

Global Cosmopolitanism: From Modernism to Modern Diaspora

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## **Abstract**

The rise of global studies in recent years has forced scholars across disciplines to recognize and remedy a deep reliance on the nation-state as a framework through which to organize and analyze their objects of study. Yet the discourses generated by the rise of global studies have remained, for the most part, disengaged from one another. “Global Cosmopolitanism: From Modernism to Modern Diaspora” bridges three such discourses, weaving together the recent revival of cosmopolitanism throughout the humanities, the transnational and global turn in literary studies, and specifically modernist literary questions of cosmopolitanism in the new modernist studies. By drawing these discourses into conversation, my project argues that they represent not a break from the national to the global but rather different iterations of a larger discourse that extends throughout the 20th and 21st centuries—a discourse I call “global cosmopolitanism.”

While “global cosmopolitanism” has recently become synonymous with economic globalization, I argue that this connotation actually represents the conflation of two once-distinct transnational forces—that of global capitalism (globalization) and that of the individual cross-cultural encounter (cosmopolitanism). Further, I argue that the maintenance of a distinction between these forces explains the aesthetic and thematic affinities between a European modernism represented in Gertrude Stein and James Joyce and a contemporary global and postcolonial literature represented in Salman Rushdie and J.M. Coetzee. The first part of my project, “Modernism,” illustrates how modernists like Stein and Joyce anticipated the global cosmopolitan world we currently inhabit and invented forms to expose its contradictions and resist its realization. The second part,

“Modern Diaspora,” argues that, at the other end of the century, writers like Rushdie and Coetzee turned to these forms invented by Stein and Joyce to render their critique of the fully realized global cosmopolitan world. Thus, by reading literary works from both ends of the century, “Global Cosmopolitanism” shows how contemporary conversations about globalization, transnationalism, and cosmopolitanism flow out of a European modernism that continues to shape and inform our global perspective.

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## Introduction: T.S. Eliot and the Two Faces of Modernism

During the spring of 1917, T.S. Eliot began composing poetry in French in order to overcome writer's block. The strategy succeeded, and one of the fruits born of this strategy was "Mélange Adultère de Tout":

En Amérique, professeur;  
En Angleterre, journaliste;  
.  
En Yorkshire, conférencier;  
A Londres, un peu banquier,  
Vous me paierez bien la tête.  
C'est à Paris que je me coiffe  
Casque noir de jemenfoutiste.  
En Allemagne, philosophe  
Surexcité par Emporheben  
Au grand air de Bergsteigleben;  
J'erre toujours de-ci de-là  
A divers coups de tra là là  
De Damas jusqu' à Omaha;  
Je célébrai mon jour fête  
Dans une oasis d'Afrique  
Vêtu d'une peau de giraffe.  
  
On montrera mon cénotaphe  
Aux côtes brûlantes de Mozambique.<sup>1</sup>

What is perhaps most striking about this poem is its whimsical style—after all, “whimsical” is not a word commonly associated with Eliot's poetry. This whimsy contributes to the poem's seemingly-celebratory posture towards travel between cultures; the self-referential authorial consciousness remains stable and unified despite moving between disparate places across four continents. Indeed, such travel lends a sort of

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<sup>1</sup> English Translation: “In America, a teacher; in England a journalist...In Yorkshire, lecturer; in London a bit of a banker; you'll have trouble putting me down. In Paris I wear a don't-give-a-damn black cap. In Germany I am a philosopher, very excited by the love of mountaineering; I continually wander about, with many expressions of pleasure, from Damascus to Omaha. I celebrated my birthday in an African oasis, clad in giraffe skin. They will display my cenotaph on the burning shores of Mozambique.”



vitality and dynamism to the language and to the poem as a whole. As well as underscoring the author's own cosmopolitanism, "Mélange Adultère de Tout" also gives voice to the cosmopolitan character of culture: many of the French words can be understood by English speakers; bits of German appear ("Emporheben," "Bergsteigleben"); and Damascus ("De Damas") and Omaha "à Omaha" seem relatively interchangeable. In so doing, the poem troubles the distinctions between nations and nationalities and questions the fixity of locality and the strength of affiliation.

But this seeming affinity for travel and impermanence was short lived. In the summer of 1919, Eliot composed perhaps his most famous anti-Semitic poem: "Gerontion," a poem he once considered as a prologue to *The Waste Land*.<sup>2</sup> The poem reveals a dramatic change in Eliot's attitude towards cosmopolitanism:

My house is a decayed house,  
And the Jew squats on the window-sill, the owner,  
Spawned in some estaminet of Antwerp,  
Blistered in Brussels, patched and peeled in London. (7–10)

In just a little over two years, the same travel between cultures that Eliot trumpets playfully in himself in "Mélange Adultère de Tout" becomes associated with decay in the Jew in "Gerontion." The dehumanized Jew moves across Europe between different cultures, becoming diseased until he assumes ownership of a home in a foreign land. Cosmopolitanism, however, is not limited to the wandering Jewish landowner. It also appears in the tenants who pay him rent: Mr. Silvero, walking all night in his room; Hakagawa, "bowing among Titians"; Madame de Tornquist, shifting candles in darkness;

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<sup>2</sup> See Frank Kermode's explanatory note to "Gerontion" in Eliot's *The Waste Land and Other Poems*, 84.

Fraülein von Kulp, in the hallway with her hand on the door (23–9). This cosmopolitan gathering of cultures remains static; while housed in the same edifice, individual cultures remain cut off from each other—cosmopolitanism has been drained of its vitality and dynamism. This results in aimlessness (Mr. Silver walking in his room), incomprehension (Hakagawa bowing to works of art), superstition (Madame’s séance), and fear (von Kulp refusing to leave her door). Moreover, such individuation thwarts the communion that Gerontion longs for throughout the poem. The poem seems to suggest that the individuation and the failure of “communion” can be traced back to the Jew whose “house” they now inhabit.<sup>3</sup>

So what happened between the spring of 1917 and the summer of 1919 to so drastically alter Eliot’s perspective on cosmopolitanism and why does this new, negative perspective on cosmopolitanism become symbolized in Jewishness? While there are a number of reasons one can cite to explain Eliot’s transformation—health problems, money problems, marriage problems, the death of his father—in terms of cosmopolitanism and Jewishness specifically, one change stands above the rest: the Peace. Letters between the spring of 1917 and the end of 1918 show that Eliot hoped that the end of the war would bring about global cosmopolitanism; that is, an economically integrated world (global) that would fuel dynamic cross-cultural exchange (cosmopolitanism). In the same letter that he expresses satisfaction and relief in his new job as “un peu banquier” at Lloyds Bank, Eliot asserts that American involvement in the war is “the best chance now for a satisfying outcome” (11 Apr. 1917, 174–5). By American involvement, the poet means more than military intervention. In a subsequent

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<sup>3</sup> Eliot’s “Burbank with a Baedeker: Bleistein with a Cigar,” composed during that same summer of 1919, conveys very similar sentiments and anti-Semitism as that of “Gerontion.”

letter, Eliot reveals a deep investment in America and Wilson's ability to foster a global cosmopolitan world that would lead to "close friendship and understanding, to freer intercourse of ideas" between nations (9 Nov. 1918, 295). After witnessing the hero's welcome that greeted the President upon his arrival in London the following month, he boasts "how much Wilson's policy has done to inspire respect for America abroad. I think that *all* the nations, allied, hostile, and neutral, *trust* us as they trust no other—everyone with the exception of particular circles, political or commercial, whose interests are not in common with those of the world at large" (author's emphasis). Eliot then recounts how "men of several different nationalities speak very warmly of America" before ending with his hope for a "peace negotiations along Wilson's lines" (29 Dec. 1918, 311–2). When Eliot next addresses the issue in his published letters, however, it comes almost a year later and four months after the signing of the Treaty of Versailles and it shows a different Tom Eliot: "It is obviously a bad peace, in which the major European powers tried to get as much as they could, and appease or ingratiate as far as possible the various puppet nationalities which they have constituted and will try to dominate. That is exactly what we expected. And I believe that Wilson made a grave mistake in coming to Europe" (2 Oct. 1919, 404–5).<sup>4</sup>

By reading Eliot's *The Waste Land* alongside John Maynard Keynes's *The Economic Consequences of Peace*, Michael Levenson has shown how Eliot's dissatisfaction with the Treaty of Versailles contributed to the disillusionment Eliot expresses in his famous poem. More specifically, Levenson attributes much of this

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<sup>4</sup> While he wrote the letter a couple of months after he composed "Gerontion" (in the summer of 1919), Eliot's assertion that the peace was "exactly what we expected" suggests that his hopes had been dashed some time earlier. Moreover, details of the treaty had been leaked to the public throughout the negotiations, so Eliot would have had a good sense of the treaty's ultimate direction before he composed the poem.

disillusionment to the failure of European states to transcend national interests for the greater good of Europe, thus exposing the fragility of the European system. Using Keynes's description of the pre-war European system as a "double-bluff," Levenson explains, "The system of Europe had depended on the 'double bluff,' by which the great capitalists agreed to invest, not to consume, and workers were persuaded that they somehow had a stake in the wealth of others. After the war the bluff has been exposed; politics descends into the unsentimental truths of economics, the truth of the power in material interests" (6). The perception of a mutually-beneficial economic integration that facilitated a dynamic cultural exchange before the war had been exposed as camouflage for an integration based on a capitalist system driven by short-sighted material gains that encouraged exploitation and domination. The longed-for communion between European cultures promised by Wilson's policy had been thwarted by "particular circles, political or commercial, whose interests are not in common with those of the world at large" because the whimsical and dynamic cosmopolitanism of the "European family" obscured the lower traffic of commerce, represented by Eliot in the diseased and decayed Jew. In other words, what we see in Eliot between the composition of "Mélange Adultère de Tout" and "Gerontion" is the utopian promise of a global cosmopolitan world exposed as a dystopian reality. Moreover, in celebrating this whimsical and dynamic cosmopolitanism in "Mélange Adultère de Tout," Eliot—however unintentionally—contributed to a cultural ideal that only served to conceal material interests.

The first part of my dissertation, aptly entitled "Modernism," argues that modernism as a transnational, cosmopolitan, and global movement consists of "Gerontion" as well as "Mélange Adultère de Tout"; it fears global cosmopolitanism at

the same time that it aspires to it; it guards against the cooption of cultural exchange by economic forces at the same time that it dreams of an economically-integrated world that fuels dynamic cross-cultural exchange. Modernist literature, in other words, is both the playful whimsy of cultural integration as well as the steely resistance to its potential abuse. Part One begins by delineating this global cosmopolitanism as a uniquely 20th-century phenomenon. Chapter 1 uses the transition between Gertrude Stein's novella *Q.E.D.* and her short story "Melanctha" to illustrate how an ambivalence towards global cosmopolitanism developed out of, but departs from, a Victorian attitude towards cosmopolitanism. Chapter 2 illustrates this ambivalence more clearly. Asking the question "Is Bloom (and, therefore, modernism) Really Transnational?", this chapter uses the "Ithaca" episode of James Joyce's *Ulysses* to challenge transnational conceptions of modernism that fail to account for the "Gerontion" face of modernism.

The second part of my dissertation, entitled "Modern Diaspora," explores the continued resonance of modernism in contemporary postcolonial and transnational literature. Eliot's poetry has already played an important role in the development of what Jahan Ramazani calls "a transnational poetics." Quite provocatively, critics like Simon Gikandi, Charles Pollard, and Ramazani himself have exposed the influence of Eliot and other modernists on the postcolonial and global poetics of writers like Kamau Brathwaite, Derek Walcott, Christopher Okigbo, and others.<sup>5</sup> The provocation that such a gesture represents lies in the traditional view of Eliot and modernism as "the site of Eurocentric danger, a threat to the assumed authenticity of the cultural and literary traditions of

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<sup>5</sup> See Gikandi's *Maps of Englishness: Writing Identity in the Culture of Colonialism*, Ramazani's "Modernist Bricolage, Postcolonial Hybridity" and *A Transnational Poetics*, and Pollard's *New World Modernisms*.

postcolonial politics” (Gikandi 421). These critics develop a transnational poetics by locating affinities between modernist formal techniques and a poststructuralist-inflected postcolonial theory characterized by interstitial sites, third spaces, and the “negotiation of incommensurable differences” (Bhabha, *Location*, 218, qtd. in Ramazani, *Transnational*, 8). Such criticism locates in the creolized aesthetics of postcolonial and global poetry the indigenization of modernist translocal mapping of, say, the Ganges over the Thames. Thus, for instance, Ramazani links “modernist bricolage” with “postcolonial hybridity.” Such a pairing requires a conception of modernism open to poststructuralism, or a conception of modernism that privileges the whimsy of “Mélange Adultère de Tout” over the steely resistance of “Gerontion.”<sup>6</sup> I raise the specter of poststructuralism not necessarily to challenge this conception of modernism, but rather to emphasize how these affinities are particularly well-suited for a comparative *poetics* that foregrounds language and discourse.

This explains, in part, why Eliot suddenly disappears when we move from transnational poetics to cosmopolitan ethics despite a similar theoretical framework. Rebecca Walkowitz explains her decision to exclude Eliot and *The Waste Land* from her study *Cosmopolitan Style: Modernism Beyond the Nation* in the following:

T.S. Eliot’s *Waste Land* is a prime example ... of a modernist text that is certainly cosmopolitan in its posture of worldliness, in its collage of national traditions, and in its resistance to the moral niceties of modern culture, but it is not especially interested in representing patterns or fictions of affiliations, in rejecting

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<sup>6</sup> In *A Transnational Poetics*, Ramazani imagines “a literary history in which transnational creolization, hybridization, and interculturalization become almost as basic to our understanding of modernism as they are of postcolonialism” (32).

conceptions of the local, or in comparing the uses and histories of global thinking.

(7)

As evident in her emphasis on an ethic that exposes affiliation as fiction and rejects conceptions of the local, Walkowitz—like Gikandi, Pollard, and Ramazani—privileges the whimsical vitality of “*Mélange Adultère de Tout*” in her conception of a cosmopolitan modernism. Indeed, Walkowitz prizes this sort of whimsical vitality in her embrace of a modernist genealogy rooted in Wildean aestheticism, dandyism, and *flânerie*; a modernist style as “attitude, stance, posture, and consciousness” that challenges convention and, in so doing, undermines static notions of collectivity, the nation, and political solidarity (2). Like transnational poetics, cosmopolitan style locates affinities between this poststructuralist modernism and a postcolonial theory characterized by interstitial states, third spaces, and the “negotiation of incommensurable differences.”<sup>7</sup> This is a perfectly legitimate reading of modernism; indeed, Ronald Bush has shown how this particular genealogy of modernism played a role in some of Eliot’s most influential aesthetic theories.<sup>8</sup> However, I believe that this conception of modernism fails to fully account for the continued resonance of this distinctly European literary movement of the early 20th century in contemporary postcolonial and cosmopolitan literature.

It fails to account for this continued resonance because, like other works of modernism and cosmopolitanism, it attempts to illustrate this resonance through a “new cosmopolitan” theoretical framework.<sup>9</sup> New cosmopolitan theory represents an outgrowth of the poststructuralist-inflected postcolonial theory that arose in the mid-1990s as

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<sup>7</sup> Walkowitz acknowledges this poststructuralist inflection: “there is a strain of ‘postmodernism’ that links Woolf and other early-twentieth-century writers to contemporary postcolonial and cosmopolitan novelists” (12). Again, this is a perfectly legitimate conception of modernism, but it tells only one side of the story.

<sup>8</sup> See Ronald Bush’s “In Pursuit of Wilde Possum: Reflections on Eliot, Modernism, and the Nineties.”

<sup>9</sup> See, for instance, Jessica Berman’s *Modernist Fiction, Cosmopolitanism, and the Politics of Community*.

materialist critiques of postcolonial theory became increasingly hostile, even personal. Work by such critics like Timothy Brennan and Aijaz Ahmad painted postcolonial critics who failed to fully embrace Marxism as derisively “cosmopolitan.”<sup>10</sup> Even critics on the other side of the postmodern divide used the term disparagingly.<sup>11</sup> In Martha Nussbaum’s call for the return of a Kantian-based cosmopolitanism in “Patriotism and Cosmopolitanism,” postcolonial critics found an opportunity to defend themselves against such attacks. Nussbaum’s essay, along with responses from such academic luminaries as Judith Butler, Immanuel Wallerstein, and Charles Taylor, was originally published in the October/November 1994 issue of *Boston Review*, then published in book form in 1996 and republished in 2002 as a response to 9/11.<sup>12</sup> In the most influential response to Nussbaum’s essay, Kwame Anthony Appiah asserts that cosmopolitanism and patriotism need not be mutually exclusive, an assertion I will take up in Chapter 2. Using his father as an example, Appiah proposes a cosmopolitan patriotism that shares Kant’s ideal of a universal human community while recognizing and respecting locality and cultural particularism. Not to be outdone, Homi Bhabha composed his own response to Nussbaum’s essay in “Unsatisfied: Notes on Vernacular Cosmopolitanism.” In this essay, Bhabha criticizes Nussbaum for embracing a form of cosmopolitanism that fails to account for those who live between places. Instead, Bhabha proposes a “vernacular cosmopolitanism” of migrants and refugees, a proposal I consider in Chapter 3. Like poststructuralist-inflected theories of postcolonialism, these theories explore interstitial

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<sup>10</sup> See, for instance, Brennan’s “Cosmopolitans and Celebrities,” 1–20, and Ahmad’s “*Orientalism* and After” in *In Theory: Classes, Nations, Literatures*, 159–220. For a Marxist disavowal of Ahmad’s attack on Edward Said, see Benita Parry’s “A Critique Mishandled.”

<sup>11</sup> See, for instance, James Clifford’s review of Said’s *Orientalism* in *The Predicament of Culture*, 255–76.

<sup>12</sup> See the editor’s preface to the 2002 volume, viii, for an explanation on the decision to republish the collection in the aftermath of the attacks on the World Trade Center.



states, third spaces, and the “negotiation of incommensurable differences,” whether it be combining a universal ethic (cosmopolitanism) with national sentiment (patriotism) or focusing on groups of people who inhabit the in-between. The major distinction between postcolonial and new cosmopolitan theories, however, lies in the latter’s focus on “actually existing” conditions; that is, new cosmopolitanism foregrounds the lived experience of the conditions they theorize.

The new cosmopolitan theory that most appealed to literary critics, however, was James Clifford’s “discrepant cosmopolitanism.” Clifford’s theory, what he also terms “traveling cultures,” offered an alternative conception of culture as dynamic and mobile and of cultural identity as rooted in “specific, often violent, histories of economic, political, and cultural interaction” as well as “routed” in the displacement and transplantation that bring cultures into contact (“Traveling” 36). Because it offered a theory of culture that was at once particular (rooted) and universal (the experience of displacement, transplantation, of being “routed”), Clifford’s theory provided the foundation for comparative literary analysis based on the cosmopolitan character of culture. Clifford’s “discrepant cosmopolitanism” was particularly appealing to modernist critics because, as a movement of exiles and émigrés, modernism has long been recognized as a literary movement produced by the expression of displacement, transplantation, and of being “routed.” At the same time, postcolonial literature is by its very definition as postcolonial an expression of the experience of cultural dislocation and displacement, whether the traveling of the culture is coerced or not. Moreover, Clifford’s discrepant cosmopolitanism also accounted for the experience of migrants and refugees that move from the periphery to metropolitan centers.

While Gikandi, Pollard, and Ramazani do incorporate Clifford's "traveling cultures" into their arguments, it remains principally at the level of discourse and signification—it presents itself at an "actually existing" level only through inference as the critics seem largely unconcerned with its socio-political implications. Indeed, the very fact that Eliot features so prominently in Pollard and Ramazani's arguments testifies to this relative lack of concern. In establishing a continuity between modernism and contemporary global literature based on a shared cosmopolitan *ethics*, however, Walkowitz foregrounds lived experience and thus the socio-political implications of cosmopolitanism. The way in which the aesthetics of "attitude, stance, posture, and consciousness"—the whimsy of "Mélange Adultère de Tout"—generate "specific projects of democratic individualism, on the one hand, and of anti-fascism or anti-imperialism, on the other" is central to Walkowitz's own project (4). As such, her argument not only becomes vulnerable to materialist critiques of new cosmopolitanism, it helps legitimate them as well.

Just as new cosmopolitanism grew out of the poststructuralist school of postcolonial theory, materialist critiques of new cosmopolitanism grew out of the Marxist school of postcolonial theory. Indeed, the debate over new cosmopolitanism is a manifestation of a schism within postcolonial theory that dates back to the early 1990s. The main features of this schism as well as its persistence can be seen in a recent discussion of the state of postcolonial studies in the Winter 2012 issue of *New Literary History*. In it, Robert JC Young celebrates the institutional influence that postcolonial studies has achieved over the years before turning to the pressing issue still facing the field. For Young, the most pressing issue is how postcolonial nationalisms have used

sovereignty to persecute ethnic minorities and impose cultural uniformity. He then turns to supranational entities like Islam and *La Convivencia* as models of heterogeneity before proposing that we dispose of the discourse of “the Other.”<sup>13</sup> In the same issue, Dipesh Chakrabarty settles on global warming as the most pressing issue facing postcolonial studies today. Chakrabarty uses Bhabha’s ideas to develop a theory of “the human” that is capable of creating global warming but incapable of addressing it as a whole due to “anthropological differences” (14). Thus, he concludes that we should view the human as the register of two trajectories: as a geological force and as a political agent (14).<sup>14</sup>

Benita Parry’s rebuttal in the Summer 2012 issue captures the sense of exasperation many materialist critics feel towards the form of postcolonial thought reflected in Young and Chakrabarty’s essays for its failure to fully grasp what Marxist critics see as the socio-political implications of its arguments. Where Young rejects national sovereignty for imposing cultural uniformity, Parry sees sovereignty as an important vehicle needed to resist economic exploitation. Where Young dismisses “othering” as the perpetuation of absolute difference, Parry views dialectic as central to political mobilization. Where Chakrabarty perceives “humanity” as the source but not the solution to a global problem, Parry senses a dismissal of struggle-based politics. Where Young declares the 21st century one of postcolonial empowerment and celebrates postcolonial theory’s influence, Parry finds evidence of postcolonial theory’s complicity with those hegemonic modes of thought it purports to combat.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> See Young’s “Postcolonial Remains,” 19–42.

<sup>14</sup> See Chakrabarty’s “Postcolonial Studies and the Challenge of Climate Change,” 1–18.

<sup>15</sup> See Parry’s “What is Left in Postcolonial Studies?”, 341–58. For accounts of the schism between these two strains of postcolonial theory, see Crystal Bartolovich’s introduction to the collection *Marxism, Modernity, and Postcolonial Studies*, 1–20, and Neil Lazarus’s *The Postcolonial Unconscious*. 21–88.

Accusations of this supposed complicity become central to the materialist critique of new cosmopolitanism, in large part because new cosmopolitan theory foregrounds the socio-political implications of its celebration of “actually existing” cosmopolitanisms. Foremost among these critics is Tim Brennan. Brennan argues that cultural transnationalism—cosmopolitanism—serves to fuel economic transnationalism—globalization. That is, he proposes that celebrations of dynamic cross-cultural exchange camouflage an economic integration based on a capitalist system driven by short-sighted material gains that encourages exploitation and domination. Thus for Brennan, global cosmopolitanism represents a double-bluff; it is a cultural ideal that encourages communities throughout the world to enter into a mutually-beneficial global economy with promises of better standards of living, more representative governments, and more open societies only to reveal the unsentimental truths of economics, the truth of the power of material interests: increasingly wider economic inequalities, rampant corruption, and new social divisions. Indeed, in reading Brennan’s scholarship one becomes closer to empathizing with Eliot’s disillusionment after the Treaty of Versailles.

Thus, the second part of my dissertation argues that the continued resonance of modernism in contemporary global literature lies more in exposing the double-bluff than perpetuating it; more in the steely resistance of “Gerontion” than in the playful whimsy of “Mélange Adultère de Tout”; more in its attunement to the reality of global cosmopolitanism than in its promises. To this end, I turn to Salman Rushdie in Chapter 3—a writer long associated with the whimsical side of the postmodern divide—in order to show how, in his novel *The Moor’s Last Sigh*, Rushdie exposes how theories of hybridity and “mix up” serve the aims of global capitalism. In Chapter 4, I argue that,

after revealing the reality of a global cosmopolitan world in the first half of *Disgrace*, J.M. Coetzee proposes a means of resistance in the second half of the novel: a means of resistance I label “critical humanism.”

Ultimately, my dissertation is an attempt to show how the avant-garde aesthetics of European modernism are as much a product of resisting cosmopolitanism as they are of fostering it, to challenge the “presentism” that characterizes postcolonial and transnational studies, and finally to mend the breach between literary and cultural work of the first decades of the 20th century and that of the second half and the 21st century, and, in so doing, to uncover new and unexpected continuities.

## Chapter 1: “The Modern Jew”: Matthew Arnold and Gertrude Stein’s Aesthetic of Cosmopolitan Resistance

Kwame Anthony Appiah begins his essay “Cosmopolitan Patriots” by proclaiming, “My father was a Ghanaian patriot” (21). In response to Martha Nussbaum’s proposal for cosmopolitanism as a remedy for patriotism, Appiah asserts that his father’s patriotism coexisted with a profound cosmopolitanism. “Like Gertrude Stein,” Appiah writes, “he thought there was no point in roots if you couldn’t take them with you. ‘America is my country and Paris is my hometown,’ Stein said. My father would have understood her” (22). Appiah’s words not only demonstrate how Stein’s modernism continues to resonate, but also the *way in which* Stein’s modernism continues to resonate—through what Appiah terms a “rooted cosmopolitanism.”

In her seminal *Modernist Fiction, Cosmopolitanism, and the Politics of Community*, Jessica Berman applies Appiah’s theory of “rooted cosmopolitanism” to the modernism of Gertrude Stein. In the first book-length study on modernism and cosmopolitanism, Berman argues that Stein’s radical aesthetic “reconstructs the subject as nomadic and polyvocal” in order to undermine the opposition between community and cosmopolitanism (158). In this way, Berman argues, Stein’s work embodies what Homi Bhabha calls “the iterative experience of belonging,” thereby challenging the distinctions between modernism and postmodernism (175).<sup>16</sup> Berman’s contention echoes similar arguments by critics focusing on Stein’s negotiation with her Jewish identity. For

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<sup>16</sup> For a critique of Berman’s use of Appiah’s “rooted cosmopolitanism” to characterize modernism, see Bruce Robbins’s review of Appiah’s *Cosmopolitanism* in “New and Newer,” 51–2. Robbins argues that Berman too readily embraces the theory without acknowledging the inherent contradiction within it.

instance, Maria Damon and, more recently, Alex Goody, approach Stein's poetry as expressions of "Jewishness as a linguistic practice" (Goody 199).<sup>17</sup> Both critics read Stein's poetics as "Yiddish," symbolizing its situatedness as minoritarian literature as well as its playful hybridity. While acknowledging criticism—like Damon's and Goody's—that associate Stein's Jewish identity with her avant-garde poetics, Amy Feinstein asserts that Jewishness for Stein also represented a source of stability ("Can a Jew be Wild?" 151). Each of these critics represent Stein's aesthetics as situated in her Jewish identity while at the same time crediting the fluidity of this Jewishness for an aesthetic that undermines situatedness itself, "anticipating much-later deconstructionist theorists" (Weiss 117). In other words, Stein represents a classical modernist whose Jewishness allows her to transcend the postmodern divide—an aesthetic captured in the term "rooted cosmopolitanism."

This, however, was not always the case with Stein. The tension between her "rootedness" and her cosmopolitanism was not always so nicely reconciled, or even reconciled at all. This is particularly evident in her short story "Melanctha," long seen by critics as one of the foundational texts of modernism.<sup>18</sup> As I argue below, "Melanctha" represents a transitional work between the rootedness represented in *Q.E.D.* and the rooted cosmopolitanism critics outline above. Further, I will argue that Stein's modernist

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<sup>17</sup> See chapter 5 of Maria Damon's *The Dark End of the Street*, 202–35, and Alex Goody's *Modernist Articulations*, 201–6. While Jewishness has been a popular topic in recent years in regards to Stein, little attention has been paid to Jewishness in *Q.E.D.* and "Melanctha," aside from chapter 1 of Barbara Will's *Gertrude Stein, Modernism, and the Problem of Genius*, 21–47 and Jessica Rabin's *Surviving the Crossing*, 88–90. For similar work focusing on *The Making of Americans*, see Feinstein's unpublished dissertation *Avant-Garde Writers and the Jewish Question*, 56–101, and chapter two of Will's book, 48–76. For *The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas*, see Feinstein's "Gertrude Stein, Alice Toklas, and Albert Barnes: Looking Like a Jew in *The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas*." For "The Reveries of the Zionist," see Goody's book, 203–4, and Barbara Will's "Gertrude Stein and Zionism." For biographical accounts of Stein and Jewishness, see Linda Wagner-Martin's *"Favored Strangers": Gertrude Stein and Her Family* and Brenda Wineapple's *Sister Brother: Gertrude and Leo Stein*. Both Wagner-Martin and Wineapple use Stein's archives, as do Feinstein and Will.

<sup>18</sup> See, for instance, chapter 3 of Michael North's *The Dialectic of Modernism*, 59–76.

aesthetic was born not through her ability to reconcile her Jewish identity with her art, but rather through her *inability* to reconcile them.

I begin this chapter by reading Stein's early psychological studies alongside Matthew Arnold in order to show how Stein's early understanding of community develops out of, but departs from, a Victorian ambivalence towards cosmopolitanism. This ambivalence, resulting from the tension between a disinterested detachment and a "rooted" morality, finds expression in Stein's autobiographical novella *Q.E.D.* I therefore read *Q.E.D.* as an attempt to reconcile this ambivalence by a robust defense of the communal morality that Arnold represents in his notion of Hebraism. I conclude the chapter with a more expansive reading of "Melanctha" as Stein's response to a modernity whose cosmopolitanism threatened to incorporate the Jewish singularity that was at the root of Stein's identity. "Melanctha," I argue, displays an open hostility to a global cosmopolitanism, and the radical form that she adopts in the short story represents an aesthetic strategy of cosmopolitan resistance.

Gertrude Stein published two articles in *Psychological Review* as a Radcliffe undergraduate, working at the Harvard Psychological Laboratory under the direction of William James and Hugo Münsterberg. Years later, Stein describes "Normal Motor Automatism," published in 1896, as "testing reactions of the average college student in a state of normal activity and in the state of fatigue" (*LIA* 137). Stein then explains that she "was supposed to be interested in their reactions but soon I found that I was not but instead that I was enormously interested in the types of their characters" (137–8). This newfound interest in character types manifested in "Cultivated Motor Automatism,"



published in 1898. These two articles articulate intellectual preoccupations that find their expression in Stein's early fiction.

In "Normal Motor Automatism," Stein and her research partner Leon Solomons argue that symptoms of the double personality that results from the overdeveloped subconscious of the hysterical subject can be seen in the automatic behavior of "normal" subjects. Stein and Solomons use themselves as subjects, representing the control group. They begin by attempting to prove the existence of automatism in "normal" subjects. The experiment consists of placing the subject's hand on a planchette made from a glass plate mounted on metal balls with a metal arm holding a pencil. The subject distracts himself by reading a novel, diverting his attention away from the arm. From this experiment, Stein and Solomons conclude that

in normal subjects there is a general tendency to movement from purely sensory stimuli, independent of any conscious motor impulse or volition. This tendency is ordinarily inhibited by the will, but comes out as soon as the attention of the subject is removed. This tendency to stop automatic movements and bring them under the control of the will is very strong. ... But as we shall see later it is a habit that can be overcome, and a trained subject can watch his automatic movements without interfering with their complete non-voluntariness. (496)

According to Stein and Solomons, the "natural" state of the body is movement. If not for the will, we would exist in a state of constant kinesis. This claim suggests an antagonistic relationship between the body and the mind, where the mind's ability to conquer the body's natural inclinations is almost as strong as its desire to do so.

Stein and Solomons first label this desire “habit” and later the “habit of attention.” They also claim, however, that this habit—this impulse to control the body—can be overcome through training. This training involves, somewhat confusingly, controlling the attention: to release control of the body, one must control the attention, thereby detaching the mind from the body. The authors illustrate this process by extending the previous experiment. While the subject is in an automatic state scribbling away unconsciously while reading, the operator dictates a word or phrase. Upon hearing the word or phrase, the subject becomes conscious of the experiment and his habit of attention brings the automatic writing to a stop. With practice, the subject proves capable of reading his book undisturbed by the words spoken to him, all the while writing automatically. At this point, the automatic writing remains unconscious or semiconscious, where the subject is “conscious that he just had written a word, not that he was about to” (497). The subject goes a step further: when interest in the story reaches a level of full emersion, he achieves pure automatism. Where earlier this writing was unconscious or semiconscious, it now becomes *conscious* in addition to involuntary—what Stein and Solomons refer to as “consciousness without memory.” In other words, the subject remains conscious of his arm writing but he cannot control it. It is this “consciousness without memory”—this “inattentive attentiveness” as Barbara Will terms it, that corresponds to the double personality of the hysteric. But there remains a difference between the trained normal subject and the hysteric. For the normal subject, reaching the automatic state requires training to control the attention to overcome the habit of attention—the natural will to control the body. For the hysteric, his anaesthesias prevent him from attending to the

experiment in the first place, making automatism natural. Hysteria, Stein and Solomons conclude, “is a disease of the attention” (511).

It seems as though Stein began to suspect that their ability to reach this automatic state was a gift rather than a universal behavior after publishing “Normal Motor Automatism” in 1896 because “Cultivated Motor Automatism,” published in 1898, treats the tendency to automatism as a means of differentiating rather than undermining difference. Subtitled “A Study of Character in its Relation to Attention,” Stein groups forty-one Harvard men and fifty Radcliffe women into two categories based on their tendency to automatism. Those of Type I display the unconscious automatism illustrated in the first experiment of the previous study. For example, in Type I, Case III, she observes, “He learnt best when his attention was strongly attracted, he was then unconscious of his hand and wrote rapidly” (300). Those responses of Type II, however, reflect the results of the second in “Normal Motor Automatism.” Type II, Case I “was conscious of the movement, although she did not feel as if she could stop it. Her hand became cold and stiff” (301). While subjects categorized as Type I remain unconscious of their automatic writing, those of Type II register consciousness; they replicate the aforementioned “consciousness without memory.” The difference between the earlier experiment and the consciousness without memory displayed in Type II is that those of Type II received no training. As such, they achieve automatism through their anaesthesia—their inability to attend to the situation. Therefore, Type II was “much nearer the common one described in books on hysteria” (298).

Stein goes a step further, claiming, “In these descriptions it will be readily observed that habits of attention are reflexes of the complete character of the

individual”—a statement that she would relay word for word almost forty years later (299).<sup>19</sup> Stein therefore includes descriptions of character along with responses. She finds that Type I—“subjects who have had their attention distracted in order to have the experiment succeed” (305)—consists

mostly of girls who are found naturally in literature courses and men who are going in for law. The type is nervous, high-strung, very imaginative, has the capacity to be easily roused and intensely interested. Their attention is strongly and easily held by something that interests them, even to the extent quite commonly expressed of being oblivious to everything else. (297)

On the other side, Type II—those whose “powers of attention, or rather lack of power of attention, induced an extreme suggestibility and a great tendency to automatic movement” (305)—are “often blonde and pale, are distinctly phlegmatic. If emotional, decidedly of a weakish sentimental order. They may be either large, healthy, rather heavy and lacking in vigor, or they may be what we call anaemic and phlegmatic. Their power of concentrated attention is very small” (297). Towards the end of the study, Stein asserts “a distinct relation between these two types and the physical condition and blood supply,” proceeding to delineate the highly-stimulated, well-circulated blood of Type I from the numbed nervous system and sluggish blood circulation of Type II (305).

Whereas in “Normal Motor Automatism,” Stein universalizes, in “Cultivated Normal Automatism” Stein differentiates. Moreover, the wide extrapolation from a limited amount of data—the move from tendency to automatism to assignation of character—suggests that Stein differentiates based on the predetermined assumptions formed, I contend, by racial typology. In “Normal Motor Automatism,” the Jewish Stein

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<sup>19</sup> See *Lectures in America*, 137–8.

and Solomons universalize themselves under the category “normal.” But in “Cultivated Motor Automatism,” this normative category becomes specified as Type I: subjects who display a tendency to (unconscious) automatism. Stein proceeds to characterize this group with qualities that resemble those associated with Jews during the fin-de-siècle.<sup>20</sup> That Type I consists of subjects with the power of sustained attention associates this type with an intellectual singularity. As William James writes in *The Principles of Psychology*, “Geniuses are commonly believed to excel other men in their power of sustained attention” (423). Not only does Stein distinguish Type I with an intellectual singularity often linked with Jewishness, but she ascribes the group with “degenerative” characteristics also associated with Jews: nervousness, anxiety, and imagination.<sup>21</sup> But where contemporary scientists stigmatize these qualities, Stein privileges them, going so far as to view these “degenerative” qualities of nervousness, anxiety, and imagination as healthy.

The difference between “Normal Motor Automatism” and “Cultivated Motor Automatism” lies in a perception of Jewish difference. In the former, Jewish difference amounts to insignificance, as despite it Stein and Solomons universalize themselves. In the latter, Jewish difference accounts for the deviation from type that contemporary scientists associated with Jews: genius vs. “normal” intelligence, and nervousness, imagination, and anxiety vs. a “normal” constitution.

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<sup>20</sup> For a summary of the perception of Jews during the fin-de-siècle, see Johnathan Freedman’s *The Temple of Culture*, 123–8.

<sup>21</sup> On the link between Jews and genius, nervousness, imagination, and anxiety, see Sander Gilman’s *Smart Jews passim*. For instance, Gilman writes, “Excessive intellectual effort is also one of the most important reasons for the physical collapse of the Jews, specifically the ‘degeneracy of the nervous systems’” (46). Here, there is an association between Jewish intelligence and physical degeneration. Additionally, Amy Feinstein notes that in Stein’s notebooks for *The Making of Americans*, “Stein ranks herself alongside historical figures and artists of her generation, designating them—from Goethe and Frederick the Great to Picasso and Matisse—as headstrong people whose exhibition of genius earned their classification as a Jewish type” (*Avant-Garde* 52).

In the same year that she published “Normal Motor Automatism,” Stein wrote a paper entitled “The Modern Jew Who Has Given Up the Faith of His Fathers Can Reasonably and Consistently Believe in Isolation.” This lengthily-titled paper represents one of the rare times in which Stein discusses Jewish identity directly. In it, the 22 year old poses the question answered in the title; namely, whether or not a non-believing Jew can reasonably be against assimilation. She begins by noting that, despite the diversity of opinion on the subject, all Jews “hold non-intermarriage to be the sine qua non of Judaism; and justly, for inter-marriage would be the death blow of the race” (423). However, the demands of the Jewish faith have proved irreconcilable with modernity, meaning that those observances that once kept the race together are no longer sustainable. Such tendencies, Stein argues, have brought “the condition and the future of the race to a crucial point” (424). Through his “financial ability and his great clannishness” the Jew has become “a great power” (424). While some in Christendom have welcomed the Jews, many have not. Alluding to the anti-Semitism of the Weimar Republic, the pogroms in Russia, and the Dreyfus Affair, Stein claims that “we seem to be on the eve of a worse anti-semitic crisis than ever before” (424). She contends that Jews have responded in one of two ways: by denying their Jewishness or rallying behind it. Stein then redefines what “it” refers to. Rather than a mission, Judaism, according to Stein, should be perceived as a nation defined by a chosen race “strong in a hereditary clan feeling, standing by each other as brothers and thus by the strength of their union” (425). Despite this strong race feeling, she asserts that Jews can be loyal to their country and their race at the same time. That said, Stein still proposes isolation. While she admits that “[s]o long as the Jews keep themselves isolated so long are they bound to be subject to persecution,” the bond

between Jews “carries with it too much joy, too much of good for even the fear of persecution to be enough to dissolve it” (427). In other words, assimilation would end persecution but also the Jewish race. A feeling “so deeply ingrained in the soul that a departure from it makes one feel a dastard and a renegade” must sustain (427).

I will be referring to “The Modern Jew” throughout the chapter, but of interest to the immediate discussion at hand is Stein’s characterization of the Jewish people. Along with the “financial ability” and “great clannishness” of this “ethical and civilizing nation” possessed with a “strongly ethical and spiritual nature,” Stein views a “high average brain power” as a characteristic particular to the Jewish race (424–5). Not “intelligence” but “brain power”—a peculiar word choice that she repeats later in the paper: “They [Jews] have ever had within themselves the force and brain-power to make them leaders” (426). The use of “brain power” might be seen as a way to express a power of concentrated attention rather than as a euphemism for “intelligence.” Either way, Stein associates Jews with brain power, financial acumen, exclusivity, and a strong ethical/moral nature.

In effect, Stein’s undergraduate work proposes a neurological basis for a Hebraism that would shape her understanding of Jewishness throughout her early work. In other words, she scientifically legitimizes the qualities Matthew Arnold assigns to his Hebraism. In fact, Arnold represents Stein’s only non-Biblical allusion in “The Modern Jew”: “even a belief in a personal God is not essential to the Jewish faith, if you only believe in a Matthew Arnold sort of ‘force that makes for righteousness’ and it will suffice” (422). As Feinstein notes in her introduction to “The Modern Jew,” “Arnold

mentions this phrase many times throughout *Literature and Dogma*.<sup>22</sup> The “force that makes for righteousness” refers to an intermediate stage of metaphysical consciousness by the early Hebrews between the contemplation of “not ourselves” and the personification of this force as God. This force is particular to the Hebrews, as Arnold writes, “The word ‘righteousness’ is the master-word of the Old Testament” (44).

Part of *Literature and Dogma*, particularly the early sections, serve as a further inquiry into the idea of Hebraism that Arnold first addressed in *Culture and Anarchy*. The inquiry involves a more thorough explication of the development of righteousness. Arnold delineates righteousness from ethics and morality by defining it as “morality touched by emotion” (46). After clarifying the definition, he asks a more general question: “[H]ow does one get to feel much about any matter whatever?” The following provides his answer: “By dwelling upon it, by staying our thoughts upon it, by having it perpetually in our mind ... by *attending* to his life, man found it had a scope beyond the wants of the present moment. Suppose it was so; then the first man who ... controlled the native instantaneous, mechanical impulses of the reproductive instinct, had morality revealed to him” (48-9). According to Arnold, righteousness requires an emotional investment in morality. We invest emotion by investing attention. Therefore, to touch morality with emotion necessitates sustained attention directed towards morality.

Ultimately, the capacity to stay one’s thoughts is about rational control—the mind’s ability to arrest time and space as a precondition of sentience. Control here meaning sexual restraint, since concentrated attention—to attend to life—prevents the mind from being overcome by “the native instantaneous, mechanical impulses of the

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<sup>22</sup> As an example, Feinstein refers to the following line: “Let us put into their ‘Eternal’ and ‘God’ no more science than [the Hebrew writers] did—the *enduring power, not ourselves, which makes for righteousness*” (200).



reproductive instinct” and enables the revelation of morality. Arnold continues, “But there is a long way from this to that habitual dwelling on the rules thus reached, that constant turning them over in the mind, that near and lively experimental sense of their beneficence, which communicates emotion to our thought of them, and thus incalculably heightens their power” (49). The concentrated attention that first revealed morality to man becomes institutionalized (“rules”) and habitualized. To concentrate on the rules to the point of habit is to experience the immediacy of the rules. The rules’ inherent goodness revealed through this experience evokes emotion, which in turn imbues the rules with power. Arnold concludes this section with the following:

And the more mankind attended to the claims of that part of our nature which does *not* belong to conduct, properly so called, or to morality ... the more they would have distractions to take off their thoughts from those moral conclusions which all races of men, one may say, seem to have reached, and to prevent these moral conclusions from being quickened by emotions, and thus becoming religious. ... Only with one people,—the people from whom we get the Bible,—these distractions did not happen. (49)

Where concentrated attention leads to morality, sentiment, righteousness, and religion, distraction prevents the development of the emotion necessary for righteousness and therefore negates the possibility of religion. And, like Stein, Arnold associates the power of attention with Judaism.

Stein’s undergraduate work can be seen as an attempt to provide verifiable scientific evidence to support Arnold’s hypotheses outlined above. Both Stein and Arnold repeat the familiar mind/body configuration, where the body represents primitive, baser

desire that the civilized, rational mind must control. Arnold presents this duality explicitly: the mind needs to control the “native instantaneous, mechanical impulses of the reproductive instinct.” For Stein, while the instantaneous and mechanical impulses become clear in automatism, the relation of these impulses with the reproductive instinct becomes clear in the way the subject arrives at automatism. Recall that Stein characterizes Type II—those who achieve “consciousness without memory” but without training—as “much nearer the common one described in books on hysteria.” Hysteria was a condition commonly associated with “unsatisfied sexual desire,” which was indistinct from having sexual desire in the first place (Donkin 246). Stein also associates Type II with the inability to control the body. Thus, there is a moral implication implicit in Stein’s experiments. Like Arnold, Stein celebrates attention as the means to overcome the desire of the body and thus achieve a greater moral sense. At the same time, Stein attributes to the power of attention the ability to achieve conscious automatism with training—the ability to detach the mind from the body that James associates with genius. While somewhat counterintuitive, Stein seems to suggest that the training required serves as evidence of the highly developed moral sense that exists prior to the automatism. In other words, the Jew, unlike the hysteric, can achieve a state of detachment while maintaining a strict moral sense, while maintaining strict control of the body. Yet as evidenced in her advocacy of isolation for the Jewish people in “The Modern Jew,” Stein appears to hold reservations about the ability to reconcile detachment and morality in terms of a cosmopolitan, non-isolationist experience.

Stein is not alone in struggling to reconcile detachment and morality. In fact, this struggle plays a central role in Arnold’s cosmopolitanism and Victorian cosmopolitanism

in general. Amanda Anderson has shown how the ideal of critical distance “lies behind many Victorian aesthetic and intellectual projects” including “ideals of cosmopolitanism” (4). Such projects, however, were often characterized by ambivalence. That the ideal of critical distance lies behind Arnold’s project should not come as a surprise given that his name is largely synonymous with “disinterestedness.” As Anderson argues, Arnold’s ideals of disinterestedness and criticism appeals to objectivity, critical reason, and aesthetic flexibility unsystematically (92–3). Moreover, this disinterestedness is grounded in cosmopolitan cultivation. The association of cosmopolitanism with disinterestedness can be seen in the Preface to *Culture and Anarchy*:

The whole scope of the essay is to recommend culture as the great help out of our present difficulties; culture being a pursuit of our total perfection by means of getting to know, on all the matters which most concern us, the best which has been thought and said in the world; and through this knowledge, turning a stream of fresh and free thought upon our stock notions and habits, which we now follow staunchly but mechanically. (5–6)

One becomes disinterestedly detached by getting to know “the best which has been thought and said in the world” and, in so doing, achieve the desired distance and objectivity in which to assess England’s present difficulties. There lies a striking similarity between Arnold’s cultivation of disinterestedness and the cultivation of righteousness by the ancient Hebrews. The Hebrews cultivated righteousness by dwelling upon morality and thus overcoming the instantaneous, mechanical impulses of the reproductive instinct. The cultured cultivate disinterestedness through the cosmopolitan

engagement with other cultures—“dwell[ing] much on foreign thought”—and thus overcoming “stock notions and habits” that are followed mechanically.<sup>23</sup>

From out of this similarity emerges a problem. Recall that overcoming the impulses of the reproductive instinct requires the institutionalization and habitualization of morality. That is, the reproductive instinct must be countered by moral habit supported by institutions. As opposed to the cosmopolitanism needed to cultivate disinterestedness, cultivating righteousness requires locality, provincialism. Thus, there remains virtue in some “stock notions and habits” disinterestedness seeks to overcome. This may explain why for Arnold there “was an anxiety that the forms of detachment that he valorized were themselves easily detachable from moral substance” (Anderson 112). Recall that Stein resolved this by linking both critical distance (evident in the detachment in conscious automatism) and moral sense (habituated control over impulses) through the power of attention. Stein therefore roots morality racially as Jewish or, let us say, Hebraic. After struggling with this complication, Arnold, according to Anderson, reconciles critical distance and moral sense by conflating detachment with morality—by attempting “to make detachment ultimately indistinguishable from moral stance or ethics” (113). For Arnold, then, detachment and morality become reconciled in Hellenism. Thus, as we turn to *Q.E.D.*, we see Stein affirm Arnold’s Hebraism and Hellenism while privileging the former to Arnold’s privileging of the latter.<sup>24</sup>

That Stein affirms Arnold’s Hebraism and Hellenism can be seen within the first few pages of the novella. “All three of them were college bred American women of the

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<sup>23</sup> To “dwell much on foreign thought” comes from Arnold’s “The Function of Criticism at the Present Time” (*CPW* 3.283), quoted in Anderson’s *The Powers of Distance*, 93.

<sup>24</sup> For a more comprehensive and clearer explanation of Arnold’s cosmopolitanism, see chapter 3 of *The Powers of Distance*, 91–118.

wealthier class but with that all resemblance between them ended,” begins the fourth paragraph of *Q.E.D.*,

Their appearance, their attitudes and their talk both as to manner and to matter showed the influence of different localities, different forebears and different family ideals. They were distinctly American but each one at the same time bore definitely the stamp of one of the older civilizations, incomplete and frustrated in this American version but still always insistent. (54)

Here lies the central tension in *Q.E.D.* Adele, Helen, and Mabel share the same traditional categories of identity: class, gender, and nationality. Because all three American women come from the upper class, those qualities normally associated with such distinctions—appearance, attitudes, and speech—become associated directly with race, for the underlying differences in community, ancestry, and values lies in their respective stamps. Which naturally begs the question: which civilizations are they stamped with? Helen appears to be the Anglo-Saxon, described as “the American version of the English handsome girl” (54). Likewise, Mabel gets her stamp as a Roman/Italian with a “face that in its ideal completeness would have belonged to the decadent days of Italian greatness” (55). Adele reveals her own civilization a page later when she ascribes her talkativeness as “the failing of my tribe” (57).

Yet to divide the trio by these stamps, to perceive them as embodiments of three separate civilizations is to misread the story’s dynamics. These dynamics concern not three civilizations but two races: Indo-European and Semitic—the two races that underlie the twin energies of Arnold’s Hellenism and Hebraism:

Science has now made visible to everybody the great and pregnant elements of difference which lie in race, and in how signal a manner they make the genius and history of an Indo-European people differ from those of a Semitic people.

Hellenism is of Indo-European growth, Hebraism is of Semitic growth; and we English, a nation of Indo-European stock, seem to belong naturally to the movement of Hellenism. (118)

This passage from *Culture and Anarchy* claims Hellenism as natural to the English because of their racial heritage. The Hebraic force becomes alien both as a “Semitic growth” and because those of “Semitic growth” are by definition excluded from “*we English*.” A few lines later, Arnold refers to “our American descendants across the Atlantic,” implying that America, too, is of “Indo-European stock.” Mabel and Helen share this Indo-European racial heritage, and, as Arnold does the Semite, they make Adele the racial other despite her being one of the “selected few” (72). At the same time, Stein invites the reader to identify with Adele’s otherness in making her the story’s focalizer. This sense of otherness, alienation, and difference forms a fundamental and heretofore unexamined dynamic in *Q.E.D.*

Mabel and Helen share a performativity that Adele as outsider struggles to penetrate and emulate. The initial descriptions of Mabel and Helen both emphasize this performativity. Helen’s brutal determination and strength prove “a brave bluff” (55). Mabel’s initial description focuses on her “attitude of awkward discomfort” and “the tension of her long angular body” and how they “betrayed her New England origin” (55). The use of the word “betrayed” suggest that Mabel attempts to conceal her New England origin, posing as a European aristocrat when she actually represents its degeneration.

Adele, on the other hand, has not “much talent for concealing [her] feelings and impressions” (76) as Helen observes. This inability to perform makes Adele unable to see through others’ performances. Adele’s inability to penetrate these masks results in a constant insecurity regarding the authenticity of Helen’s feelings repeated in the refrain that questions whether Helen truly “cares for her.” This inability stems from her unsophisticated faith in the forthright correspondence between word, action, and meaning. Adele shows little patience for the others’ performances:

Thereupon ensued between Helen and Mabel the inevitable and interminable offer and rejection of companionship that politeness demands and the elaborate discussion and explanation that always ensues when neither offer nor rejection are sincere. At last Adele broke in with an impatient “I always did thank God I wasn’t born a woman,” whereupon Mabel hastily bundled her wraps and disappeared down the companion-way. (57–8)

The mocking tone of the narrator underscores Adele’s impatience with the rules of decorum that demand to be followed despite the transparent insincerity. Adele’s exasperation with such insincerity leads her to disassociate herself from the other two girls by invoking her Jewishness: “I always did thank God I wasn’t born a woman.” As Maria Damon notes, this line comes from an Orthodox Jewish morning prayer repeated by the men daily. But Damon argues that, by uttering the line, Adele/Stein “participates in and exposes the misogynistic traditions of her own culture” (*Dark End* 232–3). While plausible, the line might also suggest that Adele embraces a Jewish upbringing that apparently does not demand such decorum from women. In other words, Adele implies, “I always did thank God I wasn’t born a woman [*like you*].”

This passage also reveals how much of Adele's alienation seems to be of her own design. In fact, she takes pride in her difference, which only serves to push her even further to the margins. After her first kiss with Helen, which offers Adele a "glimpse" into Helen's world, she travels with her cousin to Morocco and Spain. The pair spend their evenings in Tangiers laying on a hillside "agreeing and disagreeing in endless discussion with an intensity that long familiarity had in no way diminished ... she enjoyed to the full the sense of family friendship" (67). An alien in Helen's world, Adele is at home on the margins of Europe "agreeing and disagreeing in endless discussion" with her cousin who shares the "failing of her tribe" (a belief in "the sacred rights of conversation") because they belong to the same "nation." But this comfort extends beyond the national realm. Adele's "homecoming" includes "feeling entirely at home with the Moors" in Tangiers and befriending a young Spanish woman in Granada: "They sat there side by side with a feeling of complete companionship, looking at each other with perfect comprehension, their intercourse saved from the interchange of common-places by their ignorance of each other's language" (68). The encounter with the young Spanish woman throws the aforementioned conversation with Mabel and Helen into relief. Adele and the young Spanish woman seem to comprehend each other because they cannot communicate, rather than in spite of it. The scene suggests something that cannot be put into language. This sense of familiarity with the Spanish woman, the companionship with her cousin, and her feeling "at home with the Moors" all point to a shared sense of racial otherness and estrangement from the Anglo-Christian, Indo-European world of Helen and Mabel. Moreover, it reveals a sense of comfort, contentment, and character born of a morality rooted in her Jewishness.



But this comfort and familiarity in the provinces does not prevent Adele from attempting to assimilate. In fact, the degree of Adele's contentment on the margins and apparent contempt for the Christian world of Mabel and Helen only further illustrates the allure of the cosmopolitanism represented in her relationship with Helen. Even more so, however, is how Adele abandons everything we have seen Stein associate with Jewishness, and Adele does so willingly and almost without hesitation. In fact, Adele's willingness to abandon her Jewishness proves that her relationship with Helen represents cosmopolitanism because, as David Hollinger argues, what distinguishes cosmopolitanism from pluralism is the subject's willingness to risk cultural integrity (85). When Helen charges that Adele's cowardice stems from a fear of losing her "moral sense," Adele quickly disregards it in the name of desire, and thus "her moral sense had lost its importance" (64). Adele's cosmopolitan engagement also involves responding to another charge by Helen: "Haven't you ever stopped thinking long enough to feel?" (66). Adele eventually adapts: "Adele had now at last learned to stop thinking" (86). And later, she admits that she has undergone "a complete departure from established convictions" (88). Here, Adele introduces a variable that Stein failed to consider in her earlier experiments; namely, that habit of attention can register agency apart from racial and characterological determinations. Or, to put it another way, roots do not run very deep.

The qualities Adele abandons are all founded in Arnold's Hebraism, and Adele must reject them in order to "Helen"-ize. Hebraism "braces all man's moral power, and founds for him an indispensable basis of character," claims Arnold in *Culture and Anarchy*, "And, therefore, it is justly said of the Jewish people, who were charged with setting powerfully forth that side of divine order to which the words *conscience* and *self-*

*conquest* point, that they were ‘entrusted with the oracle of God’” (114). So when Adele claims that the “whole duty of man consists in being reasonable and just” (56), she affirms both “middle class” values and those of Hebraism as well. As Damon notes, Adele’s defense of her ideals yoke Jewishness and the middle class together (*Dead End* 231). This is the source of Adele’s repeated meditation on moral sense. Her struggle with maintaining morality in the realm of desire—a struggle that occupies most of the narrative—risks not just her conception of life but her entire identity. To achieve a cultivated detachment is to lose her “moral sense”; to lose her “moral sense” is to lose her sense of Jewishness, or at least that part of her nature that she considers “Jewish.”<sup>25</sup>

The repeated reference and divisiveness of middle class values lie in its concealed Jewishness. Famously, Arnold labels this class “Philistine” in *Culture and Anarchy*, sandwiched between the aristocratic Barbarians and the working class Populace. Arnold explains the name’s significance: “For *Philistine* gives the notion of something particularly stiff-necked and perverse in the resistance to light and its children; and therein it specially suits our middle class, who not only do not pursue sweetness and light, but who even prefer to them that sort of machinery of business, chapels, tea-meetings, and addresses” (84).<sup>26</sup> In its opposition to Hellenism and her pursuit of culture

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<sup>25</sup> To lose “moral sense” is also to lose peace and contentment. For Arnold, Hebraism is “the effort to win peace by self conquest” (*Culture* 116). Elsewhere, in one of his more utilitarian moments, he writes, “Happiness is our being’s end aim, and no one has ever come near Israel in feeling ... that *to righteousness belongs happiness*” (*Literature* 68). Self conquest and strict adherence to moral sense find motivation in happiness, for Jews at least. The Hebrews possessed a higher morality because only in this possession could they find peace and happiness. The same is true for Adele. Her decision to “follow [Helen’s] lead even into very devious and underground ways” is born from a desire for knowledge rather than happiness (224). Adele repeatedly reflects on her life before the affair with nostalgic yearning for simplicity and morality, and even escape, no matter how brief, provides relief: “While winding joyously up and down the beautiful Tuscan hills and swinging along the hot dusty roads all fearless and bitterness were burned away. She once more became the embodiment of joyous content” (259). And yet, even in rejecting Jewishness she embraces Hebraism: “It [knowledge] is something one ought to know. It seems almost a duty” (215).

<sup>26</sup> In *The Temple of Culture*, Jonathan Freedman argues that the Jew also lies in what he refers to as Arnold’s “classless class”: “Therefore, when we speak of ourselves as divided into Barbarians, Philistines,

(sweetness and light), Hebraism becomes almost synonymous with the provincialism of the middle class. In his Preface, Arnold writes that “the strongest and most vital part of English Puritanism [is] the Puritan and Hebraising middle class” (15). Moreover, the description of the Philistine middle class sounds similar to Arnold’s later description of Jews in *Literature and Dogma*: “their character is unattractive, nay, repellent...petty, unsuccessful, unamiable people, without politics, without science, without art, without charm” (72). Such a people fit into a class labeled “stiff-necked and perverse in the resistance to sweetness and light.” The description also underscores the difference between Arnold’s perception of the Hebrews (as forerunners of Christianity) and contemporary Jews, whose resistance to sweetness and light can be read as a resistance to Jesus Christ. It also betrays Arnold’s sympathies with Hellenism. While *Culture and Anarchy* purports to advocate an ideal balance between Hebraism and Hellenism, Arnold’s denigration of the middle class and its association with Hebraism suggests that, even in *Culture and Anarchy*, Arnold has started the process of looking to Hellenism as cosmopolitanism detachment and moral sense.

Stein, too, associates Jewishness with the middle class, but places both in a more positive light. Indeed, *Q.E.D.* can be read as a robust defense of Hebraism. The following exchange takes place after Mabel paints a pitiful image of Helen’s family life for Adele: “‘It’s a queer game,’ Adele commented, ‘coming as I do from a community where all no matter how much they may quarrel and disagree have strong family affection and great respect for the ties of blood, I find it difficult to realise.’ ‘Yes there you come in with

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and Populace, we must be understood always to imply that within each of these classes there are a certain number of *aliens*” (90). Freedman notes, “This description has been frequently (and correctly) cited as the origin of the ideal of the critical, alienated intellectual in Anglo-American culture; and it is particularly crucial that in describing that figure Arnold deploys terms that Enlightenment culture and his own country both associated with the Jew, that paradigmatic outsider in Europe’s new cultural dispensation” (47).

your middle-class ideals again’ retorted Mabel” (74). Moreover, here and elsewhere in *Q.E.D.* Stein associates the rootedness of Jewishness as more cultural than racial. As opposed to her earlier conclusion in “Cultivated Motor Automatism,” the strong habit of attention that governs morality is more developed from the ties of blood than the blood itself. As a result, however, Stein must confront the contradiction of a rooted cosmopolitanism because, as seen in the ease with which she abandons her roots, cosmopolitan engagement contains an element of conversion.

As critics have noted, Arnold’s Hellenizing project bears a striking resemblance to conversionist rhetoric circulating during the period. In “Canonizing the Jew,” Cynthia Scheinberg writes,

The universalism at the heart of Christian doctrine supposedly subordinates ethnic, racial, and gendered characteristics through religious conversion, an act which redefines the individual’s essential identity as distinct from the conditions of the body. It is this body/spirit distinction that enables (ostensibly) ‘all’ to participate in Christian salvation, that gives ‘all’ access to the ‘universal’ truth of Christian prophecy. (175)

The distinction between the body and the spirit enables a belief in Christ to transcend race. A similar dynamic universalism underlies Arnold’s Hellenizing project. As an example, Scheinberg points to the following passage in *Culture and Anarchy*: “Religion says: The *kingdom of God is within you*, and culture, in like manner, places human perfection in an *internal* condition, in the growth and predominance of our humanity proper, as distinguished from our animality” (36–37, Arnold’s emphasis).<sup>27</sup> Like the truth

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<sup>27</sup> For a more thorough discussion in the context of the Anglo-Jewish Victorian poet Amy Levy, see Cynthia Scheinberg’s “Canonizing the Jew”—especially Part I, 172–8.

of Christian prophecy, Culture possesses a transformative capacity that transcends the body (“our animality”). The universality that relies on the transformative power of Christ or culture gets disrupted by Jewish election. Judaism, founded and recognized as the “chosen people,” depends on the very notions of identity that Christianity/Culture purports to transcend: ethnicity, race, and gender. Michael Ragussis argues that just as Christian typology absorbs Hebrew Scripture in the Christian Bible and Judaism in Christianity, Arnold absorbs Hebraic culture in English culture (224–5). As Arnold writes in the Preface of *Culture and Anarchy*, “For our part, we rejoice to see our dear old friends, the Hebraising Philistines, gathered in force in the Valley of Jehoshaphat previous to their final conversion, which will certainly come” (27). In both instances, the unconverted Jew remains a singularity that needs to be absorbed into the larger Christian/Cultural totality.

Adele’s cosmopolitan education throughout the narrative resembles both religious conversion and the Hellenizing project. And herein lies Stein’s critique of Arnold’s Hellenism. The first section of *Q.E.D.*, entitled “Adele,” ends with Adele still in Granada, reading Dante:

Later on she was lying on the ground reading again Dante’s *Vita Nuova*. She lost herself completely in the tale of Dante and Beatrice. She read it with absorbed interest for it seemed now divinely illuminated. She rejoiced abundantly in her new understanding and exclaimed triumphantly, “At last I begin to see what Dante is talking about and so there is something in my glimpse and it’s alright and worth while” and she felt within herself a great content. (69)

That this passage marks the last words of the “Adele” section lend them a particular significance; the next time we see Adele she is back in America and more sure of her affection for Helen. That this passage occurs immediately after the encounter with the young Spanish woman and subsequent affirmation of marginality suggests an important shift in Adele’s point of view. Dante here represents the “sweetness and light” of the spirit of poetry and culture as well as the light of Christ. At the same time that Dante sheds light on Adele’s relationship with Helen, her relationship with Helen sheds light on Dante. In other words, only through Helen’s Hellenic influence can the Hebraic Adele begin “to see things as they really are.” She sees that a whole world of passion exists behind her glimpse into the world of Helen. Yet the new understanding of Dante’s *Vita Nuova* offers Adele more than the force of the poet’s passion, it also offers her another denotation of “passion.” Secular and Christian passion meet in Beatrice; she is at once Dante’s beloved and a symbol of Christ. Therefore, Dante provides Adele with a morality that can coexist with desire. Her “great content” arises from a conscience placated with a new moral sense provided by Christianity. Yet if morality consists of self-denial as Arnold asserts in *Literature and Dogma*, a morality that can coexist with desire is a paradox, not unlike a Hellenism that makes virtue out of detachment.

As the narrative continues, Stein seems to suggest that an underlying ideological difference between Christianity and Judaism accounts for the larger differences in personality between Adele and Helen. Somewhat counter-intuitively, Christian universality becomes associated with individualism while Jewish particularity becomes associated with communalism. Stein goes out of her way to link Adele’s Jewishness with a larger Jewish community or, as she puts it in “The Modern Jew,” “great clannishness.”

Both times that anyone openly alludes to Adele's Jewishness—conversation as a “failing of my tribe” and “coming as I do from a community where all ... have strong family affection”—share an emphasis on social interaction and community, presenting an ideology that would be antithetical to, say, one who is highly individualized, solitary, and silent.

Of course, Helen proves to be just such a one. Indeed, it is perhaps telling that the character that represents Hellenism gives voice to the anxieties about morality and detachment that Arnold will use Hellenism to resolve. Stein draws attention to ideological differences of Hebraism/Judaism and Hellenism/Christianity by drawing a contrast with Helen's family. Mabel describes Helen's father as “a successful lawyer and judge, and an excessively brutal and at the same time small-minded man who exercised great ingenuity in making himself unpleasant” (73). Mr. Thomas's individual success seems to come at the expense of familial affection since the qualities that make him a successful lawyer—brutality and ingenuity—make him a poor father. Mabel describes Helen's mother as “very religious” and that she “spent most of her time mourning that it was not Helen that had been taken instead of the others a girl and a boy whom she remembered as sweet gentle children” (73). Mabel goes on: “One day when Helen was a young girl she heard her mother say to her father ‘Isn't it sad that Helen should have been the one to be left’” (73). Like Helen's father, Mabel characterizes Mrs. Thomas as highly individualized or, to put it another way, selfish. Rather than fostering “strong family affection,” Helen's mother spends her time in a self pity that alienates her from her daughter.

Helen's mother's religiosity suggests that these differences are ideological.

Returning to *Literature and Dogma*, Arnold says of Christianity that

[t]his is a *personal religion*; religion consisting in the inward feeling and disposition of the individual himself, rather than in the performance of outward acts towards religion or society. It is the essence of Christianity, it is what the Jews needed, it is the line in which their religion was ripe for development; and it *appears* in the Old Testament ... The first need, therefore, for Israel at that time, was to make religion cease to be mainly a national and social matter, and became mainly a personal matter. (91, 93)

The difference between Judaism and Christianity lies in the difference between a social religion and a personal one. Jews bind together via social ritual. According to Arnold, however, in time these outward acts failed to inspire the emotion necessary to maintain strict righteousness. Enter Christ. With appeals to the heart of the individual, Christ reignited the fading motive power in conduct and righteousness. Yet this transition from social to personal religion meant a shift from communal to individual salvation, effectively cutting off the individual from the larger community: "Christ took the individual Israelite by himself apart, made him listen for the voice of his conscience, and said to him in effect, 'If every *one* would mend *one*, we should have a new world'" (99). The only concern became one's own soul rather than the fate of a nation, which is a critique one could very well level at Arnold's cosmopolitanism. In contrast to Arnold's personal Christianity, Stein writes in "The Modern Jew" that the origin and mission of Judaism was "this feeling of a great destiny in the sense of being a great power, a nation standing by itself, ethical, civilizing, blessing other nations, but apart from them" (425).



Where Arnold depicts Christianity as an inward movement to individual salvation, Stein views Judaism with an interdependency necessary for shared salvation. The difference becomes one of rooted morality versus a cosmopolitan morality.

For Arnold, the denial of Christ and the individualized salvation that Christ brought betrays a larger inability to “see things as they really are.” Or, as Arnold puts it, “That the Jewish nation at large ... refused to accept the identification [of Jesus as the Messiah] shows simply that want of power to penetrate through wraps and appearances to the essence of things” (101). This inability of Jews to access “the essence of things” can be traced to the failure of Hebraism “to see things as they really are.”<sup>28</sup> This manifests into an extended metaphor in *Q.E.D.* After her first kiss with Helen, Adele thinks to herself, “I am afraid Helen wouldn’t think much of that if it’s only seeing. However I never even thought I saw before and I really do think I begin to see. Yes it’s very strange but surely I do begin to see” (67). The line rehearses the common figure of darkness/blindness as ignorance and light/seeing as knowledge. Here, the knowledge that Adele glimpses—a knowledge confirmed in Dante’s *Vita Nuova*—is that of Helen’s world: the world of sexual and religious passion, the world of sweetness and light, the world of the Hellenes. For the first time, Adele sees the world as it “really” is. The narrative consists in detailing the process whereby this glimpse becomes panoramic through Helen’s teaching. However, after reading a letter from Helen, Adele exclaims in the last line of the story, ““Can’t she see things as they are and not as she would make them if she were strong enough as she plainly isn’t ... I am afraid it comes very near being a dead-lock,’ she groaned dropping her head in her arms” (133).

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<sup>28</sup> Arnold uses “seeing things in their essence” interchangeably with “seeing things as they really are.”

When *Q.E.D.* was first published, Alice Toklas and Carl Van Vechten titled the novel *Things As They Are*, recognizing the significance of this final line to the rest of the story.<sup>29</sup> I will argue, however, that this last line is significant not only to *Q.E.D.* but also to Stein's development as a writer and to the development of modernism as a whole. In this last line, the reader is meant to counterfocalize—to see what Adele cannot see; namely, that “how things really are” is ultimately relative. To see things as they really are or to “see the object as in itself it really is” is an aesthetic statement as well as a philosophical one.<sup>30</sup> It is a privileging of an objective realism that Stein would revolt against when she translates *Q.E.D.* into “Melanctha.”

Turning from *Q.E.D.* to “Melanctha,” we encounter a much different social milieu. Rather than three American women of the wealthier class aboard a steamer, two women and a man from the working class “negro world in Bridgeport” (59) greet the reader in “Melanctha.” That the man, Sam Johnson, works on a steamer (rather than travels aboard one) highlights the class difference. Often overlooked in the abruptness of the change is the significance of the specific locale—not Bridgeport per se, but the geographical specificity. The setting of *Q.E.D.* is distinctly cosmopolitan; we follow as Adele travels from America to Europe, back to America, to Europe and back again. Scenes take place in New York, Boston, Tangiers, Granada, Rome, Florence, and Sienna. The characters in *Q.E.D.* seem to be in perpetual motion, constantly moving among different cultures. All of the action in “Melanctha,” on the other hand, occurs within a

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<sup>29</sup> See Leon Katz's “Note on the Texts” in his edited edition of Stein's *Fernhurst, Q.E.D., and Other Early Writings*.

<sup>30</sup> To “see the object as in itself it really is” comes from Arnold's “The Function of Criticism at the Present Time,” 3.258.

single community; the cosmopolitanism remains, as we shall see, but in a more abstracted form.

Despite the different milieu, both “Melanctha” and *Q.E.D.* introduce race as a central player in the drama very early in the story. Yet where conflict arises inter-racially in *Q.E.D.* between the Semitic and the Indo-European, the conflict is *intra*-racial in “Melanctha.” The narrator immediately draws attention to this particular race by describing Rose Johnson in overtly racialized language within the first paragraphs.<sup>31</sup> The narrator calls her “a simple beast” whose selfishness and neglect lead to her newborn’s death, which causes only a minimal amount of grief. While the narrator describes Melanctha in more attractive terms, Rose’s qualities—not Melanctha’s—reflect those that characterize the race: the death of the infant via neglect “came so often in the negro world in Bridgeport” and “Rose had the simple, promiscuous unmorality of the black people” (59, 60). Such a portrayal of Rose as primitive serves to characterize the rest of her community as lacking the “habit of attention” or moral sense to control their baser desires.

The narrator describes “the negro world of Bridgeport” as a community that, at least initially, seems almost a travesty of the Jewish community as presented by Adele in *Q.E.D.* After all, a community described as having “strong family affection” and “great respect for the ties of blood” is pretty much antithetical to one where an infant’s death by maternal neglect occurs with some frequency. Where Adele possesses a strong—though malleable—“moral sense” and a “puritanical horror” of physical passion, “the black people” possess a promiscuous unmorality. The connecting force between having “great

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<sup>31</sup> In “The Flat, the Round, and Gertrude Stein,” Laura Doyle argues that the racist lines I go on to describe “are calculated to offend” in order to mimic her (presumably) white audience’s racism to make them “squirm,” “all the while creating the author as author through the power of racism” (263).

respect for the ties of blood” and a strong “moral sense” as well as that between maternal neglect and a promiscuous unmorality is, of course, sexuality. The different approaches to sexuality reflect disparate conceptions of community. A community bound by race becomes inherently patriarchal, demanding the policing of women’s sexuality in order to ensure the purity of the racial bond as well as the viability of the race. On the other hand, a community unbounded by race requires little policing and thus tolerates promiscuity.

But this proves a false dichotomy. Despite this initial portrayal, the black community of Bridgeport does indeed possess a “moral sense” and a “respect for the ties of blood.” For example, Rose’s definitive characteristic is not her promiscuity as the narrator alleges, but rather her having “strong the sense of proper conduct,” like in her condemnation of Melanctha’s wandering while engaged to Jem Richards: “When she is engaged to him Sam, she ain’t not right to take on so excited. That ain’t no decent kind of a way a girl ever should be acting” (61, 156). Rose’s proper sense of conduct encourages a sexual policing that demands particularly restrained sexual behavior in a committed relationship. Rose is not alone, for even Jem—who “was more game even than Melanctha”—adheres to a morality based on sexual restraint (154). Events prove Rose’s previous suspicions right, as Jem reads Melanctha’s behavior during their engagement as reflective of a lack of commitment. Jem prefaces his break up with Melanctha— “I just don’t give a damn now for you any more Melanctha”—by professing skepticism towards Melanctha’s feelings and fidelity— “you don’t care really nothing more about me now” (166). Jem’s seemingly callous words stem from a moral point of view that he shares with Rose: Melanctha does not act like a woman who is engaged. Therefore, Melanctha does not see herself as engaged; ergo, Melanctha no longer cares about him.

Neither “promiscuous” nor “unmoral,” the black community of Bridgeport possesses the same ideal of family affection as well as the great respect for the ties of blood as the Jewish community in *Q.E.D.* In fact, Jeff Campbell’s ideals seemingly rewrite those of Adele:

I simply contend that the middle-class ideal which demands that people be affectionate, respectable, honest and content, that they avoid excitements and cultivate serenity is the ideal that appeals to me, it is in short the ideal of affectionate family life, of honorable business methods. (*Q.E.D.* 59)

[H]e believed you ought to love your father and your mother and to be regular in all your life, and not be always wanting new things and excitement ... “I want to see the colored people like what is good and what I want them to have, and that’s to live regular and work hard and understand things.” (“Melantha” 82)

Here, Jeff more or less repeats Adele’s middle-class ideals, which is unsurprising given that “Jeff is in fact middle class” as opposed to a member of “a monolithic ‘lower-class’” that many critics assume (Rabin 94). While Jeff Campbell appears more direct, universalizing his individual morality to the larger community of “colored people,” both communal ideals demand sexual restraint. Just as an honest, affectionate family and respectability almost forces one to avoid excitements, living “regular” requires the same disavowal of “excitements.”

Not surprisingly, these family ideals are inextricably linked to the racial bonds of the community. For instance, Rose warns Melantha “not to go about” with white men because they “never could know how to act right, to any decent kind of girl they could ever get to be with them” (149). Regardless of her conscious reasoning, Rose’s warning

against miscegenation affirms a racial exclusivity while promoting restrained sexuality. Another example can be seen in James Herbert's relationship with Melanctha. After listening to his neighbor John Bishop speak well of his daughter, James attacks him with a razor before returning to "assail" Melanctha in a fury (66). James's rage implies a rather deep anxiety about his daughter's sexuality; a sexuality he attempts to control through violence. But just before he initially "assails" Melanctha, James tells his wife, "If she is to the Bishops' stables now with that yellow John, I swear I kill her. A nice way she is going for a decent daughter" (66)—repeating Rose's use of "decency." The second line implies that Melanctha refuses to abide by the communal code of conduct by spending time with a male neighbor. James fears that such behavior will be perceived by the community as indecent. Pointedly, however, James refers to his neighbor as "that yellow John," drawing a derogatory distinction between James as black and John as a "vigorous mulatto" (64). Of course, "yellow" could also connote "cowardly," but the use of the epithet by another man in a different context soon after—"Hullo, that's a pretty lookin' yaller girl" (69)—suggests "yellow" primarily signifies race. The clear contempt with which James uses the term implies that John is an alien to James's community. In this context, James's attempt to control his daughter's sexuality stems from a racial exclusivity.

Yet the biracial "yellow" John underscores the "actual" lack of racial exclusivity present in the community. In fact, the majority of the characters in "Melanctha" are of mixed race, throwing into question the very possibility of racial exclusivity and serving as a visual manifestation of cross-cultural commerce and the cosmopolitan character of culture. Most of the novel's main characters—Melanctha Herbert, Jeff Campbell, Jane

Harden, Jem Richards—are explicitly biracial, either “yellow,” a “mulatto,” or “so white hardly any one could guess [she was a negress]” (60; 76, 153; 72). The other main character, Rose Johnson, is “a real black negress” but “had been brought up quite like their own child by white folks” (59).

This diversity extends beyond biology to include those “family ceremonials that have done so much to keep the race together” (“The Modern Jew” 423). For instance, the narrator describes Jem and Melanctha’s engagement in the following terms: “And so Jem gave her a ring, like white folks, to show he was engaged to her, and would by and by be married to her” (155). That Jem mimics “white folks” by rehearsing a “white” ritual reveals the cross-cultural exchange, but also the imbalance in the exchange since it seems as though the moral and social economy based in part on marriage is imposed externally by the larger white universe. Jem does not simply imitate whites in giving Melanctha a ring, but invests the object with the same symbolism of possession, monogamy, and heteronormativity. Rose’s education illustrates a similar idea. Early on, after stating that Rose was raised by “white folks,” the narrator says, “Her white training had only made for habits, not nature. Rose had the simple, promiscuous unmorality of the black people” (60). The narrator implies that beneath Rose’s rigid morality lies overcharged impulses of an overactive reproductive instinct, and only through “white training” can she achieve the moral habits necessary to control them.

At the same time, Stein complicates the simplistic dichotomy of white morality versus black immorality. Melanctha “wanders” with both white men and black men. In fact, as we have seen, Rose warns Melanctha “not to go with that kind of white man” because they “never could know how to act right, to any decent kind of girl they could

ever get to be with them” (149). In effect, Rose warns Melanctha that white men are more dangerous than black men and have less of a grasp on how “to act right.” In addition to conduct, the amount of white blood fails to correspond to the degree of morality or self restraint. The model here is Jane Harden who, despite the fact that she can easily pass as white, personifies the promiscuous unmorality of the black people. Jane therefore behaves more closely to the narrator’s definition of “the black people” than any other character despite appearing the whitest of all.

If the black community of Bridgeport is not racially exclusive, then why is there such strict policing of sexuality? The cosmopolitan nature of its culture reflected in the racial diversity and shared customs distinguishes Bridgeport from the Jewish community described in *Q.E.D.*, which Adele repeatedly and proudly essentializes as singular. While this could be attributed to racist assumptions, the other affinities between the two communities suggest otherwise. To shed some light on potential reasons behind this distinction between the two fictionalized communities, we return to “The Modern Jew.” In “The Modern Jew,” Stein argues that the forces of modernity have forced Jews to choose one of two paths: either “to identify themselves entirely with the Christians and [turn] their backs on their own people” or to reconnect with the ongoing “strong revival of Jewish feeling”; it is a choice between complete assimilation or isolation (424). The black community of Bridgeport, I would argue, can be seen as the expression of the former, where intermarriage means that the “children of the second generation are Gentiles with Jewish blood and in the third generation all traces of Judaism is gone and the Jew has become the Gentile” (423). Notable about Stein’s overall argument in “The Modern Jew” is the agency she lends the Jewish community while, at the same time, she



acknowledges that the community is at the mercy of forces it cannot control. Thus, the cross-cultural traffic between communities in Bridgeport might express an anxiety that the complete assimilation into a universal community—a global cosmopolitanism, if you will—is inevitable. Indeed, that Bridgeport retains this communitarian ethos despite its assimilation suggests that isolation is no longer an option.

At the same time, the cosmopolitan nature of its culture reveals that the communitarian ethos and the morality it engenders persists under the *illusion* of community. As a result, the morality becomes “a hard-shell of formalism with all the soul fled and the living substance gone” (“The Modern Jew” 424). In other words, morality—the ability of the rational mind to control the irrational body—loses what Arnold calls its “motive power” (*Culture* 110). As we have seen, for Stein, morality has always been associated with Jewishness, whether it be a biological predisposition towards attentiveness or a value fostered by a close-knit community. A cosmopolitanism like that portrayed in “Melanctha” effectively detaches the individual from her community and, in so doing, detaches the individual from the local roots of her moral sense. In a way, Stein expresses the very anxieties that plagued Arnold’s cosmopolitanism; that is, “that the forms of detachment that he valorized were themselves easily detachable from moral substance.”

One of the ways Arnold resolves this issue is through the State to ensure the binding power of morality. In his conception of the State, Arnold proposes “a defence against anarchy” by the principle of what he calls “our national right reason” or “our collective best self” (*Culture* 69, 79). A similar yet more specific idea can be seen in the theory of organic community by Hegel. In the *Philosophy of Right*, Hegel states,

Since the state is objective spirit, it is only through being a member of the state that the individual himself has objectivity, truth and ethical life. *Union* as such is itself the true content and end, and the destiny of individuals is to lead a universal life; their further particular satisfaction, activity, and mode of conduct have this substantial and universally valid basis as their point of departure and result. (*PR* §258, author's emphasis)

According to Hegel, an individual can only have a sense of self (objectivity), understanding (truth), and morality (ethical life) as a member of a universal (state/community). All individuals strive to be a member of the universal community, and thus pursue the desires (satisfactions), needs (activities) and behavior (mode of conduct) shaped by the state in order to be a part of it. Peter Singer sums up the underlying idea in his book on Hegel: “because our needs and desires are shaped by society, an organic community fosters these desires that most benefit the community” (34–5). The distinction here is a matter of freedom. While society shapes our needs and desires, it does not *impose* them on the individual. Rather, it *fosters* those desires most beneficial to the community. Therefore, the individual remains free to choose even if that choice is, to a certain extent, predetermined by a universal morality. As long as the individual acts rationally, she will act according to what most benefits the larger community.

The universality of this morality within the community can be seen in Melanctha's ideals. We learn that “all her life Melanctha loved and wanted good and kind and considerate people, and always Melanctha loved and wanted people to be gentle to her, and always she wanted to be regular, and to have peace and quiet in her, and always Melanctha could only find new ways to be in trouble” (150–1). Melanctha's desires echo

those of her community (both as black and Jewish), specifically Adele and Jeff. Her desire “to be regular” repeats the sexual restraint affirmed by Rose, Jeff, Adele, Jem, and James. That Melanctha’s desires are the same as her community’s suggests that this morality is, indeed, universal.<sup>32</sup>

But all of this depends on Melanctha acting rationally. Without a thick sense of community, this universal morality loses its substance; the institutions needed to instill moral habit lose their motive power and there is nothing left to make her act rationally. In fact, if we look back to “Normal Motor Automatism,” we see that Stein—at least in the years preceding “Melanctha”—saw desire rather than reason as universal. Desire is the constant state of kinesis the rational will attempts to control. We see a similar idea in Melanctha’s pursuit of irrationality. In pursuing irrationality, Melanctha reveals desire—not reason—as universal, and its denial the result of conditioning. When we first meet Jeff Campbell, for instance, we encounter a universal morality representative of the social codes of the community, and a universal morality founded on the family and on sexual restraint: “I don’t believe much in this running around business and I don’t want to see colored people do it” (82). But the more his relationship with Melanctha progresses, the more desire stirs in Jeff. That is, until he has a sort of revelation. After asking himself a series of rhetorical questions, Jeff thinks,

Melanctha Herbert somehow had made him feel deeply just then, what very more it was that she wanted from him. Jeff Campbell now felt in him what everybody always had needed to make them really understanding, to him. Jeff felt a strong disgust inside him; not for Melanctha herself, to him, not for himself really, in

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<sup>32</sup> See *Philosophy of Right*, §258: “The state is the actuality of the substantial *will*, an actuality which it possesses in the particular *self-consciousness* when this has been raised to its universality; as such, it is the *rational* in and for itself.”

him, not for what it was that everybody wanted, in them; he only had disgust because he never could know really in him, what it was he wanted, to be really right in understanding, for him, he only had disgust because he never could know really what it was really right to him to be always doing, in the things he had before believed in, the things he before had believed in for himself and for all colored people, the living regular, and the never wanting to be always having new things, just to keep on, always being in excitements. All the old thinking now came up very strong inside him. He sort of turned away then, and threw Melanctha from him. (110)

This passage represents Jeff's central epiphany in the story. These thoughts are evoked by the most joyful day they had spent together, losing themselves "in warm wandering" (109). What Melanctha wants from him is to satiate her sexual desire; what Jeff suddenly feels in himself is his own desire to acquiesce. To put it another way, at this moment Jeff recognizes in himself the same unrestrained sexual desire he condemns in others. But this feeling does not account for his disgust. Instead, he is disgusted by the idea that he only aspires to understand others in order to deny himself as a sexual being. Or, that he constructed his morality on denial. Thus, he realizes that his old beliefs—his patriarchal faith in the moral and social code of his community—were based on false assumptions. Melanctha awakens in Jeff the universal sexuality he has long repressed by a morality he now sees as unnatural. Therefore, his supposedly rational choices were in fact governed by desire, albeit in its repression.

Through her formal experimentation, Stein reveals the central role that language and signification play in sustaining a morality that needs to be perceived as universal in

order to be effective. For instance, the narrator initially describes Jeff as “a serious, earnest, good young joyous doctor” who “always liked to talk to everybody about the things he worked at and about his thinking about what he could do for the colored people” (77, 81). Along with a fondness for speech lies a commitment to honesty and directness: “All I got to do is always just to say right out what I am thinking” (90). So each time Melanctha initially emphasizes the ambiguities in language, Jeff treats her responses as miscommunication rather than an inherent flaw in language:

“You don’t understand enough about what I meant.” (83)

“No I know you don’t believe what I say, Miss Melanctha, but I mean it, and it’s all just because you don’t understand it when I say it.” (83)

“It ain’t very easy for you to understand what I was meaning by what I was just saying to you.” (84)

“No, Miss Melanctha too, I don’t mean this except only just the way I say it. I ain’t got any other meaning Miss Melanctha, and it’s that what I mean when I am saying about being really good.” (85)

The air of condescension in Jeff’s defense reflects a confidence in the transparency of language as he puts the blame for misunderstanding on Melanctha. Jeff relies on the transparency of intent without conceding the many valences intent yields. The overwhelming use of pronouns reflects Jeff’s view of language: each word corresponds to a single idea and he assumes that this correspondence is universal.

This confidence in language relates directly to the universal morality he embraces. A universal morality depends to a large extent on the transparency of language and its ability to reduce complex and ambiguous behavior and desire to “good” or “bad.” This

lies behind Melanctha's rebuke of Jeff, "You always wanting to have it all clear out in words always, what everybody is always feeling" as well as the narrator's observation during the height of their romance, "More and more every day now, he did not think anything in words about what he was always doing" (121, 109). Now Jeff can only find joy without language because once he applies words to his desires/feelings they must be reduced to "good" or "bad," and since he hesitates to name them we can assume that they would be classified as "bad." But regardless of which he chooses, the process of reflection sublimates desire—a sublimation that is ultimately linguistic.

Jeff's beliefs, however, are consistently undermined by Stein's aesthetic. This formal experimentation that marks the transition from the Victorian *Q.E.D.* to the modernist "Melanctha" can be seen as an attempt to combat the global cosmopolitanism that threatens to assimilate minoritarian cultures through a universal reason rendered meaningless by a loss of community. Stein accomplishes this in two ways: the first way is through a self-reflexivity that exposes how meaning is produced, thereby dispelling imminence. The following passage from *Q.E.D.* illustrates this self-reflexivity: "Adele saw Mabel's eyes grow large and absorbent. They took in all of Helen's weariness, her look of longing and all the meanings of it all. The drama of the ages was so complete that for the moment Adele lost herself in the spectacle" (255). In *Q.E.D.*, the reader plays the role of Mabel, interpreting inferences and understatement into a coherent narrative. The drama lies within this narrative and the meaning in its dénouement. In "Melanctha," however, the reader plays the role of Adele watching Mabel interpret inferences and understatement into a narrative. The drama lies in the act of interpretation, the spectacle of reading. The question is not *what* it means but *how* it means. For instance, towards the

end of their relationship, Jeff begs Melanctha “Oh Melanctha, darling, do you love me? Oh Melanctha, please, please, tell me honest, tell me do you really love me?” To which Melanctha replies, “Oh you stupid Jeff boy, of course I always love you ... Yes I love you Jeff, how often you want me to tell you. Oh you so stupid Jeff, but yet I love you. Now I won’t say it no more now tonight Jeff, you hear me ... Yes I love you, sure, Jeff, though you don’t any way deserve it from me” (125). The narrator records Jeff’s reaction as follows: “He did not really doubt her but somehow it was wrong now, the way Melanctha said it. Something he knew, was not right now in her. Something in her always was making stronger the torment that was tearing every minute at the joy he once always had had with her” (125). Far from alleviating Jeff’s anxiety, Melanctha’s repeated iterations of love exacerbate it. Melanctha responds to Jeff’s constant need to know by demonstrating the impossibility of absolute knowledge. The two concepts Melanctha destabilizes are “truth” and “love.” Melanctha forces Jeff to see the instability of language and instability means there is not truth, only interpretation, only *how* a thing means rather than *what* a thing means. One can never know for sure if your partner loves you. Love requires faith. The same goes for interpretation. One can never know for sure the meaning once one realizes the impossibility of absolutely knowing intent, which becomes increasingly obfuscated as communal bonds erode. This realization shatters Jeff’s concept of self, expressed in the unusual and uncharacteristic visceral alliteration “the torment that was tearing every minute.”

But Stein’s primary means of resisting cosmopolitanism is by showing that meaning—whether in life or in language—is always local. In the above example, Melanctha’s repetition of “love” exacerbates Jeff’s anxiety because the iteration robs

“love” of any significant meaning. Jeff does not feel that Melanctha’s use of “love” (along with the accompanied insults) means what it means to Jeff. This repetition shows not only the instability of language, but also that meaning is local, not universal.

“Cézanne conceived the idea that in composition one thing was as important as another thing,” says Gertrude Stein in regards to “Melanctha,” “Each part is as important as the whole, and that impressed me enormously” (“Interview” 15). This tension between the particular and the universal plays itself out in meaning. Throughout the story, Stein shows that meaning arises from the feelings evoked by words, not the words themselves. She demonstrates this by using dialect, “I certainly am right Melanctha about them always you have to do it, and I knows it; but you certainly never can noways learn to act right Melanctha, I certainly do know that, I certainly do my best Melanctha to help you with it only you certainly never do act right Melanctha, not to nobody ever, I can see it” (161). We understand these lines *despite* the language. If we tease out the double and triple negatives, we get, something like, “You certainly can learn to act right Melanctha ... you certainly act right, to everybody all the time, I can see it.” This, of course, is not the intended meaning. The double and triple negatives create the feeling of negation that directs the meaning. But Jeff also reveals more than he intends. The repetition of “certainly” undermines his certainty. Like with “love,” the constant iteration robs it of meaning.

This resistance to cosmopolitanism proved short lived for Stein. In fact, Jessica Berman has shown that Stein would soon embrace this cosmopolitanism in order to challenge different sorts of conventions in *The Making of Americans*. Moreover, the post-Melanctha Stein was apparently free from the sort of ambivalence towards global



cosmopolitanism that so plagued James Joyce, as we will see in the next chapter. As Gary Levine has shown, the same cosmopolitanism she resists in “Melanctha” led her to champion an economic conservatism described as a “critique of government spending, taxation policies that penalize the rich, and excessive social benefits”—a critique that makes Stein not only a proto-neoliberal but also a member of today’s Republican Party (157).<sup>33</sup> I would argue, however, that the aesthetic development that occurred after “Melanctha” along with the corresponding affirmation of global cosmopolitanism represents the embrace of a distinctly American identity in place of a Jewish one. Jewishness for Stein, as we have seen, meant rootedness and “Melanctha” and the modernist moment it represents revealed its loss.

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<sup>33</sup> See Levine’s *The Merchant of Modernism*, 155–61, for a more detailed account of Stein’s economic writings.

## Chapter 2: Is Bloom (and, therefore, Modernism) Transnational?

A little after eight o'clock on the morning of June 16, 1904, Stephen Dedalus regards an elderly milkwoman, standing by his elbow:

He watched her pour into the measure and thence into the jug rich white milk, not hers. Old shrunken paps. ... Crouching by a patient cow at daybreak in the lush field, a witch on her toadstool, her wrinkled fingers quick at the squirting dugs. They lowed about her whom they knew, dew-silky cattle. Silk of the kine and poor old woman, names given her in old times. A wandering crone, lowly form of an immortal serving her conqueror and her gay betrayer, their common cuckqueen, a messenger from the secret morning. (1.397–407)

About seven miles or so northwest of Martello tower at Dorsey Street, Leopold Bloom considers a Zionist flier in Dlugacz's where he's gone to purchase a not-quite-kosher pork kidney. The sheet, awash in images of a "Farmhouse, wall round it, blurred cattle cropping" (4.156–7), offers land to be planted with "eucalyptus trees" as well as "olives, oranges, almonds or citrons" in "orange groves and immense melon fields" (4.191–99). Disavowing the project as "Nothing doing. Still an idea behind it," Bloom sees through the lush imagery:

No, not like that. A barren land, bare waste ... A dead sea in a dead land, grey and old. Old now. It bore the oldest, the first race ... The oldest people. Wandered far away over all the earth, captivity to captivity, multiplying, dying, being born everywhere. It lay there now. Now it could bear no more. Dead: and old woman's: the grey sunken cunt of the world. (4.219–29)

At almost the exact same moment, Stephen and Bloom both consider their heritage and reach the same conclusion. For Stephen, Ireland is an elderly woman with “old shrunken paps.” For Bloom, Palestine is “the grey sunken cunt of the world.” Both describe their homeland as barren, their people as wanderers, and the idea of return as illusory. Both see through the mythology that binds culture to soil and nation to territory, and recognize instead a history of diaspora and dispossession.

In rejecting a static, rooted sense of culture, Stephen and Bloom affirm what James Clifford calls “traveling cultures,” or, more specifically, “discrepant cosmopolitanism”—an alternative conception of culture as dynamic and mobile and of cultural identity as rooted in “specific, often violent, histories of economic, political, and cultural interaction” as well as “routed” in the displacement and transplantation that bring cultures into contact (“Traveling” 36). Like other theories of new cosmopolitanism, Clifford’s discrepant form avoids both the “excessive localism” evident in Irish and Jewish nationalisms, but also the “global vision of a capitalist or technocratic monoculture” (36). In so doing, Clifford establishes a basis for a comparative cultural studies; while the specific cultures produced might be unique, the process of negotiation, the different forms of encounter, and the development of multiple affiliations that produce such cultures can be located and compared (“Mixed” 365).

Clifford’s theory of traveling cultures and his conception of discrepant cosmopolitanism has played an important role in the transnational turn in modernist studies. In fact, Clifford’s ideas have provided an important theoretical framework for bringing different “modernisms” into conversation, particularly those studies that seek to compare European modernism with postcolonial literature. For instance, Jahan Ramazani

uses Clifford's discrepant cosmopolitanism to develop a productive dialogue among the "modernist bricolage" of T.S. Eliot and Ezra Pound and the "postcolonial hybridity" of Christopher Okigbo, A.K. Ramanujan, and others. While Ramazani acknowledges the vast geographical, political, ethnic, and historical differences, he locates continuities in their experiences of displacement and transplantation and their poetry as expressions of this discrepant cosmopolitanism (448–9).

The sort of dialogue represented in Clifford's ideas and demonstrated in the work of Ramazani and other modernist scholars can be seen in the communion between Stephen and Bloom that occurs around two o'clock in the morning on June 15 in the penultimate episode of *Ulysses*, "Ithaca." After a long day of experiencing the violence of cross-cultural encounter, be it with the "excessive localism" of the Citizen's biscuit tin in "Cyclops" or the imperial "monoculture" of Private Carr's fist in "Circe," Stephen and Bloom come together to compare the different languages, literatures, lore, and music of two cultures shaped by diaspora and dispossession. This communion, I will argue in the first part of this essay, epitomizes both a global cosmopolitan ideal and the promise of a transnational approach to literary modernism.

Yet new cosmopolitanism in general and Clifford's theories in particular are not without their detractors. The most prominent among these detractors is Timothy Brennan, who has criticized Clifford's argument in "Traveling Cultures" for its failure to "hold out a sophisticated theoretical space for a defensive nationalism." "How is it possible," Brennan asks, "to divorce the near unanimity in humanistic theory of the tropes of traversing ... from the climate created by the 'global vision of a capitalist or technocratic monoculture?'" (*At Home* 17–8). While modernist studies working in transnationalism or

cosmopolitanism often acknowledge Brennan's concerns, they rarely consider the larger implications of such concerns.<sup>34</sup> For instance, in *New World Modernisms*, Charles W. Pollard claims that "Clifford's discrepant cosmopolitanism essentially restates and reorients the modernist ideal, an ideal that recognizes the fragmentation and diversity of any contemporary culture but also seeks to bring those fragments together to form new, provisional and transnational cultural wholes" (8).<sup>35</sup> Pollard's assertion here articulates, in part, what I argue occurs with Stephen and Bloom at 7 Eccles Street: in "Telemachus" and "Calypso," Stephen and Bloom recognize the fragmentation and diversity of their cultures while in "Ithaca" they bring these fragments together to form a new, provisional, and transnational cultural whole. Pollard makes this claim, however, only after acknowledging the validity of Brennan's point—indeed, Pollard argues, critics must be careful not to conflate cosmopolitanism with Western universalism. But Pollard asserts that Brennan "does not sufficiently recognize the *discrepancy* in Clifford's discrepant cosmopolitanism." The term connotes "insurgency, contestation, and divergence" and involves "recognizing national, linguistic, and cultural differences," but Clifford "does not conceive of these differences as an *exclusive* way to understand cultural resistance and formation." Clifford's cosmopolitanism, Pollard asserts, "suggests that cultural change occurs through strategic collaboration, as well as direct opposition" (8).

But Brennan's point is exactly that. To hold out a theoretical space for a defensive nationalism would render discrepant cosmopolitanism meaningless, for a defensive

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<sup>34</sup> For modernist studies that acknowledge and dismiss Brennan's concerns, see, for instance, Rebecca Walkowitz's *Cosmopolitan Style*, 133; Berthold Schoene's *The Cosmopolitan Novel*, 10–1; and Robert Spencer's *Cosmopolitan Criticism and Postcolonial Literature*, 36–7. For more theoretical works that do the same, see Robbins's *Secular Vocations*, 183–5, and Caren Kaplan's *Questions of Travel: Postmodern Discourses of Displacement*, 123–126. Robbins and Kaplan respond to similar ideas of Brennan's, but in his earlier work on Salman Rushdie, of which I will have more to say in Chapter 3.

<sup>35</sup> Pollard's claim itself has provided the theoretical framework for some transnational modernist studies. See, for instance, Dean Irvin's "Dialectical Modernisms: Postcoloniality and Diaspora in A.M. Klein."

nationalism needs to defend itself against benevolent transnational theories that conceive resistance primarily in terms of culture. A transnational theory that fails to fully appreciate the economic and political implications of its “strategic collaboration” risks aiding, abetting, and collapsing into the Western universalism of neo-liberalism or the “global vision of a capitalist or technocratic monoculture.” In other words, it risks being used to “humanize the bottom line,” as Brennan puts it elsewhere (*Wars* 210). This is not to say that Pollard or other scholars working in the transnational mode do not consider the material implications of their work. However, when one such argument asserts that humanists “have a role in humanizing globalization,” and that “achieving a ‘culturally sensitive global economy’ requires culturally sensitive thought,” it should give us pause (Cuddy-Keane 554).

Therefore, in the second part of this essay, I pursue the implications of Brennan’s critique of new cosmopolitan thought and the transnational turn in modernist studies that relies on new cosmopolitanism for its theoretical framework, looking specifically at Melba Cuddy-Keane’s notion of “cultural globalization” and Susan Stanford Friedman’s “polycentric modernities.” I contend that while Stephen and Bloom’s communion in “Ithaca” represents the global cosmopolitan ideal and the promise of a transnational approach to literary modernism, the failure of this communion symbolizes the dangers of global cosmopolitanism and the flaws underlying transnational modernism. I conclude by illustrating how these dangers and flaws manifest themselves in a comparative reading of a contrasting cultural encounter: that of Mustafa Sa’eed in Tayeb Salih’s *Season of Migration to the North*.

Bloom is different from his fellow Dubliners. We know he is different because we hear other characters point out his differences throughout the day, whether it be the way he acts (“If you ask him to have a drink first thing he does he outs with the watch to see what he ought to imbibe”), the way he speaks (“Mr Bloom with his argol bargol”), the way he walks (“Both smiled over the crossblind at the file of capering newsboys in Mr Bloom’s wake, the last zigzagging white on the breeze a mocking kite”), and the way he looks (“Married to the greasy nose! she yelled”) (8.980–1, 12.1580, 7.444–5, 11.173). We also notice Bloom’s difference in the critical distance registered in his stream-of-consciousness. For instance, as Bloom observes communion in “Lotus Eaters,” he thinks, “Rum idea: eating bits of a corpse. Why the cannibals cotton to it” (5.351–2). Bloom’s difference as a non-Catholic in Dublin frees him from the ideological trappings of such affiliations. Or, at least, it frees him enough to gain the distance necessary to render a critique against the Church, undermining the distinction between the “civilized” missionaries and the “primitive” Africans that they seek to save through a shared cannibalism.

Such distance can be contrasted with a perspective more intimately involved with the ideological apparatus: “Father Conmee thought of the souls of black and brown and yellow men and of his sermon of saint Peter Claver S.J. and the African mission and of the propagation of the faith and of the millions of black and brown and yellow souls that had not received the baptism of water ... It seemed to Father Conmee a pity that they should all be lost, a waste, if one might say” (10.143–6, 151–2). Conmee’s place within the Catholic Church prevents him from recognizing any sort of semblance in the Other. He proves incapable of seeing past racial difference (“black and brown and yellow men”)

because he perceives racial difference as an outward manifestation of spiritual inferiority (“black and brown and yellow souls”). That is, the “primitive” is different not because he is black, brown, or yellow, but rather because their skin color signifies an unpurified soul that needs to be washed away with baptismal water lest it should be lost, wasted. In lacking the distance necessary to recognize semblance, Conmee reifies hierarchical dynamics of power that connects religious conversion with the imperial mission.

Bloom’s distance plays an important role in how recent critics approach *Ulysses* as a whole. For instance, Enda Duffy views Bloom as the detached flâneur, “the very personification of the most characteristic modern persona, the man of the crowd” (62). Duffy’s argument—that “*Ulysses* can clearly be read as *the* example of an early twentieth-century flâneur-novel”—depends on Bloom’s separation from the crowd that he moves through; it depends on Bloom’s individuation from the masses (62). Similarly, in his essay “Traveling *Ulysses*,” William C. Mottolese argues that Bloom’s distance makes him “a very real Irish-Semitic traveler ... always lurking on the fringes of Dublin social life looking in”—an observation that plays a rather important role in an argument that reads *Ulysses* as a travel narrative (94, 93). Most relevant to the present argument, however, is Gregory Castle’s characterization of Bloom’s distance as “ethnographic detachment” (223). The relevance of Castle’s characterization lies in how it captures both the detachment connoted by cosmopolitanism as well as the (scientific) pretense towards objectivity such a cosmopolitan detachment aims to achieve.

Unlike Duffy and Mottolese (as well as the implication of my observation above), Castle uses Bloom’s distance—his “ethnographic detachment”—to expose the *limitations* of Bloom’s distanced perspective. According to Castle, what connects Bloom to Stephen



and distinguishes him from other Dubliners is that Bloom routinely subjects his own “direct observation” to criticism. However, unlike Stephen, this self-criticism consistently fails “to move beyond merely wondering” (233). Thus, Bloom’s thoughts often stray upon the superficial. Castle reveals the limitations of Bloom’s distance in the thoughts that precede the aforementioned meditation on Saint Peter Claver and the African mission: “The glasses would take their fancy, flashing. Like to see them sitting round in a ring with blub lips, entranced, listening. Still life. Lap it up like milk, I suppose” (5.335–7). While Bloom might be able to recognize the connection between religious conversion and imperialism, he continues to view the world through an anthropological lens that justifies racial hierarchy and imperialism, imagining African natives as childlike primitives entranced by shiny things. In other words, while Bloom recognizes how religion seems to legitimize colonialism, he is indifferent to this recognition, content to satisfy his wonder. In this, Castle argues, Bloom is like Conrad’s Marlow in *Heart of Darkness*, who understands that the idea of imperialism “is an abstraction in symbolic structures that exist purely to legitimate it” but remains ambivalent to the idea nonetheless (235). This is due, according to Castle, to “a dehiscence in [Bloom’s] social identity, a site of perpetual splitting where Orientalist and primitivist images coalesce briefly into fantasies that lack a coherent or stable ideological frame of reference” (235). For Castle, it seems that while the distance produced by Bloom’s split identity gives him the ability to recognize ideological apparatuses at work, the distance also denies him access to a stable and coherent ideology needed to construct a frame of reference in which to fully consider the implications of such recognitions. Thus, “like a good comparativist,” Bloom can compare Catholic and “savage” rituals without

acknowledging that what links them (cannibalism) undermines an imperialism that insists on a binary opposition between them. This lack of awareness, Castle maintains, is why “we have our doubts about him in the end, that we find his desires ambivalent and unsettling” (235).

Yet contrary to what Castle asserts, Bloom *does* construct a frame of reference for his recognitions and does so through the very source of the dehiscence in his social identity; namely, his Jewishness. For instance, observing communion after ruminating on the natives’ penchant for shiny things, Bloom thinks, “They don’t seem to chew it; only swallows it down. Rum idea: eating bits of corpse why the cannibals cotton to it” (5.351–2). Here, with a bit more context to a thought quoted earlier, we can more clearly see Bloom’s distance in his lack of familiarity with the ritual along with the critique such distance affords. After standing aside and then seating himself on a bench, Bloom returns to this train of thought: “Something like those mazzoth: it’s that sort of bread: unleavened shewbread. Look at them. Now I bet it makes them feel happy ... There’s a big idea behind it, kind of kingdom of God is within you feel ... Then feel all like one family party, same in the theatre, all in the same swim ... Not so lonely. In our confraternity” (5.358–9, 360–1, 362–4). Bloom uses Jewish culture—the mazzoth—in order to translate and understand not just the materiality of the host but also its significance. The act of consumption binds a community together; it offers materiality for an abstract concept. Moreover, like that of the host, the consumption of mazzoth can be seen as cannibalism since, as Bloom notes an hour or so later in “Hades” (“It’s the blood sinking in the earth gives new life. Same idea those jews they said killed the christian boy”) it was rumored for centuries that Jews used the blood of Christian children to make mazzoth (6.771–2;

Reizbaum 12–3). So, it's *that* sort of bread as well. By using his access to Jewish "history" and culture, Bloom is able not only to undermine the distinction between the "civilized" and the "primitive" through a shared cannibalism, but also recognize how the imperial idea that insists on the civilized/primitive dichotomy stems from an intense desire for community that depends on such dichotomies for self-definition.

Similarly, in "Lestrygonians," the sight of an impoverished Dilly Dedalus inspires in Bloom the following stream of consciousness: "Fifteen children he had. Birth every year almost. That's in their theology or the priest won't give the poor woman the confession, the absolution. Increase and multiply. Did you ever hear of such an idea? Eat you out of house and home. No families themselves to feed. Living off the fat of the land" (8.31–5). A train of thought that begins with a critique of a Catholic theology that (Bloom believes) denies childless women absolution and hence salvation turns into a general condemnation of the priesthood. It seems that for Bloom only a priesthood so disconnected socially ("No families themselves to feed") and economically ("living off the fat of the land") could promote an anti-Malthusian principle of "Increase and multiply" that only exacerbates poverty. However, it is when Bloom introduces an element from a different culture that his criticism "moves beyond mere wondering": "I'd like to see them do the black fast Yom Kippur. Crossbuns. One meal and a collation for fear he'd collapse on the alter" (8.35–7). The Jewish fast of Yom Kippur offers a comparative model of discipline and restraint that the Catholic fast of Good Friday fails to attain with their "Crossbuns." If crossbuns reveal a general lack of restraint on the part of the congregation, a meal and a collation amidst a fast reveals the quasi-gluttony of the priesthood. It also underscores a correlation between lack of restraint among priests and

the lack of restraint among their congregation. Bloom then associates this excess with lust and greed: “A housekeeper of one of those fellows if you could pick it out of her. Never pick it out of her. Like getting L.s.d. out of him. Does himself well. No guests” (8.37–9). In order to conceal their hypocrisy, the priesthood further insulates itself from the world around them. As they did with the collations and the crossbuns, such behavior inevitably influences their congregation, thus spreading their insulation outwards to the community as a whole, hence the turn to “No guests” from an outsider who faces routine anti-Semitism from those among the congregation. In other words, Bloom deduces that the xenophobia he endures can be traced to a priesthood that encourages insulation because it needs to conceal its hypocrisy.

It isn't only the Church and Catholicism that Bloom distances himself from, but also the relation of the Church to national sentiment. As Ben Dollard sings “The Croppy Boy” in “Sirens,” Bloom—for the most part—appears singularly unmoved. In fact, much of what “The Croppy Boy” inspires in Bloom relates to the aforementioned criticisms of Catholicism and the priesthood. The line “The Priest's at home” prompts Bloom to think, “Ruin them. Wreck them. Then build them cubicles to end their days in” (11.1018–9), while “*in nomino Domini*” and “*mea culpa*” reinforces Bloom's skepticism towards the clergy's use of Latin in “Lotus Eaters”: “Latin again. That holds them like birdlime” (11.1034). Yet Bloom's ruminations move beyond such skepticism when he applies his heritage to the moment of greatest pathos in the song (“I alone am left of my name and race”): “Last of his name and race. I too, last my race. Milly young student. Well, my fault perhaps. No son. Rudy. Too late now. Or is it? He bore no hate. Hate. Love. Those are names. Rudy. Soon I am old” (11.1064–9). Bloom identifies with the Croppy Boy as

a Jew, believing that the death of his son means that his name and race will die with him. That Bloom blames himself for the death of his son, and thus his name and race, reflects “an ancient Jewish belief that the health of a child is a reflection of the virility of the male”—a belief Bloom articulates earlier in “Hades”: “If it’s healthy it’s from the mother. If not the man” (6.329; Gifford & Seidman 111). Ironically, Bloom’s access to a different cultural tradition brings him closer to the “original” Croppy Boy than the other Irishmen in the bar. Both traditions emphasize personal responsibility, be it an ancient Jewish belief in virility (“Well, my fault perhaps”) or the rite of confession (“*mea culpa*”). This emphasis on personal responsibility perhaps enables the sort of empathy needed to forswear vengeance, to bear no hate. That “The Croppy Boy” is somewhat of a rebel ballad that inspires just such hatred for the British reveals that the Irish nationalist movement either fails to acknowledge their own complicity in their oppression and/or expresses a latent guilt they refuse to confront, both of which are entirely consistent with Joyce’s politics.<sup>36</sup> This is not to suggest that Bloom’s criticism *always* moves beyond merely wondering, but rather that the same Jewishness that creates his ethnographic distance often coincides with those moments when Bloom moves beyond merely wondering; his most trenchant analyses occur when he accesses his Jewishness to explain and understand the world around him, even if his understanding of Jewish and Irish history and culture is not entirely accurate.

The dehiscence in Bloom’s social identity that gives him the distance necessary to recognize ideological apparatuses as well as the Jewishness that produces this dehiscence and serve as a frame of reference in which to understand, represent, and critique those

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<sup>36</sup> See, for instance, Joyce’s essays “Fenianism: The Last Fenian” (138–41) and “The Home Rule Comet” (155–9) in James Joyce, *Occasional, Critical, and Political Writing*. For “The Croppy Boy” as a rebel ballad, see Andrew Gibson’s *Joyce’s Revenge*, 106.

apparatuses make Bloom less the traditional ethnographer as Castle suggests than a forerunner of the new “ethnographic subjectivity” that Clifford describes in *The Predicament of Culture*. In his essay “On Ethnographic Self-Fashioning,” Clifford claims that on or about 1900 the meaning of the word “culture” changed; it shifted from connoting a singular, evolutionary process to a pluralist, ethnographic conception—rather than the human progress towards one particular (British) ideal, culture came to signify different and multiple ways to give life meaning in different localities. Clifford focuses specifically on the birth of a new “ethnographic subjectivity” in the early twentieth century that only became dominant towards the end of the century. An increasingly integrated world made visible what thinkers like Nietzsche, Boas, and Durkheim once posited: that cultures and languages are “constructs, achieved fictions, containing and domesticating heteroglossia” (PC 95).

Along with Malinowski’s *Diary*, Clifford locates Conrad’s *Heart of Darkness* as a “powerful articulation” of this new ethnographic subjectivity (PC 95). This powerful articulation can be seen, according to Clifford, in Marlow’s lie to the Intended, where Marlow tells the Intended that Kurtz’s last words were “her name” rather than his “true” last words, “The horror! The horror!” Clifford argues that in this moment, Marlow recognizes that “culture” is neither monolithic nor true, that there are different domains of culture between, say, male and female, metropole and frontier. Each domain must maintain its own cultural fictions, like Marlow’s lie to the Intended: “While Marlow initially ‘abhors a lie,’ he learns to lie—that is, to communicate within the collective, partial fictions of cultural life” (PC 99). In this, Clifford seems to affirm Castle’s reading of Marlow as one who understands that the idea of imperialism “is an abstraction in

symbolic structures that exist purely to legitimate it” but remains ambivalent to the idea nonetheless. Yet for Clifford, the ethnographer in the story is not Marlow but rather the second narrator aboard the *Nellie* who listens to Marlow’s tale—the narrator we as readers are meant to identify with: “It [the second narrator’s story] represents, I propose, the ethnographic standpoint and a historical site of narrative authority that truthfully juxtaposes different truths” and acts as a voice of stability “not meant to be mistrusted” (PC 99). The distinction between Marlow as ethnographer and the second narrator as ethnographer is important because it distinguishes between an ethnography that recognizes ideology but remains ambivalent about it (like Castle’s Bloom) from an ethnography that recognizes ideology and subjects it to critique, that moves beyond merely wondering (like “my” Bloom). Marlow might not subject imperialism to critique, but Conrad does through the second narrator through Marlow.

Clifford makes it clear that it is Conrad’s (and Malinowski’s) “dehiscence” that enables them to recognize the ideological structures of the English society they inhabit. Conrad and Malinowski were “two displaced persons both of whom struggled in the early twentieth century with cosmopolitanism” (PC 95). Clifford emphasizes how this displacement put them in “a peculiarly advantageous ‘ethnographic’ position” (PC 98). As cultivated exiles from a society that still admired aristocratic values, Conrad and Malinowski “would keep a certain remove” from bourgeois society. This cosmopolitan distance, Clifford suggests, not only allowed them to comprehend culture as an achieved fiction, but also to insist on the need for the lie: “the two exiles shared a peculiarly Polish cultural distance, having been born into a nation that had since the eighteenth century

existed only as a fiction—but an intensely believed, serious fiction—of collective identity” (*PC* 98).

Thus, Conrad’s cosmopolitanism—like Bloom’s—gives him the distance necessary to recognize the ideological apparatuses of the society he is alienated from. Yet Clifford also emphasizes the lack of “a coherent or stable ideological frame of reference.” This instability and incoherence can also be seen in the way *Heart of Darkness* “render(s) an experience of loneliness, but one that is filled with other people and with other accents and that does not permit a feeling of centeredness, coherent dialogue, or authentic communion. In Conrad’s Congo his fellow whites are duplicitous and uncontrolled. The jungle is cacophonous, filled with too many voices—therefore mute, incoherent” (*PC* 102–3). In a way, Conrad’s Congo is the objective correlative of Conrad’s own displacement, his own distance. The cosmopolitanism and polyvocality that Clifford locates as the source of the critical distance needed to recognize the fiction of culture and its necessity become manifested in a condition of solitude, decenteredness, incoherence, and inauthenticity, populated by untrustworthy whites and the inassimilable voices of the jungle. But, like Bloom, Conrad is able to understand, represent, and critique the society and its ideologies through a different frame of reference. Where Bloom uses his Jewishness as this frame of reference, Conrad—in addition to his own cultural frame of reference—uses the English literary tradition as “a historical site of narrative authority that truthfully juxtaposes different truths” and a frame of reference that acts as a voice of stability “not meant to be mistrusted.”

The condition of solitude, decenteredness, incoherence, and inauthenticity that Conrad confronts through *Heart of Darkness* is the very same condition that Bloom



confronts in *All Hallows* and throughout *Ulysses*. It could also very well describe the predicament of modernity, and what drives congregations to communion and European powers to imperialism (“Not so lonely. In our confraternity”). Or, at least, this condition of solitude, decenteredness, incoherence, and inauthenticity represents a particularly Lukácsian understanding of modernity and the condition of exile foregrounded by international modernism. For, as Terry Eagleton famously argued, the difference between modernism and those movements that preceded it lay in the inability of British authors “to discover a point of operative distance from the partial interests and allegiances of their own cultures” (*Exiles* 6). To put it in terms that we have been using, British authors during the early 20th century were too immersed in the ideological apparatuses of English society to subject them to critique. Thus, foreign writers like James and Conrad took their place, successful in their development of the necessary “operative distance” because they could “bring to bear on the culture a range of experience—of America, Europe, Africa, the East—which went beyond its parochial limits, and with which England could be fruitfully compared” (*Exiles* 14). Not only did modernist writers have the “operative distance,” but they also possessed different frames of reference with which to understand, represent, and critique the society they were distanced from: “Eliot, Pound, Yeats, Joyce, and Lawrence,” Eagleton writes, “had immediate access to alternative cultures and traditions: broader frameworks against which, in a highly creative tension, the erosion of contemporary order could be situated and partially understood” (*Exiles* 15). Where writers like Conrad, Joyce, and Pound used their own cultural traditions as frames of reference for the community that they inhabited but were alienated from, the literary works that they composed with their frames of reference became in and of themselves

frames of reference for Europeans to comprehend a Europe that *they* felt alienated from. Eagleton's "international" conception of modernism as exile is shared by Edward Said, who speaks of exile as "independence and detachment" and observes, "Most people are principally aware of one culture, one setting, one home; exiles are aware of at least two, and this plurality of vision gives rise to an awareness of simultaneous dimensions, an awareness that—to borrow a phrase from music—is *contrapuntal*" ("Reflections" 148).

What limits international modernism and its focus on exile as well as the cosmopolitan detachment Bloom privileges is that, among other things, it tends to assimilate local specificity into global visions. Indeed, Emer Nolan takes Eagleton to task for this very reason. She criticizes Eagleton's dismissal of the particularity of Dublin and Irish culture, arguing that Eagleton believes that "only by virtue of [Joyce's] participation in metropolitan culture does Joyce gain access to the realm of the international" (9). A similar critique can be leveled at the form of cosmopolitanism represented in Bloom's thoughts, regardless of how deep they plunge. For the most part, Bloom tends to subsume the particularity of Irish culture into vague generalizations regarding human nature. This occurs most clearly in *All Hallows* where he uses the host to develop a larger theory of community. This could be one reason why Castle concludes of Bloom that "we have our doubts about him in the end, that we find his desires ambivalent and unsettling."

Yet for all of Bloom's differences, he remains deeply connected to his local community. This is Karen Lawrence's point when she criticizes Duffy's reading of Bloom as the postcolonial flâneur: "Although Bloom is often cast as an outsider, a stranger amongst the other Dubliners, in fact, he is adept at avoidance because he knows the terrain of the familiar" (146). In a sense, Bloom's cosmopolitan detachment is born

from his familiarity. The significance of this familiarity in imagining the nation forms a central part of Toby H. Loeffler's argument on *Ulysses* and "banal nationalism." Loeffler, using Michael Billig's theory of "banal nationalism," argues that Bloom's experience throughout June 16 "coalesces as a series of actions and thoughts which locate him within the Dublin of 1904 and unmistakably identify him as an Irish citizen" (41). But the intensity of Bloom's attachment to Dublin and Ireland goes beyond the mere banal: "I'm ... as good an Irishman as that rude person I told you about at the outset," Bloom tells Stephen in "Eumaeus," alluding to the Citizen. And, while Bloom opposes the Citizen's narrow, racial definition of Irishness with a vague cosmopolitanism embodied in his Circean fantasy, he later situates his cosmopolitanism within his particular community. After imparting to Stephen his political vision of giving "all creeds and classes ... something in the neighborhood of £300 per annum" in order to facilitate friendliness, Bloom declares, "I call that patriotism" (16.1131–3, 1133–5, 1138). The same socialism and idealism remains from his New Bloomusalem fantasy, but here Bloom locates it within a discourse of national feeling. While Bloom's civic-minded, cosmopolitan patriotism might be less recognizable than the Citizen's ethnicity-based, nationalist patriotism, it is just as valid.

Or so asserts Kwame Anthony Appiah. Appiah, one of the foremost theorists of new cosmopolitanism, claims, "We cosmopolitans *can* be patriots. ... Our loyalty to humankind—so vast, so abstract, a unity—does not deprive us of the capacity to care for other people" (26–7). Rather than the privileged and elitist detachment of traditional cosmopolitanism, new cosmopolitan theorists like Appiah entertain multiple attachments by asserting that loyalty to humankind and caring for one's neighbors are not mutually

exclusive. Thus, we can see Bloom's ambivalence as Irishman and Jew, flâneur and familiar, lurking on the fringes of Dublin society and unmistakably Irish, as the embodiment of the new cosmopolitanism rather than that of traditional cosmopolitanism. He possesses the distance necessary to imagine a world beyond national border and the detachment needed to conceive of transnational community, but he remains firmly rooted to his family, his neighbors, his city, and his nation.

Throughout *Ulysses*, Stephen aspires to the cosmopolitanism embodied in Bloom. Since, as Andrew Gibson puts it, "Stephen's condition is actually one of painful belonging rather than alienation," this means achieving a similar distance or detachment from his community that Bloom already possesses (39). Stephen's predicament appears most clearly in an exchange with Garret Deasy about Jews in "Nestor":

—They sinned against the light, Mr. Deasy said gravely. And you can see the darkness in their eyes. And that is why they are wanderers on the earth to this day.

On the steps of the Paris stock exchange the goldskinned men quoting prices on their gemmed fingers. Gabble of geese. They swarmed loud, uncouth, about the temple, their heads thickplotting under maladroit silk hats. Not theirs: these clothes, this speech, these gestures. Their full slow eyes belied the words, the gestures eager and unoffending, but knew the rancours massed about them and knew their zeal was in vain. Vain patience to heap and hoard. Time surely would scatter all. A hoard heaped by the roadside: plundered and passing on. Their eyes knew their years of wandering and, patient, knew the dishonours of their flesh.

—Who has not? Stephen said.

—What do you mean?

He came forward a pace and stood by the table. His underjaw sideways open uncertainly. Is this old wisdom? He waits to hear from me.

—History, Stephen said, is a nightmare from which I'm trying to awake.

(2.361–77)

What begins as an allusion to Christ and the moneychangers soon turns into recognition: “Not theirs: these clothes, this speech, these gestures” —a line that recalls a similar one from *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*: “The language in which we are speaking is his before it is mine,” thinks Stephen, “I cannot speak or write these words without unrest of spirit” (205). Like the Irish, no matter what the rancor, the *ressentiment*, the Jews lack the power and hence the agency to master their circumstances. Whether it be zeal or patience, any attempt at self-determination would be in vain, for a Jew's hoard—his livelihood, his security—could be plundered tomorrow by the dominant culture, and tomorrow he might be driven from his home unto the roadside. Yet despite this knowledge and awareness, Jews continue to heap and hoard with zeal and patience. Despite a nightmarish history that tells them of its futility, the Jew perseveres. This is the kind of detachment Stephen longs for—a freedom, a detachment from the nightmare of Irish history. He wants to extricate himself in order to move beyond *ressentiment*—in order to speak and write without unrest of soul.

Stephen has tried to extricate himself from history before. In *Portrait*, he tells Cranly, “I will not serve that in which I no longer believe whether it call itself my home, my fatherland or my church: and I will try to express myself in some mode of life or art as freely as I can and as wholly as I can, using for my defense the only arms I allow

myself to use—silence, exile, and cunning” (268–9). Much of Stephen’s cosmopolitan flight to Paris, then, originates in a desire to distance himself from local affiliations of family, nation, and religion by using weapons of detachment—silence, exile, and cunning—in order to gain the freedom necessary to express himself in some higher mode of being. But Stephen’s cosmopolitan flight fails, both in its cosmopolitan encounter with French culture and its flight from Irish history. This failure becomes embodied in the figure of Kevin Egan. As Vincent Cheng notes, despite his time in Paris, Egan remains almost untouched by Parisian life. Egan proves “unable to admit or incorporate hybrid and foreign experiences as part of his own complex identity” unlike “the Parisian bohemian and cosmopolitan freethinking indulged in by Stephen” (226). However, while Stephen engages in Parisian culture to a greater degree than Egan, his thinking remains more fettered than free, dominated as it is by mimeticism. For instance, while recalling his trip to Paris, Stephen thinks, “Proudly walking. Whom were you trying to walk like? Forget: a dispossessed. With mother’s money order, eight shillings” (3.184–5).<sup>37</sup> Not only is Stephen’s cosmopolitan engagement limited by performativity, but the recollection leads to an economic dependence on his family (“mother’s money order”) that Mark Osteen credits for Stephen’s inability “to liberate himself from history as quicksand or nightmare” (60).<sup>38</sup>

Bloom, on the other hand, serves as a model of the colonial subjectivity free from *ressentiment* and awakened from the nightmare of history: “And I belong to a race too,

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<sup>37</sup> For a more detailed discussion of Stephen’s mimeticism in “Proteus” see Kimberley Devlin’s *James Joyce’s Fraudstuff*, 26–9. Devlin argues that Stephen’s mimeticism represents a symptom of an ontological crisis of supersaturation that appears in *Stephen Hero* as the erection of boundaries and in *Portrait* as gestures of distancing like exile and detachment.

<sup>38</sup> More generally, Michael Tratner summarizes Stephen’s walk on Sandymount Strand in “Proteus” with the following: “All he can think of on the beach, however, is his inability to break free of the hold of Irish society and of his family on him—his inability to plunge into those waters outside the social order” (195).

says Bloom, that is hated and persecuted ... Robbed ... Plundered. Insulted. Persecuted. Taking what belongs to us by right ... But it's no use ... force, hatred, history. That's not life for men and women, insult and hatred. And everybody knows it's the very opposite of that that is really life" (12.1467, 1470–1, 1481–3). Here Bloom characterizes his race by those qualities of Jewishness that Stephen admires in "Nestor." Stephen's earlier thoughts on the Jew's history of dispossession—"a hoard heaped by the roadside: plundered and passing on"—becomes for Bloom his own history of dispossession, "Robbed ... Plundered ... taking what belongs to us by right." Just as the Parisian Jews "knew the rancours amassed about them and knew their zeal was in vain," Bloom realizes that his own zeal—the rancours amassed expressed in his indignation—is in vain: "But it's no use ... force, hatred, history." Bloom's ability to transcend his rancor—his *ressentiment*—stems from his faith in a concept of community based on mutual understanding: "That's not life for men and women, insult and hatred. And everybody knows it's the very opposite of that that is really life."

Fostering such a community based on mutual understanding becomes Appiah's focus in his later works on cosmopolitanism. In these works, he replaces "cosmopolitan patriotism" with "rooted cosmopolitanism," but the theory remains essentially the same: the belief in a universal morality combined with a respect for legitimate differences. Appiah's project, however, becomes more ambitious as he attempts to develop a philosophical and ethical framework in which to nurture the productive cross-cultural encounters necessary for a global cosmopolitanism to flourish. He does this through the metaphor of the conversation. There should be universal values, Appiah claims, and must be local values, but the relative weight placed on different values will always be

contested (*Cosmopolitanism* xxii). Thus, what enables cross-cultural conversation is not shared values but rather a shared *language* of values, as the aim of the cross-cultural encounter lies not in convincing nor conversion but understanding (*Cosmopolitanism* xxii; Yates 44). As such, cosmopolitanism requires a certain attitude: a commitment to pluralism (“there are many values worth living by and that you cannot live by them all [so] we expect that different people and different societies will embody different values”) and fallibilism (“the sense that our knowledge is imperfect, provisional, subject to revision in the face of new evidence”)—a desire to make sense of the other while acknowledging the other’s right to live however they choose to live (*Cosmopolitanism* 144).<sup>39</sup>

Appiah’s metaphor of the cross-cultural encounter as conversation can be applied to Clifford’s ideas in “Traveling Culture.” Both Appiah and Clifford as well as other new cosmopolitan theorists seek to transcend the mosaic of multiculturalism (excessive localism) while avoiding the uniformity of universalism (global monoculture) by bringing different cultures into dialogue while maintaining their distinctiveness as cultures. To bring them into dialogue requires a shared language, so to speak. For the moral philosopher Appiah, this is a shared language of values. For the anthropologist Clifford, this is a shared language of “travel.” Clifford uses “travel” as a term of translation: “a word of apparently general application used for comparison in a strategic and contingent way” (39). By using travel as a term of translation, Clifford can bring cultures of the bourgeois traveler into conversation with those whose travel has been coerced. For instance, one may use “travel” to compare Congolese migrant workers with the European

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<sup>39</sup> See also Appiah’s chapter on “Rooted Cosmopolitanism” in *Ethics of Identity*, 213–72. In this chapter, Appiah discusses cosmopolitanism drawing more heavily on John Stuart Mill and liberalism.



tradition of the dandy, as a study Clifford cites does (35). Clifford recognizes the vast differences between these cultures, but he insists that these differences should not prevent them from being compared, as long as these differences are acknowledged. In this way, he brings different cultures into conversation while maintaining their distinctiveness as cultures.

To paraphrase Jameson, part of what distinguishes *Ulysses* from other modernist texts is its colonial setting where the presence of another culture is somewhat ubiquitous (“Modernism” 63). Thus, every cross-cultural “conversation” Stephen engages in—with Haines in “Telemachus,” Deasy in “Nestor,” the Anglo-Irish literati in “Scylla and Charybdis,” and Private Carr in “Circe”—is already inscribed by vast political and economic inequalities. But any sense of developing a productive dialogue between cultures is frustrated as much by the unwillingness of the powerful to acknowledge these inequalities as the inequalities themselves. For instance, Haines’s line to Stephen that “history is to blame” for over a century a colonial exploitation fails to acknowledge that this history is a product of English political power in Ireland (1.649). Or, Deasy’s lesson to Stephen that the Englishman’s proudest boast is, “*I paid my way. I never borrowed a shilling in my life. Can you feel that?*” ignores the vast economic inequalities between the West Briton and the Irish Catholic. In fact, the anti-Semitism that both characters exhibit can be seen as attempts to divest the British of responsibility for colonialism by asserting an equivalence between British and Irish as victims of an even more powerful entity. In so doing, both Haines and Deasy elide the differences between Stephen and themselves.

Acknowledgement and respect for particular distinctions between cultures become the foundation of the global cosmopolitan community that Stephen and Bloom

form ever so briefly in “Ithaca.” The episode frames the encounter as a cross-cultural dialogue made possible by a mutual recognition of a shared traveling culture while maintaining the distinctiveness of their respective cultures. After locating correspondences between Gaelic and Hebrew, the narrator offers the following question and response:

What points of contact existed between these languages and between the peoples who spoke them?

The presence of guttural sounds, diacritic aspirations, epenthetic and servile letters in both languages: their antiquity, both having been taught on the plain of Shinar 242 years after the deluge in the seminary instituted by Fenius Farsaigh, descendant of Noah, progenitor of Israel, and ascendant of Heber and Heremon, progenitors of Ireland: their archeological, genealogical, hagiographical, exegetical, homilectic, toponomastic, historical and religious literatures comprising the works of rabbis and culdees, Torah, Talmud (Mischna and Ghemara) Massor, Pentateuch, Book of the Dun Cow, Book of Ballymote, Garland of Howth, Book of Kells: their dispersal, persecution, survival and revival: the isolation of their synagogical and ecclesiastical rites in ghetto (S. Mary’s Abbey) and masshouse (Adam and Eve’s tavern): the proscription of their national costumes in penal laws and jewish dress acts: the restoration in Channan of Zion and the possibility of Irish political autonomy or devolution. (17.745–60)

Somewhat obscured in the comedy of the polysyllabic list lies the recognition of a common traveling culture—“their dispersal, persecution, survival and revival.” This recognition represents both the point of departure and the root of all other points of

contact. The languages, literatures, and lore all function as a way to bind deterritorialized and “imagined” communities together.<sup>40</sup> The points of contact that follow—the poor conditions of the places of worship, laws prohibiting national and religious dress, the desire for national restoration—all result from the powerlessness dispersal engenders. Their discrepant cosmopolitanism thus forms the basis for comparison. The cross-cultural conversation follows Appiah’s cosmopolitan principles as well. While they share a cosmopolitan curiosity, they do have disagreements. For instance, “Stephen dissented openly from Bloom’s views on the importance of dietary and civic selfhelp while Bloom dissented tacitly from Stephen’s view on the eternal affirmation of the spirit of man in literature” (17.28–30). Despite such disagreements, each appears to respect the other’s right to live as he so chooses. After all, we learn a bit later that Bloom manages to repress a “didactic counsel” on the dietary, suggesting that his aim is less to convince than to foster understanding—“Light to the gentiles,” as the narrator puts it (17.248–9, 353). Through this cross-cultural dialogue, the pair achieve a brief communion—a community of two but a model of postcolonial, postnational community that represents the global cosmopolitan ideal.

The sense of community beyond borders that this conversation represents becomes even more relevant as colonialism becomes neocolonialism and the economies and technologies of globalization bring more cultures into contact at greater frequency. It may come as little surprise, then, that “Clifford’s neologism [discrepant

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<sup>40</sup> Regarding the Irish traveling culture, Gifford and Seidman write, “The dispersions of the Irish have been endemic, beginning with the ‘Flight of the Earls’ in 1607; continuing when, under Sir Patrick Sarsfield, almost the entire Irish army went into exile on the Continent after the Treaty of Limerick in 1691; and climaxing during and after the Great Irish Famine of the 1840s” (578). In his essay “Diasporas,” Clifford argues, “If this center [of a diaspora culture] becomes associated with an actual ‘national’ territory—rather than with a reinvented ‘tradition,’ a ‘book,’ a portable eschatology—it may devalue what I call the lateral axes of diaspora” (269). Of course, as with both Irish and Jewish, a culture can be centered on a reinvented tradition, a book, a portable eschatology, *and* national territory.

cosmopolitanism] and others like it have been taken up by modernist critics who find in such terms a way to begin accounting for global modernisms flourishing beyond the temporal and spatial boundaries of the (one might say provincial) Anglo-European model” (Lyon 393).

The transnational turn in modernist studies can be seen as an attempt to recreate the conversation between Stephen and Bloom. In their article “The New Modernist Studies,” Douglas Mao and Rebecca Walkowitz highlight scholarship that examines how modernists “designed new models of transnational community” among the kinds of work transnational modernism has produced (738–9). As they note, one of the earliest examples of such work is Melba Cuddy-Keane’s “Modernism, Geopolitics, Globalization.” In this essay, Cuddy-Keane examines the role literature played in the global consciousness emerging during the early twentieth century. Such an examination, Cuddy-Keane asserts, challenges an exclusively economic conception of globalization along with its association with homogeneity and exploitation. A purely economic understanding of globalization is dangerous because it offers anti-globalization as the only alternative. Instead, Cuddy-Keane offers a third possibility between economic globalization and anti-globalization, “a broad and continuing historical investigation of global currents of thought, tracing the complexities and thus their choices that animate the multidirectional experience of living in an interdependent, interactive world” (541). Cuddy-Keane calls this third possibility “cultural globalization,” which achieved a new degree of awareness during the first half of the twentieth century. And like its economic cousin, cultural globalization is capable of both dystopian and utopian articulations. While Cuddy-Keane’s argument explicitly relies on the theories of Arjun Appadurai, it

also echoes what we have seen in James Clifford's new cosmopolitanism, not only in her third possibility between a global monoculture and excessive localism (as a reaction to global monoculture), but also in her characterization of this third possibility, its response, and its dystopian and utopian articulations. Moreover, in focusing on the generally positive and "transformative" aspects of global connectivity, Cuddy-Keane's characterization of cross-cultural encounters bears some resemblance to Appiah's cosmopolitan ideal as well as the global cosmopolitanism represented in Stephen and Bloom's communion, particularly her category of "cohabiting globalization":

"Cohabiting globalization fosters the construction of home identity not as a center but as a region of the world; it correspondingly promotes an understanding of the world as a pluralistic home of diverse individuals" (551). In acknowledging the self as one center among others and recognizing global diversity, this mode of encounter displays the commitment to pluralism and fallibilism Appiah advocates and Stephen and Bloom demonstrate.

Like Melba Cuddy-Keane, Susan Stanford Friedman employs the theoretical framework of new cosmopolitanism to transform a traditionally oppositional relationship between the center and the periphery characterized by exploitation and resistance into one of cultural engagement, creative exchange, and shared agency.<sup>41</sup> For Friedman, this entails developing a new understanding of modernism beyond the spatial and temporal borders of Europe and the United States between 1890 and 1940. Rather than a single modernity based on worldwide capitalism (*pace* Jameson), Friedman offers plural modernities that involve "a powerful vortex of historical conditions that coalesce to

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<sup>41</sup> In "Modernisms, World Literature, and Comparativity," Friedman opposes the center/periphery model of Immanuel Wallerstein's world-system theory with a model of circulation based on the theories of Clifford, among others (501).

produce sharp ruptures from the past that range widely across various sectors of a given society” associated with “the intensification of intercultural contact zones” and characterized and generated by “heightened hybridizations, jarring juxtapositions, and increasingly porous borders” (“Periodizing” 433).<sup>42</sup> Thus, in dissociating modernity from imperialism and capitalism, Friedman replaces an inherently oppositional Eurocentric modernity with relational polycentric modernities.<sup>43</sup> Such a move from modernity to modernisms mirrors the similar move from cosmopolitanism to cosmopolitanisms in new cosmopolitan theories.<sup>44</sup> This pluralization reflects the attempt to engage other (usually non-Western) cultures without assimilating (imperialism) or opposing them (Orientalism)—strategies which have made transnational encounters a historical source of exploitation and violence, as Friedman acknowledges. At the same time, however, both Friedman and theorists of new cosmopolitanism avoid cultural relativism by endowing other cultures with the agency to move beyond *ressentiment*. Just as Clifford gives diaspora and migrant cultures the agency to resist “the harshest conditions of travel” and “the most exploitative regimes,” Friedman “refuses victimology and assumes agency on all sides of the zones of encounter ... the drive to name one’s collective and individual identity and to negotiate the conditions of history, no matter how harsh” (“Traveling Cultures” 35; “Periodizing” 428). In so doing, Clifford and Friedman establish the theoretical framework to best nurture transnational encounters and a global

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<sup>42</sup> Jameson states that “the only satisfactory semantic meaning of modernity lies in its association with capitalism” (*Singular* 12). For Friedman’s rebuttal to Jameson’s assertion, see her “Planetary: Musing Modernist Studies,” 480–1.

<sup>43</sup> Friedman addresses this inherently-oppositional understanding of modernism in her discussion of binarity in “Definitional Excursions: The Meanings of *Modern/Modernity/Modernism*,” 506–7.

<sup>44</sup> Modernities even counters cosmopolitanism’s adjectives (i.e. “rooted,” “discrepant,” “vernacular,” etc.) with their own adjectives: multiple, early, alternate, polycentric, and conjectural. See Friedman’s “Periodizing Modernism: Postcolonial Modernities and the Space/Time Borders of Modernist Studies,” 434.

cosmopolitanism. Whether it be called “discrepant cosmopolitanism” or “cultural parataxis,” Clifford and Friedman enable the sort of comparative practice that fosters mutual understanding and respect as demonstrated in the communion that occurs as Bloom and Stephen locate correspondences between Gaelic and Hebrew and Irish and Jew.<sup>45</sup>

There is, however, a bit of a problem with this argument, for amidst the peaceful and productive transnational conversation between Stephen and Bloom, Stephen suddenly chants the anti-Semitic ballad “Little Harry Hughes” (17.801–8, 813–28; See Appendix for lyrics). To compound the matter, Joyce reproduces the musical score and the lyrics on the page as if to invite the reader to sing along. As Margot Norris has noted, Stephen’s singing of “Little Harry Hughes” has consistently confounded critics (69–70). The song seems out of context, for, as we have seen, the context appears to offer the promise of community across cultures. The song seems out of character for Stephen, who not only appears more inclined towards empathy than cruelty, but also repeatedly challenges similar anti-Semitic sentiments throughout the day. The song seems unprovoked; Stephen sings it in response to Bloom’s invitation “to chant in a modulated voice a strange legend on an allied theme” as that of the Zionist anthem “Hativkah” (17.795–6). So then, why *does* Stephen chant the anti-Semitic ballad? Norris, who views this moment as the climax of the novel, considers and dismisses a number of interpretations, particularly those like Hugh Kenner’s that attempt to justify Stephen’s actions. Kenner argues that Bloom’s offer of “asylum” poses a threat to Stephen’s struggle for freedom. Yet as Norris notes, Bloom’s offer of asylum comes only *after*

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<sup>45</sup> For an explanation and an example of “cultural parataxis,” see Friedman’s “Paranoia, Pollution, and Sexuality: Affiliations between E.M. Forster’s *A Passage to India* and Arundhati Roy’s *The God of Small Things*” in *Geomodernisms: Race, Modernism, Modernity*, 245–61.

Stephen chants the ballad, and thus Stephen's actions remain unprovoked, especially in the context of the cross-cultural exchange (69–70; Kenner 137, 139). For the next part of the essay, I will argue that the cross-cultural encounter *is* the provocation and that within Stephen's reaction lie potential weaknesses of new cosmopolitan theory and the transnational modernism that employs its theoretical framework.

The cross-cultural exchange poses a threat to Stephen's autonomy because the recognition of a shared traveling culture conceals the dynamics of power inscribed in the material inequalities between the two. In "Traveling Cultures," Clifford recognizes the historical "taintedness" of "travel," but affirms its usefulness as a term of translation as long as one acknowledges the inequalities between different traveling cultures (39). To a large extent, Stephen acknowledges the economic inequalities between he and Bloom before they compare cultures. Bloom possesses much of what Stephen lacks: money, a job, a home, and a partner. Stephen is aware of these inequalities; he even acknowledges the powerlessness of his position when he gives Bloom his money (15.3601–7).

However, despite acknowledging, understanding, and respecting these differences, the cross-cultural conversation only exacerbates Stephen's fear of exploitation, precisely because the comparisons contain implicit equivalences that elide the differences already acknowledged. This is central to Brennan's critique of new cosmopolitanism and of Clifford. Brennan argues that despite objections to the contrary, the cosmopolitan encounter is always an uneven playing field because those who pursue the encounter (university professors, Bloom) fashion its terms. And, as it turns out, Stephen has good reason to worry, as the "kindly" Bloom does seem to consider using his material advantages to exploit Stephen (Norris 55). For instance, upon hearing Stephen's "Parable



of the Plums,” Bloom imagines “certain possibilities of financial, social, personal and sexual success” (17.646–7). As Osteen observes, the lack of a personal pronoun to clarify whose success Bloom refers to “again suggests that Bloom’s fusion with Stephen contains the potential for exploitation” (400). Osteen’s “again” refers to how Bloom commodifies Stephen’s voice and intellect in the preceding episode. There, Bloom imagines that “if properly handled,” Stephen’s voice could “command its price” and Stephen’s brain could bring “pecuniary emolument” (16.1821–2, 1840).<sup>46</sup> In a place of economic advantage, Bloom’s “desire to make sense of the other” (cosmopolitanism) becomes very similar to Haines’s “desire to make sense of the other” (imperialism) by making a book of Stephen’s sayings for economic or cultural profit. Thus, Stephen’s behavior becomes more understandable when we concede Brennan’s point that acknowledging differences does not neutralize the potential for exploitation inherent in any comparison.<sup>47</sup>

Yet even if one disagrees with Brennan, Bloom’s cosmopolitan overtures remain provocative, albeit in a way that links Stephen to the Citizen, less in their anti-Semitism than in what the anti-Semitism represents. Linked with the Citizen, Stephen’s reaction can be seen as the reassertion of the Irish roots he will never be able to fully transcend. In “Cyclops,” Bloom—whom Duffy calls “a genteel Arnoldian liberal” in this episode—does not so much practice Appiah’s principles of cosmopolitanism as promote them; he advocates reconceiving an Irish nationalism that embraces “cosmopolitan patriotism” (112). To this end, he promotes pluralism (let others live by their own values) and

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<sup>46</sup> Lori B. Harrison connects Bloom to the figure of the vampire in this passage, whereby Stephen’s anti-Semitic ballad represents his attempt to avoid “‘turning’ Jew” (784–5).

<sup>47</sup> For an excellent rebuttal of this position regarding comparativity, see the special issue on comparativity in *New Literary History* 40.3 (Summer 2009).

fallibilism (recognizing the fallibility of one's own knowledge and values): "Some people," says Bloom to the Citizen, "can see the mote in others' eyes but they can't see the beam in their own" (12.1237–8). Thus, he encourages tolerance and challenges Irish exceptionalism. But the Citizen has his suspicions about the exploitation that often accompanies such appeals—suspicions that echo David Harvey's own suspicions about Appiah's cosmopolitanism: "Appiah's proposals could possibly smooth out the conflicts that derive from cultural and religious differences. But they would do so at the price of ignoring the political-economic inequalities that capitalism typically foments. ... In effect, Appiah ends up supporting the liberal and neoliberal imperialist practices that reproduce class inequalities, while soothing our nerves with respect to multicultural differences" (*Cosmopolitanism* 15). The Citizen is well aware of how attempts to "smooth out" cultural and religious differences often perpetuate economic inequalities. The "Alaki of Abeakuta" sketch makes this clear, satirizing the British use of cultural exchange for economic exploitation (12.1514–33).<sup>48</sup> "That's how it's worked," says the Citizen, "Trade follows the flag" (12.1541). For the Citizen and Harvey, the aim of fostering peaceful and productive cross-cultural encounters merely perpetuates and exacerbates while it conceals the economic unevenness of globalization.<sup>49</sup>

Such criticisms of new cosmopolitanism present a problem with Cuddy-Keane's argument. That Cuddy-Keane posits the third way of cultural globalization between an

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<sup>48</sup> The article from the *United Irishman* read aloud by the Citizen satirizes a meeting between a "delegation of the chief cotton magnates of Manchester" and the ruler of the small nation of Abeakuta where the traders thank the Abeakutan ruler for "the facilities afforded them in his dominion." The Alaki praises the gift of the Bible, drinks scotch "from the skull of his immediate predecessor," visits a cotton factory, and then performs a war dance to the delight of the women in company (12.1514–33). The skit portrays the sort of cross-cultural encounter the Irish are only too familiar with, where cultural exchange becomes a pretext for economic exploitation.

<sup>49</sup> For an excellent discussion of transnational economics in "Cyclops" and the rest of *Ulysses*, see Nels Pearson's "'May I Trespass on Your Valuable Space?': *Ulysses* on the Coast," 627–49.

exclusively economic globalization and an anti-globalization does not mean that she views the cultural as distinct from the economic to the degree Appiah does (according to Harvey). On the contrary, Cuddy-Keane's argument depends on their interrelationship. She concludes, "By recognizing at least the potential for the cultural imagination to guide and direct economic forces, we open up a space beyond materialist determinants for the vitally enabling role of human thought" (554). The problem with Cuddy-Keane's argument lies not in a naiveté regarding the economic effect of cultural imagination but rather in a failure to recognize the economic effect of her own argument. This can be seen most clearly when she states that "humanists have a role in humanizing globalization." In this, Cuddy-Keane's argument can be seen as guilty of the same crimes with which Harvey charges Appiah with: perpetuating the economic unevenness of globalization by softening resistance.

There remains, however, another threat that the cross-cultural exchange poses to Stephen: a loss of his sense of identity. Earlier, we saw how Stephen yearns for the cosmopolitan detachment embodied in the Jew and represented in Bloom in order to move beyond crippling *ressentiment*. Yet his cross-cultural conversation with Bloom might give him a hint about what cosmopolitanism really entails. In the cabmen's shelter in "Eumaeus," Bloom sums up for Stephen his encounter with the Citizen by stating, "A soft answer turns away wrath." Bloom continues in the cosmopolitan vein, "Of course ... you must look at both sides of the question ... It's all very fine to boast of mutual superiority but what about mutual equality. I resent violence and intolerance in any shape or form ... A revolution must come on the due installments plan" (16.1086–6, 1094–5, 1098–1100, 1101). Here again Bloom exhibits an unwavering commitment to the

pluralism and fallibilism necessary for a productive cross-cultural conversation, but such a cosmopolitanism denies *ressentiment* as a legitimate response to oppression. Indeed, Bloom tells Stephen that the anger and frustration the Citizen displays can be attributed to pathology: “All those wretched quarrels ... stirring up bad blood, from some bump of combativeness or gland of some kind” (16.1111–2). In this, Bloom demonstrates a characteristic of Appiah’s cosmopolitanism that Bruce Robbins terms “liberal presentism,” by which Robbins means the tendency to “minimize the past’s hold over political decision making in the present” and to readily offer a “distanced, resentment-free historical forgiveness” (“Cosmopolitanism” 55). Related to this presentism of Appiah’s cosmopolitanism is his sentimentalism: “the same temporality that quietly urges us to go easy on the imperial horrors of the past,” argues Robbins, “is credited with almost supernatural ability to resolve the contradictions of the present and future, or at least to get used to them” (57). The sentimentality can be seen in Bloom’s aforementioned socialist utopia where Bloom proposes giving “all creeds and classes ... something in the neighbourhood of £300 per annum” because “it’s feasible and would be provocative of friendlier intercourse between man and man” (1135–7). Both Bloom and Appiah deny the depth of history and *ressentiment* and thus overestimate the desire and ease involved in transcending them.

Robbins’s criticism of Appiah can be applied to Friedman’s conception of transnational modernism, illustrated in her reading of a different cultural encounter than that depicted in Joyce’s *Ulysses*—that of Mustafa Sa’eed in Salih’s *Season of Migration to the North*. As we have seen, Friedman “refuses victimology and assumes agency on all sides of the zones of encounter.” To deny agency and treat the colonial as an innocent

victim of Western imperialism (a la Marxism) is to submit to Eurocentrism and thus to ignore “the creative agencies of colonial and postcolonial subjects as producers of modernism” (“Periodizing” 428). Friedman uses the term “indigenization” to describe one manifestation of these creative agencies, meaning taking another’s cultural practices and making them one’s own. According to Friedman, just as Western modernists indigenized non-Western cultural practices, “colonized subjects indigenized Western modernity and modernism in forming their own modernities within the inequitable framework of colonial power and resistance” (“Periodizing” 431).

In order to illustrate her theories of modernity and modernism, Friedman draws on Tayeb Salih’s *Season of Migration to the North*. This traditionally postcolonial novel, Friedman asserts, should be considered “modernist” because, despite the date, language, and place of publication (1967, Arabic, Beirut), the novel expresses “an engagement with the historical conditions of modernity in a particular locale” and reveals “the intensification of intercultural contact zones” often associated with modernity (432, 433). Friedman begins her argument by quoting the author, who suggests that Mustafa Sa’eed’s actions are guided by a desire to metaphorically rape Europe in revenge for Europe’s metaphorical rape of Africa. However, Friedman contends that while Mustafa might be guided by *ressentiment*, Salih seeks to undermine the opposition that breeds *ressentiment*: “Salih’s novel challenges both the modernity of the West and the postcolonialism of the Sudan by deconstructing the familiar binaries of West/Rest, modern/traditional, and innovative/imitative. Instead, he shows each location as imitative of the other; each, in other words, is engaged in mimetic encounters that intermix the modern and traditional as constitutive of modernity itself in different locations” (435). Salih’s indigenization of

Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* results in a productive cultural dialogue between Britain and Africa, colonizer and colonized, that ultimately undermines the distinctions between them. Salih indigenizes *Heart of Darkness* by reversing the journey—rather than a journey from Europe to the heart of darkness in Africa, he depicts a journey from Africa to the heart of darkness in Europe. As a result, the cross-cultural dialogue becomes a conversation between two “centers” in a polycentric modernity. Salih further deconstructs the East/West, tradition/modern binaries by incorporating Conrad's “trope of journey to the heart of otherness as a means of exposing the darkness at home” (437). Salih therefore not only reverses the center and periphery, but, like Conrad, he uses the journey from center to periphery to bridge the distance between them.

By incorporating the trope—by reading the darkness Mustafa encounters in England as a reflection of the darkness of home, Mustafa's metaphorical rape of Europe exposes not the imperial horrors that inspired it but rather the brutalities hidden beneath the tranquil veneer of the Sudanese village he returns to. Indeed, Friedman parallels the “hypocrisy of European imperialism's so-called civilizing mission in Africa” with the “hypocrisy of the serene village life” and the “greed and brutality” of the reality of imperialism with the “hidden brutality of the village's ambivalent relationship to modernity and its refusal to incorporate the security and freedom of its women and its future” (438). This darkness of the Sudanese village manifests in the brutal, cannibalistic rape of Hosna (Mustafa's widow) by Wad Rayyes (an aging villager) and Hosna's subsequent murder of Wad Rayyes and suicide. The scene exposes further continuity between East and West: “Rape is not just a metaphor for colonial exploitation and

postcolonial revenge,” writes Friedman, “Rape is also what happens when ‘women belong to men’” (437).

Friedman frames the relationship between Salih’s novel and *Heart of Darkness* as a cross-cultural conversation akin to that of Stephen and Bloom. “Indigenization” becomes the expression of a shared traveling culture, Conrad and Salih share the same experience of modernity (represented in Salih’s use of Conrad’s novel) but transform it into something distinct. By recognizing a shared traveling culture while respecting their differences, Friedman mediates a productive cultural dialogue that constitutes a transnational modernism. But Benita Parry has a different view of *Season* and of transnational modernism. Parry argues that readings like Friedman’s, which see the novel as expressing a hybrid modernity, go against the political and cultural conflict that dominates Salih’s text: “Rather than valorize a zone between cultures,” Parry writes, “I see *Season* as questioning its very possibility within a situation poisoned by imperial connection” (“Aspects” 40). Or, to put it another way, “rather than signs of productive cultural dialogue,” the novel offers “a cruel parody of transculturation” (“Reflections” 74).<sup>50</sup> Parry situates the novel within a history of violent, cross-cultural encounters. She unpacks from the novel’s title the Muslim Hegira and the Christian calendar—both of which are used in the text at different points to measure time, which together recall the Crusades, “marking the beginning of Europe’s thousand-year project of invasion, culminating with modern imperialism” (“Aspects” 42). Modern imperialism becomes symbolized in the figure of Mustafa, whose life-span coincides with Sudan’s colonization (1898–1956). Consequently, Parry focuses more on Mustafa’s postcolonial revenge—his

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<sup>50</sup> Benita Parry’s “Reflections on the Excesses of Empire in Tayeb Salih’s *Season of Migration to the North*” article is condensed and modified in her “Aspects of Peripheral Modernisms.”

metaphorical rape of Europe—than on the brutal rape of his widow. In fact, Parry mentions the incident only in passing, portraying Hosna’s fatal resistance to the lust of the old lecher as a conflict between Thanatos and Eros and associating it with the “psycho-metaphysical drama of sado-masochistic hunger and its appeasement” (“Reflections” 81–2). But this association is telling in itself. Mustafa’s metaphorical rape of Europe consists in wreaking vengeance upon his colonial masters by seducing white English women and leaving them to suicide. However, in his affair with Jean Morris the tables are somewhat turned: Mustafa submits to Jean’s sadomasochistic entreaties and stabs Jean as they consummate their relationship. The act renders the colonial encounter as one of violence, desire, and mutual destruction—a violence, desire, and mutual destruction that plays out in the rape-murder-suicide of Hosna and Wad Rayyes. As Parry notes, Mustafa inverts the colonialist dread of contamination of the other by likening this violence, desire, and mutual destruction to a disease (“Reflections” 83).<sup>51</sup> Thus, for Parry, the darkness of the Sudanese village represents the darkness of the imperial North only as much as the darkness represents the infection of modernity spread by the North through the colonial encounter.

The idea of modernity as pathology goes to the heart of the difference between Friedman and Parry’s readings and their approaches to transnationalism. Recall that Parry argues, “Rather than valorize a zone between cultures, I see *Season* as questioning its very possibility within a situation poisoned by imperial connection.” For Parry, the contact between East and West has been one of infection—a history of exploitation—that

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<sup>51</sup> “They imported to us the germ of the greatest European violence, as seen on the Somme and at Verdun, the like of which the world has never previously known, the germ of a deadly disease that struck them more than a thousand years ago. Yes, my dear sirs, I came as an invader into your very homes: a drop of the poison which you have injected into the veins of history” (Salih 95).



contaminates any attempt at further conversation. This notion of modernity and imperialism as a “virus” corresponds to Immanuel Wallerstein’s view of modernity as the virus of capitalism (Wallerstein 105).<sup>52</sup> This is a conception of modernity that Friedman disavows and seeks to replace with multiple modernities. It is perhaps telling, however, that Friedman disregards Salih’s stated intentions: “one of the major themes of *Season* is the East/West confrontation. ... I have re-defined the so-called East/West relationship as essentially one of conflict, while it had previously been treated in romantic terms.”<sup>53</sup> To incorporate *Season* as a work of “modernism,” to reconceive modernism as a global phenomenon rather than a Western one, is to risk reproducing the very (neo)colonialism and Eurocentrism that one seeks to avoid. As Brennan argues, “cosmopolitanism offers a coming into ‘modernity’ as the global entrance into a common hybrid self-consciousness by formerly subjugated peoples, without in the least disturbing the self-portraiture of the West. For if we wished to capture the essence of cosmopolitanism in a single formula, it would be this. It is a discourse of the universal that is inherently local—a locality that’s always surreptitiously imperial” (“Cosmopolitanism” 81). Globalizing modernism reconceives modernity without disturbing the self-portraiture of the West. The polycentric modernities are reproductions of a single center across a variety of localities. Such cross-cultural encounters are ultimately utopian, as is global cosmopolitanism, and as Brennan suggests, they are always economic.

Yet in challenging the possibilities transnationalism and cosmopolitanism offer, Parry and Brennan seem to affirm the logic that leads to the anti-Semitism Stephen uses to reject the global cosmopolitan community that Bloom represents. Indeed, the Marxist

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<sup>52</sup> Friedman alludes to Wallerstein’s article and “virus” metaphor in “Periodizing Modernisms,” 435.

<sup>53</sup> Quoted in Parry’s “Aspects of Peripheral Modernisms,” 44–5.

discourse Parry and Brennan engage in can often sound remarkably similar to discourses of anti-Semitism. Neil Levi makes this point in his reading of Eagleton's interpretation of *Ulysses* and modernism: "Eagleton's description of 'international monopoly capitalism' and modern anti-Semitic discourse remains striking, and not a little disturbing: although 'capitalism' is arguably (part of) the correct name for that which is misrecognized by the anti-Semitic fantasy of 'the Jew,' one also wonders whether the uncanny substitutability of the one term for the other ... betrays precisely the scapegoating, binary structure of thought that is inextricable from much of the violence that so distinguished the twentieth century and seems set to persist in our own" (377).<sup>54</sup> For Levi, Eagleton's Marxist critique of *Ulysses* gainsays the very spirit of a novel that seeks to transcend binaries through the characterization of its ambiguously-Jewish protagonist. As I have argued elsewhere, one can approach the "Cyclops" episode of *Ulysses* as exposing the very scapegoat mechanism that (according to Levi) Eagleton reproduces.<sup>55</sup>

The connection between these Marxist criticism and the anti-Semitic fantasy of "the Jew" becomes clearer when we consider Parry, Brennan (implicitly), and Wallerstein's characterization of modernity, imperialism, capitalism, and cosmopolitanism as "viruses" alongside the Citizen's characterization of Bloom as pathology: "Those are nice things, says the citizen, coming over here to Ireland filling the country with bugs" (12.1141–2). The Citizen returns to this imagery later in the episode: "Saint Patrick would want to land again at Ballykinlar and convert us ... after allowing

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<sup>54</sup> Levi is alluding specifically to Eagleton, "Nationalism: Irony and Commitment," 35, 36. The passage that draws the most ire from Levi is the following: "Modernism is at once, contradictorily, an exhilarating estrangement of such clapped-out national lineages from the powerfully distancing perspectives of exiles, and an expression of the rootless conditions of an international monopoly capitalism, whose abstractly universalist forms are mimed by modernism's own progressively abstract techniques" (35). Levi connects the rootlessness of international monopoly capitalism with the rootlessness of Jews.

<sup>55</sup> See my "'A Most Precious Victim': 'Cyclops' and the Politics of Persecution."

things like that to contaminate our shores” (12.1671–2). Of course, the Citizen is not attributing this “virus” to Bloom per se but rather to his Jewishness—“*those* are nice *things*,” “allowing *things* like that.” When we consider this stereotype of the Jew as a “virus,” Wallerstein’s characterization of capitalism takes on a different valence:

Prior to the modern world-system, what happened in each of these other historical systems is that whenever capitalist strata got too wealthy or too successful or too intrusive on existing institutions, other institutional groups—cultural, religious, military, political—attacked them, utilizing both their substantial power and their value systems to assert the need to restrain and contain the profit-oriented strata. As a result, these strata were frustrated in their attempts to impose their practices on the historical system as a priority. They were often crudely and rudely stripped of accumulated capital, and, in any case, made to give obeisance to values and practices that inhibited them. This is what I mean by the anti-toxins that contained the virus. (105)

If we substitute “capitalist strata” and “virus” with “Jews,” we arrive at a summation of Jewish persecution in Europe since at least the fourteenth century. I say the fourteenth century because of Guillaume de Machaut’s description of the massacre of French Jews in 1349 and 1350 who were suspected of poisoning rivers and fountains to bring about the Black Death in his *Judgment of the King of Navarre*. Tellingly, René Girard begins *The Scapegoat* with Machaut’s text.<sup>56</sup> With this in mind, Wallerstein’s characterization of the capitalist world system begins to sound quite similar to the historical persecution of Jews, especially as Bloom articulates it: “Robbed ... Insulted. Plundered. Taking what

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<sup>56</sup> See Chapter 1 of Girard’s *The Scapegoat*, 1–11.

belongs to us by right” (12.1470–1). The problem with Wallerstein’s argument is the opposite of the problem with Eagleton’s argument, according to Levi: where Eagleton anthropomorphizes capitalism, Wallerstein de-anthropomorphizes capitalism; where Eagleton gives human attributes to an autonomous economic system, Wallerstein uses an economic system to describe real human suffering.

*Ulysses*, however, seems to be playing the similarities between Marxist and anti-Semitic discourses off of each other as different articulations of the same *legitimate* suspicion of the economic consequences of transnationalism and cosmopolitanism. Central to Levi’s contention and his critique of a latent anti-Semitism in Marxist criticism is that the connection between capitalism and “the Jew” is one of misrecognition. We have seen that the fear of exploitation that provokes Stephen’s chanting of “Little Larry Hughes” is accurately recognized since Bloom does consider using Stephen’s talents for his own economic gain. That Stephen turns to anti-Semitism to express this fear does not necessarily mean that Stephen *mis*recognizes capitalism in the Jew. That is, to a certain extent, Jews during the period *did* represent capitalism, but this link between Jews and capitalism lies not in some pathology but rather in transnationalism. To be a member of the Jewish community meant being a member (actively or not) of a transnational network of capital that could, theoretically, undermine commercial sovereignty. For instance, in the 1913 *The Jew and Modern Capitalism*—a book Joyce may have been familiar with—Werner Sombart writes, “What Christian business houses obtained only after much effort, and even then only to a much less degree, the Jews had at the very beginning—scattered centres from which to carry on international commerce and to utilize international credit”

(170–1).<sup>57</sup> So, when Bloom proclaims his cosmopolitanism in “Cyclops” — “And I belong to a race too” (12.1467)—he becomes an economic threat. This is why the Nameless One views rumors of Bloom’s involvement in the Sinn Fein idea of appointing counsels to sell Irish goods across the world as “Robbing Peter to Pay Paul,” since it would mean exchanging an imperial trade network for a transnational Jewish one (1577). “Give us a bloody chance,” mutters the Nameless One, in a state of powerlessness (1578–9). To complicate matters, we learn in “Ithaca” that Bloom owns £900 (at 4% interest) “in Canadian stock” (17.1864–5). Owning such stock makes Bloom financially invested in the stability of the British Empire, which the narrator of “Oxen of the Sun” mocks him for: “During the recent war whenever the enemy had a temporary advantage with his granados did this traitor to his kind not seize that moment to discharge his piece against the empire of which he is a tenant at will while he trembled for the security of his four per cents?” (14.908–12).

Moreover, Bloom’s access to a different cultural tradition offers him economic advantages because, in a transnational economy, the traveler is privileged. While Bloom himself has never left Ireland, he has been brought up with the values of a transnational people and a traveling father (Rudolf Virag of Szombathely, Vienna, Budapest, Milan, London, and Dublin) (17.534–6). For instance, according to Maurice Fishberg’s *The Jews*—a book Joyce had in his library in Trieste, Jews were preconditioned against alcohol (racially preconditioned, according to Fishburg) (274). The same quality that makes Bloom different in “Cyclops” and elsewhere gives him a financial advantage, as

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<sup>57</sup> Gary Levine, who also acknowledges that “the geographic dispersion of the Jews provided a network for trade,” argues that it seems likely that Joyce would have come across Sombart’s ideas given his interest in Jews. Levine also notes the similarity between Sombart’s ideas and Bloom’s speech in “Eumaeus” (16.1120–4). See Levine’s *The Merchant of Modernism: The Economic Jew in Anglo-American Literature*, 165–7.

Molly notes in “Penelope”: “making fun of him then behind his back I know well when he goes on with his idiotics because he has sense enough not to squander every penny piece he earns down their gullets and looks after his wife and family” (18.1276–9).

Bloom’s otherness sheds him of the cost burden of ritualistic drinking. This homo economicus as Osteen calls him has also been raised with an advantageous thriftiness, as we learn in “Circe”: “Second halfcrown waste money today. I told you not to go with drunken goy ever. So you catch no money” (15.253–4) (73). In addition, Bloom would have encouraged his son to pursue similarly cosmopolitan skills and similarly economically advantaged skills: “My son inside her. I could have helped him on in life. I could. Make him independent. Learn German too” (6.82–4).

Bloom also represents the capitalist *par excellence* in his occupation as an advertising canvasser. As Reizbaum argues, Bloom’s occupation possesses a certain affinity with his father’s occupation as a peddler and carries with it certain connotations (80). For instance, the following exchange arises in “Cyclops”:

—Because you see, says Bloom, for an advertisement you must have repetition. That’s the whole secret.

—Rely on me, says Joe.

Swindling the peasants, says the citizen, and the poor of Ireland. We want no more strangers in our house. (12.1147–51)

The Citizen’s charge that advertising is akin to swindling may seem hyperbolic and antagonistic, but Bloom’s emphasis on “repetition” as “the whole secret” suggests an inherent manipulation in advertising. Further, the exchange occurs just moments after a discussion about the “Canada swindle case” where an alleged Jew uses an advertisement

to rob other Jews with a false promise of passage to Canada. That advertising is a swindle is not too much of an exaggeration, as Raymond Williams writes, “the advertisers are people using certain skills and knowledge, created by real art and science, against the public for commercial advantage” (212). The Citizen’s description also fits Garry Leonard’s assessment of Bloom’s occupation: “he is a precursor to the modern-day adman in the sense that he seeks to exploit the most basic psychological constructs of the human subject” (46).

Yet before we respond to the question laid out in the title of this chapter with a resounding “No!”; before we conclude that Bloom and his Jewishness represent the danger posed by the economic consequences of transnationalism to “stranger,” “native,” and those in-between; before we agree that Joyce in *Ulysses* makes clear that these dangers outweigh the promises transnationalism offers, it is important to note that the communion between Stephen and Bloom does not end with “Little Larry Hughes.” That Bloom extends an offer of asylum to Stephen moments *after* the latter chants the anti-Semitic ballad is more representative of Bloom the character than the conniving foreigner Stephen fears. Despite some fantasies that can be construed as exploitative, Bloom is, on the whole, generous and understanding: “at the critical turning point of human existence,” the narrator of “Ithaca” says of Bloom after Stephen rejects his offer of shelter, “he desired to amend many social conditions, the product of inequality and avarice and international animosity” (17.990–2). But a history of exploitation prevents Stephen from realizing the global cosmopolitan community Bloom is offering in his offer of asylum. Thus, Joyce leaves the question unanswered if indeterminate. Whether or not one

believes that history can or should be overcome will determine whether or not Bloom and modernism are transnational or whether it can be determined at all.



### **Chapter 3: From *La Convivencia* to *El Capitalismo*: Modernist Echoes in Salman Rushdie's *The Moor's Last Sigh***

In his article on the state of postcolonial studies in the age of globalization, Robert JC Young asks, “What can nations ... learn from the empires they replaced?” (31). For Young, re-examining the ways in which empires accommodated diversity and sustained cultural heterogeneity can teach postcolonial nationalisms a form of governance less reliant on ethnic and cultural uniformity. To illustrate his point, Young turns to Al-Andalus—Spain under Islamic rule. During the tenth century, Christians, Muslims, and Jews coexisted peacefully and convivially, and together they built a thriving intellectual and economic community. “The tolerant society of al-Andalus,” Young writes, “remains Europe’s most sustained and successful experiment in communal living in a pluralistic society” (33). Amidst this discussion, Young refers to Salman Rushdie’s *The Moor’s Last Sigh*, which incorporates *La Convivencia* into its larger socio-political critique. In order to explain this critique, Young quotes from J.M. Coetzee’s review of the novel: “the Arab penetration of Iberia, like the later Iberian penetration of India, led to a creative mingling of peoples and cultures; that the victory of Christian intolerance in Spain was a tragic turn in history; and that Hindu intolerance in India bodes as ill for the world as did the sixteenth-century Inquisition in Spain” (33; “Palimpsest”). Yet the socio-political critique served by the Al-Andalus analogy that Young alludes to and that Coetzee articulates constitutes only one aspect of the role Islamic Spain plays in *The Moor’s Last Sigh*. In fact, Rushdie uses Al-Andalus to illustrate a larger aesthetic, geopolitical, and economic

critique that actually rebukes not only Young's argument but also the post-Marxist strain of postcolonial theory that his argument represents.

In *The Moor's Last Sigh*, Al-Andalus features most prominently in the artwork of Aurora Zogoiby, the novel's heroine. Aurora incorporates Islamic Spain into her paintings as a palimpsest, layering contemporary India over Al-Andalus, blending together the Agra Fort, Mughal palace-fortresses, and the Alhambra. She does so to create what Coetzee suggests—an analogy between *La Convicencia* before the Spanish Inquisition and India's pluralistic history before the rise of the Hindu nationalism of Shiv Sena. However, as I will show, Rushdie associates Al-Andalus and Aurora's incorporation of it within her art with a European modernist utopianism that brings different cultural traditions together to form new, transnational wholes. Moreover, the association between Aurora's artwork and European modernism extends to the geopolitics from which they emerge; namely, as aesthetics that negotiate the imperialism and nationalism that dominate the political horizons of early-twentieth century Europe and mid-century India.

As with literary critics like Rebecca Walkowitz, Jed Esty, Jessica Berman, and Charles Pollard, I conceptualize modernism's utopian aspirations with a number of contemporary theories loosely grouped together as “new cosmopolitanism.” Just as Young divorces the hierarchy imposed by empires from the cultural diversity empires sustain, new cosmopolitan theories tend to separate the imperial associations of “cosmopolitanism” from the underlying ideal of a community that transcends borders. Thus, Homi Bhabha, for instance, distinguishes between a “global cosmopolitanism ... complicit with neo-liberal forms of governance” and a “vernacular cosmopolitanism”

“that emerges from the migrant boarding-houses and the habitations of national and diasporic minorities” (Preface xiv). This distinction becomes particularly important in literary criticism because it enables critics to draw a continuity between the exiles, émigrés, and “metropolitan perception” of high modernism with the refugees, diasporic minorities, and “migrant’s-eye view of the world” of postcolonialism.<sup>58</sup> Robert Spencer, for example, contrasts “*our* cosmopolitanism (one of equality, rights, and democracy) with *their* cosmopolitanism (of capital, exploitation, and cultural standardisation)” (22). Or, in her chapter on Rushdie, Walkowitz differentiates “the cosmopolitanism of exploitative fusion”—that of British colonialism and global capitalism—from “the cosmopolitanism of tactical syncretism” of contemporary migration and “strategic assimilation” (132, 138). Similarly, in the introduction to her *Nabokov, Rushdie, and the Transnational Imagination*, Rachel Trousdale distinguishes “between the idiosyncratic cosmopolitanism of individual cross-cultural encounters on the one hand, and corporate globalism on the other.” And, in her chapter devoted to *The Moor’s Last Sigh*, Trousdale contends that “Rushdie’s work contains two kinds of cosmopolitanism, perhaps best distinguished as local and global cosmopolitanisms” (9, 105).

As the novel (and my argument) progresses, however, Rushdie uses Al-Andalus to reveal how the utopian idea, the idealization of pluralism that Al-Andalus represents, can become a form of empire itself as global capitalism. In other words, *The Moor’s Last*

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<sup>58</sup> The phrase “exiles and émigrés” refers to Terry Eagleton’s book by that name and “metropolitan perception” refers to Raymond Williams’s phrase in *The Politics of Modernism*, 37–48. Both Eagleton and Williams’s works play important roles in studies that connect modernism to postcolonialism. See, for instance, Jed Esty’s *A Shrinking Island: Modernism and National Culture in England*, Robert Spencer’s *Cosmopolitan Criticism and Postcolonial Literature*, and Rebecca Walkowitz’s *Cosmopolitan Style: Modernism Beyond the Nation*. The phrase “migrant’s-eye view of the world” comes from Salman Rushdie’s “In Good Faith,” 394. In “Modernist Bricolage, Postcolonial Hybridity,” Jahan Ramazani uses the phrase to make a similar connection between modernism and postcolonialism, although he qualifies the connection by suggesting, “As migrants, the Euromodernists traversed lesser inequities of power and differences of culture in the Northern hemisphere” (461).

*Sigh* undermines the distinction between the global and the vernacular, between *our* cosmopolitanism and *their* cosmopolitanism, between exploitative fusion and tactical syncretism, and between individual cross-cultural encounter and corporate globalism. In so doing, Rushdie reveals that the enemy of pluralism is not just religious intolerance or ethnic nationalism but, perhaps more so, those economic forces that seek to exploit diversity, heterogeneity, and the utopianism of global cosmopolitanism for its own purposes. Indeed, Rushdie's *The Moor's Last Sigh* seems not only to reject new cosmopolitanism, but also to suggest that Young's very idealization of Al-Andalus and his assertion that it can offer new ways to imagine community can be seen as complicit with a neoimperialism already dominant.

Rushdie designs his central motif in *The Moor's Last Sigh* around a binary opposition: the One versus the Many. While the contest between universalism and pluralism reaches its apotheosis in Aurora's struggle against the forces of Hindu nationalism, it is a battle that begins two generations earlier with her grandfather Francisco. The narrator Moraes Zogoiby—Aurora's son, also known as "Moor"—frames the tale of the rise and fall of his great-grandfather Francisco da Gama as a contest between Francisco and his wife, Epifania, where the former advocates "the virtues of nationalism, reason, art, innovation, and ... protest" and the latter believes firmly in "England, God, philistinism, the old ways, a quiet life" (18–9). Already a philanthropist, a once-promising physics student, a patron of the European avant-garde, and a spice merchant, Francisco joins the Home Rule campaign of Annie Besant and Bal Gangadhar Tilak in 1916. He founds a Home Rule League of Cochin, which lands him in and out of

prison and establishes him as a rising star in the Indian nationalist movement. On the road to greatness, Francisco's fortunes suddenly fall. With the publication of his paper entitled *Towards a Provisional Theory of the Transformational Fields of Conscience*, Francisco "turned from emerging hero into national laughing-stock" (20). In the paper, Moraes's great-grandfather "proposed the existence, all around us, of invisible 'dynamic networks of spiritual energy similar to electromagnetic fields', arguing that these 'fields of conscience' were nothing less than the repositories of the memory—both practical and moral—of the human species" (20). The Indian press lampoons the proposal and the Home Rule League demands Francisco's resignation. Abandoned by his friends and colleagues, the once-dynamic patriarch sinks into despondency from which he suffers until his death six years later.

The rather depressing tale of Francisco da Gama draws British imperialism together with Indian resistance under the same cosmopolitan canopy, revealing both Epifania's principles of England, God, philistinism, old ways, and a quiet life and Francisco's nationalism, reason, art, innovation, and protest as two sides of the same Enlightenment cosmopolitanism—both as different versions of the One, universalizing and totalizing. Moraes apports much of the blame for his great-grandfather's fall to the Theosophy of Annie Besant. As Moraes makes clear, it was under Besant's influence that Francisco joined the nationalist movement and under her theosophy that he composed his ill-fated theory. Besant's Theosophy and its aim of "a Universal Brotherhood without distinctions of race and creed" represents both the promise and the dangers of Kantian cosmopolitanism (Besant 352). This belief in a universal brotherhood led Besant to leave England for India in 1896 in order to revive an indigenous Indian culture she saw as

under threat from the West. To this end, Besant founded a Hindu College in Benares and schools all over the sub-continent. She eventually adapted the politics of Irish Home Rule into an Indian Home Rule League with Talik and became President of the National Congress.<sup>59</sup>

However, at the same time that Besant's cosmopolitan ideals inspired her to become a leading nationalist figure in India, these same ideals reified the very imperialism she struggled against. For instance, in a 1902 lecture entitled "Theosophy and Imperialism," Besant argued,

I believe, thoroughly believe, that at the present time to this British nation the possibility of a world Empire is offered. ... How vast a destiny for Britain, how magnificent a possibility for the world, if this nation can rise to the greatness of such a destiny, if this nation can be heroic enough to hold and guide and uplift. For it would mean nothing less than a world-peace, amid which a mighty civilization might grow up greater than the past has seen. It would mean to the world a federation so strong of peace-living nations, that they would be able to impose peace upon the world because none should be strong enough to break it.<sup>60</sup>

A free India for Besant always meant a self-ruling India under the British crown. Her inability to imagine a sovereign India is symptomatic of this Enlightenment form of cosmopolitanism. In fact, the very idea of "world Empire" or "federation" echoes Kant's idea of a world federation as articulated in "Perpetual Peace."<sup>61</sup> At the same time, the

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<sup>59</sup> For more information about Annie Besant in India, see Rosemary Dinnage's *Annie Besant*, 106–123; Raj Kumar's *Annie Besant's Rise to Power in Indian Politics 1914–1917*, 93–131; and W.E. Ayton Wilkinson's "Mrs. Annie Besant and the Theosophical Society," 784–5.

<sup>60</sup> Quoted in Kumar's *Annie Besant's Rise to Power in Indian Politics 1914–1917*, 59.

<sup>61</sup> "For if by good fortune one powerful and enlightened nation can form a republic (which is by its nature inclined to seek perpetual peace), this will provide a focal point for federal association among other states.

paradoxical suggestion to “impose peace” validates the criticism against this form of cosmopolitanism as a form of imperialism. For, just as Kant espouses a political arrangement in which to best achieve a lasting peace, he also locates in Western tradition “a regular process of improvement in the political constitutions of our continent (which will probably legislate eventually for all other continents)” (“Idea” 52).

But Moraes’s critique extends to the man who succeeded Besant and whose resistance meant an India independent from Britain. For, along with Besant, Moraes blames “the Mahatma’s insistence on the *oneness* of all India’s widely differing millions” for his great-grandfather’s ill-fated theory (20, my emphasis). The critique appears in the association of Gandhi’s aim with that of the Reverend Oliver D’Aeth’s—the satirized figure of British imperialism: “‘I am being flayed,’” D’Aeth tells Aurora Zogoiby in a dream, “‘It is my holy calling. We will never gain our humanity until we lose our skins.’” When he woke he was not sure whether the dream world had been inspired by his faith in the *oneness of mankind* or by the photophobia that made his skin torment him so” (95, my emphasis). D’Aeth’s faith in the oneness of mankind and the photophobia that torments him are interrelated. That the priest proves unable to withstand exposure to the Indian sun underscores his difference—a difference that manifests in the paleness of his skin. Faith in the oneness of mankind therefore demands the sort of deracination represented in D’Aeth’s dream.

The actual theory of the “fields of conscience” that Francisco develops suggests a relationship between the cosmopolitan roots of the theory and modernism. As Dohra Ahmad notes, Francisco’s *Provisional Theory of the Transformational Fields of*

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These will join up with the first one, thus securing the freedom of each state in accordance with the idea of international right, and the whole will gradually spread further and further by a series of alliances of this kind” (104).

*Conscience* represents a parody of Anton Mesmer's theories that Rushdie adopts into his short story "The Harmony of the Spheres" (9). "The Harmony of the Spheres" tells the story of a writer named Eliot Crane who suffers from paranoid schizophrenia and commits suicide at the age of thirty-two. Throughout the story, the narrator Khan, who befriends Crane while an undergraduate at Cambridge, emphasizes Crane's infatuation with the occult from disparate cultural—particularly non-Western—traditions while at the same time his paranoia leads him to believe Khan is one of a number of Martians who have succeeded in invading Britain. This attraction and repulsion to the Other reappears in Khan's affair with a graduate student named Laura, who first defends their relationship against the prejudices of her mother only to suddenly snap and threaten to kill Khan if he ever approached her again. After Crane's suicide, Khan discovers in his friend's papers erotic fantasies featuring his wife Mala, causing Khan to forsake Crane's influence. Khan, however, learns from his wife that such fantasies were not fantasies after all, and that Crane's madness concealed betrayal and hypocrisy.

The story can be approached as an allegory of Rushdie's artistic development, where Eliot Crane stands for the influence of European modernism on a Cambridge undergraduate aspiring to be a writer. Aside from a name that suggests T.S. Eliot and Hart Crane (whom, when paired together, speak to influences), there remain a few more hints at a correspondence: Hart Crane committed suicide at age thirty-two, the "bridge" becomes a central symbol in the story, and Eliot Crane's simultaneous fascination with and revulsion of the non-Western along with his collection of cultures describes, in part, the composition of *The Waste Land*. Moreover, Eliot Crane's utopian yearning for totality inspires in the young Khan a belief in the possibility of such an enterprise: "I thought I'd



found another way of making a bridge between here-and-there, between my two othernesses, my double unbelonging. In that world of magic and power there seemed to exist the kind of fusion of world-views, European Amerindian Oriental Levantine, in which I desperately wanted to believe” (*East, West* 141). Thus Francisco’s utopian yearning for totality mirrors that of the symbolic modernism of Eliot Crane as well as that of a young Rushdie. As with imperialism and nationalism, modernism becomes associated with Kantian cosmopolitanism: each seeks to bring disparate worlds together, to unite different elements and cultures into a single entity, be it a poem, a nation, or a global community.<sup>62</sup>

The cosmopolitan connection between Francisco’s theory and modernism is reinforced in his patronage of the European avant-garde. “Francisco the modernist,” as Moraes refers to him at one point, was the first Indian patron of Le Corbusier.<sup>63</sup> The young Frenchman known as M. Charles Jeanneret at the time, constructs a “Western” folly and an “Eastern” folly in the Da Gama gardens, the former “a strange angular slabby affair” while the latter “a wood and paper house of cards—‘after the style Japanese’” the young Le Corbusier explains. Moreover, in these houses Francisco hosts foreign artists who leave behind “strange mobiles” and “pictures of devil-women with both eyes on the same side of their noses,” and “giant canvases that looked like an accident had befallen with the paint” (16). Not only does Francisco’s patronage of the European avant-garde itself represent a sort of utopian bridge between East and West, but

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<sup>62</sup> Michael Davidson makes a similar point associating modernism with Kantian cosmopolitanism in his “On the Outskirts of Form: Cosmopoetics in the Shadow of NAFTA,” 734–5.

<sup>63</sup> Atef Laouyene argues that Rushdie includes Le Corbusier here to parody the post-independence Congress’s commission of Le Corbusier to reconstruct the city of Chandigarh. Laouyene writes, “Francisco’s architectural extravaganza symbolically holds up to ridicule Nehru’s socialist idealism and its failure to implement a genuine Indian *gestalt* where India’s diverse cultures and histories can be organized into a seamless whole” (150).

the avant-garde art he patronizes promotes similar utopian aspirations. Fredric Jameson characterizes Le Corbusier's International Style as a violent disjunction that "separates the new Utopian space of the modern from the degraded and fallen city fabric" in hopes that "this new Utopian space, in the virulence of its novum, would fan out and eventually transform its surroundings by the very power of its new spatial language."<sup>64</sup> We can also see in the strangeness of the mobiles and the skewed perspectives of the paintings the utopian "vocation to transform the world by transforming its forms, space, or language" ("Cultural" 60). Moreover, the mingling of these artists evokes the similar idealism behind the 1922 exhibition of works by Paul Klee, Wassily Kandinsky, Wyndham Lewis and others in Calcutta—an event that Partha Mitter calls "the beginning of the avant-garde in India" (10).

Yet there remains another, more explicit connection between Francisco's theory and modernism. While describing his great-grandfather's theory, Moraes argues that the heart of the theory—his "fields of conscience"—"were in fact what Joyce's Stephen had recently spoken (in the *Egoist* magazine) of wishing to forge in his soul's smithy: viz., the uncreated conscience of our race" (20). The allusion draws a direct connection between Francisco's theory and Joyce's *Portrait* as responses to the same historical forces at the same period in history. That is, Francisco's theory represents a scientific response to colonialism while Joyce's *Portrait* represents an aesthetic one. But Joyce's

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<sup>64</sup> In his "The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism," Fredric Jameson distinguishes the postmodern Bonaventure from the modernist monuments of the International Style by referring to "Le Corbusier's great *pilotis*, whose gesture radically separates the new Utopian space of the modern from the degraded and fallen city fabric which it thereby explicitly repudiates (although the gamble of the modern was that this new Utopian space, in the virulence of its novum, would fan out and eventually transform its surroundings by the very power of its new spatial language)" (41). Moraes's description of the Western folly as "a strange angular slabby affair in which the garden penetrated the interior space so thoroughly that it was often hard to say whether one was in or out of doors" sounds a great deal like the *pilotis* Jameson alludes to (15).

response differs from Francisco's theory as evident in a tiny-yet-significant edit in Moraes's allusion to *Portrait*: Moraes changes the pronoun of the original "conscience of *my* race" to "conscience of *our* race" (60–4; *Portrait* 276). The difference between the two pronouns and thus in Stephen and Francisco's ambitions is that Joyce hesitates before embracing totality; Joyce remains skeptical of the assimilation and elision of difference represented in the move from "my" to "our," from the conscience of the Irish race to the conscience of the human race, from the Many to the One.

The original resonance of Stephen's ambition as a means of resisting both an assimilating imperialism and a homogenizing nationalism is reproduced in the art of Francisco's granddaughter and Moraes's mother, Aurora. At the age of twelve, Aurora Zogoiby forges in the smithy of her soul the uncreated conscience of *her* race in the form of a mural covering the walls and ceiling of her bedroom. Like her grandfather's theory, Aurora preserves the ethical implications of "conscience," joining a crowd together under a single moral universe, depicting the mutilated hands of the masons who built the Taj Mahal, Emperor Asoka's Pillars of Law, a parody of the Last Supper with the aristocratic Da Gama's serving boisterous servants, as well as "the rage of the women, the tormented weakness and compromise in the faces of the men" in the "crowd without boundaries" (60). "Only God was absent," notes Camoens, seeing in its place Mother India. Herein lies the ideological difference between young Aurora's vision and her grandfather's theory: from King Gondophares to the battle of Srirangapatnam to Nehru, Gandhi, and Jinnah, Aurora's universe is a distinctly Indian one (59).

The presence of this history creates a cultural distinctiveness at the same time that her artwork evokes European modernism. The interpenetration of the dream world and

the real world in works like *Mooristan* seem to be a nod to Andre Breton, as do the fantastic figures that populate it. Aurora's exploration of the Oedipal theme in *To Die Upon a Kiss* calls forth Freud. The half-human, half-beast figures like the "dog-vicar" in *The Scandal* are Max Ernst-esque. The collage of Aurora's "dark Moors" bear loose similarities to Dada. The female devil-figure "Chimène" recalls the Picasso-like "devil-women" of the painting left behind in Francisco's follies. Aurora's work contains tenets of the modernist bricolage Jahan Ramazani uses to link the modernist with the postcolonial, like "cosmic symbolism" and "mythical syncretism."<sup>65</sup> Moreover, Moraes links *The Scandal* to Matisse's dance circle, compares Vasco and Aurora's collaboration to that of Picasso and Braque, and uses the existential torment of Edvard Munch to describe the Sultan's face in the eponymous *The Moor's Last Sigh* (102, 254, 218).

In many ways, Aurora's art is a manifestation of the aesthetic Rushdie employs throughout the novel. After all, it is not just Aurora who evokes Breton, Freud, Picasso, Tzara, and Ernst, but Rushdie who does so through Aurora. Yet Rushdie's aesthetic itself evokes European modernism, both explicitly and implicitly. In fact, he does both in a line quoted earlier, when Moraes describes his great-grandfather's "fields of conscience": "they were in fact what Joyce's Stephen had recently spoken (in the *Egoist* magazine) of wishing to forge in his soul's smithy: viz., the uncreated conscience of our race." Rushdie aligns his aesthetic with European modernism by collapsing the cultural, geographical, and temporal distance between them. The mere allusion to Joyce's *Portrait* and the *Egoist* in a novel centered in India undermines the distinction between Europe and India—a fictional juxtaposition akin to the historical one between Besant and Talik

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<sup>65</sup> In "Modernist Bricolage, Postcolonial Hybridity," Ramazani uses "mythical syncretism" to draw Yeats's Cuchulain together with Soyinka's use of Shango in "Idanre" and "cosmic symbolism" or "apocalypticism" to link "The Fire Sermon" of *The Waste Land* with Christopher Okigbo's "Come Thunder" (450, 454).

Rushdie alludes to a page earlier. Further, the relationship between Francisco's theory and Joyce's *Portrait* collapses the geographical as well as the cultural distance. It is entirely plausible that Francisco was familiar with Joyce's novel in 1916, considering his interest in the avant-garde.<sup>66</sup> The idea that Joyce's novel could travel so far so quickly suggests that, while the physical distance between London and Cochin remained static of course, their connectivity shortened the distance between them to a degree consistent with a more developed globalization. Lastly, Moraes's use of the adverb "recently" collapses the temporal distance between past and present by drawing attention to two different time-space continuums: one of Cochin in 1916 and one in 1995 in London. And, of course, collapsing cultural, geographical, and temporal boundaries is a central feature of modernist aesthetics—what Ramazani calls "modernist bricolage." At the same time, however, Rushdie maintains his own specificity, he resists succumbing fully into the modernist project through the idiosyncratic language he uses to evoke the modernist project. Rushdie reproduces Stephen's famous line—"I go to encounter for the millionth time the reality of experience and to forge in the smithy of my soul the uncreated conscience of my race"—with, "wishing to forge in his soul's smithy: viz., the uncreated conscience of our race" (275–6). In so doing, Rushdie comically deflates Stephen's dramatic declaration—a comic deflation that, ironically, is very much reminiscent of Joyce.

The specificity of Stephen's ambition along with the utopianism that such an ambition can be achieved, the cultural distinctiveness Aurora maintains as she evokes

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<sup>66</sup> The last line of *Portrait* was published in *The Egoist* on September 1, 1915. We learn that Francisco joined the Home Rule campaign sometime in 1916. Some time after joining, Besant asked Francisco to found a Home Rule League in Cochin. A few days after Francisco did so, he was arrested and spent the next six months in and out of prison. It was during these six months that Francisco developed his theory (19).

European modernism, and Rushdie's idiosyncratic language amidst his own evocation of European modernism all display to varying degrees two competing impulses: to universalize and to particularize. As such, Joyce's, Aurora's, and Rushdie's "postcolonial" modernism resonate less with Kantian cosmopolitanism than with new cosmopolitanism. Despite the diversity of new cosmopolitan theories, they all share a similar goal: to leave behind the imperial associations of "cosmopolitanism" while retaining the underlying ideal of a community that transcends borders. To do so, new cosmopolitan theorists insist that membership in a community that transcends borders does not mean rejecting those forms of communities that exist within such borders. Affiliations are not mutually exclusive; one can be both a fervent nationalist and a devout cosmopolitan. Thus, theories of new cosmopolitanism tend to situate cosmopolitanism within the context and histories from which they emerge, emphasizing the equal importance of the local in considerations of the global. Thus, we get seemingly-oxymoronic phrases like Bhabha's "vernacular cosmopolitanism," Appiah's "cosmopolitan patriotism" and "rooted cosmopolitanism," and Parry's "postcolonial cosmopolitanism." In this way, we can speak of a larger global community and consider its implications without forsaking the particularities of distinct locales.

One of the more influential theories of new cosmopolitanism appears in James Clifford's "Traveling Cultures." In this essay, Clifford argues that ethnography "has privileged relations of dwelling over relations of travel" (22). In privileging relations of dwelling, ethnographers tend to erase or marginalize the process of translation between cultures. It is this space of translation between cultures—"hybrid, cosmopolitan experiences"—that Clifford wants to account for. Clifford therefore uses "travel" as a

term of translation: “a word of apparently general application used for comparison in a strategic and contingent way” (39).<sup>67</sup> By using travel as a term of translation, Clifford can bring cultures of the bourgeois traveler into conversation with those whose travel has been coerced. For instance, one may use “travel” to compare Congolese migrant workers with the European tradition of the dandy, as a study Clifford cites does (35). Clifford recognizes the vast differences between these cultures, but he insists that these differences should not prevent them from being compared, as long as these differences are acknowledged. In this way, he brings different cultures into conversation while maintaining their distinctiveness as cultures. Ultimately, Clifford rejects a static, rooted sense of culture in favor of “discrepant cosmopolitanism”—an alternative conception of culture as dynamic and mobile and of cultural identity as rooted in “specific, often violent, histories of economic, political, and cultural interaction” as well as “routed” in the displacement and transplantation that bring cultures into contact (36).

Clifford’s work has influenced a number of scholars, including literary critics. One such critic, Charles Pollard, uses Clifford’s conception of discrepant cosmopolitanism in order to shed new light on modernism: “Clifford’s discrepant cosmopolitanism essentially restates and reorients the modernist ideal, an ideal that recognizes that fragmentation and diversity of any contemporary culture but also seeks to bring those fragments together to form new, provisional and transnational cultural wholes” (8). Pollard cites Eliot, Kamau Brathwaite, and Derek Walcott as examples, where Eliot “shores together the fragments of Euro-American culture to reimagine a new,

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<sup>67</sup> Whereas Clifford distinguishes discrepant cosmopolitanisms as a particular form of traveling cultures in “Traveling Cultures,” he uses the terms “discrepant cosmopolitanism” and “traveling culture” synonymously in his later essay “Mixed Feelings,” arguing that discrepant cosmopolitanism “gives us a way of perceiving, and valuing, different forms of encounter, negotiation, and multiple affiliation rather than simply different ‘cultures’ or ‘identities’” (365).

provisional ‘Western’ cultural unity,” while Brathwaite attempts to unify Afro-Caribbean cultural connections and Walcott a new wholeness “emerging from different diaspora cultures of Europe, Africa, and Asia” (9). However, when we consider the characterization of Eliot Crane in “The Harmony of the Spheres,” we can assume that Rushdie would view Eliot’s poetry as lacking the local specificity that separates Joyce’s modernism from the more universalist modernism of Le Corbusier and Francisco da Gama.

Aurora’s artwork, on the other hand, does appear to fit Pollard’s description of a modernism that expresses new cosmopolitan ideals. Aurora uses the palimpsest to show both the fragmentation and diversity of contemporary culture as well as to bring these fragments together to form new, provisional, and transnational wholes.<sup>68</sup> For instance, in her early Moor paintings, Aurora layers contemporary India over Al-Andalus, blending together the Agra Fort, Mughal palace-fortresses, and the Alhambra. Moorish Spain—what Robert JC Young has recently called “Europe’s most sustained and successful experiment in communal living in a pluralistic society”—represents a region fragmented by different cultures that nevertheless coexist peacefully, which resonates with a contemporary India of Jews, Christians, Muslims, Parsis, Sikhs, Buddhists, and Jains (33). The landscape of her early Moors contains two worlds—a land world and a sea world, each inhabited with various monsters, deities, and ghosts. However, as Moraes tells us, “The water’s edge, the dividing line between the two worlds, became in many of these pictures the main focus of her concern”—a space of translation inhabited by

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<sup>68</sup> For a more detailed discussion of Rushdie’s use of the palimpsest in *The Moor’s Last Sigh*, see Jonathan Greenberg’s “‘The Base Indian’ or ‘The Base Judean’?: ‘Othello’ and the Metaphor of the Palimpsest in Salman Rushdie’s *The Moor’s Last Sigh*,” 93–107 and Minoli Salgado’s “The Politics of Palimpsest in *The Moor’s Last Sigh*,” 153–68.



“strange composite creatures” (226). “Call it Mooristan,” Aurora tells her son, “Place where an air-man can drown in water, or else grow gills; where a water-creature can get drunk, but also chokeofy, on air. One universe, one dimension, one country, one dream, bumpo’ing into another, or being under, or on top of. Call it Palimpstine” (226). Aurora uses the Agra Fort and Mughal palace-fortresses along with scenes inspired by her childhood in colonial Cochin to show the layers of culture that make up contemporary Indian culture. Aurora’s paintings bring disparate elements together, represented by the land and the sea, into what she imagines as Palimpstine. Again, Aurora distinguishes her own cosmopolitan vision from that of her grandfather by separating those who can adapt as universes collide in a global cosmopolitan world (air-men growing gills, water-creatures drunk on the air) from those who cannot adapt (those who drown or suffocate), unable to conceive a universe beyond their own (universalism) or unwilling to mix with other universes (multiculturalism). Aurora’s vision maintains the local specificity of her own universe while at the same time acknowledging the existence of and engaging with other universes beyond her own. Moreover, Moraes’s description of “the vivid surrealism of her images and the kingfisher brilliance of her colouring and the dynamic acceleration of her brush” evokes the European avant-garde Francisco once patronized. But Aurora turns modernist utopianism into her own “romantic myth of the plural, hybrid nation” (227). This romantic myth of the plural, hybrid nation recalls the global cosmopolitan space between Irishness and Jewishness that Bloom creates in proclaiming his Jewishness on the jarvey outside of Barney Kiernan’s. The air-man growing gills symbolizes a similar intersubjectivity as that Bloom and Stephen develop moments before Stephen

suddenly chants the anti-Semitic ballad “Little Harry Hughes.” In other words, Aurora’s Mooristan is akin to Joyce’s vision of a postcolonial Ireland.

This global cosmopolitan space, this space of translation, finds an analogue in Homi Bhabha’s theory of the “Third Space of enunciation” and, ultimately, in his conception of vernacular cosmopolitanism. Bhabha develops the theory in order to distinguish between cultural diversity and what he calls cultural difference. According to Bhabha, cultural diversity represents “a radical rhetoric of the separation of totalized cultures that live unsullied by the intertextuality of their historical locations, safe in the Utopianism of a mythic memory of a unique collective identity” (*Location* 34). Cultural diversity conceives culture as an object of knowledge containing pre-given content and customs that gives rise to liberal notions of multiculturalism.

In order to distinguish between his cultural *différance* from cultural diversity, Bhabha recasts the cultural hybridity of Fanon’s Algerian liberation fighters as a product of linguistic freedom. Constructed out of Derrida’s theory of the trace, the Third Space of enunciation represents a gap—a lag—between the subject of enunciation and the subject of proposition; it is that which gives shape to the enunciating “I” as designated by the pronominal “I.” Meaning is produced when the enunciating subject and the propositioning subject pass through the third space. The split subject, therefore, along with the third space creates an ambivalence in the act of interpretation, and since it occurs unconsciously it cannot be manipulated by human agency. This ambivalence “destroys the logics of synchronicity and evolution which traditionally authorize the subject of cultural knowledge” (36). Such (Western) logics conceive culture as unitary and the subject as whole and fail to recognize the third space that creates the ambivalence

between the enunciating subject and the propositioning subject. The Third space of enunciation effectively introduces an indeterminacy into the production of meaning conceived as transparent and mimetic by Western cultures: “Such an intervention quite properly challenges our sense of the historical identity of culture as a homogenizing, unifying force, authenticated by the originary Past, kept alive in the national tradition of the People” (37). In so doing, it “displaces the narrative of the Western nation which Benedict Anderson so perceptively describes as being written in homogenous, serial time” (37). Yet the theory of the Third Space of enunciation has implications beyond the nation: “a willingness to descend into that alien territory [the Third Space] ... may reveal that the theoretical recognition of the split-space of enunciation may open the way to conceptualizing an *international* culture, based not on the exoticism of multiculturalism or the *diversity* of cultures, but on the inscription and articulation of culture’s *hybridity*” (38). I contend that Third Space of enunciation *does* open the way to conceptualizing an *international* culture, and Bhabha calls this concept “vernacular cosmopolitanism.” After all, in the Preface to *The Location of Culture* Bhabha composes ten years later, he notes that V.S. Naipaul peoples his novels with “vernacular cosmopolitans of a kind, moving in-between traditions, and revealing hybrid forms of life that do not have a prior existence within the discrete world of any single culture or language” (Preface xiii). In his vernacular cosmopolitanism, Bhabha applies his theory of Third Space of enunciation along with the cultural hybridity it recasts from the condition of colonialism to the condition of contemporary globalization.

The relationship between the Third Space of enunciation, hybridity, and vernacular cosmopolitanism is dramatized early in *The Moor’s Last Sigh*, as Aurora’s life

begins to mirror her paintings. In the novel, God, Empire, and the West are represented by the photophobic priest Oliver D'Aeth. The young Reverend falls in love with a fifteen-year-old Aurora da Gama, who has nothing but contempt for him. Along with sadomasochistic nightmares and the daily pang of unrequited love, Aurora inspires in the Reverend a recognition that threatens to destroy his deepest beliefs. Oliver D'Aeth begins to see through the "mirage of Englishness" constructed by the English in India: the bloodsucker lizard beneath English hedges, the parrots flying amid golfers and the Masonic Lodge, and hears the false vowels of the local merchants. In other words, D'Aeth begins to recognize the slippage of colonial mimicry—the space of translation between cultures and that between reality and desire; D'Aeth recognizes the Third Space of enunciation.<sup>69</sup> For D'Aeth not only recognizes the "deception" of English culture in India, but he also recognizes the deception and uncertainty of English culture. The recognition, however, only serves to recommit the Reverend to the "standards," "continuity," and the Manichean worldview of "God's road" and the "Left-Hand Path" (95). So when he learns of Aurora's affair with Abraham Zogoiby, his attempt to sabotage their relationship is motivated less by thwarted desire than by what they represent.

What they represent is a hybridity—another space of translation.<sup>70</sup> The relationship between Aurora and Abraham transcends generational and class

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<sup>69</sup> According to Bhabha, the Third Space of enunciation is what makes mimicry possible. In his analysis of Charles Grant's "Observations" in "Of Mimicry and Man," Bhabha writes, "Inadvertently, Grant produces a knowledge of Christianity as a form of social control which conflicts with the enunciatory assumptions that authorize his discourse" (*Location* 86).

<sup>70</sup> "It is only when we understand that all cultural statements and systems are constructed in this contradictory and ambivalent space of enunciation, that we begin to understand why hierarchical claims to the inherent originality or 'purity' of cultures are untenable, even before we resort to empirical historical instances that demonstrate their hybridity" (*Location* 37). I understand Bhabha's statement to be grouping hybridity and the space of enunciation as two different though related ways of illustrating that claims of

boundaries—he is a thirty-six-year-old duty manager of a godown and she is a fifteen-year-old girl who stands to inherit the corporation that owns said godown. However, to those in their respective communities, the most significant boundary the pair cross in their union is that of ethnicity—specifically, Abraham’s Jewishness. Echoing the sentiments of the Widow Elphinstone, D’Aeth thinks to himself, “Aurora da Gama and her Jew were no more than flies upon the great diamond of India; how dare they so shamelessly challenge the natural order of things? They were asking to be squashed” (98). Aurora and Abraham need to be squashed because the hybridity that their union represents challenges the “naturalness” of the order of things; their union threatens to expose the order as imposed, thereby undermining the authority of the Anglican Church and the British Empire. Pointedly, D’Aeth perceives Abraham’s Jewishness as the bigger threat. After all, he thinks of Aurora “and her Jew” rather than Aurora “and her duty manager” or Aurora and “that man who-is-old-enough-to-be-her-father.” Moreover, the Jew as a trope throughout modernist literature conjures associations with rootlessness, parasitism, and deceit.

That Abraham is old enough to be Aurora’s father is the protest Abraham first receives when he informs his mother Flory of his engagement to the young Catholic. Such a protest rings hollow, however, given the fact that the age difference between Flory and her deceased husband was greater than that of her son and his lover. Indeed, the protest serves to delay for a bit the moment when mother must disown son because “it was unheard-of for a Cochin Jew to marry outside of the community; yes, her memory and behind and beneath it the larger memory of the tribe” (70). As Moraes notes, the

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cultural purity are spurious. Since both ways demonstrate this through indeterminacy, I group them as spaces of translation.

White Jews of Cochin bind their community together by blood; they trace their shared heritage to 72 C.E., when Sephardic Jews from Palestine fled to India to escape Roman persecution (70). In fact, unlike the Hindu caste system, that of the Jews of Cochin was based entirely on the purity of ancestral line (Mandelbaum 69).<sup>71</sup> Therefore, Abraham's "marriage" to Aurora challenges this continuity and the naturalness of the order. Flory must disown her son to reaffirm "claims to the inherent originality or 'purity' of [her] culture."<sup>72</sup>

Just as Aurora challenges D'Aeth's worldview, Abraham forces his mother and a community of onlookers to acknowledge the reality apart from the desire, the miscegenation from the spurious purity. He notes that the Black Jews arrived in India some six hundred years before the White Jews, fleeing the Jerusalem of Nebuchadnezzar. He reminds his mother of other migrations that "contaminated" the purity of the blood line, including that of their own blood ancestors, who arrived in Cochin after being expelled from Spain. More importantly, Abraham forces his mother to concede that the Zogoiby line descends from the union of the last Moorish Sultan of Granada Boabdil the Misfortunate (he of the last sigh) and his Jewish handmaiden. As proof, Flory Zogoiby's son produces the Sultan's stolen four-hundred-year-old crown and asks Moshe Cohen what "misfortunate" means in Arabic, to which Moshe replies, "*El-zogoybi*" (83). Abraham then walks out of Jewtown and towards St. Francis's Church to begin his life with Aurora, who in loving Abraham has defied her own community.

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<sup>71</sup> For more information on the history of Jews in Cochin, see J.B. Segal's *A History of the Jews of Cochin* and Joan G. Roland's *Jews in British India: Identity in a Colonial Era*. For an extended discussion of the relationship between *The Moor's Last Sigh* and the history of the Jews of Cochin during the 16th and 17th centuries, see Bindu Malieckal's "Shakespeare's Shylock, Rushdie's Abraham Zogoiby, and the Jewish Pepper Merchants of Precolonial India."

<sup>72</sup> "Marriage" is in quotations because, although Abraham and Aurora consider themselves husband and wife, the leaders of both communities refused to legitimize the marriage (104). The quoted text comes from *The Location of Culture*, transcribed above.

While anthropologists like Clifford and literary theorists like Bhabha reclaim cosmopolitanism to challenge previous conceptions of culture and identity, political theorists like David Held and sociologists like Ulrich Beck reclaim cosmopolitanism to imagine a geopolitical system that would promote and institutionalize human rights. Abraham and Aurora seem to affirm those moral principles underlying Held's cosmopolitan world order in their defiance of their communities' customs and traditions. Aurora asserts a sort of ethics where "the ultimate units of moral concern are individual human beings, not states or other particular forms of human association" (Held 70). Such a morality centered on individual human beings recognizes "the capacity of human beings to reason self-consciously, to be self-reflective, and to be self-determining" (70).<sup>73</sup> Beck, for his part, would presumably encourage such defiance against custom and tradition because "[t]he rule of human rights is self-legitimizing and knows no limits. It follows the logic of ahistoric self-justification—it is based not on voting but on consent, not on conquest but on non-conquest, not on democracy but on reason" (*Power* 297). But there remains risks in asserting such self-legitimizing and self-justifying rights, for the moment that Aurora and Abraham cross their communities' boundaries, they lose the protection that their communities offer, and, thus, become vulnerable to the forces of order: "there was talk of lynching the Jew and his child-whore ... the dwindling population of the Mattancherri Jewtown had for a few days to fear for their lives and the news from Germany didn't sound as if it came from far away" (103–4). The mob becomes the mechanism by which the Reverend Oliver D'Aeth attempts to squash

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<sup>73</sup> This and the former quotation come from Held's description of the first two principles of cosmopolitan order—(i) equal worth and dignity and (ii) active agency. The other principles are as follows: (iii) personal responsibility and accountability; (iv) consent; (v) collective decision-making about public matters through voting procedures; (vi) inclusiveness and subsidiary; (vii) avoidance of serious harm; and (viii) sustainability (69).

Aurora and Abraham for daring to shamelessly challenge the natural order of things. The mob kills the juridical person, murders the moral person, and destroys individuality.<sup>74</sup> This totalitarian aspect of the mob—which the allusion to Nazi Germany underscores—represents the very communitarian ethics that Held’s principles of cosmopolitan order and Beck’s conception of the “cosmopolitan human rights regime” seek to combat (*Cosmopolitan* 141–4).<sup>75</sup>

Whether we contextualize it as ordering principles or a rights’ regime or call it discrepant or vernacular, the general ethos conveyed by new cosmopolitan theories corresponds to that of an author who defends *The Satanic Verses* by claiming that it “celebrates hybridity, impurity, intermingling, the transformation that comes of new and unexpected combinations of human beings, cultures, ideas, politics, movies, songs. It rejoices in mongrelization and fears the absolutism of the Pure. *Mélange*, hotchpotch, a bit of this and a bit of that is how newness enters the world” (“In Good Faith” 394). That this passage appears in both Kwame Anthony Appiah and Bhabha’s discussions of new cosmopolitanism speaks to the affinities between Rushdie’s politics and those of new cosmopolitan theorists.<sup>76</sup> And, as we have seen, those values he attributes to *The Satanic Verses* appear in the follow-up novel, *The Moor’s Last Sigh* as well, particularly in the characters of Aurora and Abraham who both rejoice in mongrelization and fear the absolutism of the Pure.

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<sup>74</sup> In *Origins of Totalitarianism*, Hannah Arendt argues that the first step towards totalitarian total domination is “to kill the juridical person in man.” The second step is “the murder of the moral person in man,” which is followed by “the killing of man’s individuality” (447–55).

<sup>75</sup> According to Beck, “The human rights regime gives rise to a geography of human rights which founds a new geography of power, once again both within and between states. Within states it empowers powerless groups and persecuted individuals and minorities; in relations between states it empowers powerful states to intervene beyond the territorial sovereign order” (*Cosmopolitan* 142–3). As we will see, David Harvey takes issue with similar statements.

<sup>76</sup> See Appiah’s *Cosmopolitanism*, 112, and Bhabha’s “Unsatisfied: Notes on Vernacular Cosmopolitanism,” 201.



However, as *The Moor's Last Sigh* progresses, this new cosmopolitan ethos, manifested in Rushdie's defense of *The Satanic Verses* and in his characters Aurora and Abraham, comes to represent a sort of prelapsarian innocence. As in *Midnight's Children*, the Fall in *The Moor's Last Sigh* arises in the form of the Emergency. Signaling the growing influence of reactionary politics during the Emergency, one of Aurora's older paintings depicting a kiss between a woman and the Muslim batsman Abbas Ali Baig becomes fodder for Hindu nationalist leader Raman Fielding to generate anti-Muslim propaganda.<sup>77</sup> "Before the Emergency, we were Indian," writes Moraes, "After it we were Christian Jews" (235). The Emergency also marks the arrival of Uma Sarasvati, who assimilates herself into the Zogoiby clan and soon becomes Moraes's lover. However, Moraes's lover describes just one of the many roles Uma performs: "Her ability to take on radically different personae in the company of different people ... was exceptional," writes Moraes (265–6). Only Aurora sees through Uma's dissembling and tries to show her son the truth: that Uma's history is a complete fabrication. At the time, however, Moraes attributes his mother's antipathy to jealousy, for just as Uma usurps Aurora's place in her son's life, she usurps Aurora's place in the Indian art world.

Coinciding with Indira's return, critics pan a large retrospective of Aurora's work as "out of tune with, and even 'deleterious' to, the temper of the age" (261). In one of the "radical shifts by which a changing society all at once reveals that it is of a new mind," the same critics who savage Aurora celebrate the show of a young sculptor named Uma Sarasvati: "The centrepiece of the show was a group of seven roughly spherical, metre-high stone pieces with a small hollow scooped out at the top and filled with richly

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<sup>77</sup> For more information about how Rushdie uses the figure Raman Fielding and his Mumbai's Axis to parody Bal Thackeray and Shiv Sena, see Stuti Khanna's "Postcolonial Politics of the Possible: City and Nation in the Fiction of Salman Rushdie," 104–8.

coloured powders — scarlet, ultramarine, saffron, emerald, purple, orange, gold. This work, entitled *Alterations in/Reclamations of the Essence of Motherhood in the Post-Secularist Epoch*, had been the hit of the Documenta in Germany the year before, and had only now returned after showings in Milan, Paris, London and New York” (261–2). In contrast to the “vivid surrealism” of Aurora’s *Mooristan* works, Uma’s centrepiece features seven uniform stone pieces differentiated only by the colored powders that occupy small hollows. Differences remain cosmetic as disparate cultures meld into a single dominant vision. We’ve seen this single, dominant vision before. We saw it in Besant’s inability to imagine an India without the British, in both Reverend D’Aeth’s and Gandhi’s “*oneness* of mankind,” and we saw it in Francisco’s theory of the “fields of conscience.” Each proves unable to envision community that respects difference and tolerates diversity. Tellingly, critics reject Aurora in favor of Uma in part because the latter is “driven by her strong religious faith” (262). Indeed, after the show, Uma declares herself a devotee of Ram, aligning herself with the monological nationalism of Mumbai’s Axis (Shiv Sena) and Raman Fielding (Bal Thackeray).

Along with the death of her daughter and her “Cassandran fears for her nation,” Uma’s presence inspires a new direction in Aurora’s art. In what would later be seen as the first work in the high period of her Moor paintings, Aurora paints *Moor and Ina’s Ghost Looking into the Abyss*, where “the line between land and sea had ceased to be a permeable frontier” (235). Instead, the line becomes a chasm that swallows both the landmen and the water-creatures screaming into the void. This development is significant, for the permeability of the line between land and sea effectively links Aurora’s postcolonial modernism with that of Joyce. Recall that, for both Aurora and Joyce, the collision of

universalisms that signifies a global cosmopolitan world promised utopian possibilities. Transculturation afforded the opportunity to develop a space of translation between cultures that would enable an intersubjectivity that would simultaneously acknowledge and transcend difference. It represented a space where air-men would grow gills and water-creatures would get drunk on air, and a space where a Jew and an Irishman could locate affinities between each others' cultures over a cup of Epp's soluble cocoa. However, the chasm that opens between the land and the sea symbolizes the end of such promises and marks, somewhat dramatically, the end of a postcolonial form of modernism.

I have argued in the first two chapters that, just as exile and metropolitan perception played a significant role in the development of modernist aesthetics, so did the idea of the normalization of this cosmopolitan condition. In other words, writers like Joyce, Eliot, and Stein were aware of the inevitability that the transnational mobility that made them unique would one day be widely available. I have termed the future world of widely available transnational mobility or "normalized" migrancy "global cosmopolitanism." I have also argued that each of these writers were alive to the dangers as well as the possibilities such a world would provide. Since new cosmopolitan theories usually insist "that the human condition has itself become cosmopolitan," such theories effectively apply the global cosmopolitan ideal to "actually existing" cosmopolitanisms (Beck, *Cosmopolitan* 2). So far in this chapter, I have suggested an affinity between Aurora, Abraham, and Rushdie's new cosmopolitanism and Joyce's global cosmopolitanism. But the postmodernism represented in Uma Sarasvati—her multiple selves, her lack of an "authentic" self, her lack of history—undermines global

cosmopolitanism as a space of resistance; the postmodern destroys the utopian potential of global cosmopolitanism, as Moraes contemplates Uma's later demise: "in the matter of Uma Sarasvati it had been the pluralist Uma, with her multiple selves, her highly inventive commitment to the infinite malleability of the real, her modernistically provisional sense of truth, who had turned out to be the bad egg; and Aurora ... that lifelong advocate of the many against the one ... had therefore been in the right" (272). Uma forces a role reversal, where the hybrid pluralist Aurora must position herself as One in order to defend against a new, dehistoricized pluralism. In effect, Uma's postmodernism "out-pluralizes" global cosmopolitanism's plurality because it undermines those concepts—such as self, truth, and reality—that global cosmopolitanism depends on. In other words, postmodernism reveals the paradox of global cosmopolitanism: as a space of resistance it retains its utopian potential, but when practiced on "actually existing" cosmopolitanisms, when itself is resisted, it becomes its own totalizing vision. In so doing, postmodernism turns not-totality into its own totality. Global cosmopolitanism cannot defend itself against a dehistoricized version of itself because to do so would be to give it dimensions, borders, and definitions and thus become its own adversary. Thus, global cosmopolitanism as an ideal developed against colonialism succumbs to neocolonialism, as Aijaz Ahmad argues in his critique of post-coloniality:

The stripping of all cultures of their historicity and density, reducing them to those lowest common denominators which then become interchangeable, produces not a universal equality of all cultures but the unified culture of a Late Imperial marketplace that subordinates cultures, consumers and critics alike to a

form of untethering and moral loneliness that wallows in the depthlessness and whimsicality of postmodernism—the cultural logic of Late Capitalism, in Jameson’s superb phrase—in a great many guises, including the guises of ‘hybridity’, ‘contingency’, etc. (“Politics” 17)

The radical shift “by which a changing society all at once reveals that it is of a new mind,” the transformation of the permeable line into the chasm, the rise of Uma’s postmodernism and the fall of Aurora’s postcolonial modernism can be seen as the result of the assertion of a Late imperial marketplace, or, better yet, the transition from Fordism to flexible accumulation. The global cosmopolitanism of Uma displaces that of Bloom and Aurora, forsaking new cosmopolitanism as a remnant of an obsolete modernism.

The face of flexible accumulation in *The Moor’s Last Sigh* becomes, ironically, that of Abraham. When we last left him, we were celebrating him as a discrepant cosmopolitan hero of sorts. However, as the novel progresses, Abraham—like his wife’s art—undergoes a transformation. Six years after Aurora and Abraham embrace translation, hybridity, and indeterminacy in defiance of God, Empire, and Nation, the pair move from Cochin to Bombay. Over the course of the next fifteen years, Abraham turns the da Gama Zogoiby C-50 enterprise into the fifth largest corporation in India through a system of bribery, intimidation, and exploitation. All of Abraham’s post-Cochin exploits can be contextualized within the setting in which he imparts them to his son: the thirty-first floor of his I.M. Pei-designed Cashondeliveri Tower. The thirty-first floor becomes a hub of international trade in the black market, be it the trafficking of drugs, arms, or people. Abraham’s tower not only symbolizes his status among the elites, but also the distance of this elite from the everyday hardships their activities create. Abraham cares

little for the laborers he employs or their culture. He hires migrants denied citizenship and thus government goods and services, paying them a low wage and denying them even the most basic health benefits (186–7). He purchases young women from South Indian temples to work in Bombay brothels (183). He sells “the symbol of the nation itself”—the four-headed Lion of Sarnath (251). His ambition works against the direct will and well-being of the populace. He uses the reclaimed land at the south end of Back Bay to build competing skyscrapers instead of developing the land to alleviate overcrowding in the city as originally intended (185). As Trousdale puts it, Abraham represents “a Bombay in which the elite belong to a global cosmopolitan culture divorced from the city’s distinct character, ignoring the source and price of its own prosperity” (107).

So then, how does Abraham the discrepant cosmopolitan hero become Abraham the global cosmopolitan villain? That the two philosophies coalesce within the same character suggests that Rushdie sees a continuity between them. His Jewishness, I would argue, only confirms this continuity. Both hybrid hero and greedy Jew represent two sides of the ambivalence towards transnationalism that we have seen modernists like Joyce and Stein associate with Jewishness. As discussed earlier, his presence reveals the potential of cross-cultural exchange fueled by economic globalization, but also of economic globalization co-opting cross-cultural exchange. That the greedy Jew ultimately consumes the hybrid hero suggests that Rushdie sees a link between them. Or, to put it in other words, instead of Uma’s global cosmopolitanism displacing that of Bloom and Aurora’s, Bloom and Aurora’s global cosmopolitanism *evolves into* that of Uma’s.

The process by which Abraham transforms from discrepant to global cosmopolitan reveals the theoretical problems posed by new cosmopolitanism. One of the more significant critics of new cosmopolitanism, Pheng Cheah, argues that, in their attempt to combat both the universal conception of culture promoted by Kantian cosmopolitanism and the cultural relativism of anthropological criticism, Bhabha and Clifford develop an idea of culture as constituted by discourse and signification, whereby “culture becomes the site of permanent contestation” (84). While reductive when used to understand the dynamics of colonialism, perceiving culture as the site of permanent contestation becomes even more reductive when applied to the present world. In effect, hybrid cosmopolitanisms strip away the empirico-material complexities of contemporary globalization. To illustrate this point, Cheah turns to Bhabha’s use of Fanon’s Algerian liberation fighters. Recall that Bhabha develops his theory of the “Third Space of enunciation” in order to recast the cultural hybridity of these Algerians as a product of linguistic freedom. According to Cheah, however, to view this model of resistance as constructed by discourse is to ignore the material realities from which these fighters emerge: “For Bhabha, the resistant subaltern is a reader who grasps modernity’s discrepant moral truths and introduces an indeterminacy or ‘time lag’ which short circuits modernity’s enunciative present.” Cheah continues, “These linguistic culturalisms elide the point that even though culture is not reducible to empirical determinations such as politics and economics, it is not entirely autonomous or free from the taint of such determinations because it emerges from its relationship with these forces” (84). Because Bhabha unmoors the cultural from the socio-political and economic, his vernacular cosmopolitanism becomes a “closet idealism.”

Cheah's critique of hybrid cosmopolitanisms offers some insight into Abraham's transformation. The first pages of Part Three in *The Moor's Last Sigh* finds Abraham's son Moraes in a solitary prison cell full of shit, disease, roaches, and rats. In his despair, Moraes thinks, "I wanted to cling to the image of love as the blending of spirits, as *mélange*, as the triumph of the impure, mongrel, conjoining best of us over what there is in us of the solitary, the isolated, the austere, the dogmatic, the pure" (229). This passage echoes Rushdie's defense of *The Satanic Verses* quoted above in terms of language but not in its retrospective, regretful tone. It is as though with Moraes, Rushdie admits that his defense of *The Satanic Verses* might have been a product of closet idealism itself. On the night that he first consummates his relationship with Aurora, Abraham evinces a similar idealism when he suddenly fears "that the ugliness of life might defeat its beauty; that love did not make lovers invulnerable. Nevertheless...even if beauty and love were on the edge of destruction, theirs would be the only side to be on; defeated love would still be love, hate's victory would not make it other than it was. 'Better, however, to win.' He had promised Aurora looking-after, and he would be as good as his word" (102). Abraham's closet idealism arises not in the "love conquers all" variety, for he readily admits to the possibility of its defeat. Moreover, he acknowledges the agency he possesses in altering the material conditions *surrounding* their love—"Better, however, to win." Rather, Abraham's closet idealism resides in his failure to recognize both the limited viability of love as well as the material conditions *of* their love. Abraham unmoors their love from the condition that he "will look after the less important part, the



part that needs to eat, enjoy, and rest” (91). In other words, from the beginning, Aurora’s love is predicated on Abraham’s ability to support her.<sup>78</sup>

One would be forgiven to dismiss such idealism in a newly-wedded couple. However, unlike his son, this closet idealism stays with Abraham throughout his life and its breach continues to justify his evil doings. On the thirty-first floor of Cashondeliveri Tower some fifty years later, Abraham dwells on the recent death of his beloved wife (whom, we later find out, was murdered on Abraham’s orders) and recalls those hopes and fears thought so many years before:

*Once by a southern shore he had seen himself as a part of Beauty, as one half of a magic ring, completed by that wilful brilliant girl ... How long since he was beautiful, since beauty made him a conspirator in love! ... But she turned away from him, his beloved, she did not keep her part of the bargain, and he lost himself in his. In what was worldly, what was of the earth and in the nature of things, he found comfort for the loss of what he had touched, through her love, of the transcendent, the transformational, the immense. (317–8)*

Even when he recognizes love’s failure, even when he uses commercial terms to describe its failure, Abraham remains steadfast in his idealization of love, justifying his actions as compensation for its betrayal. He fails to recognize the material world within the idealized, transcendental world of love. Only within such a construction of reality can

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<sup>78</sup> In fact, Abraham’s first instance of intimidation, threats, and bribery occurs immediately after their union, when Abraham must convince a merchant ship vessel’s captain to sail to England during World War II. The first ship, however, sinks, and “after much cajoling, and other, less, mentionable tactics from the depths of Thread-Needle Street, a second and then a third da Gama shipment had been sent on their way” (110). When these shipments are also sunk by German cruisers, Abraham returns to Jewtown to ask his mother to loan him her box of emeralds. As the *Merchant of Venice* theme meets the sacrifice of Isaac, Flory demands Abraham’s first-born son. Abraham agrees, the next shipment succeeds, and the C-50 Corporation is saved.

Abraham absolve himself of the responsibility for his criminal and morally reprehensible behavior since the pair met in the godown half a century earlier.

At issue here is the unambiguous celebration of cultural hybridity. For instance, in his review of Appiah's *Cosmopolitanism*, the one-time champion of new cosmopolitan theory Bruce Robbins criticizes his own creation: "However fleeting and fragmentary, the new sense (cosmopolitanism as a description of the actually existing, ineluctably mixed-up state of modern identity) is perceived as reflecting the moral glory of the old, normative sense (cosmopolitanism as an unfulfilled task or ideal of planetary justice), even as the latter seems less and less visibly active" ("Cosmopolitanism" 51). In a way, both Abraham and Bhabha do the same thing. For Bhabha, it seems, at least according to Cheah, that hybridity enables a form of justice against oppression. Similarly, for Abraham, his "marriage" to Aurora represents not only love as hybridity but also a form of justice against oppression; it represents the triumph of a different sort of morality. By holding on to his love for Aurora—his noble, moral, and just love for Aurora, Abraham is able to justify any behavior, as long as the cultural hybridity represented by their love remains detached from the material world. To put it another way, he might traffic drugs and women, but since he loves Aurora, and since loving Aurora is a moral act, he remains a moral person. Thus, this "closet idealism" of new cosmopolitanism offers a morality that can be removed from its material implications.

For critics like David Harvey, then, new cosmopolitan theories represent "seemingly radical critiques [that] covertly support further neoliberalization and enhanced class domination" (*Cosmopolitanism* 81). The explicit targets of Harvey's critique are the cosmopolitan visions of Held and Beck. For Harvey, Held and Beck

maintain very narrow and individualistic definitions of human rights that too closely resemble the neoliberal ethic (89). For instance, as we have seen, Held's first principle of cosmopolitan order locates the individual—not the state or “other particular forms of human association”—as the ultimate unit of moral concern. Moreover, his second principle demands that regimes recognize human autonomy.<sup>79</sup> In both instances, Held affirms a neoliberal ideology “that prevents government from stultifying individual incentives in the pursuit of individual ends and desires” (Turner 168).<sup>80</sup> The same can be seen in Beck's assertion of human rights as limitless, self-legitimizing, and based on consent and reason rather than voting and democracy. Such an assertion devalues not just the state—whose authority rests in large part on its capacity to regulate and legitimize, but also the will of the people whom the state represents. It affirms the neoliberal idea that “democracy ... needs to be contained by a constitution that can limit the powers of government” (Turner 182). Instead, Harvey offers examples of Seyla Benhabib and Martha Nussbaum, both of whom conceive human rights as more collective in nature, further underlining how neoliberal suspicion of democracy and quasi-deification of the individual represents a hostility towards collectivities.<sup>81</sup>

Like Harvey, Cheah's critique of cosmopolitan theory comes down to the role of the nation in a cosmopolitan world. As we saw in our earlier discussion of Bhabha, hybridity—or, more precisely, the Third Space of enunciation—ultimately “displaces the narrative of Western nations.” Bhabha's vernacular cosmopolitanism, too, represents a form of anti-nationalism: “What Held [in a different context] fails to engage with is the

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<sup>79</sup> See Harvey's *Cosmopolitanism and the Geographies of Freedom*, 85–6, for his larger critique of the neoliberalism within the eight principles and Held's theory of “layered cosmopolitanism.”

<sup>80</sup> See also Harvey's *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*.

<sup>81</sup> See Harvey's *Cosmopolitanism and the Geographies of Freedom*, 89–90, for his discussion of alternative rights.

‘culture’ of community that has resulted from the transnational flows of culture and peoples which have disaggregated (and disembodied) that mechanism of the national imaginary—Benedict Anderson’s ‘imagined community’ (“Unsatisfied” 194). For Cheah, on the other hand, “it is the defense against *uneven* globalization that makes national formation through negative identification both historically unavoidable and ethically imperative” (91). In other words, far from disaggregating (and disembodiment) the national imaginary, transnational flows of cultures and peoples only reinforce the need and desire for nation-states. The nation-state becomes ethnically imperative because, as Timothy Brennan puts it, “the nation protects the weak and is their refuge” (*Wars* 230). In fact, Brennan’s major criticism of new cosmopolitan theories like Clifford’s “Traveling Culture” are that they fail to “hold out a sophisticated theoretical space for a defensive nationalism” (*At Home* 17). Both Brennan’s phrase “defensive nationalism” and Cheah’s “national formation through negative identification” represent the state itself as a mechanism of resistance against the socio-economic realities that accompany, or, rather, produce, transnational flows of people and cultures.

Brennan, however, takes his critique a significant step farther. For him, the anti-statism of “cosmo-theory” becomes symptomatic of the failures of the postmodern, poststructuralist turn in academic theory. “In the decades in which theory has held sway,” writes Brennan, “an antagonism to what is usually called simply the State (as though there were only one) has been absorbed precritically by graduate students and younger professors as a matter of routine in American universities” (*Wars* 148). By “theory,” Brennan means “an *American* and *British* translation of *French* refinements of conservative *German* philosophy” (*Wars* 9). In other words, theory means Anglo-

American interpretation of a French poststructuralism based on the thought of Nietzsche and Heidegger. According to Brennan, rather than radical and subversive, such “theory” established a common front with American liberalism, where it assimilated itself into the mainstream while it maintained a dissident posture despite insinuating itself into the market. Like American liberalism, such theory, according to Brennan, reinvigorates “the clichés of neoliberalism by substituting the terminology of freedom, entrepreneurship, and individualism for the vocabulary of difference, hybridity, pluralism, or, in its latest avatar, the multitude” (*Wars* 11).<sup>82</sup>

Brennan’s argument of a correlation or even a complicity between postmodernism and neo-liberalism is an extension of an earlier argument he makes against Rushdie. In a study published just after the *fatwah*, Brennan names Rushdie as the poster-child for a generation of “cosmopolitan” artists, defined as those whom “Western reviewers seemed to be choosing as the interpreters and authentic public voices of the Third World—writers, whom, in a sense, allowed a flirtation with change that ensured continuity, a familiar strangeness, and trauma by inches” (*Salman* viii–ix). As with poststructuralism, the seemingly radical and subversive (or, at least, exotic) becomes a vehicle that humanizes and furthers rather than challenges American, neo-liberal, neo-colonial values.

Aijaz Ahmad makes a similar argument against Rushdie, viewing the author as a figure that joins the high modernism of Pound and Eliot with the postmodernism of Derrida and Foucault whereby the ideology Rushdie expresses establishes a continuity between them: “How very enchanting, I have often thought, Rushdie’s kind of imagination must be for that whole range of readers who have been brought up on the

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<sup>82</sup> By “its latest avatar, the multitude,” Brennan refers to Hardt and Negri’s *Empire*. For Brennan’s critique of *Empire*, see *Wars of Position*, 170–204.

peculiar ‘universalism’ of *The Waste Land* ... and the ‘world culture’ of Pound’s *Cantos*. ... One did not have to belong, one could simply float, effortlessly, through a supermarket of packaged and commodified cultures” (*In Theory* 128). In his own way, Ahmad anticipates those arguments outlined in the introduction of this chapter that attempt to bridge high modernism with postcolonialism, particularly those that use Rushdie as the vehicle by which such a bridge allows transport. Ahmad, like Esty, Spencer, and Walkowitz, associates modernist exile with Rushdie’s migrancy. The difference between their arguments lies in how these different critics perceive exile and migrancy: for Esty, Spencer, and Walkowitz, such displacement offers them a unique transcultural position that shapes aesthetic innovation; for Ahmad, however, such displacement embraces the myth of the excesses of belonging perpetuated by modern imperialism and, for postmodernists, global capitalist investment.<sup>83</sup>

In *The Moor’s Last Sigh*, Rushdie seems to concur with Ahmad and Brennan as he emphasizes similarities between the “peculiar ‘universalism’” of *The Waste Land*, capitalism, and multiculturalism. After much of Bombay—including Cashondeliveri Tower—explodes in a series of bombings, Moraes flees India for Benengeli, Spain, to find artwork from his mother’s collection (including her masterpiece, *The Moor’s Last Sigh*) stolen by her former lover and collaborator, Vasco Miranda. While attempting to locate Miranda’s home, Moraes finds himself on a thoroughfare dubbed the “Street of Parasites.” The street, Moraes writes,

was flanked by a large number of expensive boutiques—Gucci, Hermès,

Aquascutum, Cardin, Paloma Picasso—and also by eating-places ranging from

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<sup>83</sup> See Ahmad’s *In Theory*, 127–35, as well as Raymond Williams’s *Politics of Modernism*, 45.

Scandinavian meatball-vendors to a Stars-and-Stripes-liveried Chicago Rib Shack. I stood in the midst of a crowd that pushed past me in both directions, ignoring my presence completely in the manner of city-dwellers rather than village folk. I heard people speaking English, American, French, German, Swedish, Danish, Norwegian, and what might have been either Dutch or Afrikaans. But these were not visitors; they carried no cameras, and behaved as people do on their own territory. This denatured part of Benengeli had become theirs. (390)

In this neocolonial Waste Land, Rushdie just about literalizes Ahmad's metaphor of the supermarket of packaged and commodified cultures that Ahmad associates with the floating shoppers of high modernism and Rushdie himself, where Ahmad's critique of *The Waste Land* as "the 'Hindu' tradition appropriated by an Anglo-American consciousness on its way to Anglican conversion" becomes for Rushdie the Italian, French, English, Spanish, Scandinavian, and American cultures commodified in fashion boutiques and restaurants (*In Theory* 128). But the connection to *The Waste Land* goes further. As in *The Waste Land*, the number of languages spoken on the Street of Parasites underscores the lack of communication between them. The crowd that sweeps past Moraes resembles the crowd that "flowed over London Bridge, so many, / I had not thought death had undone so many. / Sighs, short and infrequent, were exhaled, / And each man fixed his eyes before his feet" (61–5). The individuals in the crowd in the Street of Parasites, too, are devoid of soul and animation, both living and dead in a Limbo of sorts: "although the street is crowded, the eyes of those crowding it are empty," says Gottfried Helsing to Moraes, "Forgive them their sins, for these blood-suckers are already

in Hell” (390). Thus, contrary to Ahmad’s assertion, however, Rushdie remains alive to the contradictions of the cultural supermarket produced by global cosmopolitanism.

Also contrary to Ahmad’s assertion, Eliot, too, is alive to the contradictions of the cultural supermarket produced by global cosmopolitanism. Take, for instance, the following passage from “The Fire Sermon”:

Unreal City

Under the brown fog of a winter noon

Mr. Eugenides, the Smyrna merchant

Unshaven, with a pocket full of currants

C.i.f. London: documents at sight,

Asked me in demotic French

To luncheon at the Cannon Street Hotel

Followed by a weekend at the Metropole. (207–14)

While the fashion boutiques and Mr. Eugenides represent different phases of capitalism, they both express reservations about the role economics play in a global cosmopolitan world. If Eliot uses the sense of unbelonging produced by colonialism to appropriate non-Western cultures, he also critiques the sense of unbelonging by recognizing that colonialism leaves his own culture available to be appropriated and commodified.

Writing on the Streets of Parasites passage, Paul Cantor argues that the text shows that, in Rushdie’s view, “commercial cosmopolitanism *denatures* human beings; by ignoring all local customs, it dissolves their sense of cultural identity, which is always anchored in a larger sense of community” (335). As Cantor notes, the parasites “had no interest in the



siesta or any other local customs” (390). Cantor’s argument about the Street of Parasites passage resonates with this passage from *The Waste Land*. Just as the presence of Gucci and Hermès signify neocolonialism, the presence of a Turkish merchant speaking French while conducting business in London results from colonial expansion. While Turkey was never a British colony, it does represent the East, which colonialism bridges unto the West. Moreover, Mr. Eugenides ignores local customs or propriety—he fails to shave, speaks “demotic” French, and makes a rather direct proposal to someone who knows him only as Mr. Eugenides. This fragment can be seen as playing a significant role in the denaturalized humanity, dissolving sense of cultural identity, and fleeting sense of community expressed in the poem as a whole.

But Rushdie most clearly echoes Eliot’s suspicion of global cosmopolitanism in his figuration of the Jew.<sup>84</sup> Rushdie expresses his doubts about a global cosmopolitan world by calling forth the specter of the dark Jew of modernism. Abraham represents not only an Elder of Zion, but also a Western culture that make the *Protocols* a best-seller. He is Sir Ferdinand Klein and the jew underneath the lot; he is USURA and the Rothschilds; he is the Jew Haines and Deasy blame for England’s woes and the Jew the Citizen blames for Ireland’s. He is the manifestation of Western anxieties during the early

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<sup>84</sup> Rushdie’s portrayal of Jewishness in *The Moor’s Last Sigh* has been criticized in some quarters. For instance, in his review of the novel, Norman Rush, with many qualifications, suggests that “this piece of portraiture [of Abraham] could have been painted less hyperbolically, in cognizance of the paranoid mythologies of secret Jewish power so widely current” (7). More direct and less qualified is Hillel Halkin’s review. Halkin stops just short of accusing Rushdie of anti-Semitism, calling Rushdie’s characterization of Abraham “cowardice” and arguing that such a characterization of Jews “could only warm the cockles of an ayatollah’s heart” (59). One could argue that *The Moor’s Last Sigh* almost begs for such a reading, and Hillel takes the bait, for in focusing on anti-Semitism, Hillel fails to confront the neo-liberal exploitation behind it. In so doing, Rushdie illustrates how liberalism’s politics of difference—its tolerant intolerance to use Brennan’s description—only enables neo-liberal exploitation by diverting attention away from it.

This seems to be the point Rushdie makes with Gottfried Helsing, whom the parasites call “the Nazi” because of his German heritage, despite his anti-Nazi claims. Such a strategy could very well be a comment on the reaction to *The Satanic Verses* from both liberal and conservative (and fundamentalist) politicians whose righteous indignation blinded them from the critique of Thatcherism.

20th century about cultural integrity and economic sovereignty. For many, the loss of Western (specifically English, in this instance) culture resulted from “free commercial exploitation by all and sundry middlemen, usurers, Jews,” argued George Lane-Fox Pitt-Rivers in 1920, “the translation of all values into money-values, by which alone can be realised that ideal of personal equality, dead-levelness and compulsory mediocrity in which she glories under the name of Liberalism and Democracy.”<sup>85</sup> As with those of the George Lane Fox-Pitt-Rivers ilk, for many modernists the Jew became the symbol of liberalism, the emblem of (what would become) neo-liberalism, and the embodiment of their complicity. By resurrecting modernism’s dark Jew, Rushdie reveals that beneath the anti-Semitism of artists like Pound and Eliot lied a fear that the social liberalization that welcomed the Jew would become an economic liberalization that would commodify cultures of the world into a global supermarket. In other words, what Abraham’s Jewishness reveals is not the “truth” about Jews, but rather the truth of what fear of the Jew concealed: that culture, politics, and society would all eventually be subsumed under an economic globalization that need not conspire to achieve its goals.

In his review of the novel, J.M. Coetzee asks, “What does it mean in real-life terms, in India or in the world, to take a stand on a symbolic Jewishness?” (“Palimpsest” 6). The answer, I believe, can be found in the following passage from *The Moor’s Last Sigh*:

They have almost all gone now, the Jews of Cochin. Less than fifty of them remaining, and the young departed to Israel. It is the last generation; arrangements have been made for the synagogue to be taken over by the government of the

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<sup>85</sup> Quoted in Michael Tratner’s *Modernism and Mass Politics: Joyce, Woolf, Eliot, Yeats*, 13.

State of Kerala, which will run it as a museum. The last bachelors and spinsters sun themselves toothlessly in the childless Mattancherri lanes. This, too, is an extinction to be mourned; not an extermination, such as occurred elsewhere, but the end, nevertheless, of a story that took two thousand years to tell. (119)

What is to be mourned is the promise of a postnational world, that each community in diaspora has a different story to tell, a story shared with the cultures that surround it, for the story of the Jews of Cochin is also the story of Cochin and India—a story that disappears as it is assimilated into Israel. What is to be mourned is the possibility, that Jews once represented, of a culture bound together not through a shared territory but a shared heritage, managing to coexist among different cultures while maintaining its own unique identity. But what is also to be mourned is the need and desire for Israel, that communities need and want nations to protect themselves from each other, whether from violence or exploitation. What is to be mourned is the global cosmopolitan vision of Joyce and Aurora, for our failure as human beings to realize these visions. What is to be mourned is the realization of Eliot's dystopia, where the last vestige of security remains within our own little universes. And yet, by writing and publishing a novel that reveals our failures, Rushdie seems to hold out hope that we might, one day, get it right.

## Chapter 4: Modernism as Resistance: Cosmopolitan Humanism and J.M. Coetzee's *Disgrace*

Much of the reason why J.M. Coetzee holds such a central place in discussions of literature and ethics lies in how he represents—or refuses to represent—otherness. Coetzee's Others—like the Namaqua in *Dusklands*, the barbarian girl in *Waiting for the Barbarians*, Friday in *Foe*, Vercueil in *Age of Iron*, to name a few—are all Others in and of the texts they inhabit; that is, they are other to both the dominant discourse represented by the narrator or focalizer and the reader.<sup>86</sup> Even Michael K, whose thoughts the reader has access to, remains a figure of otherness to the reader in his opacity (Attridge 7).

Michael Marais reads what he sees as Coetzee's refusal to represent otherness as an ethical choice, where representation of alterity signifies its incorporation into the totalizing vision of the dominant culture. Relying heavily on Maurice Blanchot and Emmanuel Levinas, Marais argues that Coetzee's refusal to integrate the Other into the dominant subjectivity of his texts forces the reader to recognize the singularity of the Other and to acknowledge what would be lost in representation. To recognize and respect the singularity of the Other is to ultimately allow for "the possibility of an alternative basis of sociality to those Hegelian and post-Hegelian descriptions of intersubjectivity which ground relations between humans in a dialectic of recognition" (168). In other words, to recognize the singularity of the Other is to begin a process that would eventually obviate the need for recognition.

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<sup>86</sup> For a dissenting opinion, see Benita Parry's "Speech and Silence in the Fictions of J.M. Coetzee." Parry argues that Coetzee's "failure" to represent otherness amounts to silencing otherness and reinforcing colonialist modes of authority.

Like Marais, Derek Attridge has played a seminal role in theorizing an ethical Coetzee. While relying less on Levinas, Attridge echoes Marais in his characterization of the specific ethical position Coetzee promotes in his texts; namely, that Coetzee's works stage a radical alterity that resists integration into the hegemonic culture represented in the first-person narrator or third-person focalizer. But where Marais locates this ethical position in Coetzee's refusal to represent otherness, Attridge locates it in *how* Coetzee represents otherness. And, according to Attridge, Coetzee represents otherness through a distinctly modernist technique and employs an ethical modernism:

Modernism's foregrounding of language and other discursive and generic codes through its formal strategies is not merely a self-reflexive diversion but a recognition (whatever its writers may have thought they were doing) that literature's distinctive and potential ethical force resides in a testing and unsettling of deeply held assumptions of transparency, instrumentality, and direct referentiality, in part because this taking to the limits opens a space for the apprehension of the otherness which those assumptions had silently excluded.

(30)

In other words, while Coetzee does represent otherness, the modernist technique of self-reflexivity he uses to represent otherness draws attention to and thus undermines the objectivity of all representation, thereby denying foreclosure on the Other and opening up a space in which to recognize and apprehend alterity.

Marais's and Attridge's readings of the ethics of Coetzee's novels have influenced a host of criticism on Coetzee as well as the larger ethical turn in literary

studies.<sup>87</sup> However, while their readings work particularly well with Coetzee's early apartheid works, they become complicated when applied to a post-apartheid work like *Disgrace*. In an earlier work like "The Narrative of Jacobus Coetzee," the dominant subjectivity is clearly embodied in the narrative voice and easily differentiated from that of the author. While Jacobus Coetzee is indeed "a recognizable (if repugnant) human being," the reader is never in any real danger of confusing Jacobus with John (Attridge 20). Moreover, "The Narrative of Jacobus Coetzee" also maintains a somewhat clear self-reflexivity.<sup>88</sup> In *Disgrace*, however, the distance between the third-person focalizer David Lurie and the author Coetzee remains difficult to ascertain, which complicates any sort of self-reflexive aesthetic.<sup>89</sup> Further, the relationship between the dominant subjectivity presented in the novel and the dominant discourse of the society that the subject inhabits remains ambiguous throughout the narrative. Such ambiguities in authority and loci of power reflect the moral and ethical ambiguity of a post-apartheid South Africa suddenly integrated into the global economy. Approaching *Disgrace* in this way, I will show, allows us to see the Western humanism David Lurie represents as a means of resistance against a global cosmopolitan world rather than a means of oppression.

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<sup>87</sup> In addition to the scholarship incorporated in this chapter, see, for instance, Rita Barnard's "J.M. Coetzee's 'Disgrace' and the South African Pastoral," Marianne Dekoven's "Going to the Dogs in *Disgrace*," and Michael Eskin's "Introduction: The Double 'Turn' to Ethics and Literature?" See also the collection *J.M. Coetzee and Ethics: Philosophical Perspectives on Literature*. Attridge's influence on the larger discussion of ethics and literature derives largely from his work on Coetzee, but also from his "Innovation, Literature, Ethics: Relating to the Other."

<sup>88</sup> As Attridge notes, the self-reflexivity of the prose appears most clearly in the "mistake" of Klawer's death (20). As Jacobus relays his return from the Namaqua, he describes how Klawer was overtaken by the currents as the pair attempted to ford a river and "went to his death bearing the blanket roll and all the food" (94). A few lines later, however, Jacobus describes Klawer's attempts to dry their clothes after fording the river.

<sup>89</sup> Indeed, critics often read David Lurie as Coetzee's mouthpiece. For instance, Jacqueline Rose states that "Coetzee brings his character closer than any other in his works to his own world" (191). The trouble it causes the self-reflexive aesthetic can be seen in Laura Wright's claim that "no character in the novel, like many of Coetzee's critics, questions the narrative voice in its biased assertions" (101).

The chapter begins by illustrating the way in which David Lurie represents humanism and argues that this humanism lies at the root of the negative response he elicits from critics—a negative response that testifies to the discourse’s marginality. However, the shifting dynamics of power in South Africa force us to reconsider how we as readers understand David Lurie’s position and the humanism he espouses. I contend that the humanism he espouses should be read as essentially modernist—humanism as a means to resist the encroachment of global capitalism that functions as the “new” hegemony in a post-apartheid nation becoming integrated into a global cosmopolitan world. While this humanism is by no means innocent, its core value of self-critique not only helps reestablish space between the global and the cosmopolitan, but also enables it to recognize its limitations so as not to repeat its past failures. Ultimately, I argue that Coetzee not only depicts the global cosmopolitan world that modernists like Stein and Joyce feared, but offers a possible remedy through a critical humanism based on a modernist aesthetic of resistance.

The third-person focalizer in *Disgrace* is David Lurie, former professor of modern languages at Cape Town University College and now adjunct professor of communications in the renamed Cape Technical University. Early in the novel, Lurie has an affair with Melanie Isaacs, a student in his Romanticism class, and is brought before a disciplinary committee when the affair comes to light. During the hearing, David acknowledges his culpability but refuses to apologize and is therefore summarily dismissed.

Dismissed from the University, David moves in with his daughter Lucy on a small holding outside of Salem in the rural Eastern Cape where she grows flowers and vegetables and boards dogs with the help of her African neighbor Petrus. At the suggestion of his daughter, David reluctantly volunteers at a small animal welfare clinic. Some time later, three black men appear on Lucy's property and proceed to rape Lucy and kill the boarded dogs while keeping David locked in the bathroom, letting him out only to burn his scalp with methylated spirits and a match. As David struggles to understand his daughter and to empathize with her pain, his somewhat indifferent attitude towards animals begins to change. He finds himself inexplicably bonded to a pair of goats Petrus plans to slaughter and begins to feel a deeper connection to the animals he helps put down, taking it upon himself to put their corpses in the incinerator. Meanwhile, his relationship with Lucy deteriorates as David proves unable to understand his daughter's refusal to both report the rape and leave the holding, leading him to return to Cape Town. On the way back to the city, David stops by Melanie's home and apologizes to her father. A few weeks pass in Cape Town, and David returns to his daughter's small holding to find Lucy pregnant and willing to wed Petrus to establish some sense of security. The novel ends with David still estranged from his daughter but devoted to giving the corpses of dead dogs a dignified end.

The majority of the numerous readings of ethics in *Disgrace* follow Marais and Attridge in reading the narrative as a bildungsroman of sorts, where David learns to recognize the singularity of the Other through his daughter's attack—a recognition expressed in David's connection to animals. While critics differ on the degree of evolution David undergoes over the course of the novel, they remain almost unanimous



on their criticism of the initial, unevolved David. Indeed, Coetzee's critics have not been kind to David Lurie. Jacqueline Rose, for instance, argues that "Coetzee seems to have gone out of his way to create a character with whom it is almost impossible for his reader to sympathize or identify" (192). Both Rose and Colin Bower use the word "repellent" to describe David, although only Bower characterizes him as "a cheap and nasty Lothario" (14). Molly Abel Travis echoes Bower's description, calling him a "lothario—elitist, racist, and sexist" (242). Indeed, David seems to elicit an almost visceral response from critics. Much of this can be traced to his relationship with Melanie, particularly their second sexual encounter, when David seems to force himself onto his young student: "Not rape, not quite that, but undesired nevertheless, undesired to the core" (25). Augmenting the critics' repulsion is what David symbolizes, and thus what his violation of Melanie represents. As a white male figure of authority abusing his power over a young, biracial student, David becomes a "figurehead of white patriarchy" and his near rape "an allegory of colonialism" (Poyner 69; Stratton 85). As a professor of Romantic poetry, David also represents the Western literary tradition. Lucy Graham, for instance, connects David's abuse with his literary background: "Coetzee's novel thus assesses the disjunction between allegiance to an ideology of aesthetics and allegiance to the ethical, revealing Western artistic traditions and perspectives that may condone unethical acts" (441).

At the root of such negative responses to *Disgrace*'s focalizer is the humanism that connects the oppression and violent sociality embodied in colonialism with the Western literary tradition—the humanism that links David's privilege as a white male in South Africa with his position as a professor of Romantic poetry. In "The Humanities in

Africa” section of Coetzee’s 2004 novel *Elizabeth Costello*, Sister Bridget Costello traces a brief history of the humanities to a sort of prelapsarian state when textual scholarship meant reading, translating, and interpreting the New Testament. The Fall occurs when those classical texts studied to master the Greek language became objects of study themselves, divorced from the Bible and the divinity within. The failure of the humanities, Elizabeth’s sister argues, can be traced to this Original Sin—this confusion of *studia humanitatis* for *studia divinitatis*—with humanists ever since searching for guidance and a way of life in classical (and secular) texts (119–23). At the conclusion of her talk, Sister Bridget takes solace in her claim that the death of the humanities has come about through the very monster it created: “the monster of reason, mechanical reason” (123).

Exhibit A for Sister Bridget’s argument against the humanities could very well be David Lurie. David Lurie is a humanist in the traditional sense that Sister Bridget historicizes. He looks to the classics for guidance, for models of ethical behavior, and for a means to realize his “best self.” David’s central canon revolves around Romanticism, and he seems to model his behavior on his interpretation of its teachings. As a number of critics have pointed out, David initially seems to embrace the role of the Byronic hero, with Michael G. McDunnah calling him “a self-consciously Byronic and Luciferian character” (15).<sup>90</sup> Gareth Cornwell identifies David’s performance at the inquiry as a “Romantic gesture of defiant individualism”—a gesture David’s ex-wife Rosalind responds to by calling him a “great deceiver and a great self-deceiver,” which gives David the same Satanic overtones as the Byronic hero (188; “Realism” 314). The mere

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<sup>90</sup> For similar allusions to David as a Byronic hero, see Elizabeth Anker’s “Human Rights, Social Justice, and J.M. Coetzee’s *Disgrace*,” 258, and Cynthia Willett’s “Ground Zero for a Post-moral Ethics in J.M. Coetzee’s *Disgrace* and Julia Kristeva’s *Melancholic*,” 10.

fact that David finds his own life mirrored in his discussion of Byron's "Lara" suggests a degree of emulation. He refers to himself as a disciple of Wordsworth and refers to the poet as "one of my masters," suggesting a sort of humanist apprenticeship. Indeed, Jane Poyner argues that *Disgrace* can be read as a kind of bildungsroman that follows David Lurie's "reaffirmation of a Wordsworthian ethic over a Byronic one" (74). The classics to which the humanist David turns to for guidance go beyond Wordsworth, Byron, and Romanticism, however. The degree of intertextuality within the novel illustrates that David's canon includes much of the Western literary canon, including Virgil, Dante, Shakespeare, Goethe, Flaubert, Dickens, Hardy, and Yeats, to note only the most obvious allusions.

And like a good humanist, David attempts to impress upon the younger generation the authority of the canon, propose models for reading and understanding them, and form "from the texts and the reading processes terms for self-representation capable of serving as projected 'best selves' and thus shaping [their] behavior as ethical agents" (Altieri 441). For example, in explicating Book 6 of *The Prelude*, David proposes a model of reading: the key term in the Alps sequence, he argues, is usurpation, wherein the "great archetypes of the mind, pure ideas, find themselves usurped by mere sense-images" (22). He continues, showing how Wordsworth synthesizes a balance between such archetypes of the mind and mere sense-images by perceiving "the sense-image...as a means towards stirring or activating the idea that lies behind more deeply in the soil of memory" (22). David concludes by asserting that "those revelatory, Wordsworthian moments we have all heard about...will not come unless the eye is half turned toward the great archetypes of the imagination we carry within us" (23). In his explanation of Book

6 of *The Prelude*, David attempts to transmit his humanist ideals to his students. David justifies the authority of Wordsworth by appealing to a supposed intellectual or popular consensus—“those revelatory, Wordsworthian moments *we have all heard about*.” At the same time and with greater subtlety, David justifies the authority of the larger Western literary canon as the foundation of “the great archetypes of the imagination.” The canon becomes a model of ethical behavior and a means to realize one’s “best self” because it provides the fountain of pure ideas necessary to transcend the rampant materialism of a rationalized world.

Quite tellingly, at the same time that David attempts to instill in his students humanistic ideals, he seduces Melanie. A few days earlier, he responds to Melanie’s suggestion that she will learn to appreciate Wordsworth by saying, “Maybe. But in my experience poetry speaks to you either at first sight or not at all. A flash of revelation and a flash of response. Like lightening. Like falling in love” (13). As David begins his discussion of Wordsworth, he thinks back to this moment, “What did he say to Melanie that first evening? That without a flash of revelation there is nothing” (21). He then proceeds to use the same analogy of falling in love to his class. After a sudden recollection of their intimacy, he concludes the discussion with the aforementioned explanation that Wordsworthian moments of revelation can only occur if one familiarizes oneself with the great archetypes of the imagination. Thus, at the same time that he instills in his students humanistic ideals, he is teaching Melanie to fall in love with him. David admits as much in referring to his lecture as “covert intimacies” (23).

This confusion between education and seduction involved in David’s humanism underscores the way in which humanism can be seen as uniting the Western literary

tradition with colonialism—or, at least, the chauvinistic universalist thought underpinning colonialism. And, like Sister Bridget Costello, critics tend to associate this humanism with reason and the Enlightenment. For instance, Melinda Harvey suggests, “If Romanticism was Enlightenment reason’s poetical mode, then Imperialism was its political program. Likewise, David’s incorrigible womanising is understood as an offshoot of his role as a high priest of white man’s greatest cultural achievements, poetry and opera” (104). This association of David’s humanism with Enlightenment reason can also be seen in characterizations of the focalizer as “disconnected” and “deficient in feeling,” where David’s “cold and detached” attitude can be linked to “cold, rational mental operations seeking the most efficient and least costly solution” (Rose 92; Douthwaite 132). More to the point, Elleke Boehmer argues that David is “the primary exponent of reason in the novel” and that his growth entails recognizing “the evil of having objectified others through reason as entirely different from ourselves and therefore to be used as we see fit” (140, 141). Similarly, Simone Drichel states, “As the novel’s principal upholder of the Enlightenment principles of reason, freedom, and autonomy, David Lurie is set up as such a knowing ego, who, ‘adequating’ singular otherness, reduces it to the structures of his own perceiving mind. It is not primarily Lurie’s individuality, then, but his investment in abstract concepts and principles, the mechanisms of reason, that is ultimately responsible for the violent sociality he engenders” (155).

Here we come full circle back to the ethical Coetzee theorized by Marais and Attridge. By applying the Levinasian ethics Coetzee seems to affirm in his earlier novels to *Disgrace*, critics ultimately attribute David’s inability to recognize the singularity of

the Other to a humanism derived from Enlightenment reason, which, in turn, informed imperialism and other forms of domination like apartheid. The trouble with such readings, however, is that while rational instrumentalism does characterize the dominant discourse of the society depicted in the text, it does *not* characterize the dominant subjectivity of the text. That is, David's humanism makes him Other to the world that he inhabits—he is the alterity that resists totalization and the humanism he represents can and should be seen as his mode of resistance. Such an approach requires a different ethical framework and a different genealogy of the humanism that David represents.

In fact, from the outset, the novel contrasts David's humanism with the rational, dehumanized world he inhabits. This predicament is made clear very early in the novel:

He earns his living at the Cape Technical University, formerly Cape Town University College. Once a professor of modern languages, he has been, since Classics and Modern Languages were closed down as part of the great rationalization, adjunct professor of communications. Like all rationalized personnel, he is allowed to offer one special-field course a year, irrespective of enrolment, because that is good for morale. (3)

David's humanism can be seen as much in the bitterness of the tone as the content, and both situate David quite clearly as an enemy of instrumental reason. The transformation of Cape Town University College to Cape Technical University marks the evolution of the modern university from a place of higher education and humanistic study to an institution more devoted towards developing in students the skills to compete in the 21st-century global economy. An institution that treats students as customers rather than pupils rejects the very premise of higher education to the humanist, who views

knowledge not as a commodity but as a guide to something higher, less tangible, more human.

Initially, David does little to resist this transformation. He seems to accept the transformation of the university as a consequence of South Africa's entry into the global economy. After all, he does continue to teach and play the role of functionary assigned to him. He even attempts to adapt to the "great rationalization" in his personal life, as evident in the very first line of the novel: "For a man of his age, fifty-two, divorced, he has, to his mind, solved the problem of sex rather well" (1). Focalized through David's consciousness, the text presents sexual desire as something external to the self, a problem to be resolved rationally. Ergo, once a week David visits a prostitute. His relationship with the prostitute Soraya is purely functional: David has desires that she satisfies in exchange for R400, half of which goes to Discreet Escorts who employs Soraya to satisfy men like David and resolve their problems with sex. What critics mistake as David's cold rationality could be seen as an attempt to adapt to the cold, rational world he inhabits.<sup>91</sup> We know this is an attempt to adapt because the adaptation ultimately fails; despite the utilitarian nature of the exchange and his apparent satisfaction in it, David develops affection towards Soraya and suspects the affection is reciprocated: "His sentiments are, he is aware, complacent, even uxorious. Nevertheless, he does not cease to hold them" (2). Such sentiments—complacent and uxorious in a cold, rational world—betray David's attempt to adapt and accept sexual desire as something external to the self. Such residual sentimentalism makes him incapable of adapting fully to a rationalized world. Soraya becomes more than a commodity to him albeit still less than a fully human subject. An

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<sup>91</sup> See, for instance, Salman Rushdie's review of *Disgrace* in *Step Across This Line*, 297–9. For a more thorough example, see John Douthwaite's "Melanie: Voice and Its Suppression in J.M. Coetzee's *Disgrace*."

encounter with a similar prostitute named Soraya leaves David unsatisfied. He continues to pursue the original Soraya and seems genuinely surprised that she is less than pleased when he tracks her down and calls her.

If David's characterization of his sentiments sound familiar to the modernist scholar, they should, for David uses the same words to describe his sentiments as Ezra Pound uses in describing the relationship between humanism and the artist in the 2 February 1914 article "The New Sculpture": "The artist has been for so long a humanist!" declares Pound, "He has had sense enough to know that humanity was unbearably stupid and that he must try to disagree with it. But he has also tried to lead and persuade it; to save it from itself. He has fed it out of his hand and the arts have grown dull and complacent, like a slightly uxorious spouse" (68). Pound rejects humanism because humanism seeks to lead, persuade, and ultimately save the unbearably stupid collectivity known as "humanity." In so doing, Pound argues, art has become "dull and complacent, like a slightly uxorious spouse." Therefore, the new art, the new sculpture, must reject humanism—rather than lead, persuade, and save the ignorant masses, the artist must go to war against humanity. Rather than guide society, culture must antagonize it: "The artist has been at peace with his oppressors for long enough" (68). Whether or not Coetzee intends a direct allusion here or not, Pound's argument does shed light on the predicament facing David Lurie specifically and humanities more generally. One can even read David's performance at the hearing as a Poundian moment of resistance, a stand for humanism against its oppressors.

As Charles Altieri has argued, Pound's rejection of humanism does not necessarily make Pound an anti-humanist (440–7). On the contrary, Pound rejects



humanism to assert a revitalized humanistic ethical framework. Indeed, Stephen Sicari has recently proposed an understanding of modernism oriented around humanism—modernism as “the last great expression of the higher ideals we have long associated with humanism” (xii). But the humanism Altieri and Sicari attribute to modernism is not the humanism critics attribute to David Lurie and the one characterized by Sister Bridget. In *Modernist Humanism and the Men of 1914*, Sicari traces the genealogies of two “versions” of humanism: one from the Enlightenment and one from the early modern period, whereby the former leads to the dogmatism and rigidity of Descartes and the latter to the playful skepticism of Rabelais. Sicari reads Erasmus’s *The Praise of Folly* as paradigmatic of a Renaissance humanism, whereby Folly represents a reaction to Stoicism and demonstrates “the humanist concern with feelings and the body as essential in defining our humanity” (14). Renaissance humanists like Erasmus were, after all, praising folly rather than reason. The modernist humanism Sicari describes descends from these early modern humanists, noting, “The recognition of the loss of the past as a result of new conditions defining and determining a radically new sense of reality is one of the hallmarks of modernist literature, and this recognition is tied to the realization of the danger of our losing a sense of what it is to be human” (3). Such a characterization of modernist humanism has the distinct advantage of characterizing David Lurie as well.

Sicari’s characterization of a modernist humanism that seeks to preserve the human amidst a dehumanizing modernity also resonates with Theodor Adorno’s dialectical conceptualization of modernism. Interestingly, the ethical implications of Adorno’s negative dialectics are similar to those of Levinas, favored by Marais, Attridge, and a host of other critics of Coetzee and *Disgrace*. Ethics for both philosophers rest on

the integrity of radical alterity. The hegemonic subjectivity—the discourse of domination—seeks totality; it strives to absorb difference into what Levinas calls “the Same” and Adorno “identity.” As Adorno puts it, “Genocide is the absolute integration” (362). But Adorno and Levinas differ on what, exactly, constitutes this dominant discourse. While Levinas views the urge towards totality as a product of the narcissism of Western philosophical thought, Adorno views this impulse towards the violent integration of differences as the logic of capitalism. It is perhaps no wonder, then, that postcolonial critics tend to turn to Levinas with greater frequency than Adorno, especially considering Marxism’s association with Eurocentrism—something Said notes when he suggests that Adorno and the Frankfurt School were “blinded to the matter of imperialism” (*Culture & Imperialism* 336).

It is in this vein that, like Jed Esty’s attempt to construct a “Global Lukács,” Robert Spencer attempts to locate a postcolonial Adorno. Spencer borrows from James Gordon Finlayson the characterization of Adorno’s moral philosophy as “affection”—“the capacity to be moved by the fate of others and is therefore the opposite of coldness of indifference”—coldness and indifference that characterizes capitalist modernity (21). Spencer argues that “Adorno wishes to revive a moral capacity to experience the world from the perspective of the other and in particular to imagine, empathise with and act to alleviate the other’s suffering” (214). To do so for Levinas would require a new form of sociality—a mode of sociality that transcends dialectical thought. But for Adorno, such a sympathetic imagination is possible by means of resisting a capitalist system that is neither fixed nor immutable.

This notion of affection could very well describe a humanism that resists “the oppressive power of purely instrumental reason over culture and personality,” as David Harvey sums up Horkheimer and Adorno’s argument in *The Dialectic of Enlightenment* (13). Indeed, Neil Lazarus picks up this humanist aspect of Adorno’s thought in his reading of modernism in the works of white South African writers in the 1980s. Using Adorno’s theory of modernism, Lazarus argues that white South African writers like Coetzee were drawn to modernism as an aesthetic of resistance—as an aesthetic that exposes and undermines art’s totalizing project that corresponds to a totalizing capitalist modernity represented in apartheid (138–9). Lazarus finds in white South African literature during this period modernism’s “articulation of negativity” or “the act of saying no to the burgeoning instrumentalism that surrounds it” (139). Along with being ethically saturated, concerned with representing reality, and rationalism, Lazarus names this aesthetic “modernist” rather than “postmodernist” because it is “so *humanistic* in its critique of the established order” (148, author’s emphasis).

It is this humanist character of Adornian modernism that leads Attridge to dismiss Lazarus’s reading of Coetzee’s modernism. Attridge criticizes the modernism Lazarus takes from Adorno because it fails to validate “an opening onto otherness” and champions rather than challenges the humanistic character of its critique of the established order (Attridge 8). As Attridge puts it, “Lazarus’s Adornian modernism is ‘conservative’ modernism; mine—and, I am contending, Coetzee’s—is radical modernism” (8). This explains the parenthetical qualification Attridge gives to modernism’s formal resistance, “(whatever its writers may have thought they were doing).” An Adornian modernism connects the anti-instrumentalist aesthetics with a

larger anti-instrumentalist philosophy and intent characterized by an essentially humanist reaction against the hegemony of reason. What draws Coetzee to modernism, I would argue, is not just the aesthetics, but the larger humanism that informs these aesthetics and the humanism that Adorno underscores.

The appeal of this humanism can be seen in the similarities between David Lurie and Coetzee's self-portrait in *Scenes from a Provincial Life*. Like David, the young John Coetzee is a humanist in the traditional sense that Sister Bridget historicizes. He looks to the classics for guidance, for models of ethical behavior, and for a means to realize his "best self." John's central canon revolves around modernism rather than Romanticism, however. For guidance, he turns to Eliot and Pound and attempts to emulate their example by fleeing the provinces of South Africa for the cosmopolitanism of London: "Like Pound and Eliot, he must be prepared to endure all that life has stored up for him, even if that means exile, obscure labor, and obloquy" (*Youth* 20). The modernists serve as masters as well: "From Eliot he has learned that the test of the critic is his ability to make fine discriminations. From Pound he has learned that the critic must be able to pick out the voice of the authentic master amid the babble of mere fashion" (*Youth* 135). The centrality of modernism to John's development can also be seen in the similarities between John's progress from *Boyhood*, to *Youth*, to *Summertime* and that of Stephen Dedalus: a young, aspiring artist grows up on the periphery whose colonial history can be understood in the very English language he speaks. The aspiring artist consistently feels like an outsider, identifying more readily with Jews than with his fellow-Christians. This sympathy with such outsiders along with a complex affinity for British culture leaves him skeptical of nationalist politics. The aspiring artist has a contentious relationship with his

father whose alcoholism turns prosperity into near-poverty, while the artist's cruelty towards his mother despite (or because of) her unconditional love becomes a source of guilt and shame that continually haunts him after she dies early from cancer. The young, aspiring artist forsakes his homeland and flees to the cosmopolitanism of a European metropolis to pursue a literary career only to discover the provinciality of the metropolis. Eventually, he returns home a failure before embarking on an internationally renowned literary career that consists, in part, of this very journey. Moreover, Coetzee seems to subject his younger self to a merciless irony similar to that which Joyce subjects Stephen, an irony that seems to deflate their literary pretensions. Those very humanistic characteristics I emphasize above—those humanist qualities that link John to David—appear as fodder for this merciless irony, which mocks more than celebrates humanist aspirations.

Indeed, Paul Sheehan has argued that *Youth* represents a rebuke to the modernist myth that “decrees that only deracination—leavetaking and voluntary self-exile—can turn an aspirant writer into a bona fide artist” (22). In Sheehan's reading, *Youth* traces the young Coetzee's aesthetic development from an international modernism to a “geomodernism,” a term borrowed from Laura Doyle and Laura Winkiel's collection of the same name that puts “classical modernism into dialogue with postcolonialism, through the politics of place” (Sheehan 26). The young John graduates from an international modernism to a geomodernism when he decides to set his first story in South Africa. He begins to see his South African heritage as advantageous to his aesthetic and thus stops disowning his nationality as demanded by the modernist myth. The narrative Sheehan thus develops is one where Coetzee rejects the deracination—a

Eurocentric “universalism”—demanded by classical modernism in favor of a geomodernism situated in a particular place.

But rather than represent progress in Coetzee’s development as an artist, “classical” and “geo” modernism seem to be held in tension in Coetzee’s mind. As Sheehan notes, Coetzee seems to model young John’s cosmopolitan flight on that of the T.S. Eliot that Coetzee describes in his 1991 essay, “What is a Classic?” In his paper, Coetzee analyzes an essay on the *Aeneid* that Eliot presented to the Virgil Society of London in 1944, aptly titled “What is a Classic?” Coetzee approaches Eliot’s reading of the *Aeneid* as autobiographical; that is, when Eliot describes Aeneas’s exile followed by his founding of Rome, the poet is describing his own migration from America followed by his “founding” of literature as a profession. Coetzee offers two potential interpretations of this subtext: “read from the inside,” the personal subtext testifies to the classical status of Virgil’s epic, transcending time; “read from the outside,” however, the lecture constitutes part of Eliot’s decades-long project of deracination, of developing a cosmopolitan conception of nationality to better shed his American heritage. Coetzee describes these two approaches to Eliot’s lecture and to Eliot’s life project as “sympathetic” and “unsympathetic” respectively. The sympathetic approach—later called the “transcendental-poetic”—gives credence to the transcendence embedded in Eliot’s description of the classic. The unsympathetic approach—later called the “socioeconomic”—however, sees Eliot as a man “trying to redefine the world around himself...rather than confronting the reality of his not-so-grand position as a man whose narrowly academic, Eurocentric education had prepared him for little else but life as a mandarin in one of the New England ivory towers” (7).

In the second part of the essay, Coetzee offers his own autobiographical subtext by describing the moment he hears Bach's *Well-Tempered Clavier* for the first time at the age of fifteen: "As long as the music lasted, I was frozen, I dared not breathe. I was being spoken to by the music as music had never spoken to me before" (9). Coetzee goes on to describe this moment as a "revelation": "for the first time I was undergoing the impact of *the classic*" (9, author's emphasis). "Using Eliot the provincial as a pattern and figure" of himself, Coetzee interrogates this moment using what he asserts are the questions cultural critics ask of culture (9). Coetzee asks whether "the spirit of Bach was speaking to me across the ages" or whether "I was symbolically electing high European culture" that would lead Coetzee from his class position in South Africa to a European stage presenting this lecture (9). Coetzee ends up reconciling the transcendental-poetic position with the socio-historical position through a historical understanding of the classic. He illustrates this point in reference to Zbigniew Herbert's conception of the classical and the barbarian: "It is not the possession of some essential quality that, in Herbert's eyes, makes it possible for the classic to withstand the assault of barbarism. Rather, what survives the worst of barbarism, surviving because generations of people cannot afford to let go of it and therefore hold on to it at all costs—that is the classic" (16). That Coetzee portrays himself as having moved beyond the humanist and universalist assumptions of classical modernism in *Youth* does not mean that Coetzee rejects these assumptions. On the contrary, this humanist vein in modernism continues throughout Coetzee's career, evident in the voice he uses to mock his younger self in *Youth* and in his portrayal of David Lurie in *Disgrace*. The point here is that the humanism that David Lurie embodies and expresses in the first part of *Disgrace* may be closer to Coetzee's own beliefs than

previously assumed and that, far from impugning humanism, Coetzee just might be endorsing humanism as a response to a dehumanizing global capitalism while at the same time acknowledging humanism's flaws and limitations.

The contrast between a transcendental-poetic humanism and socio-historical sort of anti-humanism can be seen as the root of the debate over new cosmopolitanism. In many ways, the rehabilitation of the term "cosmopolitan" initially served as a way to reconcile the legitimate critiques of humanism with the professional imperative of the humanist. One of the earliest and most important works of new cosmopolitanism, Bruce Robbins's *Secular Vocations*, uses the term as a way to reconcile two competing visions. Akin to what can be considered "traditional" universalist humanism, the first vision represents the professionalization Eliot "founded," where professionals function as guardians of a cultural heritage under threat from a degenerate present, born out of the Arnoldian tradition of culture as "the antithesis of commercialism, profit, and individual or collective self-interest" (19). Corresponding to an anti-humanism, the second vision represents the negation of the first, where professionals affirm place above all else, leading to increased specialization and thus to increased estrangement from the everyday reality of the larger public. In fact, Robbins uses the term "cosmopolitan"—with its connotations of wealth and privilege—as a direct provocation to the cultural Left that he views as too enamored with situatedness and multiculturalism and too afraid to move beyond locality lest they become too closely associated with the privilege of their own position.



For Robbins, the critic who most perpetuates this fear is Timothy Brennan. For Brennan, “cosmopolitanism” represents “spokespersons for a kind of perennial imagination, valorised by a rhetoric of wandering, and rife with allusions to the all-seeing eye of the nomadic sensibility” (“Cosmopolitanism” 2). In “Cosmopolitans and Celebrities” and later in *Salman Rushdie and the Third World*, Brennan argues that writers like Rushdie present themselves as both “insiders” to a Third World locale yet exempt from national belonging, which gives them the authority to write about Third-World locales as well as privileged access to transnational sensibilities. In essence, such cosmopolitan writers act as interpreters of the Third World that allows for the First World “a flirtation with change that ensured continuity,” at the expense of “the ‘counter-hegemonic aesthetics’ of much Third World writing” (*Salman* viii–ix; “The National” 64). Robbins associates Brennan’s argument with a similar one by Rob Nixon, who asserts that situating V.S. Naipaul as a metropolitan “dispels the myth of Naipaul’s homelessness” (27). For Robbins, both Brennan and Nixon’s arguments depend on exposing the situatedness of a metropolitan writer who conceals his “place” through claims of an “all-seeing eye of nomadic sensibility” and, in so doing, Brennan and Nixon undermine the author’s authority and delegitimize his oeuvre. The problem, as Robbins sees it, is that “absolute homelessness is a myth,” thereby rendering acts of concealment and exposure meaningless (184). At the same time, the fact that Rushdie writes about the Third World while belonging to a First World metropolis should not undermine his authority because belonging need not be all-determining.

As Robbins goes on to show, the same charges of cosmopolitanism that Brennan makes of Rushdie were made of Edward Said by James Clifford. In his review of

*Orientalism*, Clifford argues that “the privilege of standing above cultural particularism, of aspiring to the universalist power that speaks for humanity ... is a privilege invented by a totalizing Western liberalism” (263). Clifford goes on to criticize Said’s allusions to Yeats’s “The Magi” and “The Circus Animals’ Desertion” (“the uncontrollable mystery on the bestial floor” and “the foul rag and bone shop of the heart”) as ways to illustrate the human realities of individual Arabs neglected by T.E. Lawrence’s *Orientalism*: “It is still an open question ... whether an African pastoralist shares the same existential ‘bestial floor’ with an Irish poet and his readers. And it is a general feature of humanist common denominators that they are meaningless, since they bypass local cultural codes that make personal experience articulate” (263). Clifford concludes this criticism by noting disparagingly that Said’s “basic values are cosmopolitan” (263). Here, Clifford equates cosmopolitanism with a universal, modernist form of humanism that represents a hegemonic Western totality that seeks to integrate radical alterity. Put in these terms, Clifford’s criticism of Said begins to sound rather similar to the criticism of David Lurie. Both Said and David commit the crime of humanist leanings, of attempting to integrate the Other into a false totality defined by a Western philosophical and literary tradition passing itself off as universal.

Unlike Brennan et al, however, Clifford’s perspective evolves. Robbins traces this evolution by noting how “cosmopolitanism” as an idea evolved in Clifford’s writing over time. In his essay “On Ethnographic Self-Fashioning,” Clifford seems to understand “cosmopolitanism” in a similar manner as he does in his critique of *Orientalism*, but here it has a more positive resonance. As we saw in the earlier chapter on Joyce, it is precisely Joseph Conrad’s cosmopolitanism that enables him to inhabit a new ethnographic

subjectivity and recognize that cultures and languages are “constructs, achieved fictions, containing and domesticating heteroglossia” (95). Yet the sort of cosmopolitanism represented in Conrad differs from that Clifford associates with Said’s cosmopolitanism because Conrad’s cosmopolitanism is based less on knowledge or an abstract humanist tradition than on his experience as a cosmopolitan. As Clifford frames it, the access to multiple cultures that gives Conrad his cosmopolitanism and his new ethnographic position comes from his movement across those cultures rather than literary history *about* those cultures, a literary history that Said critiques, but a literary history he works within.

The very fact that someone outside of the profession—and the disciplinary training such professionalism requires—embodies the new ethnographic position challenges the divide between cosmopolitan, professional describers of culture and the local, non-professional objects of description. There is something that Clifford and professionals like him share with their subjects, and Clifford calls this something “cosmopolitanism.” “Instead of renouncing cosmopolitanism as a false universal,” Robbins writes of Clifford, “one can embrace it as an impulse to knowledge that is shared with others, a striving to transcend partiality that is itself partial, but no more so than the similar cognitive strivings of many diverse peoples. The world’s particulars can now be recoded, in part at least, as the world’s ‘*discrepant cosmopolitanisms*’ (194). Robbins reads Clifford’s theory as a call to locate instances of cosmopolitanisms from around the world. Such a project would not only dissociate “cosmopolitanism” from its connotations of privilege and the West, it would also open up multiculturalism to “a necessary but difficult normativeness” (196).

The years that followed the publication of *Secular Vocations* saw the term Brennan used to describe metropolitan writers of the Third World become popularized across academic disciplines as a way to reconcile the global and the local. Along with Robbins's book (1993), Homi Bhabha's essay "Unsatisfied: Notes on Vernacular Cosmopolitanism" (1996), and David Hollinger's *Postethnic America* (1996) came a public debate in the pages of the *Boston Review* featuring Martha Nussbaum's "Patriotism and Cosmopolitanism" as well as responses from such academic luminaries like Kwame Anthony Appiah, Judith Butler, Charles Taylor, and Immanuel Wallerstein (1994). Thus, in his 1997 book *At Home in the World: Cosmopolitanism Now*, Brennan broadens the argument that Robbins criticizes in *Secular Vocations* and, in so doing, redefines its political contours. Rather than a distinct group of writers, cosmopolitanism for Brennan comes to represent a larger movement in academia as a whole. In the process of broadening his critique, Brennan distances himself from those thinkers of the cultural Left that Robbins originally associates with him. What Brennan makes clear in this second book is that his defense of place and locality and his critique of cosmopolitanism is political and economic, not cultural. Brennan, unlike multiculturalism associated with postcolonial critics, is less concerned with preserving national cultures than with preserving the nation-state as the system of geopolitical organization best suited to resist the inequalities perpetuated by global capitalism. His interest in national cultures lies in the way they sustain political solidarities rather than a celebration of pluralism and diversity. In fact, those of the cultural Left that Robbins once associated with Brennan come to represent a larger poststructuralist paradigm that proves a significant threat to the integrity of the nation-state as a means to resist global capitalism: "We have for some

time now been witnessing a shift from a binary otherness to a single internally rich and disparate plurality” (2). According to Brennan, this shift has entailed exposing many of the myths of authenticity that hold such binaries in tension, particularly those myths that hold collectivities like the nation together. While Brennan agrees with such exposure in general, he argues that exposing myths of authenticity should not undermine the binaries such myths help sustain: “The dichotomy and the binary almost universally deplored—as much in official policy statements and editorials as literary theory—continues to make sense (indeed, is demanded) dialectically, not in the name of authentic, non-European culture or any other useful fiction but in the name of what this conflict over colonialism and postcolonialism has largely been about: collectivity, community, self-sufficiency” (2).

The underlying schism between Brennan’s and Robbins’s views of cosmopolitanism lie in the different ways in which they conceive the relationship between cosmopolitanism and multiculturalism. Both view multiculturalism as a danger, whether that danger be towards the more cultural profession or the more geo-political nation-state. For Robbins, multiculturalism poses a threat to the profession because it promotes specialization and insularity, which estranges it from a larger public, thus losing the relevance needed to legitimize and sustain it. As a way of bringing together pockets of insularity, cosmopolitanism begins to repair the rupture between the profession and the larger public and helps to restore legitimacy and relevance. For Brennan, however, the problem lies in what he perceives as the *lack* of rupture between the profession and the public. Multiculturalism for Brennan represents an affirmation of a pluralism that characterizes a specifically American ideology. In other words, the spread of

multiculturalism, ironically, leads to cultural homogeneity.<sup>92</sup> Thus, the cosmopolitanism being recuperated merely reinforces the dominant, poststructuralist paradigm in academia and a paradigm that resonates too closely with U.S. government policies or “official policy statements and editorials.” To put it another way, Brennan views cosmopolitanism not as a remedy for the excesses of multiculturalism but rather as *constitutive of* multiculturalism.

A debate similar to that between Brennan and Robbins took place a couple of years later in the newly democratic South Africa. This debate played out in the pages of the South African journal *Pretexts: Literary and Cultural Studies* in 2000. In it, South African scholar André Du Toit argues that the transformations in universities across the world occur as a response from pressure *within* the university as “tertiary educational institutions confront the realities of globalisation and the new economic and information world orders” (91). For Du Toit, such transformations—while lamentable in many ways—offer an opportunity to make the South African university more reflective of and responsive to a post-apartheid South Africa. This means, among other things, rejecting the European and Eurocentric models of the university and, in particular, European and Eurocentric notions of academic freedom.

Du Toit contends that the traditional (humanist) conception of the public intellectual and academic freedom—that of telling truth to power—remains the dominant paradigm. Du Toit calls such a conception of the public intellectual a naïve and romantic ideal because it relies on a transcendental form of truth and justice. Du Toit laments its persistence: “Somehow an uncritical notion of the vocation of intellectuals based on universalist and positivist notions of truth and justice has survived in the era of

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<sup>92</sup> For a more detailed discussion, see Brennan, *Wars of Position*, 114, 216, 272.

postmodern relativism” (93). This conception of the profession is particularly problematic in the case of South Africa, where institutional segregation meant that the poor and marginalized could only access truth and justice—could only tell truth to power—through a proxy member of the privileged class. Du Toit’s larger argument insists that traditional conceptions of academic freedom served universities well during apartheid when they needed institutional autonomy against an oppressive regime, but such conceptions of academic freedom no longer apply to a post-apartheid South Africa. Du Toit argues that the traditional understanding of academic freedom developed out of a liberal notion of free public speech. He proposes, instead, a new understanding of academic freedom based on a “republican” sense of free public speech. For instance, whereas the liberal conception of public speech is focused on the individual and the free market of ideas calculated to reveal “Truth,” the republican conception is focused on the individual’s *duty* to speak their mind freely and embrace propositional, experiential conceptions of truth. A republican conception of free speech produces a form of academic freedom that resolves the tension between disciplinary integrity and public accountability—it functions as a way to maintain a sense of academic freedom while being socially and politically accountable because such accountability is inherent in a conception of academic freedom that views such freedom as a civic virtue. Du Toit concludes by turning to the decolonizing and de-racializing of South African universities. He argues that only through a republican sense of free speech can institutions recognize that legacies of intellectual colonization and racialization within the university pose the real threat to academic freedom. Now that the state is democratic and representative,

universities do not need such autonomy and should be held accountable to a more just society.

While there are important differences between Robbins's and Du Toit's arguments, the similarities in their positions reveal the perceived dangers of new cosmopolitanism as well-founded. Like Robbins, Du Toit views the profession as dissociated from the public. Moreover, like Robbins, Du Toit views this state of affairs as lamentable and proposes a way to change it. For Robbins, the rupture has been exacerbated by the insularity of multiculturalism which risks irrelevance and ultimately extinction. For Du Toit, the rupture has been rendered by a European, humanist conception of professionalization which risks irrelevance and ultimately extinction. Both view the profession's independence from the larger public as either unsustainable or undesirable. Yet in an effort to make the profession more responsive and accountable to a postcolonial, democratic South Africa, Du Toit confirms Brennan's suspicions and his perspective on cosmopolitanism. Du Toit's argument reveals an affinity between multiculturalism and postcolonialism with global capitalism. He reveals this affinity in his original acquiescence to the economic transformation of the university and his appeal to decolonization and de-racialization.

This point is illustrated by Coetzee in his response to Du Toit's essay. In his response, Coetzee challenges the assumptions underlying Du Toit's argument; namely, that universities must acquiesce to the economic forces of globalization rather than confront them, asserting that what Du Toit terms the "new economic world order" is neither secure nor inevitable. The root of the problem lies not in definitions of academic freedom but rather those forces that are changing universities and inspiring academics to



redefine academic freedom: “Now, all over the Western world, this old [European, Eurocentric] model of the university finds itself under attack as an increasingly economistic interrogation of social institutions is carried out. There is only a tiny market for philosophy and the classics, the argument goes, therefore the study of philosophy and the classics ought to constitute only a tiny part of the enterprise of the university” (110). Like Brennan, Coetzee insists on a rupture between the profession and the larger public, or, rather, he warns against too close of a collaboration. A more “cosmopolitan” profession that is more responsive to the public loses its independence and is at the mercy of a public Coetzee—like Brennan—views as fundamentally motivated by economics and politics. In the paragraph that follows, Coetzee labels this “increasingly economistic interrogation of social institutions” the “rationalisation of tertiary education” which resonates with the “great rationalization” mentioned in *Disgrace*, published less than a year prior to his response in *Pretexts* (110). Moreover, by an oblique reference to the old European, Eurocentric model, Coetzee draws attention to the alignment between “the rationalisation of tertiary education”—the forces of globalization—and postcolonialism—those who seek to decolonize and de-racialize the university in South Africa. Coetzee concludes his brief essay with this in mind:

There is a process of intellectual colonisation going on today that is far more massive and totalising than anything Victorian England could muster. It originates in the culture factories of the United States, and can be detected in the most intimate corners of our lives, or if not in our own then in our students’ lives: their speech, the rhythms of their bodies, their affective behaviour including their sexual behaviour, their modes of thinking. This colonising process is the cultural

arm of neoliberalism, of the new world order. It passes my comprehension that we as academic intellectuals in Africa and of Africa should want to spend our time tracking down the residual ghosts of the nineteenth-century British Empire, when it is clearly more urgent to recognise and confront the new global imperialism.

(111)

In this passage, Coetzee articulates part of what has been the central argument of this dissertation. In the early 20th century, transnational artists in Europe recognized the inevitability of a global cosmopolitan world—a world where economic and cultural forces would achieve a sort of dynamism. For modernists like Stein and Joyce, the global cosmopolitan world presented both utopian and dystopian visions; in the former, international trade would be used to bring cultures into contact and facilitate a cosmopolitan world; in the latter, culture would be used to bring capital into new markets, facilitating an economically-integrated and culturally homogenous world. Modernist art was shaped, in part, in an attempt to generate the former while exposing the latter. At the end of the 20th century, writers like Rushdie and Coetzee recognize that the global cosmopolitan world they inhabit is that dystopia modernists attempted to avoid. Hence, they use modernist forms and ideas in order to expose it. By linking American culture with neoliberalism, Coetzee—like Brennan—suggests that American culture serves to extend the reach of neoliberalism or translate neoliberal values into normative ones. American culture (cosmopolitanism) provides an intellectual rationale for neoliberal values (globalization). While Coetzee does not state explicitly what is different about South African students' speech, body rhythms, sexual behavior, modes of thought, we can, I believe, deduce that what he detects in his students is a form of

rationalization—a neo-Puritanism—that corresponds to that spread by neoliberalism. Or, to put it another way, what connects economic globalization and cultural cosmopolitanism is a rigid Protestantism. And this is made evident in *Disgrace*.

The theoretical framework best suited to illustrate the relationship between the economics of “rationalization” and a “rationalized” culture through a shared asceticism is, perhaps, Max Weber’s classic text *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*. Here, Weber reveals how the seemingly-paradoxical relationship to wealth promoted by the rigid Protestantism of the Puritans played a fundamental role in shaping the rationalized culture, character, and organization of life under capitalism. This seemingly-paradoxical relationship to wealth, Weber argues, lies in the way an ascetic rejection of pleasure and of wealth itself leads to an ethos that views capitalist accumulation as proof of divine grace. That is, as Weber states, “What is actually morally reprehensible is, namely, the *resting* upon one’s possessions and the *enjoyment* of wealth. To do so results in idleness and indulging desires of the flesh and above all the distraction of behavior from their pursuit of the ‘saintly’ life” (104, author’s emphases). The “saintly” life consists of work and activity—as opposed to idleness and enjoyment—which would earn wealth and thereby testify to one’s work and activity (“Work, and work alone, banishes religious doubt and gives certainty of one’s status among the saved”) (66). What Protestant asceticism rejects is not possession and consumption per se but rather enjoying one’s possessions and consuming commodities beyond one’s needs. As such, it gives tacit approval of possession and consumption, as long as they are done rationally, according to one’s needs. To give in to the temptations of the flesh and to depend on

external things are consistent not with consumption but irrational consumption because they themselves are irrational and distract one from one's labors.<sup>93</sup>

"These are puritanical times," says David, and the primary representative of this Puritanism in *Disgrace* is Mr. Isaacs, Melanie's father (66).<sup>94</sup> When David enters the Isaacs's home with a bottle of wine, he offers the following impression: "They are teetotal, clearly. He should have thought of that. A tight little petit-bourgeois household, frugal, prudent. The car washed, the lawn mowed, savings in the bank. All their resources

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<sup>93</sup> This summary comes mostly from Chapter V: "Asceticism and the Spirit of Capitalism" of *The Protestant Ethic*, 103-25.

<sup>94</sup> That a rigid Protestantism establishes culture of consumption conducive to neoliberalism might offer insight into the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC). Despite assertions to the contrary, Christianity played a central role in the organization of implementation of the TRC, which is not surprising given that it was chaired by Archbishop Desmond Tutu. In his memoirs, Tutu makes much of the need for reparations, arguing, "Without adequate reparation and rehabilitation measures, there can be no healing and reconciliation, either at the individual or a community level. ... In addition ... reparation is essential to counterbalance amnesty" (58). Unlike amnesty, however, the Commission only had the power to recommend reparations. Their recommendations were limited to victims of a gross violation of human rights, such as murder, abduction, and torture (Simcock 239). Ultimately, the number of South Africans who suffered the gross violation of human rights that entitled them to reparations was about 17,000 of the 33 million black South Africans who suffered during apartheid. The Commission concluded that each victim was entitled to about \$4,000. As of 2007, the South African government had paid a total of \$65 million in reparations (Simcock 239).

In his recent work *Lost in Transformation*, Sempie Terreblanche analyzes the ideological shift in the economic policies of the ANC between 1990 and 1996, where a staunchly socialist and redistributionist political party transformed into a party of the free market. Terreblanche describes secret meetings between the ANC, the Material Energy Complex (MEC), and American and British pressure groups that resulted in the signing of a document by the Transitional Executive Council (TEC) whereby the International Monetary Fund guaranteed an \$850 million loan to South Africa in exchange for a pledge to commit the new South Africa to an American model of anti-statism, deregulation, privatization, fiscal austerity, market fundamentalism, and free trade to create an influx of foreign investment, higher growth rates, higher employment, and a trickle-down effect to alleviate poverty (63-4). This document would form the blueprint of the Growth, Employment and Redistribution program (GEAR) adopted by the ANC government in 1996 (65). "With the adaption of GEAR," writes Terreblanche, "The MEC, the ANC, and the American pressure group succeeded in Americanising the South African economy" (66).

This may very well explain the TRC's inability to call corporation to account. Moreover, the critical role forgiveness played in the TRC almost demanded self-denial and self-sacrifice from victims, making monetary compensation secondary to spiritual and national unity. For examples of the religiosity of the TRC, see Ebrahim Moosa's "Truth and Reconciliation as Performance: Spectres of Eucharistic Redemption" in *Looking Back, Reaching Forward: Reflections on the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of South Africa* as well as and Tutu's memoirs, *No Future Without Forgiveness*. See also Terreblanche's *Lost in Transformation*, *passim*, and Parry's *Postcolonial Studies*, 179-93. Both argue that the transition from apartheid to democracy represented merely a transition from a racial capitalism to an international capitalism, where colonialism by race became neocolonialism by class. See also Katherine Stanton's *Cosmopolitan Fictions*, 61-77, for a reading of *Disgrace* that accounts for the role globalization plays in the novel.

concentrated on launching the two jewel daughters into the future” (168). David’s characterization of Isaacs as “teetotal, clearly” gives their temperance a touch of zealotry, turning a reluctance to drink into an abstinence from all alcohol. Further, David links such frugal, rational behavior with their frugal, rational economics—they do not spend money recklessly nor indulge in temptation but rather accumulate wealth in order to invest it in their children’s education. This rational behavior also entails self-sacrifice. Isaacs’s dinner invitation to David seems both sadistic and masochistic, it introduces unnecessary suffering on David, Isaacs himself, and Isaacs’s wife. When David attempts to excuse himself, noting the upset his presence causes, Isaacs responds, “Sit down, sit down! We’ll be all right! We will do it! ... You have to be strong” (169). We also discover that behind this frugality, prudence, and self-sacrifice lies a fervent religiosity: “May I pronounce the word *God* in your hearing?” Isaacs asks of David, “You are not one of those people who get upset when they hear God’s name?” (172). Isaacs’s words reveal that the motive behind the unnecessary suffering and sacrifice lies in proselytization. The rational way that Isaacs organizes life and the rational way he behaves all derive from a faith that seeks to convert the irrational into his way of life.

Appreciation of Isaacs’s rigid Protestantism and the upbringing we can infer from it offers a different perspective on David’s relationship with Melanie. Consider, for instance, the progress of their sexual encounters. The first sexual encounter is described in the following way: “Her body is clear, simple, in its way perfect; though she is passive throughout, he finds the act pleasurable ... Averting her face, she frees herself, gathers her things, leaves the room. In a few minutes she is back, dressed. ‘I must go,’ she whispers” (19). This first sexual encounter is saturated with shame for Melanie. David’s

description of her divides her body from her mind, emphasizing a certain detachment from her own sentiments. The second encounter is more disturbing and revealing:

‘No, not now!’ she says, struggling. ‘My cousin will be back!’... She does not resist. All she does is avert herself: avert her lips, avert her eyes. She lets him lay her out on the bed and undress her: she even helps him, raising her arms and then her hips. Little shivers of cold run through her; as soon as she is bare, she slips under the quilted counterpane like a mole burrowing, and turns her back on him.

Not rape, not quite that, but undesired nevertheless, undesired to the core. As though she had decided to go slack, die within herself for the duration, like a rabbit when the jaws of the fox close on its neck. So that everything done to her might be done, as it were, far away.

‘Pauline will be back any minute,’ she says when it is over. ‘Please. You must go.’ (25)

As discussed above, this scene lies at the source of many critics’ scorn for David Lurie, and rightly so. At the very least, the sex is undesired. Melanie clearly tells him no. As Rosemary Jolly reminds us, “Accepting the inevitable should hardly be rendered as acquiescence” (162). Indeed, even those details that might suggest acquiescence—raising her arms and hips to help him—seem less from a desire to participate than a desire to hurry it up. Moreover, the detachment from herself that David describes is a common symptom of trauma. Clearly, David violates Melanie, and our lack of access to Melanie’s thoughts only deepens the sense of violation. However, this sense of violation should not cloud deeper complexities. This sexual encounter echoes much of the first, particularly in its suggestions of passivity (“she is passive throughout,” “she does not resist”) and shame

(“averting her face,” “avert her lips,” “avert her eyes”). The major differences in the descriptions of the encounters lie in the degree of Melanie’s initial resistance and her attempts to speed it up. Both differences can be seen as rooted in a fear of her cousin’s presence. The potential interruption by cousin Pauline increases Melanie’s sense of shame: she averts her lips and eyes again, she immediately covers herself when she is bare, and she dissociates herself from her body. And Melanie is right to fear her cousin’s judgment. At midnight a week after the incident, Melanie turns up at David’s looking for a place to sleep. Whether she has been kicked out of the apartment she shares with her cousin or whether she fears to return, that Melanie opts for David’s abode at such a late hour reflects a deep fear of her cousin’s judgment.

It would appear that cousin Pauline shares her family’s Puritan morality along with that of Melanie’s boyfriend, the inquiry, and the press, for all conspire to turn a sexual encounter between two consenting adults into a passion play for the world to see. Melanie’s boyfriend humiliates her (31), her father infantilizes her (38), and the university forces her to sit before a panel of faculty to recount the details of the affair (48). Melanie is punished and made to suffer her own disgrace for failing to behave rationally, from acting according to her desires or being complicit in David’s pursuit of his. Yet she remains the victim because she is young and has yet to develop the moral strength and maturity to maintain a sense of rationality to resist temptation. Indeed, only David sees her as an adult, responding to his ex-wife’s question about her age, “Twenty. Of age. Old enough to know her own mind” (45). But this is precisely what Isaacs refuses to believe: “We put our children in the hands of you people because we think we can trust you. If we can’t trust the university, who can we trust? We never thought we were

sending our daughter into a nest of vipers” (38). Isaacs uses the phrases “our children” and “our daughter” to amplify David’s responsibility while denying young women any agency. The biblical imagery of innocence stolen by serpent-like creatures not only further underscores this point, but also characterizes the specific form of trust Isaacs invests in the university. He trusts them to maintain and reinforce a Puritan morality; he trusts them to train young people to think rationally and lead them not into temptation. David’s failure derives from his own immaturity, from his inability to maintain a sense of rationality to resist temptation. It is then no wonder that Isaacs treats David as though he were a child after David apologizes:

“You are sorry ... But I say to myself, we are all sorry when we are found out. Then we are very sorry. The question is not, are we sorry? The question is, what lesson have we learned? The question is, what are we going to do now that we are sorry? ... The question is, what does God want from you, besides being sorry?” (171–2)

“Yes, you came to speak to me, you say, but why me? I’m easy to speak to, too easy. All the children at my school know that. With Isaacs you get off easy—that is what they say.” (173)

The self-righteousness of Isaac’s position reflects the same sort of self-satisfaction derived from the prurience of the spectacle of David’s disgrace.<sup>95</sup>

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<sup>95</sup> That his Puritan morality proves conducive to capitalism can be seen in the prostitute Soraya. Once David loses the Malaysian Soraya, he returns to Discreet Escorts and informed that the agency has “lots of exotics to choose from—Malaysian, Thai, Chinese, you name it” (8). Katherine Stanton reads such scenes as allusions to the global trafficking of women, where transnational women are forced from their native lands into positions as sex workers, noting that South Africa has become a prime destination for sex tourism (76). Soraya appears to have internalized the logic of capitalism, detaching her body as commodity from her subjectivity. Tellingly, she seems to share Isaacs’s Puritanism: “In her general opinions she is surprisingly moralistic. She is offended by tourists who bare their breasts (‘udders’, she calls them) on public beaches; she thinks vagabonds should be rounded up and put to work sweeping the streets. How she



The Puritanism demonstrated by Isaacs can also be seen in the university community during the inquiry into David's affair. Like Isaacs, members of the inquiry treat David as a child incapable of acting rationally:

"It seems to me that we may have a duty to protect you from yourself." (49)

"In our own minds I believe we are clear, Dr Rassool. The question is whether Professor Lurie is crystal clear in his mind." (51)

"The question is not whether it is good enough for me, Professor Lurie, the question is whether it is good enough for *you*. Does it reflect your sincere feelings?" (54)

Such condescension leads David to respond to Hakim's entreaties with "Don't tell me what to do. I'm not a child" (41) and to the inquiry's suggestion of counseling with "I am a grown man" (49). This similarly condescending tone betrays a shared morality between Isaacs and the committee. The language committee members use to rebuke David reflect a shared asceticism as well. For instance, Farodia Rassool recommends "prudence" to David, to which David replies, "There are more important things in life than being prudent" (49). After confessing that he initiated his affair with Melanie on an impulse, Desmond Swarts replies, "Don't you think ... that by its nature academic life must call for certain sacrifices? That for the good of the whole we have to deny ourselves certain gratifications?" (52). Whether or not the situation does indeed call for prudence or whether or not the academic life does call for certain sacrifices is beside the point. The point is that the inquiry uses the language of self-denial consistent with the Puritanism espoused by Isaacs and, incidentally, the Puritan morality he expects of the university.

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reconciles her opinions with her line of business he does not ask" (1). Such a morality need not be ironic, Coetzee seems to suggest, since the same self-denial and self-sacrifice demanded by Puritanism can be seen as the same qualities needed to be a prostitute.

Moreover, a certain asceticism exists in the anticolonial excesses of multiculturalism represented by the inquiry. After David first receives the complaint lodged against him, Aram Hakim summons him up to a meeting where they are joined with Farodia Rassool and Elaine Winters. The names “Aram Hakim” and “Farodia Rassool” in contrast to “Elaine Winters” speak to a form of multiculturalism, particularly that of Aram Hakim whose forename and surname combine Hebrew and Arabic respectively. More importantly, however, is David’s assessment of Elaine Winters: “She has never liked him; she regards him as a hangover from the past, the sooner cleared away the better” (40). What past, exactly, is David a hangover from: the past where universities were dominated by white men of European descent—the period before multiculturalism, or the past where Classics and Modern Language departments flourished—the period before the “great rationalization?” The ambiguity here hints at a correlation suggested in the actual committee hearing, characterized by Cornwell as “managed, utilitarian, and politically correct” (314). In regards to David’s obstinacy, Rassool argues that David’s admission of guilt contains “no mention of the pain he has caused, no mention of the long history of exploitation of which this is part” (53). Here, Rassool anticipates critics of the novel who view David as a symbol of colonialism. The association of this multiculturalism with asceticism can be seen later in the novel. On his return to Cape Town, David runs into Elaine Winters, the former colleague who considered him a hangover from the past. He observes her groceries, noting “not only the bread and butter items but little treats a woman living alone awards herself” like ice cream and chocolate (180). While this is indeed indulgence in a different sort of

temptation, her embarrassment and his pleasure in her embarrassment suggests that such indulgences are sublimations of another sort of temptation, lending her an air of celibacy.

As we have seen, the transformation of Cape Town University College to Cape Technical University represents an institutional response to the economic forces of globalization, what David calls the “great rationalization.” Yet just as Coetzee argues in his reply to Du Toit, he appears to suggest in *Disgrace* that such a response is not inevitable but rather the product of a university system too closely aligned with the public in its multicultural or postcolonial fervor. Further, in drawing parallels between the public and the profession via a shared Puritanism, Coetzee seems to suggest that the culture being defended is the one produced by the culture factories on the United States, which functions as the cultural arm of the economic forces of globalization.

And just as Coetzee seems to affirm in his modernism and in his response to Du Toit, the potential antidote for a dehumanized world in *Disgrace* is humanism. “The humanities teach us humanity,” Elizabeth Costello writes to her sister, “After the centuries-long Christian night, the humanities give us back our beauty, our human beauty” (151). While David proves unsuccessful in restoring humanity to his students in the classroom, it appears to be at least part of the motivation—or, at least, an unintended side-effect—of his seduction of Melanie. As Adriaan van Heerden argues, “Despite his more obvious sexual motives, David’s seduction of Melanie coincides with an attempt to initiate her into a deeper appreciation of art: music, dance, literature; it is an attempt to establish a spiritual connection (if only temporarily) rather than a purely physical one” (48). And the relationship does seem to awaken Melanie to her own desire, her own humanity, in their third and final sexual encounter:

He makes love to her one more time, on the bed in his daughter's room. It is good, as good as the first time; he is beginning to learn the way her body moves. She is quick, and greedy for experience. If he does not sense in her a fully sexual appetite, that is only because she is still young. One moment stands out in recollection, when she hooks a leg behind his buttocks to draw him in closer: as the tendons of her inner thigh tightens against him, he feels a surge of joy and desire. (29)

With access limited to David's thoughts, the reader would be right to suspect David's interpretation as self-serving. Indeed, Spivak insists that Coetzee signals to the reader of *Disgrace* to "counterfocalize" (22). But David's account of the previous encounter—his acknowledgement of Melanie's lack of desire, his openness about his violation, and his regret and shame—lend this next account a degree of credibility. More to the point, just after David offers his impression of the Isaacs's "tight little petit-bourgeois household," he thinks back to his first night with Melanie: "He remembers Melanie, on the first evening of their closer acquaintance, sitting beside him on the sofa drinking the coffee with the shot-glass of whisky in it that was intended to—the word comes up reluctantly—*lubricate* her. Her trim little body; her sexy clothes; her eyes gleaming with excitement. Stepping out in the forest where the wild wolf prowls" (168). That David "reluctantly" uses the word "lubricate" to describe his seduction means that he, at some level, acknowledges a degree of exploitation and abuse of power in his seduction. At the same time, however, this reluctant acknowledgement of his abuse once again lends his interpretation of this moment a degree of authenticity. And what David interprets in Melanie is a young woman who allows herself be seduced, who rebels against the

stifling, Puritan, teetotal household by drinking whiskey and sleeping with her professor; she allows herself to be seduced—to step out into the forest where the wild wolf prowls—because of the excitement offered not only by breaking rigid rules but also by being awakened to her own irrationality and her own humanity.

This is not to suggest that Coetzee endorses David's behavior and advocates a sort of humanism-through-sexual-exploitation. On the contrary, it is clear that David's affair with Melanie involves an abuse of power and exploitation just as the humanism David represents would be used to justify the worst atrocities of colonialism. But Coetzee shows in David Lurie how humanism might be a natural antagonist to a dehumanizing global cosmopolitan world—it offers a way to restore the rupture between the profession and a public world dominated by the cultural arm of neoliberalism. In this way, Coetzee begins to sound a bit like Said, who maintained and illustrated throughout his career the productivity of a humanism that is aware of its past abuses and attuned to the greater complexities of an interconnected world. In *Humanism and Democratic Criticism*, Said, too, offers humanism as a defense against the dehumanization of what David calls the “great rationalization”: “For if, as I believe, there is now taking place in our society an assault on thought itself ... by the dehumanizing forces of globalization, neoliberal values, economic greed (euphemistically called the free market), as well as imperialist ambitions, the humanist must offer alternatives now silenced or unavailable through the channels of communication controlled by a tiny number of news organizations” (71). While Said encourages a greater engagement of the profession with the public world, unlike Du Toit he insists on an inherently antagonistic relationship between them. Said calls this positioning “resistance” and argues that humanism is best suited to perform this

resistance because of its spirit of relentless critique. “Humanism,” Said asserts, “as Blackmur said of modernism in another connection, is a technique of trouble, and it must stay that way now at a time when the national and international horizon is undergoing massive transformations and reconfigurations” (77).

But there are limits to humanism as David discovers on the Eastern Cape. As Cornwell notes, in the rural Salem, “Lurie is increasingly aware of the inability of the literature he has loved to inform or make sense of the world he inhabits,” an awareness figured in the devolution of his chamber opera on Byron to a comedy come to life through a banjo (“Disgraceland” 58). The inability of David and the humanism he represents to confront the realities of the periphery are most evident in David’s thoughts during his daughter’s assault. Locked in the bathroom, listening to the attackers discuss his fate, David thinks,

He speaks Italian, he speaks French, but Italian and French will not save him here in darkest Africa. He is helpless, an Aunt Sally, a figure from a cartoon, a missionary in cassock and topi waiting with clasped hands and upcast eyes while the savages jaw away in their own lingo preparatory to plunging him into their boiling cauldron. Mission work: what has it left behind, that huge enterprise of upliftment? Nothing that he can see. (95)

David’s analogy suggests an affinity between David and the civilizing missionary. Just as prayer proves futile to the missionary at the hands of the savages, David’s humanistic training proves irrelevant to the reality of the periphery. The analogy suggests further parallels between humanism and religion as dogmas for personal salvation concealed in

proselytization. That is, David links humanism and religion as mission work, as huge enterprises of upliftment, of civilizing and saving the savages as well as themselves.

Yet critics who read the novel as a rebuke of the “Western Romantic heritage,” or the “Romantic/humanist” tradition, or Romanticism in general, misplace blame (“Disgraceland” 58; Harvey 163; Graham 441). Blame for humanism’s inability to make sense of the periphery lies with David rather than the humanist ideals or the literary tradition central to it. By viewing humanism as akin to religion, David misunderstands humanism just as, arguably, he misunderstands Romanticism.<sup>96</sup> He treats a critique of dogmatism as dogma. After all, the ability to speak Italian and French will not save him anywhere, let alone in “darkest Africa.” The main thrusts of the aforementioned critiques are that Coetzee exposes the irrelevance of the Western literary tradition in contemporary South Africa and in the globalized world at large. But it is this relentless self-critique, what Said calls “critical” humanism, wherein humanism maintains its relevance. Said explains this idea in a response to Clifford’s criticism of *Orientalism*:

I believed then, and still believe, that it is possible to be critical of humanism in the name of humanism and that, schooled in the abuses by the experience of Eurocentrism and empire, one could fashion a different kind of humanism that was cosmopolitan and text-and-language-bound in ways that absorbed the great lessons of the past from ... and still remain attuned to the emergent voices and

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<sup>96</sup> See Margot Beard’s “Lessons from the Dead Masters: Wordsworth and Byron in J.M. Coetzee’s *Disgrace*” for a detailed analysis on Romanticism in *Disgrace*. Beard argues that his grasp of Romanticism is stereotypical and superficial, relying as it does on the Byron/Wordsworth, urban/rural binary.

currents of the present, many of them exilic, extraterritorial, and unhoused, as well as uniquely American. (*Humanism* 10–1)<sup>97</sup>

Indeed, in his defense of Said, Brennan argues that critics have long misunderstood what Said meant by “exile.” For Said, argues Brennan, “exile” and “home” were “far less literal than positional, less filiative than political” (*Wars* 96). The point, Brennan argues, is, “Home refers not only to a site of origin but also to the comfort of belonging among those of the same social outlooks and opinions in a sublime national-cultural conformity” (96). While Brennan’s interpretation may sound suspiciously like a scholar trying a bit too hard to incorporate his mentor’s beliefs into his own theory, Brennan does underscore the importance of criticism—particularly self-criticism—to the humanist enterprise as rendered by Said. And this self-criticism is what David fails to do until the assault.

Throughout the first part of the novel, David subjects the global economy and its attendant culture to critique, as we have seen. His investment in humanism gives him the tools for such a critique. Yet David begins to subject himself and his humanist assumptions to criticism only late in the second half of the novel. The catalyst for this self-critique is his inability to understand his daughter after the assault:

“Is it some form of private salvation you are trying to work out? Do you hope you can expiate the crimes of the past by suffering in the present?”

“No. You keep misreading me. Guilt and salvation are abstractions. ... I don’t act in terms of abstractions. Until you make an effort to see that, I can’t help you.” (112)

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<sup>97</sup> In different ways, both Robbins and Brennan—former students of Said—attempt to situate his cosmopolitanism. For Robbins, Said’s claim for intellectual detachment was always held in tension with his political struggle for a Palestinian homeland (*Perpetual* 127). Therefore, “Like all cosmopolitans, Said is attached as well as detached” (121). Brennan, for his part, repeatedly insists that *Orientalism* and Said were American, rooting his cosmopolitanism in a particular place (*Wars* 94–5).



The key term here is “misreading.” If there is one skill a professor of Romantic poetry should have, it is critical reading. As such, his inability to read his daughter suggests a certain failure of translation between the text and the world external to it (as well as a somewhat naïve faith in such a translation). To understand his daughter, David believes, requires that he empathize with her, that he can imagine himself as her: “Does he have it in him to be the woman?” he asks of himself. As Laura Wright argues, David discovers that “to claim that one can actually be or ‘think [one’s] way into the existence’ of another is arrogant” (102). In his inability to imagine himself as a woman, David runs up against the limitations of what Elizabeth Costello calls the “sympathetic imagination” (80).<sup>98</sup> The power of the imagination was, of course, central to the Romantic movement David champions, and to realize its failure is to criticize something central to himself: “So much for the poets, so much for the dead masters. Who have not, he must say, guided him well. *Aliter*, to whom he has not listened well” (179). Paradoxically, David’s realization that poets have not guided him well prove that the dead masters *are* good guides and that David has become a better listener. Sam Durrant explains this humanist critique of humanism as follows: “*Disgrace* ... provides a roadmap of a Romanticism turned against itself. If he is to live ‘like a dog,’ David Lurie, lover of Wordsworth and Byron and would-be Byronic lover, must discard the egotistical sublime and learn a Keatsian negative capability” (130). Humanism gives David the tools of criticism; it remains up to him to choose the right ones.

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<sup>98</sup> Whether or not David possesses a “sympathetic imagination” has been a point of contention in criticism of *Disgrace*. See, for instance, Geoffrey Baker’s “The Limits of Sympathy: J. M. Coetzee’s Evolving Ethics of Engagement” and Marais’s “J.M. Coetzee’s *Disgrace* and the Task of Imagination.” In this latter work, Marais walks back somewhat his original argument and emphasizes the complexity involved in David’s journey towards the sympathetic imagination.

David's self-critique includes understanding his own complicity in the "great rationalization" that he resists, which is manifested in his relationship with animals. When Lucy first discusses her work with Bev Shaw for the Animal Welfare League, David responds, "As for animals, by all means let us be kind to them. But let us not lose our perspective. We are of a different order of creation from the animals" (74). When he first arrives at the shelter, he tells Bev Shaw, "Do I like animals? I eat them, so I suppose I must like them, some parts of them" (81). Aside from a lack of charm, such statements reflect a similar Cartesian instrumentalism that David attempts to resist. If not exactly Puritan, there remains an element of self-denial if we include animals on the same plane as humans. David not only denies sentience and "humanity" to animals, he denies himself the humanity to feel for animals. Such is the logic of capital. After the assault, however, David begins to feel for the animals he helps put down. After watching the way the workmen dispose of the carcasses, he takes it upon himself to deliver them to the fire "for his idea of the world, a world in which men do not use shovels to bend corpses into a more convenient shape for processing" (146). Ironically, it is by extending humanism to animals that David becomes a "critical" humanist.<sup>99</sup>

Derek Attridge concludes his reading of *Disgrace* by turning to the final scene of the novel. David, having developed a great affection for a crippled dog, nevertheless puts him down rather than delay the inevitable for another week. For Attridge, this moment embodies David's new "dedication to singularity" as well as that of Coetzee's art:

"Coetzee offers no explanation of Lurie's loving dedication to surplus dogs, and certainly doesn't proffer it as a model for the new South Africa, or for any reader's own conduct. If

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<sup>99</sup> Calina Ciobanu also reads the act of giving the dogs a dignified death as a gesture against instrumentalism: "As Coetzee makes clear, Lurie's actions serve as an act of resistance against a world that is stripped of fellow-feeling and ruled by the imperative to turn a profit" (680).

the novel succeeds in conveying something of the operation and importance of what I've been calling 'grace,' it conveys also that it is not a lesson to be learned or a system to be deployed" (190–1). The trouble with Attridge's reading is that it does not do justice to the relentless self-critique it takes to achieve the "grace" he alludes to nor does it do justice to just how unique this "grace" is in a world of violence, exploitation, and greed. At the end, David's state of grace is achieved by selflessness, and it is a state of grace he achieves by placing his most deeply-held beliefs to rigorous critique. While it would be presumptuous and somewhat self-flattering to suggest that David achieves a state of grace through literature, there is nonetheless a sense that he achieves this state because of, not in spite of, humanism.

## **Coda: Cosmopolitanism Now**

In the mid-to-late 1990s, Bruce Robbins played a central role in the rise of new cosmopolitan theory, not only in his seminal *Secular Vocations* but also in his edition of a collection of essays on new cosmopolitanism, *Cosmopolitics*. When modernists and other literary critics turned to new cosmopolitanism in the 2000s, *Cosmopolitics* was their foundation. Tim Brennan, on the other hand, played foil to Robbins. In numerous works involving new cosmopolitan theory, critics treated Brennan's critique of cosmopolitanism as the uninvited uncle to a summer bash; you don't want him there, but it would be rude to turn him away.

While Brennan has remained steadfast in his position, Robbins has not. In fact, just as he traces the evolution of "cosmopolitanism" in Clifford's works from a term connoting privilege and capital to one evoking traveling culture, we can trace how "cosmopolitanism" evolves in Robbins's own work from a term evoking traveling culture to one connoting privilege and capital. Through the years, Robbins, it seems, has become increasingly convinced of Brennan's prescience. While Robbins does not come out and say this directly, his recent work implies it. In *At Home in the World*, Brennan describes new cosmopolitanism as "less an analytical category than a normative projection" and notes its "celebratory claims" of the death of the nation-state, transculturation, cultural hybridity, and "the view that consumption is politically exciting, viable, and wholly one's own" (2). Once a defender against such attacks, Robbins now echoes them: in the beginning of his 2007 review of Kwame Anthony Appiah's *Cosmopolitanism*, for instance, Robbins remarks on the term's wild popularity, noting that "today it is hard to

find a place where the celebration [of cosmopolitanism] is not at full blast” (33), from scholarly works to Aymara-speaking Bolivian rappers (49). Such unabashed affirmation of what Appiah terms the “celebration of cultural variety” arises regardless of how “limited the rappers’ caloric intake may be” (49; Appiah, *Cosmopolitanism* 29). For Robbins, “celebrations of cosmopolitan diversity have largely been uninterrupted by issues of militarism, economic inequality, and geopolitical justice” (51). In fact, Robbins cites Jessica Berman’s *Modernist Fiction, Cosmopolitanism, and the Politics of Community* as well as Rebecca Walkowitz’s *Cosmopolitan Style: Modernism Beyond the Nation* as examples of such uninterrupted celebrations (50–1).<sup>100</sup>

Part of this evolution can be traced to Robbins’s attitude towards “dependency theory.” Dependency theory and world-systems theory has always informed, to a certain degree, Brennan’s approach to cosmopolitanism. While he acknowledges that dependency theory has been justly challenged in many ways, he nonetheless maintains that the old inequalities central to dependency theory persist to the point of conflating “colonialism” with “postcolonialism” (*At Home* 5–6). In *Secular Vocations*, Robbins viewed dependency theory as symptomatic of a larger zero-sum logic pervading literary criticism, exemplified in Spivak’s disparaging of feminism in her reading of *Jane Eyre* in “Three Women’s Texts and a Critique of Imperialism.” Such zero-sum logic, Robbins asserts, is even more problematic when applied to imperialism. Here, Robbins criticizes dependency theory, which “is based on the assumption that underdevelopment is structurally linked to development in the dominant nation” (201). Robbins argues that

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<sup>100</sup> Robbins criticizes the way Berman accepts without question Appiah’s contradictory notion of “rooted cosmopolitanism” as the theoretical framework for her analysis of the experimental modernism of Henry James and Gertrude Stein (51–2). While Robbins laments the way cosmopolitanism has started to stand in for aesthetic terms like irony, ambiguity, and indeterminacy, he does offer Walkowitz’s book as “the strongest and most provocative case I know for the equating of cosmopolitanism with aestheticism” (50–1).

dependency theory offers critics the moral satisfaction of linking First World wealth with Third World poverty. Yet the truth, Robbins suggests, is that “the actual development of world capitalism has been a much messier and less systematic process ... Capitalism is not a single, unitary whole” (201). Yet a 2011 piece defending Immanuel Wallerstein employs similar rhetoric to make the opposite point: “The slogan ‘alternative modernities’ allows anthropologists to tell their happy story about culture without bringing that story into any confrontation with system in the zero-sum sense of global economic hierarchy” (82). In his introduction, moreover, Robbins argues, “Crucial to my argument here is Immanuel Wallerstein’s notion of the modern capitalist system as one structured so as to permit the global North to siphon off surplus from the global South. ... Understanding cosmopolitanism historically means understanding how, for better or worse, different scales do interfere with each other” (21).

So where does that leave cosmopolitanism? Brennan’s consistent critique of cosmopolitanism is that it represents an expression of American patriotism. He always views with suspicion those critics who contend that cosmopolitanism and patriotism can be compatible. The past decade or so of new cosmopolitan theory has led Robbins to come around to the same position: “when cosmopolitanism declares itself constitutionally unable or unwilling to oppose patriotism, a warning signal should sound” and such a bell would signal “American nationalism” (*Perpetual* 35). Indeed, Robbins is most critical of scholars like Appiah and David Hollinger who seem to promote a cosmopolitanism indistinct from the pluralist ideals of America. Robbins, like Brennan, seeks to restore the space between the global and the cosmopolitan.

In order to do so, Robbins suggests a cosmopolitanism that *supports* nationalism:

“We cosmopolitan humanists do not like to acknowledge that we belong, in the strong sense, to states, though states, when we push them, do the work of guaranteeing human rights and providing welfare as well as (when we don’t stop them) making war and keeping out unwanted migrants” (*Perpetual* 61). But as Americans, as belonging to the most powerful state, we have an obligation to resist nationalism in its American form. Thus, a cosmopolitan humanism entails both recognizing a common humanity and a relentless self-critique, not unlike that suggested by Coetzee.

## Appendix

### Lyrics to “ Little Harry Hughes”

*Little Harry Hughes and his schoolfellows all  
Went out for to play ball.  
And the very first ball little Harry Hughes played  
He drove it o’er the jew’s garden wall.  
And the very second ball little Harry Hughes played  
He broke the jew’s windows all.*

*Then out there came the jew’s daughter  
And she all dressed in green.  
‘Come back, come back, you pretty little boy,  
And play your ball again.’*

*‘I can’t come back and I won’t come back  
Without my schoolfellows all,  
For if my master he did hear  
He’d make it a sorry ball.’*

*She took him by the lilywhite hand  
And led him along the hall  
Until she led him to a room  
Where none could hear him call.*

*She took a penknife out of her pocket  
And cut off his little head,  
And now he’ll play his ball no more  
For he lies among the dead. (17.802–8, 813–24)*



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