, which suppresses texts considered "tasteless," "derivative," or uninterested in formal experimentation.[xvii] For this chapter's purposes, I envision the "social authority on which the rhetoric relies" not as a unified field of taste, but as a composite field made of hierarchical relations of taste in addition to culturally cogent notions of intellectual property (which, needless to say, are Western and liberal in provenance).

Central to the purposes of this dissertation, this chapter advances my argument on global literature's instrumentality. As we will see in the analysis below, Coetzee's

formalism is a *useful* position, allowing him to achieve desirable ends. Formalism bestows his oeuvre with a theoretical autonomy while the author himself proceeds with contracts with media conglomerates—as if that economic settlement had nothing to do with the content of the book. The fact that Coetzee's texts are infrequently studied in relation to the operations of Bertelsmann—the current holder of his rights—is a testament to how useful his formalism is.

Allegorical Elements in *Diary of a Bad Year*

What little story there is to *Diary of a Bad Year* is as follows. JC is assembling a contribution of short essays for an edited volume, and requires an assistant to convert Dictaphone recordings of his book material into a digital document. He persuades Anya, a beautiful neighbor with whom he wants to initiate an erotic encounter, to take the job. JC intends to seduce her by daily subjecting her to evidence of his intellectual power. Instead their daily exchanges spur a shift in JC. Conversations with Anya, a "thoroughly modern Millie," lead JC to see in his own opinions something "alien" and "antiquated" (137). Anya's challenge to JC is severe enough to substantively change the constitution of the novel before us, leading JC to write the material that makes up "Second Diary"; these are a set of "soft opinions" on lighter matters, gathered together at the top of each page in the novel's Part 2. (At the top of the novel's Part 1 are the "Strong Opinions" that JC will publish. Below the topmost band in either part, we find two more bands of text, the middle one giving JC's first-person narration of story events, and the last band giving Anya's first-person narration of the same events.)

Diary achieves a climactic peak when Alan, Anya's partner, reveals he uploaded spyware onto JC's computer by way of one of the computer discs exchanged. Through the viral software, Alan acquires the ability to control JC's millions, which he plans to reinvest for his own profit. Alan's scheme serves a narrative function in *Diary*: it lines up the likable JC and the unlikable Alan along indelible lines of moral right and moral wrong (which then precipitates the end of Anya and Alan's relationship). Given Coetzee's sophisticated work with ethics in previous novels, we might wonder at the simplicity of moral sentiment deployed here in pitting Anya (and the reader) against Alan. Indeed, the climax is so simple that Anya even describes Alan's trespass in terms of "black and white": "in Señor C's case [Alan] seems to be crossing the line from grey into black, into the out-and-out blackest" (135).

But, as I will argue, the climax does more than paint JC and Alan in terms of right and wrong. More than that, it bolsters the ideological polarity already set up by the two characters, who are really allegorical stand-ins for socio-economic ideologies, and performs the political work of vindicating JC (and therefore his allegorical referent, old-world liberalism) over Alan (or cutthroat neoliberalism). JC's strong opinions reveal his position on neoliberalism, which consists in his denial of the primacy of economics, suggestions that we "remake [the market] in a kindlier form," and indulgences in idealist principles of "the true, the good, and the beautiful" (119); and by his own opinions he is continually framed as a remnant of a worldview or ideology recently displaced by neoliberalism. Alan, in contrast, sees the world in "two dimensions, the individual dimension and the economic dimension… the individual dimension being nobody's business but your own and the economic dimension being the big picture" (79). Hence

Diary performs the allegorical task of making JC the deputy of a liberal modernity, and Alan the model of automated and algorithmic neoliberalism.

An allegorical rendering in which JC stands for liberalism and Alan for neoliberalism may strike us as an inappropriate feature for a Coetzee text. That is, if "allegory" designates the "urge to treat elements in the text as symbols for broader ideas or entities," then as a mode it signals the author's deference to external reality for the supply of representational ideas (Attridge, "Against Allegory," 67). Moreover, if the allegorical presentation serves to vindicate the author's double—and JC does enjoy a righteous triumph over Alan—then the discourse would appear to be "monologic" or didactic in a manner that is incompatible with the novel form. For these reasons, then, allegory seems inimical to a text championing autonomy and complexity.

Noting precisely the clumsiness and inappropriateness of the allegorical structure in *Diary*, Julian Murphet faults the novel—in which the protagonist seemingly turns into a mouthpiece for the author, and the antagonist a "god-child of Thatcher, Reagan and Howard" (76)—for its stylistic infelicity. To make sense of the aesthetic flaw, Murphet turns our attention to a rather relevant source: J.M. Coetzee, who in a 1985 essay, "Confession and Double Thoughts," contrasted the didactic impulse to divulge the "authorial ideology" through fiction, which is typified to his mind by the late Leo Tolstoy, with the dialogic impulse to ironicize, which is typified by Fyodor Dostoyevsky. Finding the latter impulse proper for novelistic discourse, Coetzee in 1985 characterized the former as an "authoritarian position" that prefers to short-circuit "self-doubt and self-scrutiny in the name of […] truth" ("Confession," 263). Ironically, for Murphet, *Diary* repeats the authoritarian gesture of making a text monologic, by indulging in allegory and

by failing in its paltry gestures of ironicization. And rather knowingly, it seems, JC redeems the late Tolstoy, who comes up as a figure worthy of some admiration:

> No one is more alive to the real world than the young Leo Tolstoy, the Tolstoy of *War and Peace*. After *War and Peace*…,Tolstoy entered upon a long decline into didacticism that culminated in the aridity of the late fiction. Yet to the older Tolstoy the evolution must have seemed quite different. Far from declining, he must have felt, he was ridding himself of the shackles that had enslaved him to appearances, enabling him to face directly the one question that truly engaged his soul: how to live. (193)

Murphet's point is that while there *are* gestures of ironicization in *Diary*—which I analyze below—they are not nearly as predominant as the inclination to teach the revealed truth, not nearly as salient as the work of allegory. This, then, is how we can make sense of the multiple defenses made on behalf of late Tolstoy, a gesture probably unthinkable to the younger Coetzee. Murphet reports regretfully on Coetzee's decision to betray the standard of novelistic dialogism, JC's choice of Tolstoy over Dostoyevsky; for my own purposes, however, the allegorical presentation of *Diary* will be significant for the way it signals the novel's historical situated-ness, a matter to which I turn after inspecting its nuances.

The binary between past (liberalism) and present (neoliberalism), or old and new, surfaces in a number of episodes in the book, as when JC comments on the commercialization of sport. He notes, it used to be that a human judge—who stood for "the common man with the keenest eye"—would rule on the winner of sport, and where no difference could be discerned, then "we used to say, there is indeed no difference"

(73). This happened at a time when sport was informed by principles of play; but the transformation of sport into a business has meant that decisions on the winner, being consequential to an entire industry, are now made by "devices keener than the keenest human eye: electronic cameras divide each second into a hundred instants and save each instant in its frozen image" (74). In JC's assessment, commercial sport exemplifies the merger of heartless economism and computerization, both of which are opposed to more human ways of organizing society. Though neoliberalism and computerization may have been historically independent developments, in this novel's imaginary, their shared utilitarianism brings them together in opposition to an older, kinder social form.

We learn more about the novel's conception of the opposition between the past and the present by analyzing the minutae of Alan's scheme. As Alan explains, "On [JC's] three million I can get fourteen or fifteen per cent, easily. We make fifteen per cent, we give him back his five per cent, we take the rest as commission, as the fruits of intellectual labour" (127). The details of the scheme indicate that Alan, a reinvestment consultant, plans to siphon the money in the "new," post-1970's world economy, which is characterized by a move away from profit made through commodity exchange towards profit models based on investment. Alan allegorizes, as starkly as possible, the financialization of the market and—given that the entire scheme takes place through the viral corruption of a hard-disk—the introduction of computational techniques in trade and management. Thus, Alan's reinvestment scheme alters the book by creating two discrete camps: old ways of making money (commodity-based trading) *v*. new ways of making money (financialization and computation); old political ideologies (liberalism) *v*. new political ideologies (neoliberalism); and old media (the book) *v*. new media (the Internet,

computer discs, digital files). The climax, therefore, fashions a battleground between the authority of the old against the authority of the new—with the comedic end securing success for old authority, old media, and old property relations.

Such a normative construal of old and new involves the supposition that digital technologies portend a negative social impact, either because they align with neoliberal reason or represent the reign of technical instrumentality of themselves. However, the notion that digital technologies pose a social threat—that their introduction correlates with the need to reconfigure existing institutions—has a specific point of origin in a 1990's debate on digital copyright, being nearly identical to the proprietary perspective that digital technologies upend currently existing systems for copy control. It would be a mistake, then, to perceive in the opposition between analog and digital an innocent means of signaling the ideological divisions between "old world" and "new"; rather, the opposition should help us contextualize *Diary* as a product of late-twentieth-century proprietary culture.

Copyright Under Digital Threat

The conceptual opposition between JC and Alan derives its energy, at least in part, from the functional difference between old media from new media. Since *Diary* aligns JC with old media and Alan with new, the novel effectively suggests a relationship of opposition between the two media forms. But this perception of an antagonism evolved due to a proprietary and legal discourse initiated in the 1990's and early 2000's, at which time national legislatures and international administrations in the West were pursuing the codification of copyright standards on digital goods.[xviii] It is to some details

of this history—a history of the commercial influences on the codification of digital copyright—that we must turn in order to learn the full extent of proprietary investment in *Diary of a Bad Year*.

The commercial sale of electronic computers in the 1980's, as well as the commercial availability of the Internet since 1989, compelled the government of the United States (where these changes took place most rapidly) to facilitate debate on "digital copyright," which refers to the legal protection of content made or transferred on a digital computer. How would books of the print world be protected in a digital environment? How could online texts be circulated without risk of infringement? In 1992, the Clinton administration convened task forces and committees in order to plan the control and regulation of the National Information Infrastructure (NII), a related policy project that aimed to coordinate digital technologies in a network. One subcommittee under the Information Policy Committee, called the "Working Group on Intellectual Property" (WGIP), would play a key role in suggesting principles of copyright to be applied to digital goods. Because some of the notions articulated in that debate would be codified in currently existing law, it is worthwhile to review how "the digital" was rendered in contrast to "the analog."

Between November and December 1993, the WGIP heard public comments on how copyright should be amended to protect informational content on the NII (Lehman 3, 1995); after this period of open commentary, the WGIP released "the Green Paper," the first draft of its policy suggestions, in 1994. The Green Paper was skewed in favor of industry interests, primarily because, of the 82 written testimonies that were submitted in response to the call for policy suggestions, twice as many represented content industries

over consumers, while 18 of the 25 verbal testimonies (given in person to the members of

the WGIP) came from copyright-owners (Postigo 22). The owners' overrepresentation—

in written testimony and in verbal commentary—meant that their main concern—on

"how existing definitions of distribution, transmission and copying would be enforced on

NII" (Postigo 22)—was the one found most pressing.

We can get a sense of the concerns of the proprietary perspective by looking at

the comments made by Timothy B. King, a representative from a publishing firm. He

argued,

> In the network environment, a significant component of the commercial use of a
>
> work will be the access, transmission and copying of elements of the work. *Fair*
>
> *use criteria need to be applied in a manner which reflects this difference from the*
>
> *paper world, and protects the authors and publishers interests* in the emerging
>
> electronic market. (*Comments* 1993, emphasis added).

In King's view, digital technologies pose a threat to commercial profit, but the threat may

be managed by trimming "limitations and exceptions" on copyright (including the "first-

sale" and fair use provisions that guard public interest). For King, curtailing public

benefit was justified because fair use limitations have "always been conditioned on such

use not having a detrimental commercial impact on the copyright holder" (King in

Comments 1993). Problematically, statements such as King's contributed to the treatment

of intellectual property right as an absolute or natural right, whereas it is actually a

limited monopoly conferred to an author in order to "produce present and future public

benefit" (Boyle 1997 [*Duke Law*], 105). As legal scholar James Boyle pointed out, such

misstatements led to what would become, in the "White Paper" eventually produced by

the hearings, a tendency to "give a pro-author account of the existing law" and to misrepresent the legal function of limitations, which encompass consumer rights equally as important as the property right granted to the owner (Boyle 1997 [*Duke Law*], 104).

The 1993 hearings indicate that content industries fretted about the digital capacity to copy, because digital media preserve originals when a user wishes to share information across a network. Their concern can be further clarified through example, by considering a case in which a user purchases a song file through iTunes, which she subsequently decides to share through email. If this user were to upload the song as an attachment, she would retain a copy of the song on her own hard disk. Sharing would produce a near-perfect copy, and it would not require her to delete the original she owns. In contrast, copying a physical book is difficult, and transmission involves relinquishing the copy you own. For this reason, content industries do not fear a book's resale, which they believe will be infrequent, or a book's reproduction, which they believe will be imperfect. Indeed, when a reader resells a copy of a used book in the market, she does so because she has the right to "transmit" an object she once purchased. ("Transmission" here refers to a consumer's right to privately circulate information, over which she has legal possession; transmission is distinguished from the copyright-owners' right to "distribute," which describes their ability to decide authorized routes of distribution.)

In the case of digital information, copyright owners cannot regulate the deletion of the original; therefore, digital technologies symbolize an exponential rise in the power of transmission (since the continued availability of the original facilitates further copying). For this reason, copyright owners believed they would be negatively impacted by the proliferation of digital technologies. Foreseeing the multiplication of original

digital files among members of their potential market, copyright owners recommended the end of first-sale, the consumer right (and a limitation to copyright) that legitimates the user practice of transmission. Given the Clinton administration's own belief that industry would help make the NII, the Green Paper (1994) accepted many of the opinions of the copyright owners, as did the "White Paper" (1995), the second draft of WGIP's policy suggestions.[xix] The latter document was revised[xx] and rewritten as the Digital Millennium Copyright Act (DMCA), which was signed into law in 1998 by Bill Clinton. The prohibition on first-sale survives in DMCA, effectively, since section 1201 of the bill acknowledges the right-holders' ability to use technological means to constrain access to content; as Jessica Litman argues, rendering access a negotiable condition upon purchase results in "discourag[ing] the inference that the classic general exceptions and privileges apply" (145). In other words, it is imaginable that the very terms of access may require the user to relinquish traditional fair use privileges. Today, when consumers purchase a digital file or program, they may need to agree to accept the terms of a licensing agreement, which heavily regulates how consumers use the digital file. Users may be prohibited from copying, reselling, or even excerpting and repurposing for educational purposes.[xxi]

Fear against digital copying was promulgated by the cultural industries in the late 1990's and subsequently institutionalized in digital copyright law, as I have discussed. In addition to weakening consumer rights, such a discourse established different ways of handling analog and digital goods, which then solidified ideological distinctions. That is, by distinguishing between the user rights related to tangible goods and user rights related to digital goods, the commercial discourse implemented an ideological and practicable

divide between old and new media. When digital technologies are positioned repeatedly and invariably as objects bound to affect the profit of content industries,[xxii] and when consumers accept new habits to observe new laws, then there arises a perception that digital technologies differ fundamentally from older ones.

In sum, copyright holders were key in generating the notion that digital media differ from analog media. To be sure, a material difference exists between the paper world and digital information. But, as Seb Franklin points out, certain socio-cultural conditions must be in place before we begin to conceptualize material differences—such as the difference between digital and analog—in terms of a historical break—such as the one thought to divide the pre-digital era from the post-digital era (2015). A tour through some of the history of digital copyright reveals how copyright owners were prioritized by federal-level institutions; owners were therefore instrumental in transforming a material fact into the epistemic view that digital media pose a threat to the existing system of proprietorship. (Hector Postigo proposes that, if more consumer rights and citizen activists had attended the hearings, if an industry bias had not tainted the process, then we might have enjoyed an Internet with a more expansive version of "fair use" and "transmission," as might be thought more appropriate for a world in which information is more widely available and the desire to transmit increases [26-27, 37-39]).

In *Diary of a Bad Year*, we feel the relevance and currency of the notion that digital media threaten older systems of proprietorship. JC is situated in a network of book publishing: he will submit a manuscript to a German publisher, along with six other established authors. He cannot use the computer without help, and since he is losing fine muscle control, he prefers to speak his opinions into a Dictaphone. Alan, in contrast,

exploits the copying capabilities of digital technology to substitute the totality of JC's computational environment—including email, bank account, word files—with a facsimile. Thus, the fear of digital copying, a phenomenon that was discursively reinforced by rights-holders during the digital copyright debates, helps to buttress an opposition between the novelist (who seems here allied with copyright holders) against Alan (the computer-savvy entrepreneur). If the allegory works on an intuitive level, that is, if the allegory is conceptually clear and emotionally sensible, it is because the history of legislative and industry actions against digital technologies have rendered them a threat.

Formal Play

Thus far, I have argued that the allegorical elements of the novel—i.e., the opposition structuring *Diary*—derive from a proprietary episteme assembled, in part, during the digital copyright debates. In this section and the next, I will supplement my findings by adding a comment on the novel's formalism, which also derives from principles used in defenses of proprietary right.

For there is more to *Diary* than the characterological opposition between JC and Alan; the "more" is that the novel *stages* the opposition, and thereby creates some distance between itself and Coetzee's putative look-alike. JC should not be mistaken as a duplicate speaking on behalf of the author; as Jonathan Lear points out, "there is a crucial difference between JC and J.M. Coetzee," namely, the difference that "JC is willing to publish his *Strong Opinions* as a freestanding book; Coetzee is not" (70). When they appear, "strong opinions" are supplemented by story in *Diary*, and thus Coetzee's

decision to situate them in fiction dilutes the authority of the political pronouncements, which nearly singe when read alone, but which attenuate in impact when made part of an aging luminary's "magic revenge on the world for declining to conform to [his] fantasies" (23). What weaknesses in character, the reader reflects, may there be in JC that make revenge a means for taking hold of the world? What sorts of withdrawals have already taken place in his internal constitution, which make elitist condemnation seem like a suitable retort? Despite the skeletal quality of the realism evoked along the novel's bottom two tracks, then, the reader builds a character out of JC, nonetheless, pondering the possibilities of a backstory. (One is reminded of evocative details—realism's signature—such as the cockroaches that crawl across his desk, or the "Russian doll" magazines that will have to be hidden after he expires.) And, ultimately, it will be mediation through that character's flaws that "alters" the reader's "angle" on the opinions.

According to Johan Geertsema, *Diary*'s form "constitutes an attempt to move towards a position beyond politics" (71). Through fictional embedding and staging, *Diary* undercuts the substance of JC's pronouncements, effectively "carv[ing] out a position off the stage of political rivalry while yet positioning itself with respect to the outrages with which it is concerned" (75). But precisely what sort of negation is enacted in *Diary*? We may agree that, after their fictional displacement, JC's opinions on the origins of the state (in banditry) and democracy (identical to totalitarianism) do not retain their prominence, their provocation fading once we see better the person from whom they emerge, a person that was indeed put together in a South Africa of the 1940's and 1950's (as Alan notes). However—and here is the crucial point—aesthetic authority is also *emboldened* by

Diary's form, insofar as it is the *aesthetic*'s negative capacity to de-familiarize that allows us some distance from JC's opinions. Despite the negative work of the novel's form, then, one of the terms of the binary opposition retains its position: if JC allegorizes "the poetic," then the poetic still seems to have won out after the dust settles.

I maintain, then, that though *Diary* seemingly disrupts the notion of authorial genius (because of how it frames JC's opinions), the superiority of the aesthetic—which JC also represents—does not really enter its domain of scrutiny. In fact, as is a recurrent pattern in Coetzee's oeuvre, *Diary* lines up in defense of the "poetic," slyly redeeming JC, or at least some of what JC stands for. For it is the power of 'the poetic' that allows for countervoices to sound out across the page, just beneath JC. Since it is a structuring principle of the *form*, "the poetic" transcends what is up for critique.

We can see some of this better through an exchange on which the novel pivots. Anya, flirtatiously extending one of her visits to the author's apartment, challenges JC over a deeply held conviction. In an opinion on "national shame," JC (like Coetzee) tries to revive the powers of shame, outlining the need for the American public to accept a state of dishonor after Bush and Cheney make a public push for torture. As JC says, of himself as a white South African, an Australian, a person benefitting from American imperialism: "when you live in shameful times shame descends upon you, shame descends upon everyone, and you have simply to bear it, it is your lot and your punishment" (96). This Anya counters with an anecdote, a story of her own rape. She rebuts his thesis on collective responsibility, arguing,

> …when a man rapes a woman it is the man's dishonour. The dishonour sticks to
> the man, not to the woman.…You have got it wrong, Mister C. Old thinking.

Wrong analysis, as Alan would say. Abuse, rape, torture, it doesn't matter what:

the news is, as long as it is not your fault, as long as you are not responsible, the

dishonour doesn't stick to you. (101-105)

Anya refuses JC's position by insisting on the rightness of notions of "individual

responsibility," as we would say in political lingo. If we are swayed by Anya, and if her

own experience helps to defend her position, it is because we see how clearly collective

(or communal) shaming has been deployed against women. "Old thinking" would have

women still bowed under the weight of a trespass performed against them, a problem that

Anya mentions. Thus, even if principles of collective responsibility may aim, in theory,

to acknowledge everyone's role in the construction of a social crisis, they fail because

their enactment shifts responsibility to those impaired by the crime, especially if the

victims are among the historically disadvantaged or socially vulnerable.

The substance of the disagreement, however, is about two notions of shame—

collective shame and individual shame—and, again, the disagreement is also legible as a

historical opposition between "old thinking" and new. The intrigue in *Diary*—as in the

oft-cited exchange between Lucy and David Lurie in *Disgrace*[xxiii]—is that the novel does

not itself adjudicate between the two notions. It cannot. Arguably, JC enjoys some

privilege of presentation—his statements are ennobled by rhythmic repetition and a

quality of directness—and Anya enjoys the privilege of emotional appeal. But JC's

ennoblement in letters does not amount to an elevation of JC over Anya, and her

rendering through the lens of pathos does not decide the case. Far from that: the ethical

aporia that their exchange opens is avoided altogether, because it is the fulcrum over

which the two sides divide themselves, and through which the reader is invited in as

judge. (The reader will recall that Anya refuses to work for him after this conversation, at which point JC begs for her return but does not withdraw his comments; this flurry of plotting covers for the insolubility of the conflict that has actually emerged.)

Ethically, then, the novel cannot judge the rightness of either JC or Anya; but this is a boon to the aesthetic, which can make a statement "about politics" without itself "being political." And this is precisely the technique through which the novel can distance itself from JC, the figure for literature in troubled times, but (to my earlier point) vindicate him too. To an extent, this contradiction in *Diary*—its simultaneous critique of JC and its redemption of the aestheticist position—is not a conceptual dilemma in need of logical resolution: texts survive their contradictions. In my view, the intractable problem arises when the Coetzeen text gets cast as espousing no position, transcending entirely the trappings of political and historical affiliation, as if "the poetic" had no history, as if Coetzee had not made a trademark of irony. One feels, at that juncture, the urgent need to bring up the modern genesis of formalism, to show how formalism continues to work by being itself enmeshed in legal and commercial discourses of ownership. As part of this effort—of remaining mindful of how economics subtends "the poetic"—, I indicate some of the resonances between Coetzee's aestheticism and proprietary discourse below; in doing so, I complete the historicist gesture begun in the previous section, of showing how elements of *Diary* recall proprietary principles.

———

To grasp the meaning of an oeuvre that advocates for the priority of form, it will be critical to recall what formalism meant, the purposes it served, at the incipience of the modern literary regime. In giving some points in this origin story, I will examine two

significant contexts—early modern England and Germany. This long view on the formalist position will illuminate that literary formalism resolves, then and now, specific dilemmas in legal and economic spheres, and allows for an informed consideration of how formalism performs a social function today.

An author's ownership of his or her literary text was not a self-evident fact at the inception of the book trade (see Rose 1988, Woodmansee 1994; see also Foucault 2010/1979). Rather, an author's right to his or her "literary property" was an argument first conceived by eighteenth-century booksellers and deployed to preserve the trade conditions yielding them the highest profit. Taking the case of England, we note that from the start of print trade in the 1500's to the start of the eighteenth century, London booksellers, overseen by the Stationer's Company, had exclusive rights to print and reprint in England (Rose 52). These monopolies were seen as inhibitive of multiple needs: the need to control price by competition, the need to create an economy for provincial booksellers, and the need to encourage learning through wider dissemination. To dismantle the monopolies, parliament's strategy was to pass a statutory intervention setting term limits on the exclusivity of printing rights. Thus, in 1709, the Statute of Anne, the world's first copyright act, established that an original publisher would retain the right to copy only fourteen years after the publication date, with a chance to renew another fourteen-year term, if given the consent of the author (52). The Statute was seen as highly restrictive of the activities of London booksellers, who had until then enjoyed exclusivity and also acquired copyrights of very high value (Bacon, Shakespeare, Milton and Bunyan [Rose 53]). These booksellers would see these high-value rights dissipate beginning in the 1730s.

In retaliation to the Statute, London booksellers argued that author's ownership of his or her product was a "common law" right, a right of *property* and therefore comparable to the prior legal decisions regarding ownership of land. When an author's "literary property" was transferred to a chosen assign at the time of copyright purchase, the right continued to be operative and binding (Rose 58). By making literary creation the property of its originator, booksellers were able to argue that the property should earn the author and his or her associates continued profit, never expiring to the public domain. An intentionally stark statement by Mark Rose surmises the circumstances: "It might be said that the London booksellers invented the modern proprietary author, constructing him as a weapon in their struggle with the booksellers of the provinces" (56). In the end, booksellers lost their claim to perpetual copyright. But their argument, and the decades-long debate which their argument provoked, consolidated the author-concept.

We should also consider formalism's function where its effects on public debate were among the most pronounced—eighteenth-century Germany. Despite its own regional particularity, Germany at this time also indexed "the modern condition" insofar as there took place a great deal of interchange between the aesthetic, legal and economic realms before the issue of intellectual property could be decided.

Prior to the restrictions implemented by intellectual property, norms of the eighteenth-century German book-trade permitted everyone "the right to reprint every book" (Fichte 237). The singular restriction curtailing this norm was the privilege, which, as a special favor granted by the monarchy, allowed select publishers to make a profit before the book was forfeited to others publishers. But, since "the privilege extended only to the borders of the territory or municipality that granted," it granted a very limited

protection in Germany, which consisted then of more than three hundred states (Woodmansee 46). Initial market conditions were therefore the inverse from those that held in England (where monopolies had maintained exclusive rights to reprint until statutes intervened to broaden the trade network). In Germany, prior to modern reform, knowledge was considered "by its very nature public… and [was] therefore free to be reproduced at will" (46). For booksellers, bookmakers and authors, the piracy-prone book trade was an intractable for business, however. Debate broke out after the mid-eighteenth century on the need to regulate the marketplace through law, and the focus of its participants was whether unauthorized reproduction should be prohibited.

One means of justifying the prohibition of piracy was to claim, (1) that ownership of the work belonged to the author, and hence, (2) its reproduction should be conducted under his or her appointed assign. The difficulty lay in defending the view that an author's ideas counted as property, or rather, property able to be legally protected. Here, Christian Sigmund Krause's "Über den Büchernachdruck" [On the Reprinting of Books] is the oft-quoted reference; in an incredulous, bewildered tone, Krause points out that ideas are not the kind of matter that can be possessed:

> But the ideas, the content! That which actually constitutes a book! Which only the author can sell or communicate!—Once expressed, it is impossible for it to remain the author's property.
>
> … A published book is a secret divulged. With what justification does a person expect to have more property in the ideas he expresses in writing than in those he expresses orally? With what justification does a preacher forbid the printing of his homilies, since he cannot prevent any of his listeners from transcribing his

sermons? Would it not be just as ludicrous for a professor to demand that his students refrain from using some new proposition he has taught them as for him to demand the same of book dealers… with regard to a new book? No, no, it is too obvious that the concept of intellectual property is useless. My property must be exclusively mine; I must be able to dispose of it and retrieve it unconditionally. Let someone explain to me how that is possible in the present case. Just let someone try taking back the ideas he has originated once they have been communicated so that they are, as before, nowhere to be found. All the money in the world could not make that possible. (Krause 417-17, quoted and translated in Woodmansee, 50-51)

Valuable for its expression of unreserved disdain for the concept, Krause's critique is also significant for indicating that intellectual property would only be practicable by law if it implied a technique for making the property attributable to the owner (as suggested by the question, "with what justification does a person expect to have more property in the ideas he expresses in writing than in those he expresses orally?"), and if a systemic transformation in culture would substitute practices associated with public knowledge ("learning, expanding, abridging, translating and reprinting") with those associated with privatized expression.

Unfortunately for history, Krause was defeated by none other than Johann Gottlieb Fichte, whose 1793 essay, "Beweis der Unrechtmässigkeit des Büchernachdrucks" ["Proof of the Illegality of Reprinting"], argued against Krause and to the advantage of the publishers and authors. Fichte wrote that though the ideas of the book may indeed pass to the buyer upon purchase, in addition to ownership of the

physical object which is the book, still the buyer will never possess *the form* in which the ideas are presented, which is the property of the author to perpetuity.

> Each individual has his own thought processes, his own way of forming concepts and connecting them… Now, since pure ideas without sensible images cannot be thought, even less are they capable of presentation to others. Hence, each writer must give his thoughts a certain form, and he can give them no other form than his own because he has no other. But neither can he be willing to hand over this form in making his thoughts public, for no one can appropriate his thoughts without thereby altering their form. This latter remains forever his exclusive property. (Fichte 227-228, quoted and translated in Woodmansee, 51-52).

Here is a critical argument for the history of copyright, for the history of aesthetics, and for the history of possessive individualism, appropriately begotten by a key post-Kantian thinker. It is a Kantian theme to reify the *form* of the subject's thoughts, deriving from their *form* a unity that implies the unity of the thinking subject. To the known Kantian theme, Fichte adds the dimension of formal uniqueness; the singularity of a thought's form implies a corresponding singularity in the subject. From there, through the ineluctable exfoliation of his premise, Fichte can argue the formal singularity that belongs to a subject becomes a formal singularity transferred to the production, and thereby the literature produced becomes theirs and theirs only—that is, the author's exclusively. Fichte's peculiarly modern notion of form—which belonged to only *thought* (sensory information), but which after philosophical treatment cannot be divested from the thinking *subject,* and then from the literary *object*—is an antecedent to the form we read for in literature departments, still today. As we read for form, we too attempt to

identify a specificity that renders our object distinct from all other like objects, though others may indeed be identical in content.

As Woodmansee has shown, Fichte's argument served as the philosophical backbone for acts of intellectual copyright in nineteenth-century Germany, providing legal bodies a means of recognizing the author's exclusive rights "insofar as his work is unique or original, an intellectual creation that owes its individuality solely and exclusively to him" (52). The debate exemplifies that principles originating in Kantian philosophy—principles of individualism and formalism—could be made practicable enough to rectify real-world crises like piracy and theft.

A similar notion of form can be found in reasoning given by the English lawyer William Blackstone, who acted as the plaintiff's attorney in the case *Tonson v. Collins* (1763), the first suit in which it was argued that authorial ownership was a common-law right. Arguing that the author and a chosen assign retained exclusive printing rights as owners of property, Blackstone had to persuade the court that literary composition possessed the attributes of property (exactly as the German book sellers, book makers and authors did). In identifying the attributes whose possession could make literature deserve the name "property," Blackstone chose "style" and "sentiment":

> Style and sentiment are the essentials of a literary composition. These alone constitute its identity. The paper and print are merely accidents, which serve as vehicles to convey that style and sentiment to a distance. Every duplicate therefore of a work, whether ten or ten thousand, if it conveys the same style and sentiment, is the same identical work, which was produced by the author's invention and labour. (Quoted in Rose 63)

Blackstone, facing the same dilemma as Fichte, picks form (style and sentiment) to be the qualifying trait of literary property; form helps us understand how a text has an identity, a singularity among a set of others. He anticipates Fichte by some twenty years (albeit giving us a far less robust version of "form," lacking, as he does, the resources of German Idealism). How to make sense of this historical near-coincidence?

Roger Chartier attends to the concurrent circumstances in England, France and Germany to develop a helpful conclusion. During the eighteenth century, England, France and Germany all experienced a shift in the system of legal regulations pertaining to the book trade. The shift entailed an acceptance of literary property, a shift whose consequence was the simultaneous "professionalization" of the author in modern culture *and* his or her "sanctification." The author became a proprietor at the same time that he or she became an esteemed, inspired creator:

> [A] somewhat paradoxical connection was made between a desired professionalization of literary activity (which should provide remuneration in order for writers to live from their writings) and the authors' representation of themselves in an ideology of literature founded on the radical autonomy of the work of art and the disinterestedness of the creative act. On the one hand, the poetic or philosophic work became a negotiable commodity endowed with a *valeur commerçante*, as Diderot put it, and hence could be the object of a contract and evaluated in monetary terms. On the other hand, the work was held to result from a free and inspired activity motivated by its internal necessities alone. (37)

Chartier notes the paradoxical simultaneity in the establishment of the two very divergent ideas of authorship. But Fichte and Blackstone's arguments (of which he is aware) reveal

how intimate and proximal was their co-development. Isolating characteristics in literature that can help it qualify as property meant isolating characteristics that were "individualizing," i.e., necessarily related to some*one*. Making literature a protectable property meant making it belong to someone—necessarily *that* one, the one whose genius it reflects. While the endeavor to transform literature into "literary property" could have had the democratizing effect of giving every single scribbler legal and cultural authority—the authority that attaches to you as a citizen—it had the opposite effect of venerating the mind responsible for literature with an undue and elevating authorization. Thus, the modern juridical regime mixed the arguments common to the then incipient aesthetic regime, the latter already churning out concepts like "originality" and "genius."

At this point, it behooves us to recalibrate Woodmansee's and Chartier's conclusions for contemporary circumstances: what does Coetzee's avowal of form mean, in historicist terms, and how might his position participate within economic or legal events configuring the present?

Since eighteenth-century debates on intellectual property were directed towards implementing a prohibition against piracy, Fichte's formalism must be seen as a defense of proprietors; similarly, formalism enacted today has to be understood, first, as a means of concretizing the link between author and literary object, and in addition to that, in the context of 1) transnational media conglomeration and 2) a proprietary turn in copyright, as glimpsed above through my discussion of the DMCA. It is the latter two points that are particular to our time, and which have helped to reconfigure the economic and legal landscape in which the formally innovative text operates.

Since the 1960's, waves of mergers—taking place on a global scale—have led to

the concentration of media control in the hands of a half-dozen conglomerates. In 1983, fifty firms dominated the global media market (Bagdikian 2000, xxi); but just seven years later, in 1990, only 23 firms commanded all of the world's channels of information (Bagdikian 2000, xxi). In 2004, Ben Bagdikian named just 5 firms: Time Warner (American), Disney (American), News Corporation (Australian and American), Viacom (American), and Germany's Bertelsmann (3).[xxiv] Of the firms just named, 3 of them include one of "Big Five" publishers operating in the US as of 2017[xxv]: Bertelsmann, the world's biggest book-maker, owns Penguin Random House; News Corporation owns HarperCollins; Viacom owns Simon and Schuster; Holtzbrinck owns Macmillan; and Lagardère Group owns Hachette. Analyzing how this very small number of large-scale publishers has grown to control book production, sociologist John B. Thompson reports that such publishers have been able to pursue an "economy of scale," and an "economy of favors" enables small, independent presses to survive while medium-sized publishers grow increasingly rare (Thompson 267). Therefore, it is in view of the "conglomerization" of the publishing industry that the enactment of the formalist position must be assessed.

As implied in the above, large-scale publishing takes place within communication firms that also own film, video, radio and digital media industries across continents; Bertelsmann—Coetzee's appointed assign as the owner of Penguin Random House—is a good example, as it owns radio and TV stations around Europe and Asia through the RTL group. As Simone Murray argues, the location of publishing houses in multimedia firms has transformed the condition of book-making, such that books are now treated as containing "liquid content, which may be decanted and reconstituted across the full

gamut of contemporary media platforms" (38). Murray's particular focus is on the way

that companies churn out adaptations, which, "in a converged system for producing and

valorizing the printed word, [can] no longer be considered merely a serendipitous but

unlikely afterthought for a minority of already successful books" (26). Instead, firms

approach an author's manuscript with a view to repurposing and licensing it for the firm's

other media outputs. Due to its disregard for the singularity of the original, this system of

production seems theoretically inimical to the aestheticist attitude. But, remarkably,

Murray concludes that a firm's extractive approach to literature does not endanger the

traditions surrounding "the literary," but rather renews their lease; for the firm will

capitalize on the author as an autonomous figure and the book as rarefied material in each

of the uses it finds for the book. Aspects of the literary industry that reverberate with

cultural capital are craftily repurposed during the adaptation's marketing campaigns and

premiers (26-27).

By citing Murray's conclusions on how a firm banks on "the literary," I do not

mean to suggest that Coetzee wrote *Diary* with a view to making an adaptation from the

material (though it has been argued that the novel anticipates multiple translations and

transnational audiences[xxvi]). Rather, I mean to gesture to the phenomenon by which an

enormous firm's profit-oriented activities—which would seem to be an anathema to the

strictures of aestheticism—can coexist alongside their acquisition of an abundance of

"literary capital." And here, a case in point would seem to be that Coetzee appears

autonomous while related to Bertelsmann. It is at this juncture that it becomes apparent

how Coetzee's insistence on formalism is *useful*—instrumental--for it accords him a

theoretical autonomy (an autonomy discernible within the covers of his books), even

while his authorship retains relations of *social dependence* on a conglomerate of a global scale. That is, it is Coetzee's *formalism*, precisely as a position that issues forth no political claim and requires no material commitments on the part of the author, that has the capacity to serve as an accomplice for a corporation's activities. (Whereas an author with Marxist sympathies might be embarrassed, there is a sense in which an author of Coetzee's declared affiliations doesn't face the charge of contradiction.) I propose, then, that there may be a settlement emergent in the new literary field—composed as it is of elite formalists, such as Orphan Pamuk, Salman Rushdie, Mohsin Hamid, all of whose rights are owned by Bertelsmann—a settlement according to which declarations of their literary autonomy work handily with conglomerate contracts.

In arguing this point, I acknowledge a debt to Sarah Brouillette's important thesis, which updates Bourdieu's conclusions in light of the recent history of conglomerization. Whereas Bourdieu argued that "aesthetic value *cannot be reduced* to its economic value even when economic viability confirms intellectual consecration" (164, "Intellectual Field," emphasis added) and thus advanced a thesis on the "intellectual field as an autonomous system" (166), Brouillette argues that "talk of saving literature from 'reduction' to commodity status is now scarcely possible" given that the postcolonial market in writing was itself *an effect of* "market expansion in the publishing industry" (3). I take Brouillette to mean that while conditions of artistic autonomy have held for the greater part of modern history, the late-twentieth-century expansion of commercial control has led to a reconfiguration of the relations within the intellectual field, thus sometimes allowing for the dispensation of the guise of autonomy (especially by the postcolonial writer, whom she considers "compromised," or complicit in market

operations).

Coetzee's formalism descends from historical debates on intellectual property, in which form was used as a tool for linking literature to identity, and thus formalism today inevitably resonates with notions of individualist singularity; however, in addition to the historical associations in which it is mired, the formalist text also performs the function of attaching prestige and "cultural capital" to large publishers, who in the internationally standardized legal regime of intellectual property (of which DMCA was a part), enjoy a number of new rights against unwanted access and copying. Formalism, therefore, must be assessed as an authorial position that responds to the current publishing and cultural landscape—which is the product of post-1960s mergers and acquisitions, on the one hand, and, on the other, a shift "from the nineteenth-century view that copyright was more regulatory than proprietary to the contemporary consensus… that copyright is more proprietary than regulatory" (Patterson and Lindberg 77). Since it operates in the context of a strong proprietary turn in both the legal and economic spheres, Coetzee's formalism behaves as a secret sharer, a complicit participant. [xxvii]

Conclusion

One of the promised "consequences" of this study was to be a recommendation for a more skeptical approach to Coetzee's aesthetics—one that would help us to finally disassociate modernist self-reflexivity from ethics. To this point, I want to draw on a suggestion recently made by Joe Cleary, who proposes to historicize our recent preference for the ironic and defamiliarizing text. As he notes, over the period of its existence postcolonial studies has favored modernist-associated terms such as "hybridity,

polyphony, pastiche, irony, and defamiliarization rather than realist-associated conceptual categories such as historical transition, class consciousness, and totality" (265). Cleary contextualizes this bias by showing that at the time of its disciplinary institutionalization, postcolonial critics' tastes were influenced by a Cold War split, according to which the Soviet Union laid claim to the legacy of realism, while the United States espoused modernism as it "safeguarded the autonomy of art from Soviet-style cultural engineering" (263). Cleary brings a broad optic to the debate, showing our critical attitudes to be determined by geopolitical circumstance. My own chapter—which in a sense supplements his framework by adding the details that pertain to a global publishing industry and digital property regime—shows that postcolonial modernism also works as a kind of prestigious affiliate for a conglomerate's economic interests.

As I have tried to show, *Diary of a Bad Year* is comprised of an allegorical binarism based on the notion that analog differs from the digital, a notion that has solidified into truism after the digital copyright debates. As well, I have argued that *Diary* supersedes the binarism between JC and Anya/Alan through formal play, which makes *Diary* a recent instantiation of Coetzee's career-long avowal of formalism. Placing his position in the context of eighteenth-century discourses and today's economic landscape, I have shown that formalism helps to concretize the relation between author and text, as it ever did, but also participates in a proprietary culture, recently characterized by corporate expansionism and legal control.

Methodologically, this chapter suggests that formalism, as a position, is efficacious; that is, formalism does things, accomplishes desirable ends, interacting in the moment of its avowal with the socio-cultural environment. By studying formalism as a

feature of the literary object and as a cultural position with aims and effects—even if, in some cases, they are not the aims and effects it intends—criticism would gain a view of literature as a capable agent within the economic and legal worlds. Or, using the vocabulary deployed through this dissertation project, we might say: criticism can gain an expanded and more detailed view of literature's instrumentality, if it were to attend to formalism's effects.

As this dissertation has suggested, global literature is a useful discourse. In a previous chapter on Ozeki, I argued that *Tale for the Time Being* reflects and critiques the logic of cybernetic control; and though its critique was an effective means of censuring the spread of cybernetic subjectivism, still it is nevertheless the case that Ozeki's novel works by disseminating cybernetic logic and training the reader in its techniques. Arguably, then, that novel's use is that it shows us the right ratio of moralism to power, balancing the practice of cybernetic control over the Other and moral righteousness. Similarly, *Diary of a Bad Year* popularizes the kind of formalism that, internally, seems to promote ethical reverence for the unknowable Other (in the familiar Levinasian mode), but externally operates as a partner to industry.

CHAPTER 3

Ishiguro and the Post-45 Turn to Rationality

Introduction

When in a 2000 interview Brian W. Shaffer asked, "Can you tell us anything about your

current fiction writing or film work?" Kazuo Ishiguro responded that he had three novels

currently in mind. One of these projects, whose approach he described in some detail,

departed from the novels of his early phase, *A Pale View of the Hills* (1982), *An Artist of

the Floating World* (1986), and *The Remains of the Day* (1989), and from the novels of

his middle phase, *The Unconsoled* (1995) and *When We Were Orphans* (2000). These

novels, especially the three earliest, have a "tone" and "narrators [that are] associated

with emotional repression," not just because of design of the characters, Ishiguro

clarified, but because of "the way [the characters] speak, the way I write, the techniques I

employ" (14). And this element of repression supports a "dominant" view of subjectivity,

Ishiguro admits, the "Freudian way of looking at the world—seeing human beings as

repressing sexual and other urges, as being emotionally repressed" (13).

> But I'm wondering if it's time to try to construct a voice, a way of writing, that
>
> somehow takes on board some of the post-Freudian tensions of life—that comes
>
> not from buckling up, not from being unable to express yourself, but from just
>
> being pulled left, right, and center by possible role models and urges, by a sense
>
> that you're missing out. That would involve a different kind of voice, would

employ a different way of writing, and would lead to a very different looking

novel. (14)

Ishiguro admits that his earlier novels employed a set of strategies aligning with

"Freudianism"—the view that a subject's essential truth has to do with her psychic

dilemma, that she may misrecognize features of reality based on her current

psychological state—but he also expresses a desire to move beyond this picture of

subjectivity. In other words, his statement confirms that he nurtures the ambition to offer

a corresponding story for a shift experienced in historical subjectivity. Five years later,

Ishiguro released *Never Let Me Go* (2005), a novel that indeed represented a departure

from the techniques associated with repression to techniques whose effect was wholly

new.

Pale View and *Artist* feature narrators giving accounts of a putative past, but when

their stories fracture to reveal contradictions, gaps or illogical mirrors (such as the series

of ropes that appear in *Pale View*), then it becomes clear that it is the *process* of

(mis)recollection which is the novel's main interest. The early novels don't so much deal

with the objective or even reported experience of a traumatic past, but rather stage an

"interior monologue" or daydream that has taken its place. Because a series of scenes

given by the unreliable narrator refuse to settle into a stable history, the narrated event is

actually the unreliability of the narrator, who is "perceived as *being the story* rather than

merely having one" (Walkowitz, "Ishiguro," 1067, italics added). In my take on

Ishiguro's early narrators, what is critical is that the interiority showcased by the novel

also points outwards, albeit indirectly or negatively, to an objective series of events that

is rendered irretrievable. Thus, the novels are distinguished for "the balance" (in the

sense of "ratio" or "proportion" not equilibrium) they achieve between interiority and exteriority, tipped though this scale is toward the subjective. Put another way, *Pale View* and *Artist* suggest an objectively occurring series of events negatively, while they spotlight and stage the subjectivity that misrenders them.

Something changes by Ishiguro's sixth novel, though it again relates a first-person account of a remembered past. In *Never Let Me Go*, Ishiguro forges a set of techniques that point neither to the internal state of the narrator, Kathy H., nor to an objective reality that she cannot access (due, say, to repression). The novel lacks representations of interiority for two main reasons. First, Kathy describes experiences without offering interpretive comment, without yoking events to the development of psychological drama; this is the facet on which I will be focusing the most. Second, plotted events don't hint at a logical or chronological contradiction, and there is therefore no insinuation of a psychological break (as was the case in Ishiguro's early works). That is, because of the ordinariness and orderliness of the events that are described, we reflect neither on Kathy's current psychological state (i.e., the conditions of narration), nor are we circuitously led to ponder the objective reality that may in fact elude her account. (While, intermittently, Kathy does gesture toward the possibility of another ordering to the events she relays--because Ruth or Tommy disagree with her timeline--this does not amount to a suggestion that the alternative ordering will be meaningful.) Drawing on a distinction made by Georg Lukács, I will argue that Kathy gives an account of her life in the "descriptive" mode, rather than the mode of "narration"; her decision entails the construction of a story in which events are *not* shown to contribute to the evolution of her own interiority (implying also that events possess little to no dramatic order of

themselves, and read episodically). This, in turn, has the concomitant consequence of minimizing the reader's curiosity about the truth of Kathy's account, since neither its relative veracity nor the objective truth will contribute to "meaning," in the Lukács-ian or Kantian senses of the term. When the novel refuses to paint the character's interiority in detail, it weakens our desire for objective truth.

I will also be suggesting a contextual, historical correlate that aligns with Ishiguro's new techniques—a correlate perhaps taking Freud's place—by drawing on historiographies by Orit Halpern, Lorraine Daston, Paul Erickson, Philip Mirowski, and others. Comparing the structure of Kathy's descriptive techniques to a post-1945 "turn to rationality," which was eventuated by the influence of cybernetics on the human sciences, I argue that Ishiguro's narrative forecloses an exploration of complex interiority in just the same way that Gregory Bateson, Leon Festinger, John von Neumann and Oskar Morgenstern gave up on designing scientific programs that factored in subjective complexity. The crux of the argument here is that there is a movement away, in both *Never* and the cybernetic-influenced human sciences, from the view of the subject who practices "reason" toward a view of the subject who practices "rationality." In their account of the post-45 shift from "reason" to "rationality," Paul Erickson, Judy L. Klein, Lorraine Daston, Rebecca Lemov, Thomas Sturm, and Michael D. Gordin (hereafter Erickson et al.) describe reason as "the highest intellectual faculty with the most general applications, from physics to politics to ethics" (3); the faculty implies a fine balance between interiority and sociality, as espoused by the theories of Enlightenment philosophers like Immanuel Kant and even Nicolas de Condorcet. Rationality, on the other hand, "referred more narrowly to the fitting of means to ends (sometimes called

instrumental reason) and was especially associated with economics and engineering" (Erickson et al, 3). Reason and rationality have co-existed throughout modernity, but the post-45 period is unique for facilitating the ascendance of rationality, which was seen as a more fool-proof means of decision-making at that time.

In this chapter, I scrutinize the theories of the "double bind" in Bateson, "cognitive dissonance" in Festinger, and human motivation in von Neumann and Morgenstern. I suggest that each of these mid-century thinkers proposes an impoverished conception of interiority—that is, they presume the practice of *rationality*, not *reason*— and the outcome is a more impoverished notion of sociality as well. To be clear, I will not be arguing merely that there is a parallel between the form of Ishiguro's new techniques and the form of Bateson's medical technique of family therapy. (I am not interested in showing merely that they are both 'rhizomatic' or 'networked,' though they are—more on that later). My emphasis is rather that both these cultural forms (cybernetic human sciences, and *Never*'s mode of narration) abandon the more typical balance between human interiority and exterior reality—the balance that is the achieved consequence of Kantian theories, the realist novel and methodologies of the pre-cybernetic human sciences. Thus, when both literary craft and cybernetic technique move away from determining the objective cause of a subjective or psychological problem, what results is a disregard for the traditional means by which meaning is produced.

At several moments in Ishiguro's *Never*, Kathy states that though each of the Hailsham clones knew they were fated to donate until their death, none of them knew what the system of donations "meant." That is, they each had, as far back as they could

remember, information about the donation system, but this information failed to translate into *meaning*:

> It's hard now to remember just how much we knew by then ["age of nine or ten"]. We certainly knew—though not in any deep sense—that we were different from our guardians, and also from the normal people outside; we perhaps even knew that a long way down the line there were donations waiting for us. But we didn't really know what that meant. (69)

The gap opened by this paragraph is between information and meaning. The entire narrative is, in a sense, her endeavor to understand what her curtailed life *means*, to generate significance for the experienced past. Does she succeed? Arguably, she does not, because, as I will be showing, her interiority doesn't intervene significantly enough to lend episodes the requisite dramatic weight or order. Without the provision of an interpretive gloss on events, episodes read like an accumulation of sensory data, unframed by the framework of human experience. Because it lacks this psychological dimension, her account seems to exemplify the extended exercise of cybernetic rationality, espousing a literary practice of "description," even though interpretation or "narration" are the literary means to realize what she's after: the subjective relation to reality capable of producing truth.

Changes in Technique

A few months prior to the narrative present of *A Pale View of the Hills* (1982), Keiko hangs herself in a rented Manchester apartment. This event overshadows the novel, and haunts our protagonist, Keiko's mother, Etsuko. The novel takes place in a rural English

country house in the 1980s, as Etsuko receives a visit from Niki, her daughter from a second marriage with a British man. Though Niki's implied intention is to check on Etsuko's mental health, their conversations reveal little about how either of them are coping with loss. Instead, the reader learns more about Etsuko's psychological health through her first-person narration, which intermittently turns to memories of a summer of the early 1950s. This is a summer spent in Nagasaki, during which she was still married to her first husband, Jiro Ogata, and about three months pregnant with Keiko; over the summer, Etsuko befriends a woman named Sachiko, who, along with her daughter Mariko, seems to be squatting at a shabby cottage within sight of Etsuko's modern apartment building. Etsuko notices a pattern of parental negligence in Sachiko noticing, for instance, that Mariko is allowed to skip school and left alone for hours. The novel, then, sets up a collage of scenes, present and past, and each type of scene, whether taken from the present of England or the past of Nagasaki, Japan, features mothers and daughters—sometimes many sets of them.

The mother-daughter couples are not the only recurring pattern. There's also the issue of the recurring scenes of rope. Take, for instance, the first few pages of the novel, in which we get a quick glimpse of one:

> Keiko, unlike Niki was pure Japanese, and more than one newspaper was quick to pick up on this fact. The English are fond of their idea that our race has an instinct for suicide, as if further explanations are unnecessary; for that was all they reported, that she was Japanese and that she had hung herself in her room. (10)

As is characteristic of her narration, Etsuko doesn't here divulge the method of suicide directly. She couches the detail in a discussion of her daughter's background, and in a

discussion of how the English stereotype and misperceive Japanese difference. But the means of Keiko's suicide become important for the novel's form, since this detail, reported in a misdirecting paragraph, affects the structure of what is remembered, and even what motivates memory.

Two chapters later, Etsuko takes Niki to a local teashop, from whose window they are able to see a girl in a park playing with a swing set. As we understand from the commentary that begins the episode, the scene of the little girl at the swings has stayed with Etsuko, infiltrating some of her dreams. "At first it had seemed a perfectly innocent dream, I had merely dreamt of something I had seen the previous day—the little girl we had watched playing in the park" (47), says Etsuko, before giving us the details of what she and her daughter saw:

> As we watched, [the little girl] climbed on to a swing and called out towards two women sitting together on a bench nearby. She was a cheerful little girl, dressed in a green mackintosh and small Wellington boots. (48)

Visually, the scene suggests that the child hangs on a swing in close proximity to two women, all of which resonates with the spare visual suggestions we have from the Sachiko and Mariko episodes. After she dreams of the little girl, Etsuko reflects on why the child at the swings was so important to her, and determines that the child must have reminded her of Mariko and Sachiko: "the dream had to do not so much with the little girl we had watched, but with my having remembered Sachiko two days previously" (55). Importantly, Etsuko herself admits that though a dream may seemingly refer to the lived experience to which it visually corresponds (i.e., dream of girl at swings seems to point to experience of seeing girl at swings), it can actually serve as a reinforcement of

something else altogether (Etsuko's relationships with Mariko). In a comparable way, Etsuko's recollections of Sachiko and Mariko fall into doubt: do these representations point towards the reality of Etsuko's experiences in Nagasaki, or do they actually point somewhere else altogether?

They point, of course, to Etsuko and Keiko—which, you'll recall, is where we started our discussions of ropes. That Etsuko's recursion to her long-past summer in Nagasaki is really a way of reliving a critical moment with Keiko becomes clear in a scene appearing at the end of the novel. Immediately preceding this scene is Sachiko's announcement that she will take her daughter to Kobe, and wait there until Frank, her American lover, sends for them. Several times earlier in the novel, Mariko refused her mother's plans to emigrate to America, and this time responds by running away from their cottage. Etsuko decides to fetch her, while her unaffected mother waits back at home.

> "…if you don't like it over there, we can always come back."
>
> This time [Mariko] looked up at me questioningly.
>
> "Yes I promise," I said. "If you don't like it over there, we'll come straight back. But we have to try it and see if we like it there. I'm sure we will."
>
> The little girl was watching me closely. "Why are you holding that?" she asked.
>
> "This? It just caught around my sandal, that's all."
>
> "Why are you holding it?"
>
> "I told you. It caught around my foot. What's wrong with you?" I gave a short laugh.
>
> "Why are you looking at me like that? I'm not going to hurt you." (173)

Though she intends to convey an encouraging message about the fact that Mariko will be able to return if she doesn't like America, Etsuko says "*we*'ll come straight back," suggesting that this might be a way of remembering what she said to Keiko prior to their departure for England. In this eerie scene, then, Etsuko slips up in an utterance that elides the difference between Sachiko-Mariko and Etsuko-Keiko pairs. This slip-up suggests that when Etsuko indulges in memories of Mariko or Sachiko during her period of grief, she might be using memory as a way of bringing something else to mind—her own past negligence and mistreatment of her daughter.

After the slip from "you" to "we" (i.e., not *you*, but *we* can come right back), Mariko remarks on the rope Etsuko seems to be holding, which appears in Estuko's grip out of, seemingly, nowhere. Mariko's comment is how we learn of the rope at all, and Mariko's fear of the rope is how the reader learns that, in Mariko's eyes, Etsuko poses a danger. Therefore, the rope, which materializes in the dialogue of a remembered event and not in descriptive passages, suggests that memory is not entirely in the control of the recollecting subject. While Etsuko may intend to escape the reality of her daughter's death through acts of recollection, her submission to memory will be imperfect, given that memory requires construction from the subject's present circumstances.

In the part of the novel devoted to Nagasaki in the early 1950's, a series of events and questions drive readerly interest forward. We long to hear about Etsuko's relationship to Jiro, and to identify reasons for their eventual divorce. We search for clues that would help us understand Etsuko's experience of pregnancy, so that we can plot her relationship with Keiko along a longer timeline. We are invested in discovering details of Sachiko's (seemingly wealthy) past, the reasons for her post-war impecuniousness, and

how she will forge ahead. We seek, in essence, to put together a past that would help us see the contributory forces that constitute a traumatic present. But, by the novel's end, none of the readerly expectations for historical background have been met, because the past has acted as a canvas or screen, on which figures from the present are drawn.

The reader is involved in a linear project; she wants to subordinate the present as a consequence of past behavior. But when she encounters Nagasaki scenes in which Etsuko fails to interpret described details and to which she fails to impute meaning, the scenes seem to function as visual mirrors to the present without resolving themselves as causes or antecedents. Thus, when Mariko fears Etsuko's rope, she becomes one of many little girls who have been pictured with rope. See how the above-quoted scene ends:

Without taking her eyes from me, she rose slowly to her feet.

"What's wrong with you?" I repeated.

The child began to run, her footsteps drumming along the wooden boards. She stopped at the end of the bridge and stood watching me suspiciously. I smiled at her and picked up the lantern. The child began once more to run.

A half-moon had appeared above the water and for several quiet moments I remained on the bridge, gazing at it. Once, through the dimness, I thought I could see Mariko running along the riverbank in the direction of the cottage. (173)

The scene, the most critical of the novel, ends with the narration of an inconclusive set of gestures: Mariko stops at the end of the bridge, looks back, and runs again; Etsuko thinks she sees a final glimpse of her running away. I reproduce the end in order to prove that where there is ample opportunity to reflect and interpret—make sense of exterior events-- the narrator neglects to do so. Where Etsuko might try to make sense of Mariko's fear,

through interior monologue or reflection, she instead substitutes a series of gestural events. Indeed, the scene ends with a stress on the conditions of perception, rather than with the events themselves. Just as the novel's name stresses that view of the hills is "pale" instead of the hills themselves, so we learn in the scene's culmination that "through" "dimness," Etsuko "thinks" she sees Mariko running.

The book prefers the establishment of mirrors (recurrent appearance of ropes and little girls) that do not dissolve into story; that is, the mirrors create recursive structures in the novel—making the novel a maze-like room, an Escher sketch of an impossible, spiraling staircase, in which events fail to organize themselves in chronology or causal order. And through their recursive repetition, the mirrors point to the narrating consciousness that sets them up as a particularly broken one. The story the mirrors create, therefore, is in the unreliability of the narrator, not in the past that feeds into the present. Yet, it would not be true to say that there is no gesture toward chronology or an objective sense of the past, either. There *is* a summer that comes back to Estuko in her middle age in England, and there *is* a sense that things of that time remain with her. Take, for instance, the description of the *kujibiki* stand. A particular type of carnival stand, the *kujibiki* enters the story when Etsuko, Sachiko and Mariko are on a day's outing to Inasa, an area near Nagasaki. In the evening, Mariko plays *kujibiki* three times—which means that out of a common bowl she draws three tickets, each of which allows her a claim to a specific object of the variety displayed at the stand. Etsuko explains of the *kujibiki*: "Since it was never my habit to indulge in *kujibiki* and since it has no equivalents here in England—except perhaps in fairgrounds—I might well have forgotten the existence of such a thing were it not for my memory of that particular evening" (120). The past exerts

a pressure, then, as do all of the traces of Japan that find no equivalent in England. Anticipating some of what comes later (i.e., in my comments on Kant), it might be fair to say that while the *form* of the distorted account is a product of Estuko's contemporary trauma, the *content* of the distortion is a product of her real interactions with the people, things, and events of the Nagasaki past.

Despite the subjectivism of the novel, then, one gets the sense that Etsuko's psychological drama still retains an important relationship to actualities of post-war Japan, because objective reality is the screen, or background, that her distortion points toward. Beneath the distortion that she presents of Mariko, there is a real Mariko, a little girl she at least briefly knew. (Indeed, it is because Mariko is ultimately a different girl than Keiko that thoughts of Mariko provide any relief at all.) Though the reader doesn't understand, say, specifics of Satchiko's or Mariko's personalities, nor the order of events that led to Sachiko's move to the cottage, still through these traces the reader grows curious to learn the linear reality and series of events that might make sense of some of them. There is, then, a sustained relationship between subjective distortion and objective occurrence in *A Pale View of the Hills,* though the latter is usually rendered inaccessible or elusive, and though an incoherent substitution usually takes its place.

We see the same tipped "balance" between subjective experience and objective event in *An Artist of the Floating World* too. (By balance, here, I mean "ratio" or "proportion," rather than an equilibrium or equivalence.) And in *Artist* too, there are moments when the distortion—usually in place due to first-person narrator's overwhelming guilt for betraying his pupil to the Japanese authorities—clears enough to show the outlines of what it conceals. At times, in this novel too, memory hints at a series

of events that it cannot get at, but to which it can nonetheless allude.

An Artist of the Floating World describes Masuji Ono, an aged artist trying to marry off his second daughter, Noriko. Because an earlier match fell through, due to reasons that remain obscure, Masuji wants to ensure that no ill impression of the Ono clan will reach the Saito family. It is customary for an established, elite family to hire a "detective" that can verify the reputation of the prospective in-laws, and for this reason, Masuji is aware that his friends might be quizzed about his character. When nudged (or seemingly nudged) by his elder daughter, Setsuko, to ensure the family's contacts speak favorably about him, Masuji begins his expeditions to previous colleagues and friends. A tour through his previous set of contacts sets off memories of his own involvement with the militarism in Japan during the 1930s.

We learn that Masuji started his career in painting at a commercial firm, under a Master Takeda, where he and a number of others were commissioned to make "a high number of paintings at very short notice" (66). Here, the task was to paint "geishas, cherry trees, swimming carps, temples," the sort of content whose point is to "look 'Japanese' to the foreigners to whom they were shipped out, and [in which] all finer points of style were quite likely to go unnoticed" (69). From producing stereotypical sketches for a foreign market, Masuji moves as a new recruit to the studio of "Mori-san" (or Seiji Moriyama) for an extended apprenticeship. Under Mori-san, Masuji learns a delicate, modern style emphasizing non-utilitarian and ephemeral content (such as fleeting erotic encounters, nightworlds, non-traditional urbanism, etc.). Devoted to "exploring the city's 'floating world'—the nighttime world of pleasure, entertainment and drink," this style and content seem to signal a decadence and autonomy that is the

product of a Western influence (144-145). Contrasting this is the style Masuji will eventually go on to espouse, the nationalist-militaristic style oriented toward the rhetorical rousing of the populace.

When Masuji in his late years narrates his past life, he focuses on experiences in the Takeda studio and on experiences from the Mori-san years; he remembers in both these masters the quality of authoritarian control, exercised over pupils' ideas, bodies, labor and art. Given the similarity between the two studios' work style, we discern that Masuji's discussion of these two workplaces is actually a displacement on how he ran his own studio. Masuji was the controlling master, perhaps demanding output from his students at an exploitative rate, and perhaps demanding from them a submission to his own ideals—in this case, fascistic imperialism. In the postwar years, Masuji regrets his participation in the war effort, given that, in light of the atomic bombings, the mood of the country abruptly shifts in sympathy with liberal democratic rule. He regards with particular regret how he treated a former pupil, Kuroda, who dissented from Masuji's teaching.

The scene of his confrontation is withheld, and it has to be deduced from what is presented. In place of that scene, we hear of how Mori-san reproached Masuji for experimenting in a new, message-driven style; notably, this conversation took place in a pavilion where he and Kuroda had a significant conversation years later:

> [Mori-san] did not speak for some time so that I again thought he had not heard me. But then he said: 'I was a little surprised by what I saw. You seem to be exploring curious avenues.'
>
> Of course, he may well not have used that precise phrase, 'exploring curious

avenues'. For it occurs to me that expression was one I myself tended to use frequently in later years and it may well be that I am remembering my own words to Kuroda on that later occasion in that same pavilion. But then again, I believe Mori-san did at times refer to 'exploring avenues'; in fact, this is probably another example of my inheriting a characteristic from my former teacher. In any case, I recall I did not respond other than to give a self-conscious laugh and reach for another lantern. (177-178)

Here, the narrating consciousness confesses that some of part of what it recollects should, in truth, be associated with another set of events altogether. Masuji raises, momentarily, the possibility that the phrase "exploring curious avenues" was uttered not by his teacher but by himself. But, quickly, Masuji explains the ambiguity as a sign that student learned from master, that "exploring curious avenues" was a phrase used both by Mori-san and Masuji.

It is critical, in this particular novel, that though we receive very little information about Masuji's words to Kuroda, we understand the nature of their disagreement. This understanding develops from the gestural quality of the narrative, the way that it can point to something it can't represent. *Artist* frequently suggests that the strictness of Masuji's own teaching practice paralleled the teaching practice in which he was immersed as an apprentice, and that his relationship with Kuroda paralleled Mori-san's relationship with him. Because this series of hints leads us to see Masuji's studio as the reverse image of Mori-san's studio, we see, in outline, the nature of the scene that cannot be narrated. This is how *Artist* is capable of pointing toward the objective reality from which it shirks, and which it willfully falsifies.

In an important article on Ishiguro's unreliable narrators, Rebecca Walkowtiz argues that his early fiction demonstrates the "treason" inherent in every act of representation. In this formulation, Walkowitz borrows from Maud Ellmann's reading of Henry James (a precursor to Ishiguro's style), in which the latter critic claims, "As soon as there is representation… there is treason" ('Intimate' 508-9, quoted in Walkowitz "Ishiguro"). "Treason" applies because gaps and misinterpretations that are constitutive of every speech act force the subject to necessarily betray the truth. Thus, any representation is a mis-representation—a treason against what actually happened. For Walkowitz, Ishiguro's is a stylistic repertoire that alleges affiliation with treasons of representation "as a value more consistent and more responsible than any single allegiance that either characters or readers can imagine" ("Ishiguro" 1053). Over the nationalistic or arbitrary loyalty that Ishiguro's characters would otherwise claim, Ishiguro's style supports the claims of treason, or the deviance from objectivity or sociality that is a consequence of having a free, willful mind. Where the former requires the submission of willpower to a prior and general authority, the latter permits the exercise of what we, in regular parlance, might just call "critical thinking," the willingness to admit that subjective viewpoint determines our being in the world (Walkowitz 1053).

Inasmuch as Ishiguro's style emphasizes the treason involved in representation, however, his style also always stirs our curiosity about the objective occurrence that it betrays—a point I have been making in my close readings so far. And, as I will show below, *Never* does not maintain an allegiance toward treason or mis-representation, because the sixth novel does not characterize its narrator's account as a biased view that

falsifies reality. It does not posit a counter-narrative that would oppose the story we get, nor does it posit the possibility of an objective, closer-to-truth account. In *Never*, representation works descriptively or episodically, because it narrates fact after fact without relating any of the facts to interior state of the first-person narrator, Kathy H. Thus, because the text does not point to Kathy's interiority, we have no reason to doubt her account of the events—and this in turn raises no questions about the truth of reported events. Whereas the early narrators' trauma or guilt (which colored the representation of the past) always fed our curiosity over the objective truth, in *Never* the lack of self-reflection in Kathy's account leads the reader to be incurious as to the reality beyond individual perspective, or the counter-narratives possible.

Ishiguro's novel *Never Let Me Go* presents a dystopian Britain in the 1990's in which a portion of the population suffers grave exploitation for the benefit of the rest. We follow three friends, Kathy H., Ruth and Tommy, over three sequential periods: a period of growth and education in Hailsham, a boarding school for clones; a period of transition and reprieve at "the Cottages"; and a period of organ donation at a variety of care centers. Because Kathy and her friends are clones, they are bred for the organs they can supply to the human population and then allowed to die.

The novel is comprised of Kathy H.'s account of her life, which she writes at age 31 in an effort to sort her memories before beginning the donation term that will end in her death. But while it is virtually a "death-bed" narrative, and though it spans the period from her youth to her adulthood, the story is missing the kind of interior complexity we've come to expect from Ishiguro. Instead of seeing how a single perspective can telescope all events and experience, how it can taint our sense of reality, we see instead a

series of event-oriented descriptions from Kathy. In what follows, I will suggest that a substantial portion of *Never*'s episodes fit the Lukács-ian category of "description"—not "narration"—which classification has consequences for the kind of meaning generated by the novel.

Lacking tragedy, guilt, repression or trauma, Kathy focuses on documenting the subtle disagreements, eruptions and conciliations that took place between herself and her group of friends in their youth. Usually her account delineates the ways in which Ruth, the leader of the group, maintains control; and it describes not how Kathy feels about being controlled, but rather how Ruth's control *appears* or *materializes* over her friends' bodies and behavior. A passage exemplifying this point is Kathy's earliest memory, the moment she met Ruth in the sand pit. Kathy explains, "She wasn't someone I was friends with from the start…." The memory goes like this:

> I'm playing in a sandpit. There are a number of others in the sand with me, it's too crowded and we're getting irritated with each other. We're in the open, under a warm sun, so it's probably the sandpit in the Infants' play area, just possibly it's the sand at the end of the long jump in the North Playing Field. Anyway it's hot and I'm feeling thirsty and I'm not pleased there are so many of us in the sandpit. Then Ruth is standing there, not in the sand with the rest of us, but a few feet away. She's very angry with two of the girls somewhere behind me, about something that must have happened before, and she's standing there glaring at them. My guess is that I knew Ruth only very slightly at that point. But she must already have made some impression on me, because I remember carrying on busily with whatever I was doing in the sand, absolutely dreading the idea of her

turning her gaze on me. I didn't say a word, but I was desperate for her to realise I

wasn't with the girls behind me, and had had no part in whatever it was that had

made her cross. (45-46)

In this memory, Ruth glares at two girls, with whom she is mad, and Kathy dreads that

Ruth's anger might turn against her. But rather than explain the source of her own

dread—how the "impression" that Ruth has left on Kathy *causes* fear and dread—Kathy

finishes the narration by sticking to exterior, phenomenal events: "I carried on busily with

whatever I was doing in the sand." Though it is true that when Kathy describes not

wanting to incur Ruth's anger, not wanting to have any part "in whatever it was that had

made her cross," we get a glimpse of Kathy's insides. But, as will become apparent, this

is only *description*, not *narration* of the structure of interiority that can be said to have

caused Kathy's behavior. To clarify this point, I'll have to turn to the Lukácian view of

the difference between description and narration.

In his essay "Narrate or Describe?", Georg Lukács defines the distinction between

the two modes. Mistakenly, it is sometimes thought that "description" applies to the

portions of the narrative that catalogue phenomenal detail (such as setting, objects,

costume or appearance), whereas "narration" applies to dialogue and event. But the

reality is "something more elusive" (Schmitt 102); the distinction has more to do with "a

writer's stance toward a fictional world," (Schmitt 102) or what I have been calling the

represented "relationship to reality." According to Cannon Schmitt's clarifying

summation:

Novelists *narrate* when they present a world in flux, riven by forces of change—

change, moreover, in which the novelist and her or his narrator have a vested

interest. Of necessity, then, narration is committed to action (including inner
action: epiphany or disillusionment, for example). It also links every detail in a
novel to the fate of that novel's characters. Narration admits of no filler.
Description, by contrast, is all filler. Novelists *describe* when they enumerate the
details of a world in which those details do not finally matter. (102-103)

Details do not "matter" when they cannot be related to characters' "inner drama."
Lukács's himself illustrates the difference by discussing how a horse race is described by
Zola's *Nana*, in contrast to a horse race in Tolstoy's *Anna Karenina*. In the former novel,
"every possible detail at a race is described precisely" but events are only "loosely related
to the plot and could easily be eliminated" (110). Tolstoy, on the other hand, uses the race
as an opportunity to develop the "inner drama" of his characters, Anna, Vronsky and
Karenin (112). Though the scene in Tolstoy is devoid of "action" in the classic sense, it
fits the category of narration, because it "link[s] the race with the destinies of the
protagonists" (112). In so doing, the race gets raised above the level of "accident" to the
level of the "inevitable," where

inevitability arise[s] out of the relationship of characters to objects and events, a
dynamic interaction in which the characters act and suffer… Linking Vronsky's
[the equestrian's] ambition to his participation in the race provides quite another
mode of artistic necessity than is possible with Zola's exhaustive description….
The race is, on the one hand, merely an occasion for the explosion of a conflict,
but on the other, through its relationship to Vronsky's social ambitions—an
important factor in the subsequent tragedy—it is far more than incident. (112)

Events acquire significance if characters are "directly involve[d]" in them (116); if this is the case, then we are dealing with "narration." If characters are "merely spectators" of the events, if events (even dialogue or movement) do not affect or evolve the "inner drama," then we are dealing with "description" (116). My point is that *Never*—because it does not narrate its actions as consequential to the life of its characters, because its action does not represent the interaction between a richly developed inner life and exterior reality—is an example of "literature based on observation and description" (Lukács 124). Because Kathy continually fails to relate event to interiority, there is little to no dramatic development in *Never* (in the Lukács-ian sense), no sense of the inevitability of action. In place of dramatic development, we get instead a distinct sense that we are plodding along, episode by episode.

All of the Ruth stories are episodic, and there are a number of them. Kathy starts with the sandpit, and moves on to: Ruth's pretend horses, her secret guard, her invented rules of chess, Ruth's ejection of Moira and Kathy from the secret guard, and finally her luscious purse. In each of these events, as in the sandpit example, we understand nothing of subjectivity of the controlled, Kathy, nor of the subjectivity the controlling, Ruth; contrast how much we understood, in *Artist*, about the subjectivity of the guilty, because each section pointed to Masuji's interiority. It is true that we indeed saw evidence of fear and dread in Kathy's physical actions, and heard reports by her present-day narration on those feelings, and that this points to Kathy's internal state; but all of this fails in the way of *explanation*. It is as if her actions (cowering, avoidance, acting "busy") registered the feeling, without narration or monologue ever broaching the issue of *why*. Techniques that

would imply internal processing or complexity are therefore missing, failing to lend dramatic weight or meaning to action.

Importantly, the sandpit episode is narrated in the present imperfect tense: I'm playing; we're getting; Ruth is standing; I'm feeling, and so on. The rest of the novel is in the past tense, which we see evidence of in the last few sentences of the above quoted passage: "I didn't say a word, but I was desperate for her to realise I wasn't with the girls behind me." So, we might ask: why the sudden shift to present imperfect for the sandpit memory? Again, Lukács can provide some insight: the epic poet, of whom a novelist such as Tolstoy is a descendent, narrates all events in the past tense, in their achieved finality and significance (128), but an observer such as Zola remains caught in the midst of events, and might indeed choose the present. Whereas the former understands how an event was consequential for the consciousness he follows, and strives to impart a sense of that significance to the reader, the latter falters by describing objects or events for no meaningful reason at all. "The use of the past tense in the epic is thus a basic technique prescribed by reality for achieving artistic order and organization" (128); and, again, "order" and "organization" are attributes of a narrative if it strives to make meaning for the human consciousness which it is narrative's job to develop. Thus, the use of the present tense or descriptive approaches—all these suggest the "mere leveling" of information, "the loss of …order and hierarchy among objects" because these are not related to an interior domain that can place them in the story of its development (131). The sandpit episode's technique of evocation—reversion to the present imperfect—is all the more evidence that *Never* does not connect event to interiority, and describes a

narrating consciousness lost in the midst of things. Kathy can't make meaning out of her past—not in the Lukács-ian sense, at least.

In *Never Let Me Go*, events and experiences don't have the hierarchical order that helps generate meaning, because they are neither interpreted by the narrating consciousness nor do they point (by their incoherence or inconsistency) to psychological complexity in the present. With respect to the plot, the Hailsham section is significant for relating how Ruth kept Tommy and Kathy apart by exercising control over both of them in their teenage years. But when Kathy reproduces the episodes relating to this fact, she accords them no psychological meaning and fails to provide an interpretive gloss. Of course, through reported dialogue or gestural events we understand that Kathy is uncomfortable witnessing Ruth's faked intimacy with Tommy. But, recalling Lukács, Kathy's discomfort seems relatively meaningless when it isn't presented in its psychological fullness.

Near the end of part 3 of the novel, Ruth confesses to Tommy and Kathy that she had indeed connived to separate them and that she is sorry for it. But this confession doesn't quite work like a confession should—it does not vindicate those who have been wronged (the couple), or relax or give catharsis to the reader—because the reader has not tracked the progress of repression and control as a psychological phenomenon in Kathy. Confession has an important role to play in psychologically-oriented literature, and here I am thinking of Dostoyevsky's Stavrogin, who in *Demons* gives a confession that raises questions of truth and interiority. *Never Let Me Go* might be singular, a flashpoint, for the strange role it plays in the tradition of confession-oriented literature—it produces a

confession to which the reader will likely give little weight or meaning, since she is regularly struggling against the grain of the text to hierarchize events.

David James has noted of the same aspects of *Never* that trouble me, though his take is resoundingly positive. Noticing Kathy's failure to provide interpretive glosses, he writes: "Connoisseur of surface impressions; spokeswoman for what she notices (in patients, in friendships, in herself through hindsight), instead of what she suspects; defender of actions based around what she accepts, rather than what she unearths—Kathy is the paragon of a descriptive reader" (499). He falls short of categorizing the novel as a descriptive one, but sees in Kathy's disposition and character an inclination for descriptive procedures (rather than interpretive ones). Moreover, James recommends her decisions to withhold critical assessment, nudging literary critics to reflect on how "descriptive" approaches can be adopted in the field of literary criticism: "With her at its perspectival helm, *Never Let Me Go* urges us [i.e., critics] to reflect on the habits of 'symptomatic reading'" (499). But, as I will show, there is reason doubt that the novel wholly endorses her approach to events; given that Ishiguro undercuts the value of Kathy's approach in several passages, it might be more true that we are being prompted to understand (and critique) Kathy's "descriptive" relationship to reality than to replicate it.

When James turns to the concluding paragraph of *Never Let Me Go*, he writes appreciatively of the way it "stage[s] consolation as a problematic" while "also solicit[ing] a reading experience that leaves us conscious of the vocabulary we use to engage solace" (492). To fully explicate his point, I will have to explain the ending of *Never*: the last paragraph of the book depicts a particularly sorry scene, in which Kathy

cries while permitting herself the brief "fantasy." Tommy died two weeks ago, and as she is parked by a Norfolk road and gazing over a field, she lets herself look into the horizon and imagine Tommy walking towards her. He waves and "maybe even call[s]" (282). Here is an excerpt with which James works:

> That was the only time, as I stood there, looking at that strange rubbish, feeling the wind coming across those empty fields, that I started to imagine just a little fantasy thing, because this was Norfolk after all, and it was only a couple of weeks since I'd lost him. I was thinking about the rubbish, the flapping plastic in the branches, the shore-line of odd stuff caught along the fencing, and I half-closed my eyes and imagined this was the spot where everything I'd ever lost since my childhood had washed up, and I was now standing here in front of it, and if I waited long enough, a tiny figure would appear on the horizon across the field, and gradually get larger until I'd see it was Tommy, and he'd wave, maybe even call. The fantasy never got beyond that—I didn't let it—and though the tears rolled down my face, I wasn't sobbing or out of control. I just waited a bit, then turned back to the car, to drive off to wherever it was I was supposed to be. (282)

James begins by commenting on the "looser syntax" and "sibilant-rich diction" that contrasts the despair in the content, our despair at Tommy's death, the despair accompanying the thought that Kathy will begin donating her own organs by the end of that year. In the style, there is "counter-life" (James 496). More importantly, however, the scene is deserves close scrutiny because, given that Kathy allows herself only a brief moment of consolation, her decision to assume a self-therapeutic posture is staged *self-consciously*. A self-conscious staging such as this invites us, also, to sympathetically

recognize "when it can be more important to care about mental refuge than to critique its supposed fallacy" (498). James seems to be saying: you could critique Kathy's blinkered assessment of reality here and throughout the novel, but might not it be kinder to allow her the self-conscious consolation, just as she allows it to herself?

If indeed the last passage of the book is directed toward providing consolation, then there is a tremendous irony that works against that intention. Because the disconcerting—disrupting—effect of the passage follows upon the realization that the fantasy is not a creative construction, not an original expression of sorrow. It is a reenactment of previous fantasies, ones made by a group of Hailsham students. Kathy alludes in the above passage: "this was Norfolk after all." Her reference is to the clones' invented belief that Norfolk is the "lost corner of England," where objects, ephemera, attachments and people would be returned to you, should you go looking for them. (One of the many instances of consolatory group think, the Norfolk myth demonstrates how the clones delude themselves so as to avoid the stark reality of their fate—that they are institutionally robbed of their friends, loves, possessions and attachments.) Kathy's moment of indulgence in fantasy, then, is really a recursion to a pattern set by others. So where David James sees an invitation to rest in consolation, because Kathy self-consciously creates a frame of consolation for herself, I see a reminder that the text is shaped by vexing crisis between creativity and control, individuality and authority, agency and obedience (the same dilemma that Walkowitz helped us identify in his early novels). This is all to say that when Kathy fails to exercise interpretive agency as she composes her memoir, or as she indulges in a pre-scripted fantasy at the end of her account, then by her failure she is rehearsing a problem that is at the heart of the novel.

Readers will recall that part of *Never Let Me Go* revolves around questioning the ontological status of the clones: Are clones more than their organs? That is, are they the equal of humans? And do they, by the mere fact of their existence, deserve dignity and rights? Are clones capable of creativity? Do clones have a soul? Can they achieve an interpretive, meaningful relationship to reality, as might be conveyed in an artwork? *Never*'s dystopian society invented human cloning in the aftermath of WWII, and would not at that time accept the clones' equality. As the Hailsham head, Miss Emily, explains at the end of the book, cloning combined with organ transplantation helped the human population overcome too many ailments and diseases, such that the "revers[al] of the process" became impossible (258). She asks: "How can you ask a world that has come to regard cancer as curable, how can you ask such a world to put away that cure, to go back to the dark days?" (258). Though it couldn't fight the tide of public opinion, Hailsham and other schools like it sought to prove to humans that clones were at least deserving of humane treatment, as proven by their ability to be creative, interpretive and talented. Thus the students' engagement with art, and the related plotting around "the Sales," the "Exchanges," the "Gallery," and "deferrals," were part of a larger social scheme to test the clones' creativity.

My point, though, is that the above list of questions about the clones' creativity is asked by Ishiguro himself—in the form of *Never*. Thus, when Kathy skips over processes of interpretation or deep reading, she adopts a descriptive approach in which consolation is preferred to seeing how she herself participates in her own subordination. Were she able to read interpretively, she would see herself involved in the oppressive events she merely describes. Were she able to carefully track how her own mind resisted, tested, and

finally submitted to Ruth's forms of control, all the while that she described Ruth's forms of control, then she would understand that oppression requires a dialectic. Were she able to delineate how the clones accepted, invited and resisted the training activities at Hailsham, alongside the description that she does give of those training activities, then she would understand that master and slave co-constitute each other. And she would be engaged in giving a story of personal evolution, a speculative *bildungsroman*, which by its end would enable her to produce a critique (in the Kantian sense), given that by its end she would have achieved an autonomy of perspective. But, in the novel we have, events pile on top of each other and no psychological growth can be accounted for; we leave the novel feeling that it should have recounted a story of oppression, but didn't.

 Far from merely giving us thematic explorations of creativity, then, *Never* doubles as a textual, formal exploration of that dilemma. And the concluding passage might be—in its recursion to pre-existing myth—the most uncanny, because it simultaneously invokes sympathy for the clones and demonstrates how they failed to establish a critique. Where James sees a positive feature of the novel culminating in new heights—a crescendo of self-conscious consolation—I see a disconcerting restaging of the crisis between agency and passivity.

 As should be clear from the foregoing analysis, *Never Let Me Go* signals a stylistic shift for Ishiguro. His earlier novels met the Kantian standard, proposed by Lukács, that there be a demonstrated relationship between event and internal drama, primarily because *Pale View* and *Artist* narrated events that pointed back to the narrating consciousness of which they were distortions. *Never*, however, meets no such standard: its first-person narrator fails to create meaning out of occurrence, and, as a result of this

failure, neglects to show that "a fact of the social process" (or objective reality) is a "fact of life of the individual" (Lukács 123). As I have argued, the descriptive attitude has consequences: it implies a weakening of critical agency, which is perhaps one of our only means of relating things as they are to things as they should be. In the next section, I identify a social phenomenon that runs parallel to Ishiguro's shift in style, and it shares some of the same consequences (i.e., abandonment of interior complexity as an object of representation, and the concomitant abandonment of objective reality); the phenomenon is the reformulation of modern reason into post-1945 "rationality."

From Reason to Rationality

My analysis of Ishgiruo's novels has relied on a Lukácian matrix, according to which meaning results when narrative can show how characters are "involved" in events, and events in characters. Lukács's theory aligns with Enlightenment ideas about the exercise of reason, inasmuch as it has a clear basis in Kantian philosophy—which dictates that conceptual forms existing in the subject's mind meet with experience to generate information that qualifies as knowledge. The Kantian substrate to Lukács implies something significant about Ishiguro's shift: with *Never* Ishiguro abandons the usual ways of generating novelistic meaning, but this decision amounts to more than an experiment in style. Ishiguro moves away from the establishment of the usual relationships thought to entangle subjectivity with exterior reality, and proposes something new in their stead. In what follows, I will show that Ishiguro's new techniques align neatly with post-1945 "rationality," which as an outcome of cybernetics redesigns the subject's relationship with the objective world. Beginning with an account of how

Kant resolved the modern conflict between interiority and experience—by describing the nature of resolution he gave—I then move on to a discussion of Warren McCulloch, Gregory Bateson, Leon Festinger and von Neuman and Morgenstern, detailing how cybernetic rationality seeks to replace the Kantian paradigm.

a. Kant's Reason

Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* (1781/1787) responded to the conflict between Newton and Leibniz, a conflict memorialized in the "Leibniz-Clarke correspondence," which was published in 1717 and in which Clarke acted as mouthpiece for Newton. The essence of the conflict was as follows: Leibniz, a proponent of theological, Christian doctrine, argued for the study of natural phenomenon by beginning with "abstract general notions [and then working] down to concrete nature," whereas Clarke-Newton stood for a method moving from quantitative measurement of phenomenon upward to the evidence-based derivation of first principles (Gardner 5). According to Leibniz, Newton's method was completely contemptible because it invalidated theological ideas of space and time; indeed, it could not be that both religious ideas and scientific method were true, because at several points Leibniz arrived at conclusions "about the structure of reality diametrically opposed to [those of Newton]" (Gardner 5-6). As Sebastian Gardner helpfully explains: "[T]he fact that natural science and metaphysics, both of which could claim to be rational descriptions of reality, should contradict one another, amounted to sheer paradox" (Gardner 6).

Kant's endeavor is to save "metaphysics," or religious and moral judgment, because to him it is self-evident that it alone is the source of "the moral welfare of

humanity" (Gardner 22). Unlike Hume, Kant is not willing to abandon non-empirical ideas; thus, for him, "the question is not whether, but *how* metaphysics is possible" (Gardner 22.) In an effort to re-establish the legitimacy of metaphysics (rather than debating its fact), Kant essentially presupposes that one non-empirical thing: that we have the ability to practice reason without sense experience, via the exercise of conceptual categories with which we are born and which exist, *a priori*. Discussing this decision in his method, Gardner comments:

> It may seem puzzling that Kant should give his enquiry this particular slant, apparently building into the very statement of his philosophical task the highly disputable, anti-empiricist assumption that there are a priori elements in cognition. …The provisional justification for Kant's assumption is that, unless there are such elements, then it is a foregone conclusion that metaphysical knowledge of things lying beyond experience is impossible. (23)

I describe this controversial, contestable decision in Kant's part to show that Kant's system has a hypothetical quality to it. His philosophy is not a product of a verifiable or evidence-to-first-principles method. Far from that, it begins with a minor, speculative admission to metaphysics. The gambit, seemingly, is not: "let's begin with everything we know to be experientially true and explicate from there." Rather, the gambit seems to be: "since morality and human welfare must be part of human reason, let's permit the existence of a priori concepts in human beings, and see how much of metaphysics that lets us save."

But though Kant begins with a concession to metaphysics and permits humanity the exercise of reason in isolation (i.e., without sensory information), he determines that

reason experienced without sensory (phenomenal) information is illegitimate. Subjective speculation that has no object (sense information) is an illegitimate exercise of the mind, leading to no knowledge. Famously, then, he does reject the possibility of legitimate knowledge of God, the soul, and the cosmos, because these are not objects in the world capable of producing sense information. This might sound as if Kant has not actually saved metaphysics, since he seems to renounce its availability as content. But, as Gardner explains, Kant's defense of metaphysics consists in the concession with which Kant began:

> in the *Critique* Kant will offer a defence, against Hume, of the metaphysics that is necessary to hold together the framework of experience, the principles presupposed by commonsense empirical judgment that we have 'no option save to employ', such as that every event has a cause; but he will not similarly vindicate the employment of reason in metaphysical speculation outside the bounds of experience, to determine the existence of God, for example, and to that extent, he stands in agreement with Hume. (24)

Metaphysics—in the form of the human subject capable of reason through the operation of a priori categories—allows us to hold together all of the sensory information of the world, and from experience derive conclusions that qualify as knowledge.

This gloss on Kant gives us a reminder of the attributes of modern reason. First, reason requires the operation of a human faculty—in this system, a faculty that is universal and social (because theoretically all humans have it) and resonant with moral implications. Second, reason, if it is to produce legitimate knowledge, needs to be exercised over sense experience. Therefore, reason is the consequence of a subject

meeting an object, and without the subject's participation within that encounter we have something else altogether: rationality.

b. Rationality

In *How Reason Almost Lost Its Mind*, Erickson et al explain that Enlightenment philosophers were unafraid of incorporating mathematical forms in their own philosophies. Kant and Condorcet mixed mathematics and reason when they speculated about "reasonable risk." These forms of thought, though mathematical or formulaic, were not opposed to the humanly practice of reason; what Enlightenment thinkers would have thought inimical to reason was the calculation of risk that "could have been mechanically implemented by following rules without judgment or interpretation" (35). This is to say that for Enlightenment *philosophes*, even calculation entailed humane, self-reflective activity, as is evident in Condorcet's reflections on numerical learning. On teaching a simple mathematical equation to grad-school students—"3+4=7"—he hoped that that they would learn:

> the distinct memory of having had the perception of the identity of the two ideas that form a proposition, that is to say the self-evidence of this proposition, is the only motive they have to believe it . . . and that the memory of merely having always repeated or written this proposition, without having felt its self-evidence, is not a motive to believe. (44, quoted in Erickson et al.)

Calculation was not a mechanizable operation, in the eighteenth century, but one that entailed reflective activity—which had the potential to liberate the subject from rigid rule-following, to teach self-reliance through an appropriate conception of evidence. "For

Condorcet," Erickson et al. write, "even the algorithms of arithmetic were anything but mindless…To put the point paradoxically, within the framework of Enlightenment reason, calculation was reasonable but not rational: even for elementary arithmetical reckoning, rote rule following would not suffice" (36).

One of the transitions that had to take place, prior to the post-1945 reappraisal of "rationality," then, was that calculation had to be rendered mechanical. Calculation had to be separated from the exercise of judgment, and instead become an operation performable independently of the human mind. This happened at the beginning of the twentieth century, around 1900, "in large part because machines could by then actually execute [calculations]" (38). The availability of the machine--usually mechanical counters or computers—strengthened the perception that human thought was *not* integral to the resolution of algorithms—and the more problematic but related perception, that algorithms were, in their nature, mechanic. Here is another case where material conditions alienated a human faculty (in this case, calculation) from the human being, making calculation hereafter synonymous with computers, and more mechanical seeming in its essence. This reality had consequences: where the link between algorithms and reason was previously strong, machines weakened it. Simultaneously, machines became identical with rule-following and formulae, and algorithms came to seem like one set of rules to be followed.

Rationality, of the post-1945 kind, entails rigid rule-following of the kind that would have appeared deeply unreasonable to Enlightenment thinkers (Erickson et al, 36). If it were discussed by Enlightenment thinkers, rationality would be cast aside as a lower form of thought, since it requires submission to authorities beyond oneself and enacts

behaviors prescribed by a manual or predetermined script. But, in a reversal the Enlightenment would not have anticipated, in 1945, rationality was elevated and "at the expense of […] reason" precisely because the former could be modeled and materialized in machines (Erickson et al. 2; see also Halpern 145-197), which were then thought to be more reliable than humans in stressful situations. Rationality, which we can define as the fitting of means to ends, as would be done in algorithmic or formulaic solutions, expanded its domain to include political, economic and scientific method, "sometimes not only in competition with but in downright opposition to reason, reasonableness, and common sense" (Erickson et al. 2).[xxviii]

During the period of time that cybernetics was debated and consolidated as a science (from 1940's to 1960's), rationality came to appear in a more and more appealing light, because it rejected reliance on human judgment. Cyberneticians and technologists were champions of rationality, because of their orientation toward material application and exploitation, and this came to be an increasingly popular attitude in the related disciplines (psychiatry, neuroscience, cognitive science, medicine, robotics, and even political science and economics). Moreover, it was increasingly felt that computers were more reliable that humans in a high-stress context of the cold war. "It was first and foremost a sense of unprecedented urgency that distinguished debates over rationality during the Cold War from those over similar issues waged before and after: in the minds of the participants, nothing less than the fate of humanity hinged on the answers to these questions" (3). This was a context in which "the traditional forms of practical reason… which emphasized prudence, experience, deliberation, and consultation, seemed inadequate" and came to appear "outmoded" (Erickson et al. 3).

Rationality is not involved in the production of meaning; it describes the application of a predetermined rubric to an issue. It is interested in the generation of an answer, with no consideration given as to whether the answer is right, or whether the means applied were sound, or moral. Questions of soundness and goodness are dispelled at the cost of means-to-end thinking; moreover, rationality is a performance capable of being enacted by a machine; thus it is more asocial than social. Contrast rationality to reason, the latter of which is abstractly social, since it is theoretically a faculty of every human as human.

"Rationality" was the conceptual apparatus in the cybernetic program, importantly a part of theories by Warren S. McCulloch (psychiatrist and cybernetician) and Walter Pitts (logician). In "A Logical Calculus of Ideas Immanent in Nervous Activity" (1943), the pair proposed an equivalence between propositional logic and the operation of neurons, arguing that because there is an "all-or-none" character to the firing of neurons, they can be "treated by means of propositional logic" (99). They went on: "Physiological relations existing among nervous activities correspond, of course, to relations among the propositions; and the utility of the representation depends upon the identity of these relations with those of the logic of propositions" (100-101). The fallacy here is that just because there appears to be a formal correspondence between physiological characteristics and logic--synapse firing here is reframed as a "response" to a proposition—such a correspondence does not warrant the former's treatment through the frame of the latter. As Orit Halpern helpfully points out, for the success of McCulloch and Pitts's argument, they had to represent "higher cognitive functioning ... logically" and prove such functioning to be an "outcome from the material physiological actions of

the brain" (155). McCulloch's and Pitts's project, then, had precisely the negative consequence for mind and reason that Enlightenment thinkers found despicable; the cyberneticians reduced the operations of mind to a set of rules, which could then be materialized in machines.

Gregory Bateson et al.'s "Towards a Theory of Schizophrenia" (1956, original publication) reproduced some of the same problems first appearing in McCulloch and Pitt's theories. Bateson, an anthropologist and cybernetician, was one of the first to import cybernetic practices developed for the applied sciences into the social sciences. Along with his co-authors, Don D. Jackson, Jay Haley, and John H. Weakland, he remodeled the psychological disease of schizophrenia on the foundation of what was called "communications analysis"—but which was actually just propositional logic. (In fact, Bateson et al. shared the same source as McCulloch and Pitts for their reformulation of reason—A.N. Whitehead and Bertrand Russell's *Principia Mathematica* [1910-1913].) They began by taking up "theory of logical types," which states that there is a fundamental discontinuity between a class and its members (since a class cannot be a member of itself). Upholding as existing fact the difference in level between class and member, they proposed:

> in the psychology of real communications this discontinuity is continually and inevitably breached, and that a priori we must expect a pathology to occur in the human organism when certain formal patterns of this breaching occur in the communication between mother and child. (202-203)

According to this influential article, schizophrenia results when the patient cannot assign the appropriate type ("communicational mode") to any message she receives, because she

has been habituated to receiving "two orders of message and one of these denies the other" (208). Her inability to assign "type" is a consequence of "certain formal patterns of breaching" experienced in childhood (202), usually involving a conflicting message comprised of two different types. A typical experience of traumatic breaching patterns would include the following:

> we hypothesize that the mother of a schizophrenic will be simultaneously expressing at least two orders of message…. These orders of message can be roughly characterized as (a) hostile or withdrawing behavior which is aroused when-ever the child approaches her, and (b) simulated loving or approaching behavior which is aroused when the child responds to her hostile and withdrawing behavior, as a way of denying that she is withdrawing….The mother uses the child's responses to affirm that her behavior is simulated, the child is placed in a position where he must not accurately interpret her communication if he is to maintain his relationship with her. In other words, he must not discriminate accurately between orders of message, in this case the difference between the expression of simulated feelings (one logical type) and real feelings (another logical type). As a result the child must systematically distort his perception of metacommunicative signals. (213-214)

In this passage, Bateson et al. provide an etiology explaining the preconditions for schizophrenia. If the patient cannot discern the "type" of a message today, it is because she has a traumatic experience with "type" differentiation in the past. And the traumatic experience is related to particularities of affection and disaffection in childhood; in order to sustain a relationship with the mother (there is no option not to), the child must not

perceive the simulated feelings as the type they are, and must moreover void the metacommunicative messages she receives. Because the mother continually rewards the patient's misperception of type (because she can't face her own feelings of aversion towards the child), the child grows habituated to type confusion.

For our purposes, the importance of this theory is that it reframes trauma through the lens of Whitehead and Russell's symbolic logic (an important text for cyberneticians) or "communications analysis." Though the descriptive advantages of using this new lens (over, say, the lens of Freudian theory) are not very clear, the political or ideological advantages of type theory are evident. As Halpern writes, Bateson et al. successfully reframe language as a "set of patterns and redundancies as existing in neural nets and communication theories" (163). In transforming language in such a way, Bateson was removing the subjective and interpretive elements of medical analysis, essentially recasting the relationship between messages and mind. Language does not entail issues of representation in Bateson's schema; rather, messages are transparent, easy to decipher, and never missed.

The reconstruction of language symptomizes the bigger change being introduced here—the reformulation of subjective complexity. Halpern continues: "Bateson, therefore, chose to focus on the structure of the interactions rather than their content in contemplating psychological trauma" (163). What happens in Bateson's reformulation of schizophrenia is a hollowing out of trauma; we might even say a simplification or reduction of psychological complexity. This is an effect of the mechanized picture of the mind that undergirds the theory, which explains also why the theory places a weaker stress on internal pathology or history, the individual's relationship to meaning, or their

interpretive reality. In Bateson's schema, disease is not believed to have evolutionary or interpretive quality, and there is therefore no interpretive solution to disease. (Recall, in passing, that Bateson would be applauded in Deleuze and Guattari precisely for substituting pattern and interaction for repression and trauma.)

In fact, though there *is* a minimal etiology given to explain how type confusion happened in childhood (cited above), the psychiatrist need not actually recover the past with the patient. Causality and historicity are methodologies that are repeatedly minimized in cybernetics; in their place, the article recommends a present-ist approach: "We must look not for some specific traumatic experience in the infantile etiology but rather for characteristic sequential patterns" (206). Given the structure of the disease, what is important is that the patient experiences reinforcement of double bind patterns in the contemporary moment (207-208). Therefore, Bateson et al. encourage the psychiatrist to look for sequences that impart the "mental habits which are exemplified in schizophrenic communication" (206), possibly to undercut them, or to substitute bad double binds with benevolent double binds (the latter taking place between the therapist and patient). These recommendations strike one as strikingly un-interpretive: they give up on possible resolutions of previously experienced conflicts, and look to establish new patterns in their place. In place of the human who was formed by scars of repression, they propose a habit-oriented creature capable of moving from one pattern of interaction to another.

As should be clear, I see a weaker form of psychological complexity in the theories of both McCulloch and Pitts and Bateson (et al.). But a brief example from Leon Festinger will show how attenuated notions of subjective depth also weaken standards of

truth, objectivity, and reality. Festinger, who was associated with Kurt Lewin, a cybernetician and participant of the Macy Conferences, is well known for his theory of "cognitive dissonance," and it's this concept that will be my main example on this point. Festinger held that the mind was an entity that would experience "psychological discomfort" if there were "inconsistencies" or "dissonances" between an individual's ideas and their behavior (2). To illustrate, he gives the disturbing example that "A person may think Negroes are just as good as whites but would not want any living in his neighborhood" (1)—an example, by the way, that should put to rest any presuppositions that cybernetics is a discourse without racial or biopolitical histories and implications.[xxix] Thus, in Festinger's hideous example, the individual would gravitate toward the reduction of "dissonance," seeking conditions of least disturbance (3), perhaps moving to neighborhoods where they would be least moved to reflect on such a behavioral inconsistency ("when dissonance is present, in addition to trying to reduce it, the person will actively avoid situations and information which would likely increase the dissonance" [3]); and one wonders, when working through this example of Festinger's, whether we are being given a scholarly-sounding explanation for white flight. Festinger goes on: the theory of cognitive dissonance is important for illuminating how the mind behaves when faced with contradiction; and moreover how reality exerts a pressure on the mind to bring the latter in alignment:

> Reality ["which may be physical or social or psychological"] which impinges on [an individual] will exert pressures in the direction of bringing the appropriate cognitive elements into correspondence with that reality. This does not mean that the existing cognitive elements will *always* correspond. Indeed, one of the

important consequences of the theory of dissonance is that it will help us understand some circumstances where the cognitive elements do not correspond with reality. (11)

The obligation to reckon with objective truth, here, is reduced to a pressure exerted on the mind; and if one of the pressures includes the idea that inequality is perpetuated when one acts on one's racist preferences (an idea you might get if you were looking at statistics of segregation, numerical information and sociological analysis), then the allowance permitted to human beings to shape their field of interaction, their environment, might be a way of counteracting that pressure. Festinger's is more than a theory of how humans select the reality they inhabit. Rather, an entirely new relationship between objective truth and subjective distortion is being offered, insofar there seems to be no moral weight, authority or injunction attached to objective reality as it really is (it is only a field of "pressure"); and the human is construed as a machine experiencing levels of dissonance or consonance, who in response moves so that the levels experienced are optimum. Festinger's work fits perfectly within the ideal type described by Erickson et al., and his work, moreover, stands for the possibility that behaviorism could dispel with the notion of an objective existence, dispelling in the same maneuver the ethical injunction to strive toward the actual, the existent, the real.

Finally, John von Neumann and Oskar Morgenstern's work serves as my last example of the transformation of reason into rationality. von Neumann, a mathematician and cybernetician, will be remembered, according to the historian of economics Philip Mirowski, as the "single most important figure in the development of economics in the twentieth century" (94). *Theory of Games and Economic Behavior* (1944), a co-authored

text by von Neumann and Morgenstern, was an exercise that sought to formalize rational economic behavior "independent of human psychology"—that is, through the hypothetical performance of human agents in the abstraction afforded by mathematical formulae (Mirowski 129). One symptom of the abstraction involved by von Neumann and Morgenstern's work is their rendering of utility:

> The conceptual and practical difficulties of the notion of utility, and particularly of the attempts to describe it as a number, are well known and their treatment is not among the primary objectives of this work… We wish to concentrate on one problem which is not that of the measurement of utilities and of preferences and we shall therefore attempt to simplify all other characteristics as far as reasonably possible. We shall therefore assume that the aim of all participants in the economic system, consumers as well as entrepreneurs, is money, or equivalently a single monetary commodity. (8)

In this passage, von Neumann and Morgenstern state their decision to reduce human motivation to the pursuit of money for the purposes of their theory. They do this because money-motivation is easy to describe in formulae. The consequences of this decision are manifold: it amounts to the elimination of considerations of desire, charity, generosity, obsession, or other forms of unreasonableness. My interest in this decision is that von Neumann and Morgenstern's *Theory* sustains cybernetic view of the human, one with an uncomplicated psychology; moreover, with this 1944 text, the cybernetic view enters the forefront of economic science.

In this section, I have worked with the research and conclusions of recent genealogies by Orit Halpern, Paul Erickson et al, Philip Mirowski. Following the lead of

these historians of science and economics, I have described the development of new standards in the cybernetic-influenced applied and human sciences, arguing that after 1945 technologists and social scientists move toward an impoverished, simplistic view of the human mind. As argued in the above section, this cybernetic development parallels the literary techniques of *Never Let Me Go*, which depicts a hollowed-out interiority.

Conclusion

The reductions and simplifications operationalized by cybernetics resonate with *Never*'s picture of the human. The string of memories recounted in *Never* does not add up to an exploration of interiority or objectivity: for instance, no dark motivation (guilt, disconsolation, trauma) seems to be leading Kathy through a reflective tour of the past, or inflecting the form of the memory.

We can, for a brief while, entertain the speculative notion that Kathy's recollections suggest internal negotiations that are not themselves pictured. That is, it may be that Kathy experiences resentment and anger when trapped in Ruth's web of control, but that these feelings do not taint the form of the account. A darker possibility is that clones' critical agency has not been developed during their lifetime, and it is this internal absence that causes surface-level engagements with phenomena. In either case— whether there is an internal drama not relayed by the account, or there is no internal drama at all—Kathy's internal negotiations are never really re-presented (and narration no longer does the normal work of linking interiority to external event), and this leads to a singular reading experience. We move from exterior event to exterior event, receiving information accorded an almost equivalent weight. Additionally, emphasis seems to rest

on the form of the narrated event, in which we see the communication channels and environmental inputs for Kathy; but without learning about the complexity of Kathy's internal negotiations, we witness character reactions to events without attributing to these reactions any modicum of meaning. Jane Elliott writes of *Never:*

> Kathy's escape from that reality is signaled by what is for many readers the most infuriating feature of the novel: the fact that Kathy is in effect *tone-deaf to self-interest*. She is unable either to notice it in the selfish manipulations of her friend Ruth or to muster enough of *it* to undertake seemingly obvious actions that might preserve her own life — for example, attempting to flee the country. (96, italics added)

Here, Elliott gets at an important aspect of *Never*. In Elliott's vocabulary, Kathy seems unable either to notice self-interest in others, or muster self-interest for herself. The ambiguity of how to manage the self is also an ambiguity in how to read others, but where Elliott focuses on the particular theme of "self-interest," the issue is rather that the ability to read deeply (either internally or externally) has been vacated. Put another way, we might say, self-interest cannot be enacted because self-reflection has been rendered impossible.

While David James sought in *Never* a model for descriptive reading, I've tried to show that the novel represents the dangers of rejecting interpretation. My interest in the novel has been that it gives us a literary correlate to cybernetic reformulation of interiority and exteriority, subjectivity and objectivity, reason and truth. *Never* seems to be offer a nudging reminder: if the humanities give up--as the social sciences and sciences have--the endeavor to represent psychological complexity through a real

engagement with objective occurrence—give up, that is, on the Kantian relation to the world—we'll have weaker narratives for it.

Epilogue: Kazuo's Father

Never Let Me Go serves as a cultural correlate to cybernetic advancements, but not because Ishiguro is a cybernetician. To my knowledge, Ishiguro does not have specific interests in McCulloch, Pitts, Bateson, Festinger, von Neumann or Morgenstern.[xxx] My analysis has been concerned to show a contingent connection between literary and social form—that they share a post-Kantian attitude to interiority--though the reason they both choose to forego Kantian ways of rendering meaning may be related to a historical fatigue in the humanities and social sciences.

I would be remiss, however, to not mention a biographical connection between Kazuo Ishiguro and technological history, a connection to be explored further in future research. It is a commonly known fact that Ishiguro moved to Surrey, England, because his father began work at the National Institute of Oceanography in 1956. Less frequently understood is that Shizuo Ishiguro has a claim to fame of his own right (Rooney, "Modelling the Oceans"). Originally situated in Nagasaki, Japan, Shizuo was experimenting with "electronic models" of oceanic bodies of water, and was recruited by George Deacon, the then-director of the National Insitute of Oceanography. Shizuo's talents were needed in England, as the North Sea had flooded in 1953 and taken 2500 lives (Rooney, "Modelling the Oceans"). In England, Shizuo built a North Sea model (see Fig. 4) that used electronic methods to predict storm and tide surges. The machine was in operation for "several years" (Rooney, "Modelling the Oceans"). Whether Shizuo was

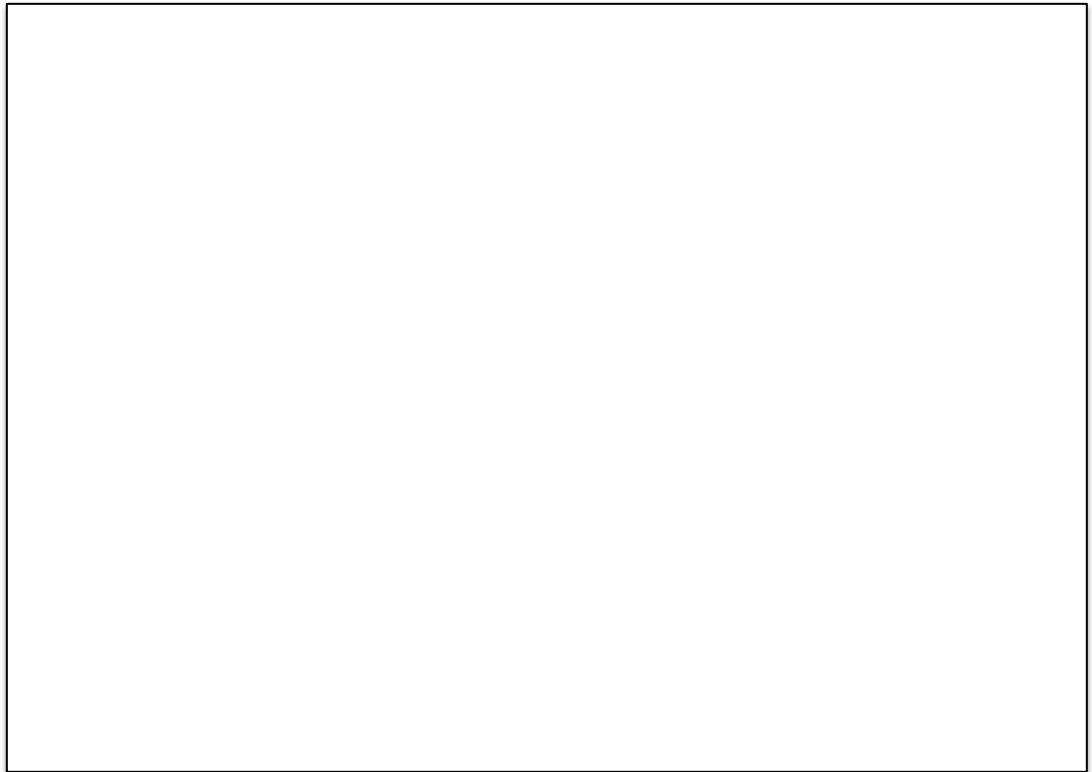influenced by cybernetics, and whether that influence could have worn off on his son, remains to be seen.

Fig 4. Shizuo Ishiguro's model of the North Sea. Rooney, "Modelling the Oceans." Photograph redacted prior to dissertation upload.

Coda: Method and Consequences

Global Narrative in Electronic Modernity has argued for the importance of an understudied variable in global literary studies—namely, technological development. Too often, literary critics such as Pascale Casanova, Franco Moretti or the Warwick Research Collective conflate different types of development under monikers like "world system" or "modernization." But these names cover over differences that matter, since modernization can refer to industrialization, urbanization, adaptation of infrastructure, diversification of economy or technological innovation, all of which are part of world-systems theory.

Studying one form of development in a genealogical fashion, I have tried to show how authors such as Ozeki, Coetzee and Ishiguro use literary techniques to reflect, elaborate and contest the logic of Northern developmental control over the rest of the world. But, in my framing remarks in the introductory chapter, I have shown how literary resistance can nevertheless participate in an instrumental logic, showing Northern readers the right ratio between moralism (sympathetic identification with the Other) and might (power exercised over the Other).

According to Trevor J. Pinch, Thomas Hughes and Wiebe E. Bijker, proponents of the social constructivist school of technology studies, the word "technology" may denote any or each of the following: a) a physical object, or artifact; b) the activities or processes linked to innovation; and c) the practical or operational knowledge linked to innovation (Bijker et al, 2012, xlii). In this dissertation, "technology" has been discussed

in an expanded sense; more than a code-word for the dumb materiality of a computer, a server, a connection or a car, "technology" has helped me refer to the conceptual framework initiated in World War II research, expanded during the pressure of nuclear threat during the Cold War, and elaborated in the post-1989 regime of global North control. Moreover, my method has been to research the "practical and operational knowledge" behind computation and, where possible, to link that knowledge to exercises of power through narrative representation.

Global Narrative in Electronic Modernity hopes to contribute to literary and cultural studies by demonstrating the importance of recent historiographies in science to the humanities. Through reference to Halpern, Galison, Daston, Mirowski and others, and by espousing a critical historicism, I have strived to add more nuance and detail to discussions of neoliberalism, financialization and post-1945 militarism. These latter forms of economic imperialism are not easy to understand in isolation, and should be conceptualized in relation to the technical rationality with which they were co-emergent. This dissertation has begun that endeavor, though it will have to be completed in future work.

Notes

[i] As Stuart Umpleby, a contemporary cybernetician writes: "Cybernetics treats not things but ways of behaving. It does not ask 'what is this thing?' but 'what does it do?' and 'what can it do?' Because numerous systems in the living, social and technological world may be understood in this way, cybernetics cuts across many traditional disciplinary boundaries. The concepts which cyberneticians develop thus form a metadisciplinary language through which we may better understand and modify our world." (1982/2000)

[ii] The ways in which cybernetics changes our lens on the Other is the focus of my analysis in Chapter 1.

[iii] In a expanded version of this introduction, I will show the extent to which Adorno and Horkheimer's reading of "reason" follows from Nietzsche's reading of modern morality; Nietzsche, being a shared resource for both the Frankfurt school and Michel Foucault, is the reason that the former's critique of reason so closely resembles Foucault's thesis on power/knowledge. And, of course, all of these philosophers follow the cues of Marx and Hegel in critiquing Kant's conception of public reason, insofar as Hegel and Marx were the first to argue that pretenses of public reason mask the expression of private interests (i.e., a capitalist might advocate property rights in a newspaper, giving the reasons that these encourage ingenuity, and holding in secret his private motives to make money).

iv In Carruth's important words: "What these arguments [by Heise, Julie Sze, Cheryl Fish and Susan McHugh] about interconnectedness as a theme tend to neglect is the form of Ozeki's fiction, which remixes discourses (slow food and pro-life in *All Over Creation*, political tracts and TV scripts in *My Year of Meats*) to compound the moral upshot of the novels. Rather than a singular moral purpose, these fictions distribute competing moral and political concerns across characters. As critics, then, we might approach Ozeki's work seeking not her politics (as has been the tendency) but the *politics of form*" (122, italics mine).

v As Levenson explains, the subjectivism of *Heart of Darkness* can be conceptualized as the completion of a gesture begun in the *The Nigger of the 'Narcissus.'* He writes: "[The stratagem of Marlow] confirms the triumph of 'sense of fact' over 'fact.' [Marlow] completes what was inchoate in *The Nigger of the Narcissus*, and embodies the psychologistic premise, namely that the meaning of a phenomenon is its presence to a mind" (*Genealogy* 20).

vi Peter Galison cites a correspondence between Norbert Wiener and Vannevar Bush, in which the former scientist writes: "I ... hope you can find some corner of activity in which I may be of use during the emergency." See Galison, "Ontology of the Enemy: Norbert Wiener and the Cybernetic Vision" 228.

vii RAF Museum, accessed April 27, 2018, https://www.rafmuseum.org.uk/research/online-exhibitions/history-of-the-battle-of-britain/british-defences.aspx

viii It is part of the sad and symptomatic history of labor that some of the first computers to be employed in institutions of governance, academia and industry were human—not

analog or electronic. In the greater part of the twentieth century, the labor of calculation was considered menial, and therefore able to be off-loaded onto humans of a lower skill competence—such as women, and/or women of color. On this labor history, see Hayles, *How We Became Posthuman*; Hayles, *My Mother Was a Computer*; Margot Lee Shetterley, *Hidden Figures: The True Story of Four Black Women and the Space Race.*

[ix] Wiener and George Stibitz commented on the import of behaviorist ideas in the experiments. As George Stibitz wrote: W[iener] points out that their equipment is probably one of the clos- est mechanical approaches ever made to physiological behavior. Parenthetically, the Wiener predictor is based on good behavioristic ideas, since it tries to predict the future actions of an organism not by studying the structure of the organism but by studying the past behavior of the organism.

[x] Halpern helpfully points out that a number of projects preceded the Aspen Interactive Movie Map, which were notable for their particular relationship to social control of racialized populations. I take up these points of hers in the Introduction to this dissertation.

[xi] In a self-reflexive comment, Ruth says to Oliver:

"I don't care about other worlds. I care about this one. I care whether [Nao is] dead or alive in this world. And I want to know how her diary and the rest of the stuff washed up here, on this island." She held out her arm and pointed to the sky soldier watch. "This watch is real. Listen. It's ticking. It's telling me the time. So how did it get here?"

He shrugged. "I don't know."

"I really thought I would know by now," she said, getting to her feet. "I thought if I finished the diary, the answers would be there or I could figure it out, but they weren't, and I can't. It's really frustrating." (400)

[xii] By "classic accounts," I am referring to Georg Lukács's "Realism in the Balance" and Raymond Williams's chapter on "Realism and the Contemporary Novel" from *The Long Revolution*. I refer also to commentary that is more sympathetic to the modernist position, such as Theodor Adorno's *Aesthetic Theory* or Fredric Jameson's *The Modernist Papers*.

[xiii] "Proprietary authorship" refers to the state of being a modern author, a person who has property rights in what she pens. After the eighteenth-century debates on how to codify and legislate intellectual property were settled, authorship began to entail proprietorship. (Note that "proprietary authorship" is nearly analogous to "literary proprietorship," the latter term stressing the state of having literary property.)

[xiv] I refer to position that favors artistic autonomy as "modernist" or "formalist" (thus, the position aiming to 'rival' history); the position that subordinates literature to historical or social objectives is called "historicist," and when relevant, "realist." I acknowledge that the opposition between modernism and realism is not always isomorphic with formalism vs. historicism, but Coetzee frequently presents cases in which they are.

[xv] On this point, my chapter is indebted to the excellent archival and argumentative work done by a generation of scholars before me. These scholars are Martha Woodmansee ("Genius and the Copyright" and *The Author, Art and the Market: Rereading the History of Aesthetics*), Mark Rose ("The Author as Proprietor: Donaldson v. Becket and the Genealogy of Modern Authorship"), Carla Hesse, ("Enlightenment Epistemology and the Laws of Authorship in Revolutionary France, 1777-1793") and Roger Chartier (*The*

Order of Books: Readers, Authors and Libraries in Europe between the Fourteenth and Eighteenth Centuries).

[xvi] Here I refer to the critical consensus that values strategies of reflexivity, irony, estrangement and negation for their ethical import. Hailing the pattern of negation or irony that appears repeatedly in the Coetzeen text, for instance, Derek Attridge has forwarded a thesis on the "singularity" of literature, which, when reckoned with, can inculcate an appreciation of singularity in "every living and dead being" ("Grace," 117). Modernist negations lead to "a new apprehension of the claims of otherness," according to Attridge, and such an apprehension catalyzes an ethical position in the reader (*Coetzee and Ethics* 30). Similarly, Rita Barnard sees Coetzee's work as hosting "counter-voices and adversaries with their own agendas, attachments, and ways of speaking." It is work in which "identification is short-circuited by fictional conventions" ("Country Ways," 393). Taking up the case of *Disgrace*, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak downplays the misogyny or racism latent in the novel's structuration, and emphasizes rather the novel's ability to provoke "counterfocalization"—which it does do, forcing us to look beyond David Lurie to Lucy, and other viewpoints, for insight. Because these critics attach ethical significance to acts of self-staging and self-examination, they find in Coetzee an ethical model of the novel, novels that can "make the subaltern speak" (Spivak 24).

[xvii] It is indeed the hierarchical system of taste that has contributed to the waning of interest in realist postcolonial literature. To reiterate a point made by Joe Cleary, realists such as "Naguib Mahfouz, Abdul Rahman Munif, Ghassan Kanafani, Ngugi wa Thoing'o and Nadine Gordimer have not been entirely ignored, but they have rarely been studied

with the same intensity or carried the same cachet as their modernist or postmodernist counterparts" (265).

[xviii] For more on the contemporary and historical debates surrounding digital copyright, see James Boyle, *The Public Domain: Enclosing the Commons of the Mind* (2008); Boyle, "A Politics of Intellectual Property: Environmentalism for the Net?" (1997); Boyle, *Shamans, Software, and Spleens: Law and the Construction of the Information Society* (1996); Lawrence Lessig, *Free Culture: How Big Media Uses Technology and the Law to Lock Down Culture and Control Creativity* (2004); Pamela Samuelson, "Intellectual Property and the Digital Economy: Why the Anti-Circumvention Regulations Need to be Revised" (1999); Jessica Litman, *Digital Copyright: Protecting Intellectual Property on the Internet* (2001); Hector Postigo, *The Digital Rights Movement* (2012); and Aaron Perzanowski and Jason Schultz, *The End of Ownership: Personal Property in the Digital Economy* (2016).

[xix] In the White Paper, the WGIP's first recommendation is the following:

> *the Working Group recommends that the Copyright Act be amended to expressly recognize that copies or phonorecords of works can be distributed to the public by transmission, and that such transmissions fall within the exclusive distribution right of the copyright owner."*

The recommendation suggests that we officially recognize "transmission," the personal circulation of information, as "distribution," to which content industries possess rights. For a detailed critique of the White Paper's revisionary interpretation of copyright, see Jessica Litman, *Digital Copyright* (2001).

[xx] On the extent of the debate and resistance generated by the White Paper, see Jessica Litman, *Digital Copyright* (2001), esp. chapter 9.

[xxi] The United States is not alone in putting digital consumers at an overwhelming disadvantage. In the essay, I have focused on the mid-to-late 1990s circumstances in the US, where the discourse of digital difference has a localizable point of origin, but we can also broaden our perspective to include the internationalization of consumer disadvantage. Around the time that WGIP held the Green Paper hearings, the UN Agency in charge of introducing international intellectual property standards—the World Intellectual Property Organization, or WIPO—was also in the process of consolidating a set of policy recommendations. Like the Green Paper's, WIPO's recommendations would also be critiqued for their biases favoring the interests of copyright holders.

[xxii] James Boyle has gone so far as to name the fear promulgated by content industries the "Internet threat" narrative. As he explains, "The Internet makes copying cheaper and does so on an unparalleled global scale. Therefore we must meet the greater danger of illicit copying with more expansive rights, harsher penalties, and expanded protections. True…, some of these expansions may indeed have the practical effect of reducing rights that citizens thought they had, such as fair use, low-level noncommercial sharing among personal friends, resale, and so on. But without an increase in private property rights, cheaper copying will eat the heart out of our creative and cultural industries. I call this story the Internet Threat" (*Enclosing*, 93).

[xxiii] The oft-cited passage is one in which David and Lucy discuss Lucy's options after her rape. In the exchange, David proposes that Lucy restart her life in Holland, or anywhere "safer than here," on David's dime. But Lucy rejects that possibility and opts to

continue living on her property, henceforth as a tenant to Petrus (her black South African neighbor). David comments that it is a humiliating decision, but in Lucy's framing, her choice is "is a good point to start from again. Perhaps that is what I must learn to accept. To start at ground level. With nothing. Not with nothing but. With nothing. No cards, no weapons, no property, no rights, no dignity" (205). As in the case of *Diary*, this passage demands that that we focalize the narrative scene though David's and Lucy's viewpoints to do justice to each position.

[xxiv] See Bagdikian's *The New Media Monopoly* (2004) and Bagdikian's *The Media Monopoly* (2000), sixth edition. See also John B. Thompson, *The Merchants of Culture* (2012), Laura J. Miller, *Reluctant Capitalists* (2006), Jason Epstein, *Book Business: Publishing Past, Present and Future* (2001), Douglas Gomery, "The Book Publishing Industry," in *Who Owns the Media?* (2000), and Leo Bogart, *Commercial Culture: The Media System and Public Interest* (1995).

[xxv] See the popular article by Valerie Peterson, "The Big Five Trade Book Publishers" (2017); the same ranking was reported by the more reputable *Publishers Weekly* in Milliot, "Ranking America's Largest Publishers." Both these sources seem to base their ranking on a report issued by NPD Group, an independent sales monitoring group (formerly Nielsen BookScan).

[xxvi] See Rebecca Walkowitz, "Comparison Literature" (2009).

[xxvii] What I describe here may partly relate to a phenomenon described by Laura J. Miller, who documents that certain agents in the literary field (independent booksellers) prefer to relinquish their cultural elitism in favor of a franker self-consciousness of themselves as business practitioners. She writes: "[A] decline [took place], during the post-World War

II era, in booksellers' former identification with a genteel culture and a social elite. This led… to a greater willingness by independents to shrug off conservative respectability and engage in politicized actions to defend the model of retailing they esteem..." Though one cannot assume that a decline in cultural elitism for booksellers translates into the same decline for authors, still it seems likely that shifts in the internal constitution of the "intellectual field," which include corporatization, would have comparable effects on authors.

[xxviii] Erickson et al. identify three important features of rationality: "Rationality was seen as compatible with both a certain kind of subjectivity (as in utility theory) and uncertainty (the probabilities of Bayesian decision theory), but not with inconsistency (e.g., violations of transitivity of preferences) and indeterminate solutions (e.g., n-person non–zero-sum games) or ad hoc adjustments to complexity and contingency. Also characteristic of Cold War rationality was a focus on individuals' choices and preferences—wherever these came from and whether or not they were reasonable. Further, judgment, in the traditional sense of an assessment of the particulars of a case in light of universal directives (as in a case before a law court), is often in tension with rationality, which seeks to reduce complexity, either by stripping away all but the essential elements of a problem (as in a mathematical model) or by shrinking the issue to dimensions small enough to be observed under controlled circumstances (as in a laboratory experiment" (9).

[xxix] It is the intention of my planned research on cybernetics and literature of the global south to show that cybernetics is, in fact, a discourse of racial control.

[xxx] Though, Ishiguro has made a remark that resonates profoundly with the subjectivism

of Festinger's *A Theory of Cognitive Dissonance*: "It's a kind of consolation that the world isn't quite the way you wanted it… [so that] you can somehow reorder it or try and come to terms with it by actually creating your own world and own version of it" (2008, 85).

Works Cited

Adorno, Theodor W. *Aesthetic Theory*, translated by Robert Hullot-Kentor, U of

>   Minnesota P, 1997.

Attridge, Derek. "Age of Bronze, State of Grace: Music and Dogs in Coetzee's

>   *Disgrace.*" *Novel*, vol. 34, no. 1, 2000, pp. 98-121.

Attridge, Derek. "Against Allegory: *Waiting for the Barbarians*, *Michael K*, and the

>   Question of Literary Reading." *J.M. Coetzee and the Idea of the Public Intellectual*,

>   edited by J. Poyner, U of Ohio P, 2006, 63-82.

———. *J.M. Coetzee and the Ethics of Reading*. Chicago UP, 2004.

Attwell, David. "J.M. Coetzee and the Idea of Africa." *Journal of Literary Studies*, vol.

>   25, no. 4, Dec. 2009, pp. 67-83.

Bagdikian, Ben. *The Media Monopoly*, sixth edition. Beacon Press, 2000.

———. *The New Media Monopoly*. Beacon Press, 2004.

Barnard, Rita. "Coetzee's Country Ways." *Interventions: International Journal of

>   Postcolonial Studies*, vol. 4, no. 3, 2002, pp. 384-394.

Bateson, Gregory. "Towards a theory of Schizophrenia," *Steps to an Ecology of Mind*.

>   Chandler Publishing Company, 1972, 201-227.

Bijker, Wiebe E., Thomas P. Hughes and Trevor J. Pinch. *The Social Construction of

>   Technological Systems: New Directions in the Sociology and History of

>   Technology*. MIT Press, 1987 [original] /2012 [anniversary].

Bogart, Leo. *Commercial Culture: The Media System and Public Interest*. Oxford UP,
1995.

Bourdieu, Pierre. "Intellectual Field and Creative Project." *Knowledge and Control: New
Directions for the Sociology of Education*, edited by Michal F. D. Young, Collier-
Macmillan Publishers, 1971.

Boyle, James. "A Politics of Intellectual Property: Environmentalism for the Net?"
Available open access at http://www.law.duke.edu/boylesite/intprop.htm.
Retrieved August 2017. Also published in *Duke Law Journal,* vol. 47, no. 1,
October 1997, pp. 87-116.

———. *The Public Domain: Enclosing the Commons of the Mind*. Yale UP, 2008.

———. *Shamans, Software, and Spleens: Law and the Construction of the Information
Society*. Harvard UP, 1996.

Brouillette, Sarah. *Postcolonial Writers in the Global Literary Marketplace*. Palgrave
Macmillan, 2007.

Buckley, John. *Air Power in the Age of Total War*. UCL Press, 1999.

Carruth, Allison. *Global Appetites: American Power and the Literature of Food*.
Cambridge UP, 2013.

Casanova, Pascale. *The World Republic of Letters*. Harvard UP, 2004.

Chartier, Roger. *The Order of Books: Readers, Authors, and Libraries in Europe between
the Fourteenth and Eighteenth Centuries*. Trans. Lydia G. Cochrane. Stanford UP,
1994.

Chow, Rey. *The Age of the World Target: Self-Referentiality in War, Theory, and
Comparative Work.* Duke UP, 2006.

Cleary, Joe. "Realism after Modernism and the Literary World-System." *Modern Language Quarterly*, vol. 73, no. 3, September 2012, pp. 255-268.

Coetzee, J.M. "Confession and Double Thoughts." *Doubling the Point: Essays and Interviews,* edited by David Attwell, Harvard UP, 1992, pp. 253-4.

———. *Diary of a Bad Year*. Penguin, 2007.

———. *Disgrace*. Penguin, 1999.

———. Interview with David Attwell. *Dagens Nyheter*. 7 Dec. 2003.

———. "Nobel Lecture: He and His Man." *Nobelprize.org*. Nobel Media AB 2014. https://www.nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/literature/laureates/2003/coetzee-lecture-e.html. Accessed 9 April 2018.

———. *Slow Man.* Penguin, 2005.

———. "The Novel Today." *Upstream*, vol. 6, no. 1, 1988, pp. 2 –5.

Comments Submitted for the Public Hearing on Intellectual Property Issues Involved in the National Information Infrastructure Initiative, Andrew Mellon Auditorium, Washington, DC . 1993 . US Patent and Trademark Office, US Department of Commerce. At http://www-personal.umich.edu/~jdlitman/NOV18NII.TXT. Accessed 15 August 2017.

Condorcet, M. J. A. N [Quoted in Erickson et al.] *Élémens d'arithmétique et de géométrie* [1804], *Enfance* 4 (1989): 40-58.

Conrad, Joseph. *The Nigger of the 'Narcissus.'* Penguin, 1987 [William Heinemann, 1898].

Derrida, Jacques. *The Politics of Friendship*. Trans. George Collins. Verso, 2006.

Digital Millennium Copyright Act ("DMCA"). Pub. L. No. 105-304, 112 Stat. 2860.

October 28, 1998.

Elliott, Jane. "Suffering Agency: Imagining Neoliberal Personhood in North America and Britain," *Social Text* 31.2 (Summer 2013): 83-101.

Ellmann, Maud. "'The Intimate Difference': Power and Representation in *The Ambassadors*." *Henry James, The Ambassadors*, edited by S. P. Rosenbaum, 2nd ed. W. W. Norton, 1994, pp. 501-514.

———. *The Nets of Modernism: Henry James, Virginia Woolf, James Joyce, and Sigmund Freud*. Cambridge UP, 2010.

Epstein, Jason. *Book Business: Publishing Past, Present and Future*. W. W. Norton & Company, 2001.

Erickson , Paul, Judy L. Klein, Lorraine Daston, Rebecca Lemov, Thomas Sturn, Michael D. Gordin. *How Reason Almost Lost Its Mind: The Strange Career of Cold War Rationality*. The U of Chicago P, 2013.

Festinger, Leon. *A Theory of Cognitive Dissonance*. Stanford UP, 1957.

Fichte, Johann Gottlieb. "Beweis der Unrechtmässigkeit des Büchernachdrucks. Ein Räsonnement und eine Parabel." *Sämtliche Werke*, vol. 3, pt. 3, edited by J. H. Fichte, Mayer and Müller, n.d., Leipzig.

Foucault, Michel. *The Order of Things: An Archeology of the Human Sciences*. Trans. Alan Sheridan. Tavistock, 1970.

------. "What is an Author?" in *The Foucault Reader*. Ed. Paul Rabinow. Trans. Josue V. Harari and originally published in *Textual Strategies: Perspectives in Post-Structuralist Criticism* (Ed. Harari, Ithica: Cornell UP, 1979). New York: Vintage Books, 2010, pp. 101-120.

Franklin, Seb. *Control: Digitality as Cultural Logic*. MIT P, 2015.

Freud, Sigmund. *On the History of the Psycho-Analytic Movement, Papers on Metapsychology and Other Works*. *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, Volume 14. Trans. James Trachey. Hogarth Press and the Institute of Psychoanalysis, 1953.

Galison, Peter. "The Ontology of the Enemy: Norbert Wiener and the Cybernetic Vision." *Critical Inquiry* 21.1 (Autumn 1994): 228-266.

Gardner, Sebastian. *Kant and the Critique of Pure Reason*. Routledge, 1999.

Geertsema, Johan. "Coetzee's *Diary of a Bad Year*, Politics, and the Problem of Position." *Twentieth-Century Literature*, vol. 57, no. 1, Spring 2011, pp. 70-85.

Gilbert, Martin. *The Second World War: A Complete History*. Weidenfeld, 1989.

Gomery, Douglas. "The Book Publishing Industry." *Who Owns the Media? Competition and Concentration in the Mass Media Industry*, third edition, edited by Douglas Gomery and Benjamin Compaine, Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 2000.

Habermas, Jürgen. "Science and Technology as Ideology" [1968] in *Jürgen Habermas on Society and Politics: A Reader*. Ed. Steven Seidman. Beacon Press, 1989. 237-265.

Halpern, Orit. *Beautiful Data: A History of Vision and Reason since 1945*. Duke UP, 2014.

------. "Algorithmic Hegemony & the Droning of Labor. Digital Labor: Sweatshops, Picket Lines, Barricades." [Lecture entitled "Strange Agency: A Brief History of Clouds and Crowds."] Lecturer. The New School. Published on Nov. 20, 2014. Accessed https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s5nQbsaO0H0, May 2, 2018.

------. "Resilient Hope" *Logistical Wolrds: Infrastructure, Software, Labour* No 2,

Kolkata. Ed. Brett Neilson and Ned Rossiter. Low Latencies, 2017.

------, Robert Mitchell and Bernard Dionysius Geoghegan. "The Smartness Mandate: Notes toward a Critique." *Grey Room* 68 (Summer 2017): 106-109.

Heise, Ursula K. "Ecocriticism and the Transnational Turn in American Studies," *American Literary History* 20, issue 1-2 (2008): 381-404.

Hesse, Carla. "Enlightenment Epistemology and the Laws of Authorship in

Revolutionary France, 1777-1793." *Representations*, vol. 30, 1990, pp. 109-37.

Holling, C.S. "Resilience and Stability of Ecological Systems" *Annual Review of Ecology and Systematics* 4 (1973): 1-23.

Horkheimer, Max and Theodor W. Adorno. *Dialectic of Enlightenment*. Trans. Edmund Jephcott. Stanford UP, 2002.

Huggan, Graham. *The Postcolonial Exotic: Marketing the Margins*. Routledge, 2001.

Ishiguro, Kazuo. A Pale View of the Hills. Faber and Faber, 1982.

------. An Artist of the Floating World. Faber and Faber, 1986.

------. Never Let Me Go. Faber and Faber, 2005.

------. "An Interview with Kazuo Ishiguro," conducted by Brian W. Shaffer.

Contemporary Literature 42.1 (Spring 2001) pp. 1-14.

------. "An Interview with Kazuo Ishiguro," conducted by Allan Vorda and Kim

Herzinger (1990), in *Conversations with Kazuo Ishiguro*, edited by Brian W.

Shaffer and Cynthia F. Wong, UP of Mississippi, 2008, pp. 66-88.

James, Henry. *The Ambassadors*. Oxford UP, 2008 [1903].

James, David. "Critical Solace." *New Literary History* 47.4 (Autumn 2016): pp. 481-504.

Jameson, Fredric. *The Modernist Papers*. Verso, 2016.

Kant, Immanuel. *Critique of Pure Reason*, translated and edited by Paul Guyer and Allen W. Wood. Cambridge UP, 1998 [orig. pub. 1781, first ed., 1787, sec. ed.].

Kellhammer, Oliver. "Neo-Eocene" *Making the Geologic Now: Responses to Material Conditions of Contemporary Life*. Ed. Elizabeth Ellsworth and Jamie Kruse. Punctum Books, 2013. 196-201.

Kline, Ronald R. *The Cybernetic Moment: Or, Why We Call Our Age the Information Age*. Johns Hopkins UP, 2015.

Krause, Christian Sigmund. "Über den Büchernachdruck." *Deutsches Museum*, May 1783, 400-430 and June 1783, 487-514.

Lear, Jonathan. "The Ethical Thought of J.M. Coetzee." *Raritan*, vol. 28, no. 1, 2008, pp. 68-97.

Lehman, Bruce A. "Intellectual Property and the National Information Infrastructure: The Report of the Working Group on Intellectual Property Rights." [The "White Paper" issued by the WGIP]. Information Infrastructure Task Force. September 1995.

Lessig, Lawrence. *Free Culture: How Big Media Uses Technology and the Law to Lock Down Culture and Control Creativity*. Penguin, 2004.

Levenson, Michael. *A Genealogy of Modernism: A Study of Literary Doctrine, 1908-1922*. Cambridge UP, 1984.

Litman, Jessica. *Digital Copyright: Protecting Intellectual Property on the Internet*. Prometheus Books, 2001.

Lukács, Georg. "Narrate or Describe?" *Writer & Critic: And Other Essays*, edited and translated by Arthur D. Kahn, Merlin Press, 1970, pp. 110-148.

------. "Realism in the Balance." *Aesthetics and Politics*, foreword by Fredric Jameson, NLB, 1977.

Marais, Mike. "'Little Enough, Less than Little: Nothing': Ethics, Engagement, and Change in the Fiction of J.M. Coetzee." *MFS Modern Fiction Studies*, vol. 46, no. 1, Spring 2000, pp. 159-182.

Mirowski, Philip. *Machine Dreams: Economics Becomes a Cyborg Science.* Cambridge UP, 2001.

McCulloch, Warren S., and Walter Pitts. "A Logical Calculus of Ideas Immanent in Nervous Activity." *Embodiments of Mind*, edited by Warren McCulloch, MIT Press, 1970 (Originally published in 1943), pp. 19–39.

Miller, Laura J. *Reluctant Capitalists: Bookselling and the Culture of Consumption*. U of Chicago P, 2006.

Milliot, Jim. "Ranking America's Largest Publishers." *Publishers Weekly*, https://www.publishersweekly.com/pw/by-topic/industry-news/publisher-news/article/72889-ranking-america-s-largest-publishers.html. Accessed 15 August 2017.

Moretti, Franco. "Conjectures on World Literature." New Left Review 1 (Jan./Feb. 2000): 54–68.

Murphet, Julian. "Diary of a Bad Year: *Parrhesia*, Opinion and Novelistic Form." *Strong Opinions: J.M. Coetzee and the Authority of Contemporary Fiction*, edited by Chris Danta, Sue Kossew and Julian Murphet, Continuum, 2011.

Murray, Simone. *The Adaptation Industry: The Cultural Economy of Contemporary Literary Adaptation*. Routledge, 2012.

Negroponte, Nicholas. *Architecture Machines: Toward a More Human Environment*.

    MIT Press, 1973.

Ozeki, Ruth. *A Tale for the Time Being*. Penguin, 2013.

------. *All Over Creation*. Penguin, 2003.

Parry, Benita. "Speech and Silence in the Fictions of J. M. Coetzee." *Writing South*

    Africa: Literature, Apartheid, and Democracy, 1970-1995, edited by Derek

    Attridge and Rosemary Jolly, Cambridge UP, 1998, pp. 149-65.

Patterson, L. Ray and Stanley W. Lindberg. *The Nature of Copyright: A Law of Users'*

    Rights. U of Georgia P, 1991.

Perera, Sonali. *No Country: Working-Class Writing in the Age of Globalization*.

    Columbia UP, 2014.

Perzanowski, Aaron and Jason Schultz. *The End of Ownership: Personal Property in the*

    Digital Economy. MIT P, 2016.

Peterson, Valerie. "The Big 5 Trade Book Publishers." *The Balance*,

    https://www.thebalance.com/the-big-five-trade-book-publishers-2800047.

    Accessed 15 August 2017.

Posnock, Ross. *The Trial of Curiosity: Henry James, William James, and the Challenge*

    of Modernity. Oxford UP, 1991.

Postigo, Hector. *The Digital Rights Movement: The Role of Technology in Subverting*

    Digital Copyright. MIT P, 2012.

RAF Online Exhibition, "British Defences." *Royal Air Force Museum.* Retrieved May

    2,   2018.   https://www.rafmuseum.org.uk/images/online_exhibitions/pc94-152-

    50LG.jpg

Robbins, Bruce. Feeling Global: Internationalism in Distress. NYU Press, 1999.

Rooney, David. "Modelling the Oceans." *sciencemuseum.org*, published 4 December 2016, beta.sciencemuseum.org.uk/stories/2016/11/4/modelling-the-oceans, Accessed on 27 May 2018.

Rose, Mark. "The Author as Proprietor: Donaldson v. Becket and the Genealogy of Modern Authorship." *Representations* vol. 23, Summer 1998, pp. 51-85.

Said, Edward. *Beginnings: Intention & Method*. Introduction by Michael Wood. Columbia UP, 1985.

Schmitt, Cannon. "Interpret or Describe?" *Representations* 135.1 (Summer 2016): pp. 102-118.

Slaughter, Joseph. *Human Rights, Inc.: The World Novel, Narrative Form, and International Law*. Fordham UP, 2007.

Spivak, Gayatri Chakravorty. "Ethics and Politics in Tagore, Coetzee, and Certain Scenes of Teaching." *Diacritics* vol. 32, no. 3/4, Autumn-Winter 2002, pp. 17-31.

------. *Death of a Discipline*. Columbia UP, 2003 [Lectures delivered 2000].

Tauber, Alfred. *Requiem for the Ego: Freud and the Origins of Postmodernism*. Stanford UP, 2013.

Tindall, William Y. "Apology for Marlow," *From Jane Austen to Joseph Conrad: Essays Collected in Memory of James T. Hillhouse*. Ed. Robert C. Rathburn and Martin Steinmann, Jr. U of Minnesota P, 1958.

Thompson, John B. *The Merchants of Culture: The Publishing Business in the Twenty-First Century*, 2nd ed., Plume, 2012.

von Neumann, John, and Oskar Morgenstern. *Theory of Games and Economic Behavior*.

Princeton UP, 1953.

Walkowitz, Rebecca. "Ishiguro's Floating Worlds." *ELH* 68.1 (2001): pp. 1049-1076.

------. "Comparison Literature." *New Literary History*, vol. 40, 2009, pp. 567-582.

Watt, Ian. "Marlow, Henry James, and 'Heart of Darkness.'" *Nineteenth-Century Fiction* 33.2 (Sep. 1978): pp. 159-174.

Weber, Marc/Computer History Museum. [Online Exhibition] "Going Places: A History of Surrogate Travel and Google Maps with Street View." *Computer History Museum* Retrieved May 2, 2018. http://www.computerhistory.org/atchm/going-places-a-history-of-google-maps-with-street-view/

Weber, Samuel. *The Legend of Freud: Expanded Edition.* Stanford UP, 2000.

Wiener, Norbert. *Cybernetics: or Control and Communication in the Animal and the Machine*. MIT Press, 1948.

------. *The Human Use of Human Beings*. Avon Books, 1988.

Williams, Raymond. *The Long Revolution*, Chatto & Windus, 1961.

Woodmansee, Martha. *The Author, Art, and the Market: Rereading the History of Aesthetics*. Columbia UP, 1994.

WReC [Warwick Research Collective]. *Combined and Uneven Development: Towards a New Theory of World-Literature*. Liverpool UP, 2015.