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This project extends debates about cosmopolitanism to the classroom by defining a cosmopolitan pedagogy that fosters students' ethical engagement with difference. By reimagining cosmopolitanism in a pedagogical space, I build a counter-hegemonic cosmopolitanism which disrupts totalizing narratives of Enlightenment modernity and open a location for alternative epistemologies. Drawing on Mikhail Bakhtin, Wolfgang Iser, and Louise Rosenblatt, I reconfigure contemporary reading theory to face the challenges of engaging with postcolonial literature in an era of globalization. Readings of key postcolonial texts, including Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*, Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children*, Patrick Chamoiseau's *Texaco*, and Chris Abani's *GraceLand*, provide insight into the way cosmopolitanism works to construct community out of the shared sense of alienation that arises in the postcolony in an age of globalization. Through postcolonial theorists Dipesh Chakrabarty, Homi Bhabha, and Simon Gikandi, I argue that the unhomely cosmopolitan comes to represent the displaced figure of globalization but whose presence interrupts the narrative of development constructed through colonial modernity. Ultimately, a cosmopolitan pedagogy makes the classroom an unhomely space which disrupts knowledge production and consumption, challenging students to be responsible for their participation in those processes. In asking students to be accountable for and respond to the call of the other, this project helps students build the skills necessary to ethically engage with difference inside and outside the classroom.

COSMOPOLITAN PEDAGOGY: READING
POSTCOLONIAL LITERATURE IN
AN AGE OF GLOBALIZATION

by

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The Classroom in the World and the World in the Classroom

In the fall of 2002, I was in India in the rural town of Paud in the state of Maharashtra, teaching at an international school of 200 students representing 68 different nationalities. I recall the day I introduced *Heart of Darkness* to my class of 22 students, and the amazement I had at being in a classroom in India teaching a Polish born novelist who wrote in English about a fictionalized African journey to students from Europe, Africa, North America, and Asia. The novel elicited useful, and at times frank, conversation about colonialism's impact and legacy on the world and created a site for students to speak to one another through the specifics of the text. It was the first time I realized the power of literature to open dialogue across difference to help students move from the fixity of particular points of view to fluid positions which provided insightful and ever-changing vantage points. It was not the literature in and of itself which created this situation, but it was the experience of the literary engagement, the very act of reading, in such a diverse and challenging environment that enabled students to orientate themselves to others and otherness in productive and instructional ways.

My experiences at the Mahindra United World College of India taught me the importance of bringing the world into the classroom and seeing the classroom in the world. What I would like to suggest is that literature serves as the nexus point between

the two. I argue that we must recognize the possibilities for pedagogy to be an intervention in the world, disrupting, disquieting, and destabilizing familiar narratives that reduce the world to prefabricated realities or master narratives. The aim of this project is to create a pedagogical approach to literature¹ which opens a space for dialogue between reader and text, necessitating an ethics of responsibility for difference. While all classroom environments might not be like the one I had in India, there are particular pedagogical practices, which I call a cosmopolitan pedagogy, that can result in the same outcome. Cosmopolitan pedagogy entails a commitment to the act of reading as an act of engagement with the world. Through the four chapters, I move between literary analysis, cosmopolitan theory, and practical pedagogy to give a comprehensive expression of how a cosmopolitan pedagogy works and what it can offer students. I locate my project in the postcolonial literature course as a way to access a set of problems that shape our current geo-political landscape and challenge students to engage with difference.

Making the Invisible Visible

Globalization has spread its economic, social, and political nets across the planet, creating one world, albeit a deeply disproportionate one. In defining globalization, I am working from the supposition that this is not just an economic force, but also one that mediates flows of culture, law, and politics. Additionally, it can be characterized as “the intensification of worldwide social relations which link distant localities in such a way that local happenings are shaped by events occurring many miles away or vice versa”

¹ In this project, I work from a more restrictive view of literature. Rather than thinking of literature simply as working with letters, I choose to think of it in J. Hillis Miller’s terms as a way of knowing. My definition of literature is not a value based one, but rather predicated on the need for imaginative engagement with a text.

(Giddens qtd. in Gupta). The historically unparalleled amount of contact between peoples generated by globalization has spawned a new set of problems for our global community. Rather than bringing individuals together to embrace difference as such, globalization's centrifugal forces often reduce or assimilate difference into dominant cultures, creating intensely asymmetrical power structures. The result is that globalization often works in one direction, the global north forcing its economic and cultural influence on the global south, negating the opportunity for equal exchange between peoples. The fallout of this uneven relationship permeates all aspects of society and the world. The increase of hybrid identities, diasporic populations, and migratory labor, which result from globalization, necessitates the challenge of making interstitial spaces visible and livable. The monolithic categories that served as primary identities for so long, such as nationality, race, religion, etc., no longer adequately represent the dynamic nature of individual identity. However, we have not found an appropriate way to recognize these voices in-between. In the United States, the multicultural movement worked toward recognition of minority and disenfranchised voices, but the limitations of this theory within globalized discourses ultimately renders it dated and ineffectual. Cosmopolitanism has come to represent the follow up to multiculturalism, achieving multiculturalism's goals more effectively.

Cosmopolitan Pedagogy: Reading Postcolonial Literature in an Age of Globalization rests at the crossroads of several disciplines and challenges some of the fundamental approaches with which teachers have operated until now when working with non-Western literature. This project offers a critique of the popular reading models utilized in

postcolonial classrooms, and it suggests a new way of approaching difference through a cosmopolitan framework. I draw from well-established reading theory, including work by Mikhail Bakhtin, Wolfgang Iser, Louise Rosenblatt, and Mary Louise Pratt, and read their work through a cosmopolitan lens in order to adapt it for reading literature in an age of globalization. Building from these theorists allows me the opportunity to work from canonical critical positions, adjusting them in order to meet today's classroom demands. Cosmopolitanism has been and continues to be at the center of contentious debates concerning diversity, identity, and ethics. Entering this milieu with a pedagogical perspective in order to bridge the gap between cosmopolitan theory and contemporary critical pedagogy provides an alternative reading model that responds to the challenges that globalization raises for students. To accomplish this task, I turn to current and emerging cosmopolitan theory, incorporating Anthony Appiah's "rooted cosmopolitanism," Martha Nussbaum's argument for a cosmopolitan education and Boaventura de Sousa Santos' counter hegemonic cosmopolitanism. Putting the work of these three theorists in conversation helps me to create an unhomey cosmopolitanism which when situated in the classroom realizes my pedagogical goals of decentering power, destabilizing positionality, and fostering ethical engagement. This concept of the unhomey provides the unmooring of students and texts from fixed positions and opens, in Homi Bhabha's terms, a Third Space from which to interact. This universal condition of unhomeliness provides the counter-hegemonic cosmopolitan link between reader and text.

Despite increasing university requirements for global non-Western and diverse course material, current pedagogical practices do not address ethics in an age of globalization, and I argue that it must. As a result of neglecting to deal with how difference is being understood today, the classroom's potential as a site for critical thinking about what constitutes knowledge often collapses into locations of knowledge consumption. This part of my project works to uncover globalization's impact on classroom pedagogy by not only asking how we can globalize our curricula, but also how we can alter our pedagogy to foster an ethical engagement with difference, thereby refusing to promote or even accommodate the inequities which can arise as a result of globalization. In situating my study in the postcolonial literature classroom I consider both the field's often-stated desire to question hegemonic forces as well as the ironic tendency for students to consume or appropriate postcolonial literature without altering their systems of knowledge. While the postcolonial classroom offers these specific challenges, at the center of my project is a basic ethical question, situated within a pedagogical context, concerning the relationship between students and knowledge acquisition. I approach this encounter through a Levinasian ethical framework. Emmanuel Levinas argues that ethics is the first philosophy, preceding ontology and epistemology. I work from this hypothesis, foregrounding my project in an ethical framework which calls for the recognition of the irreducibility of an other's difference. Thus, before my project even considers pedagogical approaches or establishes my reimagining of cosmopolitanism, it is grounded in an ethical framework that strives to preserve the difference of an other.

In general, this project is indebted to postcolonial theory and literature because they both provide non-Western and counter hegemonic approaches to dominant narratives, such as the autonomous individual, which have circulated in pedagogical practices for some time. Specifically, Gayatri Spivak's structure of rights suggests the need for training in literary reading by both the benefactors and beneficiaries of rights, offers a model to structure and justify my project within the privileged world of the academy. Additionally, Dipesh Chakrabarty's work in *Provincializing Europe* explores ways in which non-western histories constantly arise to disrupt the continuity of modernity. Utilizing his terminology of History 1 (history centered on Enlightenment modernity) and History 2 (subaltern histories), I suggest that a cosmopolitan pedagogy can provide moments of History 2 in the classroom to unsettle the uninterrupted privileging of knowledge organized through exclusively European discourses. Finally, I put several postcolonial literary texts, Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children*, Patrick Chamoiseau's *Texaco*, and Chris Abani's *GraceLand*, in conversation with a cosmopolitan pedagogical theory to provide imaginative solutions to the problems which I engage. My commitment to postcolonial theory and literature in this project stems from a belief that postcolonial theory and literature not only provide perspectives from the geographic and intellectual margins, challenging the centrality of Western thought, but also remain dedicated to acknowledging and working for the betterment of the material realities which inform much of their work. As a whole, this project's multidisciplinary approach requires that I put all of the different components - ethical, pedagogical, postcolonial, and theoretical - in conversation. In this way this process yields productive ends as it opens up new ways

of addressing familiar questions and produces an environment which maintains a commitment to working across difference. It is my hope that the methodology for this project mirrors the goal of the project: ethical encounters with difference produce knowledge about others in the world which is mindful of and makes visible the hegemonic forces which structure that very knowledge production.

Chapter Outlines

In Chapter One, “Counter-hegemonic Cosmopolitanism: Reimagining Cosmopolitanism in a Pedagogical Space,” I explore cosmopolitanism’s theoretical history, addressing its growth out of a European intellectual tradition and its response to multiculturalism, ultimately providing a counter-hegemonic cosmopolitanism. I provide a much needed history of cosmopolitanism and show how subjectivity has gradually shifted from the idea of a sovereign, coherent subject to one predicated on intersubjectivity. This move establishes the basis for cosmopolitanism’s commitment to the recognition and preservation of the other, which in subsequent chapters I use as the foundation for the reader / text relationship. This chapter attempts to divorce cosmopolitanism from an elitism which limited it to those who had the cultural and economic capital to build relationships across difference. Situating cosmopolitanism in a pedagogical space reimagines and opens it as a way of participating in the world regardless of positionality. Ultimately, this chapter provides the foundation for the cosmopolitanism I employ throughout the remaining chapters.

In Chapter Two, “Cosmopolitan Pedagogy: From Theory to Practice,” I critique the current Western-centric approach to reading pedagogy common in the Enlightenment

University in Bill Reading's terms, and I offer a reading model which will open the possibility of an ethical encounter between readers and postcolonial literature. Drawing on Freireian methodology, especially in courses that explicitly deal with global and postcolonial literature, my project helps students generate new ways of reading and creating the world. This conscientization helps students recognize the assumptions implicit in their positionality. I build on Louise Rosenblatt's transaction model, which helps students consider the ethical and complex dimensions of engaging with postcolonial literature. I explore how students easily move between anthropological, totalizing readings to those that radically decontextualize texts in problematic ways and work to produce a cosmopolitan space which recognizes context but maintains a fluid relationship thereby creating multiple points of engagement with a text. In this chapter, I offer a unit lesson on Afghan refugees, located in Khaled Hosseini's *The Kite Runner* and Michael Winterbottom's *In This World*, as a way to ground a cosmopolitan pedagogy in practical application. This unit plan shows a cosmopolitan pedagogy in action and demonstrates how teachers can construct classroom assignments in order to help students ethically engage with difference, unmooring students from their positionality and, by extension, making visible the assumptions which they carry into the classroom.

In Chapter Three, "ImagiNation: Cultivating Cosmopolitan Classroom Communities," I explore how cosmopolitanism can be used to create a reading community that works outside of the traditional *bildung* structure which customarily privileges individuality as the focal point of growth and development. I use Bhaktin's

dialogical reading to demonstrate that reading is always already a social act in order to consider the possibility of literary engagement as a process of community development. Denying the collaborative nature of reading only reinforces Enlightenment narratives of development. Since this chapter is predicated on reading as a social act, I examine how framing reading as an ethical engagement across difference makes the reading process receptive to working within a cosmopolitan framework. Specifically, I employ a Levinasian ethical model in which the preservation of difference, through a non-totalizing relationship, opens a teaching moment where students can learn from and with the other, not just about the other. My hope is to discourage purely anthropological or emotional readings of culturally dissimilar literature in order to engage with a text on a more self-reflexive level. This kind of pedagogical practice unmoors students from their positions of power in relationship to a text, resulting in a renegotiation with the text and by default difference. I provide a reading of two novels, Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children* and Patrick Chamoiseau's *Texaco*, in order to explore how cosmopolitan community construction works more effectively from a grassroots cosmopolitanism based on participation rather than a top-down framework. Through Dipesh Chakrabarty's idea of History 1 and History 2, I show how a grassroots cosmopolitanism interrupts dominant narratives of Western modernity and opens a space for alternative epistemologies. As such, the classroom turns from a space normally given to passing along dominant narratives to a space which problematizes those narratives through the inclusion of alternative voices.

In Chapter Four, “The Unhomely Cosmopolitan: Adrift in the Global Sphere,” I conclude with the concept of the unhomely cosmopolitan. This chapter suggests that cosmopolitan pedagogy is not about making a person feel at home in the world, a phrase commonly associated with western, hegemonic cosmopolitanisms, but rather disrupting and disorienting a reader in order to locate collective identification in mutual alienation. I provide examples from two texts which situate the unhomely cosmopolitan from two different perspectives within a colonial framework. From the colonial perspective, I examine how Marlow in *Heart of Darkness* exhibits characteristics of the unhomely cosmopolitan but ultimately reifies the colonial project by upholding the binaries of self and other, public and private. In contrast, I incorporate a reading of Elvis, the protagonist from contemporary Nigerian novelist Chris Abani’s *GraceLand*, in order to show how the unhomely cosmopolitan arises from the postcolony, unhomed from nation, culture, and tradition to enter an inhospitable global public sphere. The presence of this unhomely figure disrupts positionality and asks readers to join him or her in this cosmopolitan space of otherness. This space of collectivity through alienation requires students to inhabit more fluid subject positions, destabilizing the appropriation of difference and opening a site of ethical engagement.

Interdisciplinarity and Commitments Beyond the Classroom

A core element of this project is a commitment to interdisciplinarity within the academy. The compartmentalization of both postcolonial studies and composition in English departments, in which they function as supplementary or subordinate

disciplines to Western literary studies, creates difficulty in collaborating across disciplines. This is especially evident for postcolonial and composition studies because at different points they have had to justify their position within English departments. As such, the opportunity for postcolonialists and compositionists to work in an interdisciplinary manner is curtailed in favor of legitimizing their inclusion in the academy. By this point, both disciplines have managed to become mainstays of English departments, but they seem to function differently, even at odds sometimes, because of the different perceptions of how they function within departments. Postcolonial studies is often characterized as an overly theoretical field which prides itself on its insularity and exclusivity, allowing access only to those who work through its often opaque lexicon. On the other end of the spectrum, composition studies is viewed as lacking theoretical rigor and focusing solely on practice. In my project, I bring the strengths of these two disciplines together, embracing postcolonial studies' dedication to interrogating structures of power and social justice and composition's commitment to putting the student at the center of the university. Putting these two disciplines in dialogue provides the potential for the classroom space to transform into a site of action inside and outside the university. This move creates what Henry Giroux describes as "a space of dialogue and unmitigated questioning ... that makes visible the urgency of politics necessary to reclaim democratic values, identities, relations, and practices" (129-130). The willingness to bring together disparate disciplines reinforces the spirit of cosmopolitanism, which gives shape and name to the project, in order to learn from our encounters with difference.

While my project is situated within the academy, it is a project that is committed to, in Spivak's eloquent words, "an *uncoercive* rearrangement of desire" (original emphasis, "Righting Wrongs" 529). I refuse to see a distinction between the classroom and the world. Yes, there is a recognition of those who have the opportunity to access higher education, but that does not mean that work that builds ethical relationships cannot and should not happen there. What transpires in the classroom has a lasting impact on what happens in the world. Benita Parry argues in "The Institutionalization of Postcolonial Studies," that postcolonial studies needs to maintain its commitment to "theoretical sophistication that has marked its engagement with Orientalist discourse, Eurocentricism, and the exegetics of representation, but to link such meta-critical speculations with studies of actually existing political, economic, and cultural conditions, past and present" (80).

A cosmopolitan pedagogy takes up that challenge to not only exist as a theoretical model but also as an agent of change. I start by recognizing the work that can be done in the university through a commitment to pedagogy. It is that work which helps establish communities committed to having productive and sustainable engagements with and across difference in order to affect material change. Stephen Slemon makes a similar point at the end of "Post-colonial Critical Theories" that

the intellectual challenge for post-colonial critical theory is to attempt to come to know the story of colonial and neo-colonial engagements in all their complexity, and to find ways to represent those engagements in a language that can build cross-disciplinary, cross-community, cross-cultural alliances for the historical production of genuine social change. (197)

My project speaks to these concerns and suggests that a pedagogical approach which recognizes these challenges has the potential to produce an outcome, making manifest the material realities of political, economic, and cultural conditions for those who were and remain a product of colonialism. A cosmopolitan pedagogy makes the classroom an unhomely space which disrupts knowledge production and consumption, challenging students to be responsible for their participation in those processes. In asking students to be accountable for and respond to the call of the other, this project helps students build the skills necessary to ethically engage with others and otherness inside and outside the classroom.

CHAPTER II

COUNTER-HEGEMONIC COSMOPOLITANISM: REIMAGINING COSMOPOLITANISM IN A PEDAGOGICAL SPACE

Several years ago, I attended an academic conference on cosmopolitanism during which the opening speaker demonstrated how to make a cosmopolitan drink. At the podium, he pulled out vodka, orange liqueur, cranberry juice, and lime and proceeded to make the drink. The entire time this was happening, I was waiting for the punch line. Disappointingly, it never came. Instead, this was an attempt to conjoin critical cosmopolitanisms with popular cosmopolitanism¹, an attempt that seemed to fall rather flat based on the audience reaction. Rather than bringing these two together, more work is required to differentiate these two strains of the many strains of cosmopolitanism. Cosmopolitanism is a multifaceted idea, but merging popular cosmopolitanism with critical cosmopolitanism only muddies our understanding of this already entangled concept. While I appreciate the opening speaker's attempt to reach out to all the

¹ While I appreciate his effort in showing us the connection between the two, I was a little disappointed that cosmopolitanism continues to be misunderstood and misused. Fortunately, the majority of the conference rigorously interrogated cosmopolitanisms many implications in today's world. However, there is no denying that cosmopolitanism has taken on an increasingly popular understanding which deviates from its theoretical base. In fact, this more pedestrian interpretation undermines the core principles of cosmopolitanism. This misconception that a cosmopolitan is someone who can travel the world or sample culture as he or she wishes conflicts with the basic values instilled in cosmopolitanism. Obviously, one cannot ignore the magazine *Cosmo* as well and its association with style and sophistication. The sense of responsibility to the other is lost in these modern interpretations. As a result, cosmopolitanism takes on a very elitist connotation which disassociates it from the very democratic philosophy it actually is. The first step in reimagining cosmopolitanism is to help others gain an understanding of its complexity.

participants in the conference, the result was an oversimplification of a complex philosophical outlook. Instead of blending cosmopolitanism together as one idea, we might begin thinking about cosmopolitanisms and the points at which these versions of cosmopolitanism diverge², providing opportunities for a critical self-awareness within the field.

To be clear, cosmopolitanism(s) do share a set of characteristics which define it as a theory, a worldview, and in this project a pedagogical approach to teaching literature. Ulf Hannerz in “Cosmopolitans and Locals in World Culture” expresses cosmopolitanism’s basic tenets as “an orientation, a willingness to engage with the Other” (239). He continues, adding that “it is an intellectual and aesthetic stance of openness toward divergent cultural experiences, a search for contrasts rather than uniformity” (239). I would also include that cosmopolitanism maintains a respect for the welfare, safety, and rights of all individuals regardless of race, class, gender, nationality, or other demarcations of difference. Understanding these characteristics, which can be included in both theoretical and practical endeavors, allows for a distinction between cosmopolitan projects and projects which simply provide moments of contact across culture or through transnational organizations. The point I wish to stress is that cosmopolitanism is often mischaracterized and reduced simply to cross-cultural encounters. While working across culture may be a component of cosmopolitanism, it also carries with it an ethical component which requires the regard for the humanity of others. To better understand how cosmopolitanism has evolved in a way that embraces

² A similar position is taken by Breckenridge, et al. in *Cosmopolitanism*.

these characteristics, it is necessary to look back historically to see where cosmopolitanism originated and the different branches that have emerged through time. I trace this history through subjectivity as a way to show how the identity of the individual, a central focus of cosmopolitanism, has continued to evolve through the many manifestations of this theory.

Greek Stoic and Cynic Cosmopolitanism

The origins of cosmopolitanism date back to the Greek Cynics and Stoics of the fourth and third century BC respectively. This philosophy worked in opposition to the standard belief of the time which was predicated on the idea that a person was defined exclusively by his or her affiliation with a particular city or community. In other words, a person's identity was based on place of origin. The Greek Cynic, Diogenes, resisted this restrictive limitation on identity formation. When questioned about his citizenship, Diogenes' famously responded "I am a citizen of the world [*kosmopolitês*]" (Diogenes Laertius VI 63). In characterizing himself as a citizen of the world and not as a citizen of Sinope, "Diogenes apparently refused to agree that he owed special service to Sinope and the Sinopeans" ("Cosmopolitanism"). For Diogenes, this was not an argument for some sort of world state, as some historians may suggest, but rather a more philosophical understanding of humankind's relationship to nature and the autonomy of the individual. Instead of belonging to a man made city-state, Diogenes posited that all people belonged to a natural order. That is to say, Diogenes argued that the laws of nature were the most important ones and governed over all, transcending man-made laws to affect everyone equally, regardless of class, gender, or race. The oft repeated "citizen of the world" cliché

frequently misrepresents Diogenes, pulling his ideas out of context in order to justify a supranational structure which organizes humankind under one governmental structure. Robert Fine and Robin Cohen in their essay, “Four Cosmopolitan Moments,” explain how this idea of adhering to natural law came to become associated with the familiar “citizen of the world” definition. They write that “Tomlinson³ suggests the etymology is ‘clear enough’: the Greek words *kosmos*, meaning ‘world’ and *polis*, meaning ‘city’. ‘Hence,’ he continues ‘a cosmopolitan is a citizen of the world’. The ‘hence’ is not so self-evident” (137). Fine and Cohen unpack the complicated nature of what this idea meant to ancient Greeks. They argue that the idea of not belonging to a city-state goes against the basic “Aristotelian conception of man as *zoon politikon*, one whose very nature demands that he live in a particular state” (138). Instead, they argue that while the concept was rooted in Cynic thought, particularly Antisthenes and Diogenes, it was the stoic, Zeno, who advanced the modern understanding. For Zeno, every person had the “divine spark and all were capable of *logos*” (138). These natural rights were not contingent upon a person’s political status but emanated from the individual as inalienable rights. Zeno’s insistence that everyone has the capacity for reason forced Greeks to consider the possibility that a person is not recognized as human because of his or her identification with a particular city-state or other state apparatus, but it is a person’s capacity for reason and thought which makes him or her human. This approach provided a foundation for the sovereign subject, suggesting a coherent, unified identity as an innate part of being human. However, this view did not absolve individuals from

³ Tomlinson, John. *Globalization and Culture*. U of Chicago P: Chicago, 1999.

moral responsibilities to others, in fact, it called for a universal connection among all people in recognition of the value of the individual. As a result of this perspective, in a legal framework, law is not what gives a person human qualities or identity, but instead it is put in place to protect those rights. While this idea did not gain much traction in ancient Greece, it did resonate in early Roman law, particularly in Cicero's avowal that all men were equal under the law. Obviously, the resonance of this particular viewpoint can be recognized in contemporary political law as well, most obviously in the United States Constitution and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR). At the heart of this early manifestation of cosmopolitanism is the problematizing of identity, particularly as it related to citizenship. As ancient Greece was expanding, the city-state of Athens began to grow with non-native Athenians, igniting questions about belonging and rights. This is a debate that continues today. The renderings of contemporary cosmopolitanisms, especially as they pertain to the subject, have much to do with how one interprets the ancient Greek formulation of the term. There have been several other significant moments in the development of cosmopolitan theory before it has reached its most recent understanding.

From *Orbis Christianus* to Kant's Enlightenment Cosmopolitanism

Before the second major cosmopolitan moment, Emmanuel Kant's Enlightenment cosmopolitanism (late eighteenth century), the rise of Christianity in Europe, especially in the thirteenth century, provided a minor resurgence of the idea. Thomas Aquinas was one of the major philosophical figures of this time, and his work provided the foundation for the moral responsibility of the individual to a wider community. At the heart of

Aquinas' doctrine is a commitment to charity, peace, and happiness which was cultivated through virtue. The individual, Aquinas argued, needed both reason and faith in order to understand the truth of God, the beatific vision. Part of achieving a closer relationship to God was the commitment to helping other Christians on their journey toward spiritual development. This morality, which is grounded in the obligation to helping others, still informs cosmopolitan norms today. Aquinas' reliance on natural law owes much to Aristotelian thought, reinforcing the sovereignty of the individual subject and, by extension, purporting the autonomy of the individual. However, individuals were still organized within a larger structure, Christianity, and if a person was a non-believer, he or she was less exalted. In a pre-modern world, Christianity worked as a unifying force, maintaining a commitment to both natural law and divine law, which developed as an early political structure. Through religious identification, Christianity was used as a way to unify peoples across geographical, political, and social divisions. Gradually, with the shift from feudal political structures to the modern state, Christianity became increasingly committed to expanding its presence throughout the world. Presented as *Orbis Christianus*, Christianity became a planetary organizing principle which helped unite Christians. Obviously, this vision of a world order based on religious belief was problematic because it pitted secular citizens and other religions against Christians, rendering cosmopolitanism projects contradictory to one of its core tenets, a shared common humanity. The *Orbis Christianus* concept offered the possibility of only one worldview which is inherently incongruous with cosmopolitanism's plurality of worldviews. Additionally, this worldview supported the continued conversion of non-

believers through evangelical missions as a way to unify the world under one religion. These missions were often co-opted by nationalist enterprises, resulting in conversion through violence and exploitation. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, Christianity became an integral part of colonial missions, providing the rationale at home for these endeavors as well as a governing mechanism in the colonies. Christian cosmopolitanism appeared to bridge differences across geography and culture, but it still presented itself in exclusivity rather than cosmopolitanism's inclusivity of diversity.

In the late eighteenth century, Immanuel Kant ushered in a more modern, political cosmopolitanism which coincided with the rise of the nation-state. As such, a commitment to helping others becomes a facet of the state apparatus as opposed to the individual. The state becomes the driving force for ensuring the protection and the sanctity of human life. *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* remarks that

In *Perpetual Peace* (1795) Kant argues that true and world-wide peace is possible only when states are organized internally according to 'republican' principles, when they are organized externally in a voluntary league for the sake of keeping peace, and when they respect the human rights not only of their citizens but also of foreigners. ("Cosmopolitanism")

From Kant's perspective, the formation of a supra-national organization could ensure that nations would act responsibly toward one another in trade, security, and other measures, but more importantly, every individual would have a guarantor for his or her rights through this voluntary "league of nations." As Kant argues in *Perpetual Peace*, "The peoples of the earth have entered in varying degrees into a universal community, and it is developed to the point where a violation of laws in *one* part of the world is felt

everywhere” (qtd. in Harvey 532). Kant’s philosophy echoes the Roman formulation that everyone is equal under the law, but his view brings with it a much more overt political perspective⁴. One complication to Kant’s model is that it is predicated on an assumption of what it is to be human. There is a subtext to the statement which suggests that everyone is equal under the law. In Kant’s work, everyone is actually a specific type of person, expressly a European, male who is recognized by a political community. By this point, identity is clearly connected with nationality; it is the emergence of the modern political subject.

The rise of Enlightenment cosmopolitanism was triggered by the expansion and increasing interaction, primarily through exploration and trade, between peoples both at the individual and nation-state level. This capitalist component to cosmopolitanism reveals an elitist element to cosmopolitanism which remains problematic today. When this increased contact between states is coupled with documents such as the *Declaration of the Rights of Man* and the *Declaration of Independence* which explore the inherent rights of individuals, an inextricable link between the nation-state and basic human rights begins to emerge in cosmopolitan thought. Ironically, Kant’s cosmopolitanism, which was predicated on the nation-state structure, did not take into account the strength that nationalism played in individuals’ lives. Kant, a proponent of the belief that there were

⁴ Kantian cosmopolitanism is complicated by Kant’s views on race and geography. His classification of peoples into a hierarchy undermines his philosophical work on cosmopolitanism. Nevertheless, Kant, writing during the rise of the nation-state, did offer a unique view of the cooperation between nations for the protection of individuals.

shared characteristics which helped to define a nation⁵, opposed nationalism and as Robert Fine argues in *Political Investigations: Hegel, Marx, Arendt*, “Kant viewed nationalism as a kind of enslavement to the passions, an error, something alien to the free spirit of republicanism” (140). Kant believed that the *telos* to all of the revolutions of his time was a cosmopolitan confederation of states. He was not so much interested in creating a world state as much as an organization among states which could work above the nation-state level to ensure the protection of individuals as well as the stability of relations among states. Looking back over the 200 years since Kant’s work, the nation-state strengthened in ways which Kant had not imagined and for much of that time, the nation-state provided a bounded community for individuals which worked through an oppositional framework. Far from reaching across borders to make connections, the nation-state looked inward for solidarity. Throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the primary identity category was nationality. The individual subject was interpolated into the nation. The *telos* of development for an individual was socialization into the nation and by extension a political community. This move marks a significant shift in cosmopolitan thought, moving from the sovereign subject whose rationality provided the foundation for one’s being to a political subject who is dependent on the nation-state for rights and identity. Benedict Anderson suggests that the rise of print-capitalism in the form of newspapers and serial novels provided a way to connect citizens of the nation across time and space. These texts provided a shared experience and

⁵ Kant presents some of these ideas in the deeply problematic work, “Of National Characteristics, so far as They Depend upon the Distinct Feeling of the Beautiful and Sublime” in *Observations on the Feeling of the Beautiful and the Sublime*. In this text, Kant draws on essentializing and stereotypical depictions of many different cultures, including those in Africa, Asia, and North America.

culture. Ironically, it was during the strengthening of the nation-state that colonial expansion was at its peak. Colonial encounters typically reinforced positionality, and when mediated through anthropological and pseudo-scientific approaches, difference served to reify binary positions of us and them, civilized and savage, etc. Instead of engaging across cultural divides, colonialism's abusive and divisive systems of control served to hierarchize otherness. The openness to otherness and difference that is a hallmark of cosmopolitanism through a shared understanding of being equal under natural law was buried beneath a growing hegemonic capitalist system predicated on domination and exploitation.

Historically, regional and global projects such as *Orbis Christianus*, colonialism, and even earlier trade related enterprises such as those found along major trading routes have arguably been examples of actually existing cosmopolitanisms, but this form of cosmopolitanism often existed outside of the nation-state or other governmental structures and did not rely on the theoretical principles which characterize Stoic and Cynic cosmopolitanism, Kantian cosmopolitanism and the new cosmopolitanisms of the 1990s. It is in these types of moments that the popular connotation of a cosmopolitan, a sentiment that still lingers today, as being at home in the world was initiated. Far from adhering to cosmopolitanism's regard for the well being of others and belief in the possibility of difference without hierarchy, movements like colonialism were built on economic principles that rationalized difference to exploit peoples for capitalist enterprises. To reduce cosmopolitanism to moments of contact between and across culture through trade or other means strips this theory of its attempts at a larger project of

“planetary conviviality” (Mignolo 157). However, it is important to understand the different narratives of cosmopolitanism, even those which fall outside of theoretical projects or work outside the nation-state structure, to gain insight into how the term is used today.

Post-World War II Cosmopolitanism to Today’s New Cosmopolitanisms

It was not until the post-World War II period, specifically in the independence movements throughout the postcolonial world and in the formation of the United Nations, that the idea of cooperation across nations returned as a focal point of geo-political concern. Hanna Arendt was foremost among the thinkers of this time at constructing a system that strived for inclusiveness even in diversity. Her political philosophy of equality under the law is the basis for much contemporary human rights work and also marks a shift from understanding the subject as sovereign to one that is interdependent on others for his or her being. Arendt’s political philosophy argues for an understanding of intersubjective relationships as a way to understand ourselves among others in the world.

In *The Human Condition*, Arendt points out that

the impossibility of becoming unique masters of what they [humans] do, of knowing its consequences and relying upon the future, is the price they pay for plurality and reality, for the joy of inhabiting together with others a world whose reality is guaranteed for each by the presence of all. (244)

In *Hannah Arendt and the Challenge of Modernity: A Phenomenology of Human Rights*, Serena Parekh locates an implicit critique of sovereign subjectivity, suggesting that “sovereignty is the opposite of freedom, since ... freedom entails acting in concert with others, not in isolation” (73). Arendt’s work reignited questions of natural and civil law

and enquired at a fundamental level what it means to be human. A person's political identity then was of paramount importance because it often determined to what extent that person had rights coverage. Her dedication to the idea of human dignity provides a foundation for the connection between human rights and cosmopolitanism. By insisting that rights are generated from access to political communities instead of conceived of as inalienable rights, Arendt directly addressed the crises of refugees and stateless persons following WWII. Her work brought to bear the catastrophic failure of inalienable rights to protect those whose lives were lost during the Holocaust. Arendt argued that "a man who is nothing but a man has lost the very qualities which make it possible for other people to treat him as fellow-man" (300). For Arendt and other intellectuals of the mid-twentieth century, political inclusion seemed like the best way for individuals to be protected from dehumanization and rights abuses. Since much of this thought centered on working through and ultimately above the nation-state apparatus (i.e. United Nations), cosmopolitanism became one of the primary methods for conceiving of human rights distribution because it provided a way for individuals to have their rights covered. It also provided a framework which necessitated an interdependence among people and nations for the betterment of all. With cosmopolitanism's focus on post-WWII human rights issues much of the debates on cosmopolitanism in the latter half of the twentieth century were housed in political science and social science departments. It was not until the 1990s that another cosmopolitan moment opened debates to other disciplines.

In 1989, the fall of the Berlin Wall and the subsequent thawing of Cold War binaries provided an opportunity to question the seemingly unshakable nation-state structure.

With new economic markets opening throughout the world and the rise of the transnational corporation, the nation-state was now not the only powerhouse on the block. Transnational corporations provided a new global force, increasing the flow of capital and people with frighteningly little regulation. The increased encounters that resulted from the global outreach of many businesses coupled with technological advancements in travel and communications challenged the nation-state as the primary identity marker. Individuals were forced to consider allegiances outside the nation-state. People began to form new bonds across borders, creating what George H.W. Bush called in 1991, a “New World Order.” While President Bush pushed for an “enduring peace” and “a world where the United Nations, freed from cold war stalemate, is poised to fulfill the historic vision of its founders. A world in which freedom and respect for human rights find a home among all nations” others saw this moment as a chance to question the hegemonic force of the nation-state (Bush, George H.W. March 6, 1991). In 1994, Martha Nussbaum published “Patriotism and Cosmopolitanism,” an essay that critiqued the myopic scope of responsibility that nationalism generates. Her essay set off a firestorm of responses, collected in *For Love of Country?* (1996). Nussbaum’s 1994 essay changed the course of cosmopolitan conversations, opening this theory up to other disciplines beyond political science and sociology, especially the humanities. With essays from Judith Butler, Elaine Scarry, Kwame Anthony Appiah, and many others, this collection ignited the biggest advancements in cosmopolitan thought since the Enlightenment.

Some of the responses to Nussbaum's essay were unsurprising in that they rehashed previously rehearsed arguments about the limitations of cosmopolitanism. For example, Gertrude Himmelfarb gives a strong defense for rooted identity, stating that we come into it [the world] complete with all the particular, defining characteristics that go into a fully formed human being, a being with an identity. Identity is neither an accident nor a matter of choice. It is given, not willed (77). From her comments, Himmelfarb reveals her deep skepticism and outright fear of cosmopolitanism, falling back on traditional structures like the nation-state to ensure political stability as well as structure for an individual's life . Another rebuttal to Nussbaum's essay, this time by Michael Walzer, argues that

I am not a citizen of the world as she [Nussbaum] would like me to be. I am not even aware that there is a world such that one could be a citizen of it. No one has ever offered me citizenship, or described the naturalization process, or enlisted me in the world's institutional structures. (125)

Walzer's argument echoes the sentiments of much of the critique of Nussbaum's position, that it is utopian and untenable because of the impossibility and impracticality of a supra-national organization. However, he does not necessarily critique cosmopolitanism's goal of recognizing a shared common humanity.

The late 1980s and early 1990s marked a period of global restructuring as the thaw of the Cold War opened up the world beyond the superpower stalemate structure. The Berlin Wall came down only five years before Nussbaum published her essay. With the removal of this literal and symbolic wall, Cold War era binaries ceased to make sense in a more transnational landscape. In this same time period, 1993 to be exact, Samuel

Huntington published “The Clash of Civilizations” in *Foreign Affairs*. In this essay, Huntington suggests that global conflict in the future will not be between nation-states but rather between civilizations. Huntington argues that the softening of the nation-state will cause individuals to search for something to fill that primary identity category. Huntington imagined that people will fill that void by connecting with their civilization. He defines a civilization as “the highest cultural grouping of people and the broadest level of cultural identity people have short of that which distinguishes humans from other species” (23-24). Huntington takes the time to break down the approximately seven civilizations⁶, meticulously describing their differences. Obviously there are myriad issues that can be raised by this premise, but my primary purpose in this context is to show that in the early to mid-1990s there was a scramble taking place to identify the primary identity shaper. Huntington offers one solution, albeit an extremely divisive one, that seems to have played out in political policy in the United States during the early 2000s. Nussbaum on the other hand takes an opposing position, suggesting that this is the time for the recognition of a common humanity, a unifying of difference if you will. The concerns raised in response to her article appear to be preoccupied with the replacement of the nation-state. However, a closer look at Nussbaum’s original article and her reply at the end of *For Love of Country?* reveal that she is asking us to re-imagine the possibilities that cosmopolitanism holds, particularly as they pertain to the

⁶ This is Huntington’s own characterization. It is unclear the exact number of civilizations presented in Huntington’s work. Issue has been taken with this formulation. Among the most insightful is Edward Said’s response in “*The Clash of Civilizations*.” Said argues that Huntington does not account for the dynamic nature of civilizations and worse, it creates a state of perpetual conflict between culture often seen as a method of legitimating political and military objectives.

individual. Additionally, her argument calls for a cosmopolitan education as a manner of cultivating this worldview, even though the details of this educational plan remain underdeveloped. By locating cosmopolitanism as an educational endeavor, Nussbaum suggests that cosmopolitanism is something that can be learned, not simply bestowed on individuals, which in many ways responds to Walzer's critique because it suggests that the logistics of cosmopolitanism can be worked through at a micro instead of macro level approach. The benefit of the debate surrounding Nussbaum's essay is a revitalization of cosmopolitanism through an exploration of what it can offer at a time when technological advancements shrink the globe, rendering borders more permeable.

A few of the essays in *For Love of Country?* manage to break themselves from the patriotism /nationalism and nation-state / world-state debates and offer a glimpse of cosmopolitanism's potential for reframing contemporary debates on identity issues, human rights, and alterity. Elaine Scarry's essay "The Difficulty of Imagining Other Persons" stands out in this collection as a thoughtful interrogation of the challenge of empathetic identification. Her essay provides a helpful critique of the struggle to represent another's pain and the problem of turning that recognition into action. Scarry suggests that it is both through emotional connections which lead to action and constitutional frameworks that every individual is ensured recognition before the law. In many ways, she is extending Arendt's thinking regarding human dignity. At the core of Scarry's work is the question of what impetus might prompt people to act in the name of an other. Scarry's essay touches on one of the toughest questions for cosmopolitanism: how to build thick relationships across national, political, cultural, ethnic, etc. borders?

In the same volume, Kwame Anthony Appiah's "Cosmopolitan Patriots" takes up this question and considers the idea of multiple affiliations as it pertains to building relationships. Appiah's essay ushers in a new era of cosmopolitanism that attempts to avoid the pitfalls of Nussbaum's universalist approach, and it considers a way to broach the task of multiple allegiances, from the local to the global. Appiah opens with a story about his father's ability to bridge local affiliations with global responsibilities. He mentions how his father is tied at once to his region, Asante, his nation, the broader allegiance to Africa, and finally his responsibilities to the world. Appiah's father leaves his children with the dictum that "remember that you are citizens of the world'....wherever you choose to live we should make sure we left that place better than we found it" (21). This anecdote serves to initiate Appiah's defense against the charge that cosmopolitans are rootless, carrying little to no responsibility for others. One of the major critiques of cosmopolitanism asserts that being a citizen of the world means an individual is a citizen of nowhere. Appiah's argument is that citizenship, which is a loaded term because it brings with it a set of obligations to others under law, can be simultaneous and multiple, extending from local to global communities. Appiah also refutes the criticism that cosmopolitanism ultimately leads toward a singular, global humanism. He argues that "cosmopolitan celebrates the fact that there are different local human ways of being, while humanism is consistent with the desire for global homogeneity" (25). Appiah assumes the challenge of dispelling the myth that cosmopolitanism is synonymous with the creation of a world state. His anti-universalist

position is not in conflict with the presence of governing bodies at the nation-state level or the presence of local culture. In fact, Appiah suggests that

it is because humans live best on a smaller scale that we should defend not just the state, but the country, the town, the street, the business, the craft, the profession, and the family, as communities, as circles among the many circles that are narrower than the human horizon. (29)

The thoughts that Appiah offers in “Cosmopolitan Patriots” are the first glimpse of the new cosmopolitanisms that have emerged out of the 1990s’ resurrection of cosmopolitanism. Appiah has continued to flesh out his ideas in works such as *Ethics after Identity* (2004) and *Cosmopolitanism: Ethics in a World of Strangers* (2006⁷), furthering the connections between cosmopolitanism and ethics.

What these cosmopolitanisms of the 1990s attempt to offer are alternatives or advancements to the way cosmopolitanism had been previously conceived. In particular, this shift is located in individual identity. The cosmopolitanisms of the 1990s work to build allegiances and identities outside the nation-state structure. Some of these renderings, like Nussbaum’s, still rely on sovereign subjectivity grounded in logos as a foundation for cosmopolitan thought, but others begin to push for an understanding of how global interconnectedness shapes the way individuals understand themselves. What I hope to show through this important historical overview is that cosmopolitanism has continuously adapted to the structural and political models which govern individuals. It

⁷ Both of these works take an extensive look at morality, values, and ethics as they pertain to cosmopolitanism. He is particularly keen on working through the challenge of how a person negotiate’s thick and thin relationships. Additionally, Appiah works to unravel the association between cosmopolitanism and moral relativism. His insistence is that there are shared frameworks from which right and wrong might be explored.

moved from a theory based on natural law, became a way for Christianity to organize believers throughout the world, provided a theoretical model for rights distribution in modern political structures, and currently it acts as a way to negotiate the multiple social affiliations that arise from globalization.

Co-opting Cosmopolitanism

Because of its adaptability, cosmopolitanism is susceptible to being incorporated in hegemonic projects. Granted, those permutations of this theory strip it of its commitment to others and a willingness to engage with difference through non-hierarchical methods. These new cosmopolitanisms can be characterized not only by their proliferation of diverse interpretations of cosmopolitanism, including descriptors that frame cosmopolitanism as “vernacular,” “actually existing,” “subaltern,” “rooted,” etc., but also it can be understood as a project which seeks to effectively bridge the local / global divide, providing a counter to globalization’s top-down organizing structure. Walter D. Mignolo describes this attempt in his essay “The Many Faces of Cosmo-polis: Border Thinking and Critical Cosmopolitanism” as “a set of projects toward planetary conviviality” (157). It is that desire for conviviality that drives the new cosmopolitanisms to push against power structures in order to reveal new organizing principles across difference. Recognizing the increased flow of capital and people, these new cosmopolitanisms attempt to reimagine social affiliations, taking into account a person’s commitment to local communities while maintaining global responsibilities. Mignolo is suggesting the possibility of horizontal relationships across communities that are not necessarily mediated through governmental structures. One of the major critiques

leveled against these emerging theories is that they are not grounded in lived realities, instead catering to a cosmopolitan elite. Critics argue that these new cosmopolitanisms do not take into account the problems that arise for the disenfranchised who are forced unwittingly into these newly emerging systems. As David Harvey explains in *Cosmopolitanism and the Geography of Freedom*

the chronic failures on the part of the new cosmopolitans to ground their theories in spaces and place in effective ways or, when they naively attempt to do so, not to go much beyond conventional neoliberal wisdoms make it tempting to dismiss their whole line of argument as yet another moral or legalistic mask for the continuance of elite class and imperialist power. (94)

This argument that cosmopolitanism caters to an elite few is one that is echoed by other critics. Craig Calhoun in “The Class Consciousness of Frequent Travelers: Towards a Critique of Actually Existing Cosmopolitanism” charges cosmopolitanism as having the potential to be a part of Western hegemonic structures, specifically capitalism.

Ultimately, Calhoun sees cosmopolitanism’s greatest problem as its reinforcement of the status quo. He argues that “advocates of cosmopolitan democracy often offer a vision of political reform that is attractive to elites partly because it promises to find virtue without a radical redistribution of wealth or power” (108). In such a system, further stratification between the local and global occurs through the privileging of who has access to connect across borders. What Harvey and Calhoun both touch on is the vulnerability of these new cosmopolitanisms to be co-opted by a neo-liberalism which justifies intervention, economically, politically and militaristically, into local communities through

humanitarian and democratic projects. This concern became a reality in the United States in the early 2000s.

One of the most recognizable moments for the co-opting of modern cosmopolitanism for nationalistic and imperialistic purposes occurred in the aftermath of the terrorist attacks on September 11th. Calhoun writes,

on 11 September 2001, terrorists crashing jets into the World Trade Center and the Pentagon struck a blow against cosmopolitanism – perhaps more successfully than against their obvious symbolic targets. They precipitated a renewal of state-centered politics and a ‘war on terrorism’, seeking military rather than law enforcement solutions to crime. (Calhoun 86)

Writing in 2002, with only a year’s perspective, Calhoun immediately recognized the damage to cosmopolitanism as a result of the response to the terrorist attacks on September 11th. As time passes and scholars look back on this specific historical moment, they will indeed identify a squandered opportunity to embrace a shared humanity and a move from a state-centric model of pursuing justice to an international model. Long forgotten will be the outpouring of solidarity, exemplified by the *Le Monde* headline on Sept. 12, 2001, “We all are Americans.” Cosmopolitanism could have provided a way to understand this event outside of a nation-state structure and help people throughout the world imagine it as an attack on humanity. This move would have increased the human resources available to respond to this problem, and it would have attempted to address the root causes which prompted the attacks. The brand of fundamentalism that inspired such horrific events exists in philosophical opposition to cosmopolitanism. Fundamentalism works through bounded and exclusive communities,

attempting to make the world in its own image. Cosmopolitanism recognizes and promotes a plurality of being, enriching interaction between peoples and provides productive relationships. Unfortunately, the opportunity to oppose fundamentalism through cosmopolitanism was lost when the US decided on a unilateral political and military response. If this revitalization of the nation-state's power is not damaging enough to cosmopolitanism, the outright commandeering of cosmopolitanism in current American foreign policy has twisted these ideas, inverting cosmopolitanism's intentions.

The cosmopolitanism of the 1990s has been succeeded by a darker, paradoxical cosmopolitanism. Much of today's military offensives and prisoner detentions are justified through the invocation of cosmopolitan principles. In *Postcolonial Melancholia*, Paul Gilroy acknowledges this appropriation of cosmopolitanism for political and military purposes, noting that "the meaning and ambition of the term 'cosmopolitanism' has been hijacked and diminished by a belief that failed states rather than poverty and hopelessness are the breeding ground of terror and envy."

Cosmopolitanism, as it has been understood from Kant to Arendt, checks the power of the nation-state from above, with supranational organizations that ensure stable relationships between nations. However, when cosmopolitanism is appropriated by a powerful nation-state, who acts outside the bounds of cooperation, the drive of self-interest easily outweighs altruistic motivations, providing a situation in which

in the names of cosmopolitanism and humanitarianism, these particular moral sensibilities can promote and justify intervention in other people's sovereign territory on the grounds that their ailing or incompetent national state has failed to measure up to the levels of good practice that merit recognition as civilized. (Gilroy 59-60)

This new cosmopolitan world created through military interventions, exists ironically through Western imperialist power, shaping identities without the input and participation of individuals throughout the world. Sold to the public as a means of liberating people from despotic and anti-modern regimes, this new cosmopolitanism does not work to strengthen global justice, but instead reinforces the nation state as “the primary institutional guarantor of political rights” (Gilroy 65).

Ironically, this new, “armored cosmopolitanism” exploits the gaps in human rights coverage in order to justify intervention but also as a way to prosecute enemy combatants. Since the “war on terror” pits civilization, recognized in the form of the nation-state, versus a terror network, international law regarding treatment, due process, etc. can be circumvented. As I have argued early in the chapter, cosmopolitanism is deeply invested in rights coverage for individuals. Stemming initially from natural law and eventually from civil law, cosmopolitanism became the means from which to distribute these rights. The Kantian conception of rights suggests that every individual has inalienable rights, suggesting a sovereign subjectivity, and it is through the nation-state that those rights are guaranteed. In the mid-twentieth century, Hannah Arendt critiques this model and points out the lapses in coverage for those who exist outside of the nation-state, suggesting that rights are not necessarily embedded in the individual but granted through political inclusion. This intersubjective position is predicated on a belief that individuals must work in concert in order to ensure human rights. When a person exists outside the nation-state boundaries, for all intents and purposes, he or she exists outside humanity, beyond law. Remembering Arendt’s quote from earlier in this chapter,

“a man who is nothing but a man has lost the very qualities that make it possible for other people to treat him as fellow-man” (300), we see how coverage still has not been extended to all peoples. In the name of a cosmopolitan, humanitarian justice, human rights violations are sanctioned. That is not to suggest that justice should not be pursued, but utilizing a cosmopolitan humanism which leads to human rights abuses seems perverse.

Gilroy’s comments on the shift in contemporary cosmopolitan theory are not the only observations about the “hijacking” of cosmopolitanism. At the end of *Human Rights, Inc.*, Joseph Slaughter quotes a message from President George W. Bush to the people of Afghanistan. President Bush expresses his regard for “human life and human dignity” and also expresses his pleasure of hearing “stories of young girls going to school for the first time so they can realize their potential” (317). Bush reiterates this sentiment, explaining, “We like stories, and expect stories, of young girls going to school in Afghanistan” (317). Slaughter’s analysis suggests that

the implicit cosmopolitan model of reading lurking within George Bush’s statement of great novelistic expectations asks relatively little of our literary, humanitarian imaginations; it invites us to identify not with people unlike us but with our kind of people – people who ‘care about the plight of people. (324)

Slaughter’s argument continues,

in a world where privileges and rights, as well as literary technologies and juridico-institutional resources, are unequally distributed, such cosmopolitan reading practices often serve to recenter the traditional subjects of history now as the subjects of benevolence, humanitarian interventionist sentimentality, and human rights – the literary agents of international human rights imaginary. (324)

The climate created for readers is one that reinscribes their position as protectors of human rights through their reading practices and the subjects who are being read remain victims of human rights violations, devoid of agency. This cosmopolitan world, as George W. Bush projects it, is made to resemble our own world. In this model, difference is something to be enjoyed and appreciated, never challenging one's own identity or position. These trends can be observed in many of the popular non-Western texts of the past several years. Works like Khaled Hosseini's *The Kite Runner*, Azar Nafisi's *Reading Lolita in Tehran*, Dave Egger's *What is the What*, and Ishmael Beah's *A Long Way Gone* argue for a cosmopolitan understanding of difference yet limit this potential by presenting readers with foreign landscapes or experiences that ultimately work to reinforce an understanding of the world already familiar and embraced in the West. Readers find legibility and familiarity in literary form and the messages these works communicate, permitting readers to take a sympathetic tour through the world without the complexities and complications of deep inequities surfacing. From the vicious cycle that Slaughter identifies, it becomes apparent that humanitarian benefactor and humanitarian beneficiary locked into place and reinforced through reading practices all under the auspices of new cosmopolitanism.

Subaltern Cosmopolitanism

Even with the many concerns raised over cosmopolitanism⁸, it still offers a theoretical model which can work to reshape social structures in a globalized world, offer multiple

⁸ Another contentious issue for cosmopolitanism is the lack of attention paid to the gendering of the term. Emerging from a Western Enlightenment tradition has meant that cosmopolitanism is culpable of

connections across difference, and provide a space for the development of multiple epistemologies. I argue that it is through individual relationships and everyday encounters with difference that a cosmopolitan ethos can be created which in turn can effect change at a systemic level. It is in its ability to embrace plurality without hierarchizing that cosmopolitanism emerges as a viable option for managing globalization's hegemonic tendencies, but this is a move which comes from below through grassroots, participatory actions instead of from state level decrees. While Harvey and Calhoun both address concerns over cosmopolitanism's accommodation of only an elite, Western class of people, they do see a potential for cosmopolitanism from below. For Calhoun, cosmopolitanism's potential can be realized when there is a commitment "to the reduction of material inequality and more openness to radical change" (108). Calhoun's transformative approach relies heavily on a reimagining of cosmopolitanism outside of current power structures. In particular, Calhoun takes umbrage with the capitalist structure that continues to widen the gap between rich and poor. Calhoun believes that cosmopolitanism needs to disentangle itself from an elite position which works more in cooperation with hegemonic forces than against them. Harvey reemphasizes Calhoun's position, suggesting a way of working against neo-liberal globalization from below. Harvey draws on Boaventura de Sousa Santos' work as an example of cosmopolitanism from below. De Sousa Santos offers a "subaltern cosmopolitanism" which provides translocal solidarities as a way to work from below by

replicating a patriarchal system which seeks to other the non-male, non-Western, and culturally unfamiliar. Shameem Black addresses this issue and explores the potential for cosmopolitanism to work at creating a global solidarity for women in her essay "Fertile Cosmofeminism: Ruth L.Ozeki and Transnational Reproduction."

connecting similar local struggles and providing global frameworks for addressing issues. Fundamental to this project is “the task of translation of particularist demands and local engagements into a common language of opposition to the neoliberal capitalism and imperialist strategies that lie at the root of current problems” (97). In other words, Harvery’s characterization of cosmopolitanism from below works as a counter hegemonic force by consolidating local efforts through a global network of localized connections. This translocal approach eschews the center / periphery model in favor of connecting local struggles with global actors such as NGOs and other organizations. De Sousa Santos’ approach relies heavily on a belief that the individual is a social construction and never outside of those forces. Importantly, this is a notable difference with previous manifestations of cosmopolitanism that characterize the individual as coherent and autonomous. In order for cosmopolitanism to work from below, it must be understood as a collaborative project which recognizes the interdependency of the self and the other in order to displace the privilege of the sovereign subject. This approach suggests that the other is always already present in the self. In an era of globalization this is imperative because it makes visible the relationships across borders, economies, and strata of society. That is not to say that those relationships are equitable, but in bringing them to light it draws attention to the need to address those inequities. Walter Mignolo also identifies the current structure of cosmopolitan encounters as a major concern because it creates a framework in which cosmopolitanism “only connects from the center of the large circle outward, and leaves the outer places disconnected from each other.” (184). For Mignolo, this model “would be a cosmopolitanism from above, like Vitoria’s

and Kant's cosmopolitanism in the past and Rawls's and Habermas's cosmopolitanism today" and as such, it creates a system in "which only one philosophy has it 'right'" (184). The challenge then is to position cosmopolitanism in a space which generates the conditions necessary to work against and outside of a top-down framework, building connections and encounters that skirt an imperialist center. Doing so would produce the conditions from which cosmopolitanism could emerge in the voices once pushed to the margins in order to join together collectively against globalization's hegemonic forces, creating more open dialogue, encouraging local responses to issues ranging from human rights implementation, environmental protection, and economic development. While I am intrigued by the idea of a cosmopolitanism from below and think it has potential for addressing important but often ignored issues of the global South, I believe it is crucial that the forces are challenged from within. Creating a cosmopolitanism from below not only requires connections between disenfranchised groups, in the form of something like De Sousa Santos' subaltern cosmopolitanism, but also it necessitates a reimagining of cosmopolitanism within Western social and institutional structures. This two pronged approach allows cosmopolitanism to work from below, connecting marginalized groups in a global structure, and it invites a reconsideration of how knowledge production about others and otherness is complicit in maintaining the status quo.

To better understand the first of these two approaches, cosmopolitanism from below, it is necessary to examine how De Sousa Santos' subaltern cosmopolitanism works as a counter hegemonic approach to neoliberal globalization. De Sousa Santos explains that this form of cosmopolitanism not only fights against "the economic, social, and political

outcomes of hegemonic globalization” because they challenge the underlying assumptions and offer an alternative (*Toward a New Legal Common Sense* 459). De Sousa Santos eschews current debates on cosmopolitanism by offering the simple assessment that “cosmopolitanism has been a privilege of those that can afford it” (460). The result of such an elite approach to cosmopolitanism is that cosmopolitanism remains a possibility only for the privileged. In addressing the question of who needs cosmopolitanism, de Sousa Santos responds, “whoever is a victim of intolerance and discrimination needs tolerance; whoever is denied basic human dignity needs a community of human beings; whoever is a non-citizen needs world citizenship in any given community or nation” (460). In the past, cosmopolitanism has been presented as a lifestyle or a way of seeing the world, but de Sousa Santos believes that it can effect change in the world. De Sousa Santos’ cosmopolitanism takes the form of action, that is, building connections and solidarities through encounters with difference and action toward alleviating inequities which is in contrast to the elite cosmopolitanism whose privilege is predicated on many of those inequalities. In order to achieve this activist cosmopolitanism, de Sousa Santos draws on the principles of local groups that are currently fighting against social exclusion in order to show how they offer alternative structures to mainstream resistance. His primary example of a community which is working to have its voice heard without compromising its identity is the Zapatista movement in Mexico. He pulls out four major components of the Zapatista movement in order to draw parallels with what subaltern cosmopolitanism can achieve. First, the Zapatista movement is fundamentally about inclusion. The Zapatista’s work is not a

matter of gaining rights for a particular group; instead it is about opening a space for all disenfranchised groups. Second, the goal of inclusion for all necessitates not just equality but recognition of the heterogeneity of a group. In other words, this requires a respect for differences and a willingness to allow a group “to decide to what extent they wish to hybridize or de-differentiate” (461). Third, the creation of alternatives to the current political structure in which connections are made horizontally to create a deep democracy predicated on inclusion. Fourth, “the theory, whatever its value, will always be last, not first” (463). Therefore, the goal of inclusion is not to unify movements under one ideological position but rather to acknowledge that the struggles are localized and often take on a shape and order reflective of that space. What cosmopolitanism promotes is a willingness to translate those movements to develop a “mutual intelligibility among them so that they may benefit from the experiences of others and network with them” (463). In drawing out these four principles from the Zapatista movement, de Sousa Santos has worked to lay the groundwork for a subaltern cosmopolitanism. He acknowledges that other movements provide the same sort of framework, just in their localized manner. He hopes his work has “rendered the world less comfortable for global capitalism” (464). In doing so, de Sousa Santos is also working against the elitist cosmopolitan projects which have relied on a macro level, trickle down approach to connecting people across difference. Cosmopolitanism from below reveals the human cost of globalization and suggests a way to connect the global disenfranchised to provide solidarities that can activate change in the world. This form of cosmopolitanism relies on acknowledging the

similar circumstances, albeit with specific manifestations, in order to build a coalition of voices from below.

De Sousa Santos' approach seems more than slightly utopian in its formulation, but it does offer an interesting space for a consideration of alternative ways of living in a globalized world through a reimagining of the current system. In other words, de Sousa Santos suggests the possibility of multiple epistemological approaches to difference. He does not seek to overturn globalization because ultimately he believes it is globalization which promotes the contact among those currently existing on the periphery. Establishing these relationships enables the possibility of translocal solidarity. The key to communicating across those movements is the willingness to appreciate the translatability of these struggles. De Sousa Santos uses cosmopolitanism as a way to facilitate that dialogue because it provides a way to negotiate difference without hierarchies. These efforts may be situated in local temporalities, but de Sousa Santos sees them as part of a larger struggle against hegemonic forces.

I do not want this approach to be misconstrued as simply supporting all organizations which create solidarity across nation-state borders in order to advance a particular ideology. After all, that is the basic recipe for the type of terrorist activity which has developed over the past twenty years. It is important to remember that cosmopolitanism values human life "irrespective of whether an individual belongs to 'our' or to 'another' political and social community" ("Terrorism and Cosmopolitanism"). Terrorist organizations as well as faith organizations "can be narrowing, rather than broadening, despite working in a transborder fashion" (Vertovec and Cohen 20). Transnational

approaches to solidarity are a necessary part of creating cosmopolitan communities, but there needs to be a complementary component that is founded on openness to preserving the difference of others as well as a basic regard for the welfare of individuals through the protection of their rights.

If de Sousa Santos presents the foundation of a cosmopolitan approach for the disenfranchised, I hope to couple his work with a reimagining of cosmopolitanism within current power structures, specifically the university system. By working outside mainstream structures in projects like subaltern cosmopolitanism and inside the system in the cosmopolitan pedagogy that I will propose, cosmopolitanism can provide a means of addressing the social, political, and economic disparities that form the basis for global power imbalances. To focus only on one of these approaches limits the potential for change because it does not address the fundamental problem of cosmopolitanism – its close association with privileged communities. De Sousa Santos's subaltern cosmopolitanism works to connect and empower groups that have been denied recognition; however, his approach does not address, and understandably so, a plan for reconfiguring mainstream cosmopolitanism. Without work being done from inside current structures like the university, de Sousa Santos' model merely works in opposition with mainstream cosmopolitanism, creating a stalemate between competing ideologies that can never work in concordance. To better understand this two pronged approach, I turn to a similar methodology employed by Gayatri Spivak regarding human rights education and reform.

Building the Structure of a Cosmopolitan Pedagogy

In her 2002 article “Righting Wrongs,” Spivak problematizes the current human rights structure. In this essay, Spivak argues that in order for human rights projects to succeed and produce sustainable change, they need to rethink the benefactor / beneficiary binary. It is in this structure of rights that the victim is perpetually denied agency in the process of righting wrongs and the benefactor remains the benevolent guarantor of rights. As a result, the positions of rights giver and rights receiver remain static. Spivak proposes the development of what she calls a literary reading as a means to disrupt the fixity of position. This approach requires that educational practices both for human rights benefactors and beneficiaries need to be reformed within the academy, specifically through imaginative moment of literary engagement. Spivak argues that for human rights benefactors “the teacher can try to rearrange desires noncoercively...through an attempt to develop in the student a habit of literary reading, even just ‘reading,’ suspending oneself into the text of an other— for which the first condition and effect is a suspension of the conviction that I am necessarily better, I am necessarily indispensable, I am necessarily the one to right wrongs” (532). It is through a recognition of the call of the other, a nonreciprocal ethical responsibility, that readers can begin to be accountable for their relationship to others. Literary reading also promotes change from below. The imaginative engagement that the literary event provides promotes an awareness of self in order, in Freirian terms,” “to name the world” (76). That is, when the rural poor of the global South are challenged beyond rote memorization, they can break out of cultural systems which reinforce “a certain hierarchical order of functioning” (559). This

imaginative engagement with language produces greater self-awareness and initiates a greater horizon of possibility. Spivak concludes her essay with the reminder that “the efforts I have described may be the only recourse for a future to come when the reasonable righting of wrongs will not inevitably be the manifest destiny of groups poised to right them” (564). I describe Spivak’s literary approach because it provides a model from which cosmopolitanism might be reimagined from both a counter hegemonic position and within established institutions.

De Sousa Santos and others take up the challenge of reworking cosmopolitanism from below, and I locate my project in the pedagogical space of the university postcolonial literature classroom. The pedagogical space provides an interesting location from which to work through the process of knowledge construction about difference because it provides a forum where students encounter alternative epistemological perspectives that challenge hegemonic traditions. There is no guarantee that those moments of contact provide ethical outcomes, the retention of the other’s difference, which is why it is necessary to work through a theoretical framework like cosmopolitanism in order to make the ideological conditions under which knowledge construction takes place more transparent. My decision to use cosmopolitanism for this project stems from the fact that the pedagogical space necessarily is a site of negotiation with difference.

Cosmopolitanism provides an ethical response to those encounters with difference and suggests the ability to learning from instead of simply learning about others. In this regard, I reimagine cosmopolitanism, moving it from a theoretical and political perspective to a pedagogical approach to reading. The postcolonial classroom is

particularly interesting location for this project because as discipline postcolonial studies works against consumption or appropriation of difference yet there is an ironic tendency for students in postcolonial literature classrooms to attempt to domesticate difference into what they already know about the world. In “Dodging the Crossfire: Questions for Postcolonial Pedagogy,” Rajeswari Mohan reminds us that that postcolonial texts can make “visible the ideological supports of global economic and political arrangements” (263). Mohan makes the case for the potential of postcolonial texts to identify if not actively work against deeply entrenched hegemonic forces. But it is important to recognize that it is not just the text themselves which create this resistance or opposition to power structures; The way these texts are read activates their potential to generate and recognized alternative epistemologies. In this regard, cosmopolitanism proves a perfect fit in that it provides an orientation for students to be open to read postcolonial texts to find points of contact which can lead to productive dialogue instead of just reinforcing points of difference thereby closing down conversations. The pedagogical space is an excellent location for fostering cosmopolitan perspectives because it challenges students to interrogate long-held beliefs and build knowledge based on those interactions. We may even consider the pedagogical space as a mini public sphere in which the exchange of information takes place in a relatively democratic space. In order to achieve such a productive environment, it is important to understand the ideological influences on this space as well as the potential that this space holds. Additionally, looking at previously attempted projects, especially multiculturalism, provides a gauge of what type of problems arise in the pedagogical space.

What Pedagogical Sites Can Offer Cosmopolitanism

Pedagogical sites are marked as locations of knowledge production where students intervene in the world, creating their relationship to knowledge, others, and the world. Unfortunately, the potential of this space is not always fully realized. Instead of becoming agents of change, students often remain passive receptors of prefabricated knowledge. Students learn to learn about others instead of from others. It is in the pedagogical space that grand narratives about “the Other” are transformed into cultural capital, which “can be exchanged on the world market for upward mobility” (Mohanty 184). Instead of education working toward material gain or even reifying power structures, a cosmopolitan pedagogy imagines educational work in the Freirean tradition of a liberatory education. Education is a way of naming a person’s world, and as Henry Giroux argues

pedagogy at its best is about neither training nor political indoctrination; instead, it is about a political and moral practice that provides the knowledge, skills, and social relations that enable students to expand the possibilities of what it means to be critical citizens. (“Academic Repression in the First Person: The Attack on Higher Education and the Necessity of Critical Pedagogy”)

It is in becoming citizens engaged in the world through the educational process that the transformative power of learning emerges. The contact between reader and text is a particularly powerful moment because it requires a negotiation with difference that puts the self into question in the presence of an other.

In the introduction to Paulo Freire and Donald Macedo’s work, *Literacy: Reading the Word and the World* Giroux quotes David Lusted at length to underscore the fundamental

nature of knowledge production through the literary encounter. Lusted writes,
knowledge

is produced in the process of interaction, between writer and reader at the moment of reading, and between teacher and learner at the moment of classroom engagement. Knowledge is not the matter that is offered so much as the matter that is understood. To think of fields of bodies of knowledge as if they are the property of academics and teachers is wrong. It denies an equality in the relations at the moment of interaction and falsely privileges one side of the exchange. (18)

Creating a balance between a reader and text is a key aspect of producing an ethical engagement and is explored in more depth in Chapter Two. For now, it is important to examine other pedagogical approaches which have attempted to work in a counter hegemonic fashion and then differentiate what a cosmopolitan pedagogy works at accomplishing.

The Multicultural Model

Other projects have attempted to address this same central issue of fostering cross cultural encounters in a non-hierarchized manner and building relationships across difference. Since the 1980s and 1990s, the most recognized model in the humanities is multiculturalism. While multiculturalism's goals are similar to the ones I hope to achieve, its methodology and structure belie its objective. Both conservative and liberal thinkers have problematized the multicultural model and indicated its inability to work effectively to achieve its goals.

One of the fundamental issues concerning multiculturalism's method of addressing difference is the tolerance approach. In other words, multiculturalism suggests a structure in which otherness is not placed in contact with others' ways of knowing and

ways of being but rather a space is carved out from which each culture, ethnicity, or some other all encompassing grouping can situate itself side-by-side with other groups. This is problematic on many fronts, least of which is the presumption that there are adequate ways to categorize groups of people and ways of thinking. What I am concerned with, however, is the latent tolerance which reinforces already established power structures. In “The Face of the Other,” Nandita Dutta addresses this apprehension, arguing that

the prevailing view of multiculturalism is trenchantly attacked by S. P. Mohanty as ‘demand[ing] a suspension of judgment on purely a priori grounds . . . a weak pluralist image of non-interference and peaceful coexistence . . . based on the abstract notion that everything about the other culture is (equally) valuable’ (1998: 145). In other words, multiculturalism is finally reducible to a bland ‘rights-for-all’ or a ‘live and let live’ state that is quite immune to the other because, instead of celebrating difference and inviting a minutely calibrated response, it simply tolerates it. (439)

It is precisely this mentality of tolerance that undermines multicultural projects. Working in a slightly different field, political science, Wendy Brown elaborates on why tolerance produces such a problematic framework. In *Regulating Aversion*, Brown underscores the imbalanced power structure, stating that “tolerance as a political practice is always conferred by the dominant, it is always a certain expression of domination even as it offers protection or incorporation to the less powerful” (178). Translating Brown’s thoughts into more practical terms, when we look at how multiculturalism has been applied to academic departments, the incorporation of subjects and courses deemed multicultural further entrench a center periphery model. The goal of carving out a space from which to speak and present difference is indeed laudable, however the reification of an “us” and “them” binary counteract multiculturalism’s aims. Cosmopolitanism

responds to this challenge by looking at how texts can speak across literary and literal borders instead of demarcating spaces from which house encounters with difference. In fact, a cosmopolitan pedagogy need not only work in postcolonial literature courses because at its foundation it is about recognizing and engaging with the presence of difference within seemingly homogeneous categories. That being said, I choose to locate this particular project in the postcolonial literature class because it emphasizes the power dynamics that arise in the aftermath of colonialism which provide particularly challenging moments for students.

Another unfortunate outcome of a multicultural model is the establishment of static, monolithic categories in which to situate identity. Again, the goal of reclaiming identities from the margin in order to deconstruct the myth of a mainstream culture is a necessary and important project, but rather than presenting culture as fluid and always becoming, multiculturalism relied on presenting fixed positions, including hegemonic culture. The resulting balkanization that occurs once a group receives recognition leads to an unfortunate outcome. There is no method for bridging the divide created by this type of particularist movement. Cosmopolitanism, on the other hand, promotes multiple affiliations which provide individuals with the possibility of the simultaneity of identification with more than one identity group. In creating these fluid positions, these groups become more dynamic and open to acknowledging the plurality of being that makes up every group. Unfortunately, often the multicultural model in the United States works to strengthen the center by providing spaces on the margin for others. In *Multi America*, a collection of essays about multiculturalism, Bharati Mukherjee's essay,

“Beyond Multiculturalism” takes a critical look at the limitations and consequences of this movement. She writes that

‘Multiculturalism’ has come to imply the existence of a central culture, ringed by peripheral cultures. The sinister fallout of official multiculturalism and of professional multiculturalism is the establishment of one culture as the norm and the rest as aberrations. Multiculturalism emphasizes the differences between racial heritages. This emphasis on the differences has too often led to the dehumanization of the different. Dehumanization leads to discrimination. And discrimination can ultimately lead to genocide. (458)

Mukherjee looks to the future of what can occur if multiculturalism is fully actualized. She sees the dangers that arrive from an ‘us’ versus ‘them’ mentality, suggesting that “we need to protest any official rhetoric or demagoguery that marginalizes on a race-related and/or religion-related basis any segment of our society” (458). Ultimately she hopes that people can “think of culture and nationhood not as an uneasy aggregate of antagonistic ‘them’ and ‘us,’ but as a constantly re-forming ‘we’” (458).

Cosmopolitanism provides that framework which destabilizes an either/or mentality, asking individuals to consider the possibility of both/and. Mukherjee’s concluding thoughts are precisely cosmopolitanism’s goals. Whereas multiculturalism fixates on difference and draws lines at those locations, cosmopolitanism works to find shared experience from which to understand and connect across difference.

Meyda Yegenoglu looks at this same issue in “Liberal Multiculturalism and the Ethics of Hospitality in the Age of Globalization.” While this essay primarily focuses on the economic and political difficulties presented by multiculturalism in the age of

globalization, it still presents some insightful ideas of the constraints of multiculturalism.

Yegenoglu asserts that

Multiculturalism is based on a disavowed and inverted self-referential form of racism as it empties its own position of all positive content. The racism of multiculturalism does not reside in its being against the values of other cultures. Quite the contrary: it respects and tolerates other cultures, but in respecting and tolerating the different, it maintains a distance which enables it to retain a privileged position of empty universality. It is this emptied universal position which enables one to appreciate (or depreciate) other local cultures. Thus multiculturalist respect for the particularity of the other is indeed a form of asserting one's own superiority and sovereignty. (6)

The lack of interaction between cultures in a multicultural framework simply avoids the impending encounter with difference. Multicultural theory does nothing to disrupt the control of the center by hegemonic forces, usually those associated with Western neo-liberal tendencies, but instead it creates tolerance between groups.

The consequences that Mukherjee suggests are echoed by Paul Gilroy in *Against Race* and Rey Chow in *Ethics after Idealism*. Rey Chow recognizes a similar pitfall in the way culture is understood through critical theory⁹. She sees people who work with culture through theoretical approaches as being “caught in a prevalent idealism in relation to otherness” (xx). For Chow, idealism works in a similar manner as essentialism. She describes idealism as relating “to alterity through mythification; to imagine ‘the other,’

⁹ In *Ethics After Idealism*, Chow examines the relationship between cultural studies and critical theory, arguing that “a *class distinction* is at work in differentiating the labor that goes into ‘critical theory’ and the labor that goes into ‘cultural studies’” (original emphasis xvi). Chow problematizes the idea of cultural studies suggesting that in actuality culture is “an unfinished process, a constellation – never in pristine form - of social relations that are to be continually unworked or reworked” (xiv). Chow’s interpretation of cultural studies moves beyond the established understanding that cultural studies is simply an examination of the representations of culture through academic inquiry.

no matter how prosaic or impoverished, as essentially different, good, kind, enveloped in a halo, and beyond the contradictions that constitute our own historical place” (xx).

Under this model, ethical encounters between self and other could not take place because of the fetishizing of the difference of the other. Like Mukherjee, Chow sees disastrous consequences on the horizon if culture is only understood in positivistic and idealized forms. The dangers of the demarcation of ‘us’ and ‘them’ that Mukherjee warns of is echoed by Chow. She sees critical theory’s study of culture as becoming what it struggles against. Chow looks back at colonialism and explains that “The myth [...] was that (white) consciousness had to be established in resistance to captivity – even while whites were holding other peoples and lands captive – so that (white) cultural origins could be kept pure” (31). She recognizes the reverse of this trend in the postcolonial era. Therefore, “the myth is that (white) consciousness must itself ‘surrender to’ or be ‘held captive by’ the other – that (white) consciousness is nothing without this captivity called ‘otherness’” (31). Chow then links the two periods together asserting that “*what remains constant is the belief that ‘we’ are not ‘them,’ and that ‘white’ is not ‘other.’ This belief, which can be further encapsulated as ‘we are not other,’ is fascism par excellence*” (31).

The consequences Chow sees are chilling and serve as a reminder that the study of culture contains some of the same core problems that multiculturalism faces. A cosmopolitan pedagogy recognizes these concerns, especially given the fact that most academics are Western trained, postcolonial studies in many ways depends on a center-periphery model, and cosmopolitanism has its origins in Western philosophical traditions. To turn away from a theory like cosmopolitanism because its roots emerge from Western

thought is short sighted and only substitutes one tradition for another. The benefit of using cosmopolitanism is that as a pedagogical practice it is that it is not only open to engaging with different epistemologies, but also it teaches an awareness of non-Western epistemologies. The postcolonial literature classroom is a productive space from which to engage multiple epistemologies because it addresses the tension created by a colonial modernity which marginalized other ways of knowing the world. Cosmopolitanism is not a value regulating theory, instead it puts difference in conversation, working against center-periphery to make visible the networks and frameworks which create the inextricable links between peoples.

In addition to Chow's and Yegenoglu's critiques, I see the foundation of the multicultural movement as problematic because it works on the supposition that group identity defines an individual. The obvious problem arises when individuals are associated with more than one identity. Which takes priority – race, ethnicity, gender? It is more important to look at the role of the individual in groups and how identity is shaped or limited. There is no doubt that individuals are to some degree shaped by the groups they belong to. In *The Ethics of Identity*, Kwame Anthony Appiah suggests that groups provide a narrative from which individuals can understand their lives. He examines the complexity of the individual in relation to these collective identities. He reiterates the point that Chow makes regarding essentializing. Appiah explains that “once labels are applied to people, ideas about people who fit the label come to have social and psychological effect” (66). Appiah's point is a salient one because it reminds us that not only does the ‘us’ group have ideas about ‘them’ but the ‘them’ group has

ideas about how they see themselves. The result is the construction of a barrier between the self and others which is difficult to breach. Appiah lays out the complicated relation between individual identity and group identity. He makes the good point that “even though my race and my sexuality may be elements of my individuality, someone who demands that I organize my life around these things is not an ally of individuality” (110). Regrettably, that is what multiculturalism is asking from individuals. The individual is swept up by the zeal with which people are so quickly asking for a space to be established for their particular group. I do not want to appear unsympathetic to the struggles for recognition and equal treatment that many marginalized groups have faced. However, in order to truly achieve a point at which equal treatment will occur, divisiveness seems counterintuitive.

Often in academia the problem with the study of the West’s others is that the framework devised for this intellectual endeavor is not built around critical inquiry but instead it is constructed as an oppositional paradigm in which difference is either hierarchized or othered. In *Ethics After Idealism*, Chow offers measured thoughts on the missed opportunity to undertake critical analysis of otherness not for the sake of idealizing otherness but for the sake of engaging with otherness. Chow suggest that instead of,

in the name of studying the West’s ‘others,’ then, the *critique* of cultural politics that is an inherent part of both poststructural theory and cultural studies is pushed aside, and ‘culture’ returns to a coherent, idealist essence that is outside language and outside meditation. Pursued in a morally complacent, antitheoretical mode, ‘culture’ now functions as a shield that hides the positivism, essentialism, and nativism – and with them the continual acts of hierarchization, subordination, and marginalization – that have persistently accompanied the pedagogical

practices of area studies; 'culture studies' now becomes a means of legitimizing continual conceptual and methodological irresponsibility in the name of cultural otherness. (9)

Put in simpler terms, literature presented in classes deemed multicultural or cultural potentially suffers from what it is trying to defeat. Under a multicultural system and even in some cultural studies classes the complexity of identity is not being recognized. Issues of representation are simply being traded from one group to another. The individual's voice is lost within a totalizing system. Ironically then, the fallout spreads to writers and artists to produce work which represents the group of which he or she is a member.

Molly Travis relays this point in her book, *Reading Cultures*, by way of an anecdote from Nadine Gordimer. Travis quoting Gordimer explains that

'the essential gesture' of criticism [...] mandates that a writer living in a politically conflicted country write about the conflict, that a female writer represent the female experience, and that the culturally marginalized author write about the experience of marginality (87).

Travis goes on to show the ramifications of this line of thinking. She explains that "This essential gesture [...] reveals the white critic as a manufacturer of otherness, a curator of difference to valorize and preserve her or his own autonomous essence" (87). Travis's critique helps us understand that this is not just a classroom problem; it also permeates academic inquiry by scholars. The most obvious example of the limitations of authors to only write about collective experiences occurs in Fredric Jameson's "Third World Literature in the Era of Multi-national Capitalism." Jameson proposes that "all third-world texts are necessarily, I argue, allegorical, and in a very specific way: they are to be

read as what I will call *national allegories*, even when, or perhaps I should say, particularly when their forms develop out of predominantly western machineries of representation, such as the novel” (69). Jameson leaves no room for individual expression instead, reinforcing the distance between the “First World” and the “Third World.” Jameson’s supposition leaves no room for alternative experiences or even domestic inquires. Instead, in Jameson’s view, the “Third World” writer is completely defined by his or her relationship to colonial structures of power through the nation. In proposing this model, Jameson reifies his position in the metropolitan center and firmly embedding “Third World” literature in the periphery.

In looking at the problems of studying the West’s others in academia, we can see how students learn their relationships with difference. The rise of new cosmopolitanisms in the late 1990s and early 2000s can offer an alternative to these methodologies of dealing with otherness. Situating cosmopolitanism in academia can further serve to disrupt the binaristic, uncomplicated way of seeing difference. These new cosmopolitanisms offer a complexity of thought which match the complexity of experience in the world. In particular, utilizing cosmopolitanism in a pedagogical approach for reading creates the potential for interaction with otherness rather than simply studying otherness.

Constructing a Cosmopolitan Pedagogy

Bringing cosmopolitanism into the classroom through literary engagement is as much about understanding different ways of living in the world as it is about recognizing different ways of knowing the world. The postcolonial literature classroom presents an opportunity for students to engage with alternative (alternative to a neo-liberal, Western

modernity) epistemologies as a means of producing a counter-hegemonic space for inquiry. The reliance on a dominant knowledge system, one based on Enlightenment rationalism, continues the colonial legacy of the production of knowledge as a hegemonic act. This premise is after all is what lies at the heart of Edward Said's *Orientalism*. Written over 30 years ago, the core of the critique that is offered in the book still resonates today: "Orientalism is a style of thought based upon ontological and epistemological distinction made between "the Orient" and (most of the time) 'the Occident'" (2). The postcolonial literature classroom initiates students' interaction with difference within a framework of academic inquiry that works to critique the systems of power that govern these encounters with difference, but implicit in that meeting between reader and text is the presence of a privileged western epistemological perspective. As such, the tension created between a text's willingness to explore alternatives while pushing against these hegemonic forces and students' desires to understand a text within a Western epistemological and literary tradition, often gets misread as an opportunity to learn about others instead of learning from others. What is produced in that interaction has implications far beyond the classroom walls. The danger lies in having students walk out of the classroom having reified the cultural assumptions that divide the global North and South into the distressingly similar binaries utilized in colonial projects. Seeing the world as divided between modern and traditional, enlightened and primitive, lawful and lawless, center and periphery, etc. undermines projects which seek to problematize the relationship between global North and South. In order for the postcolonial literature class to fulfill its function as a location governed by a self-awareness of its own role in

knowledge production, there needs to be a way to facilitate encounters with difference that are presented in a non-hierarchical space. Cosmopolitanism offers that structure from which to bring together different ways of living in the world and different ways of knowing the world. As I demonstrated earlier in the chapter, a cosmopolitanism from below can work through a participatory approach to knowledge production that brings together seemingly disparate positions but provides an ethical framework which gird these encounters, promoting the possibilities for sustained and productive relationships.

What makes this space unique is that not only is it a site of knowledge production, but also that literary engagement, with specifically non-Western texts, presents an opportunity for students to examine divergent epistemologies. Coupling these two processes together makes the classroom a useful space for understanding difference. After all, the epistemological differences presented in literary texts require students to consider their own ways of knowing and how it might be made commensurable with that of the text. When that consideration takes place in a pedagogical space, the opportunity to create hybrid and unique worldviews emerges. As history shows, the danger of hierarchizing knowledge about others and other ways of knowing arises from a colonial mentality which suggests that Western epistemologies, based on Enlightenment rationalism, are by default the only perspectives. In order for the potential of the pedagogical space to be realized, there needs to be a way in which students interact with those diverse and alternative epistemologies. Cosmopolitanism offers that negotiation across difference which promotes understanding but does not limit the potential for variances. Ulf Hannerz's characterization that cosmopolitanism is "an orientation, a

willingness to engage with the Other” (239) serves as the foundation for the way in which the pedagogical space can adapt to engaging with difference, but a cosmopolitan pedagogy does not stop at a point of orientation, it also engages with and teaches awareness of those non-Western perspective through literary engagements, restructuring of classroom communities, and the decentering of privilege and positionality in the classroom. In dealing with alternative epistemologies, cosmopolitanism is an effective means of bringing those divergent ways of knowing into conversation more effectively.

Cosmopolitanism also benefits from being situated in the pedagogical space because it is democratized through the educational setting. In other words, cosmopolitanism goes from being an abstract theory appropriate only for jet-setting individuals to an actually existing cosmopolitanism. In tracing the intellectual history of cosmopolitanism, I hope to have demonstrated its mutability over time, responding to the various social and political structures of a given time. Additionally, cosmopolitanism’s concern with the way the individual encounters others has also continued to develop, moving from a sovereign subject to one which recognizes the presence of the other within the self. I build from these advancements, transporting and translating cosmopolitanism into a pedagogical practice. I still incorporate cosmopolitanism’s characteristics of responsibility for and to others and its willingness to engage with difference, but I attempt to reimagine cosmopolitanism in more egalitarian ways. My goal is to show that moving cosmopolitanism into the classroom can help students learn how to be prepared to meet the challenges of negotiating with otherness in their everyday lives, stripping cosmopolitanism of its elitist legacy. I do this through highlighting the translocal

connections that can be made between students and the literary texts provide an opportunity for those who often have been outside of the global public sphere to enter into contact with different ways of knowing and being. The hope of course is that exposure to difference will lead to productive engagements with questions on how to create sustainable relationships across difference, how to manage globalizations homogenizing tendencies, and how to understand oneself among others. Facilitating the literary contact zone through cosmopolitanism enables otherness to be understood outside of a Western hegemonic position.

The insidiousness of many current pedagogical practices not just in colonial / postcolonial encounters but the privileging of Western ways of knowing is a tool used in metropolitan centers to produce subjects who unflinchingly adopt a Western epistemological view. While colonial projects restructured ways of life far from imperial centers, the project of colonization was also very much about creating a citizenry who constructed their identities and understanding of the world through a comparative framework which reified binaries of us / them, modern / primitive, center / periphery, etc. The practice of constructing these pairings may be less obvious but it still remains deeply embedded in educational experiences for students. As De Sousa Santos, Nunes and Meneses argue in the introduction to *Another Knowledge is Possible*, the “denial of diversity is a constitutive and persistent feature of colonialism” (xxxiii). This mono-epistemic approach to education can be seen across all disciplines, in particular in the sciences, but I am concerned with how this problem emerges through literary encounters. Wars over opening the canon have raged for decades now, nevertheless, literary

experience for most university students in the United States remains Western-centric. Works that are incorporated into mainstream curriculum often require justification for their inclusion, or it is their “exotic” nature which provides students with a glimpse of how others live. What remains missing is an interrogation of the text as a legitimate offering of a particular way of seeing the world. Rey Chow takes up the theoretical underpinnings of this problem in *Ethics After Idealism*. She argues that “questions of authority, and with them hegemony, representation, and right” are being displaced by “facilely dismissive judgments” which ignore the “ideological assumptions in discourses of ‘opposition’ and ‘resistance’ as well as in discourses of mainstream power” (13). The problem then is that students are trained to read from a Western perspective which places non-Western texts under impossible circumstances. Chow suggests that

we need to continue to train our students to read – to read arguments on their own terms rather than discarding them perfunctorily and prematurely – not in order to find out about authors’ original intent but in order to ask, ‘Under what circumstances would such an argument – no matter how preposterous – make sense?’ With what assumptions does it produce meanings? In what ways and to what extent does it legitimized certain kinds of cultures while subordinating or outlawing others?’ (13)

In a roundabout way, Chow makes the same point that De Sousa Santos, et al. are making. She is arguing for recognition of alternative epistemologies and a reading methodology that approaches texts with an openness which appreciates what non-Western ways of knowing offer. This approach to reading offers a sensitivity to the historical legacy of subordination which has always othered competing knowledges. A cosmopolitan pedagogy challenges students not only to encounter difference but also to

understand the conditions that structure and control how we engage with it. In teaching awareness of non-Western epistemologies, a cosmopolitan pedagogy naturally teaches students to locate power structures which mediate how those epistemologies are received.

De Sousa Santos, et al. remind us that

there is no essential or definitive way of describing, ordering, and classifying processes, entities, and relationships in the world. The very action of knowing, as pragmatist philosophers have repeatedly reminded us, is an intervention in the world, which places us within it as active contributors to its making. (xxxix)

However, Western epistemological perspectives have been privileged in the US academy for so long that they have become normative. The result is the unrealized reproduction of accepted structures through student participation. By the time most students reach the university level in the United States, they have undergone a cultural indoctrination through their academic and cultural experiences. How then do we work against those embedded biases towards seeing the world one dimensionally? To begin with, students need to develop openness to difference and a comfort in living with the heterogeneous voices that inhabit our world. Cosmopolitanism can facilitate that ethical engagement when situated in a pedagogical space. It provides an opportunity for the literature class to turn into local public spheres which create translocal connections between ways of knowing. In those epistemological, cultural, and ideological exchanges new ways of seeing the world can emerge, but it takes a responsibility and commitment to the kind of ethical encounters that result in making meaning. As De Sousa Santos, et al. reminds us

to produce knowledge is to accept the risk of putting to the test our beliefs and our ignorance without reducing what we do not know to what we already know and

without dismissing as irrelevant what we cannot describe because we ignore it, but it is also to exercise prudence and precaution when dealing with the unknown or with the possible consequences of our actions. (xxxi)

Re-seeing the literature classroom as a space devoted to the engagement with difference and the non-hierarchized relationship to knowledge is the first step in building a foundation from which to destabilize the mono-epistemological approach to learning. Cosmopolitanism works as a natural theoretical fit for these encounters because it recognizes uniqueness without categorizing or classifying, opening up a space in which encounters with otherness are more transparent. We can start thinking about this model in a way which allows readers to learn with or from difference instead of about difference. This shift in perspective is the first step in changing reading practices in postcolonial literature classes.

CHAPTER III

COSMOPOLITAN PEDAGOGY: FROM THEORY TO PRACTICE

The moment of contact between reader and text, ostensibly self and other, is the ethical moment. Literature as a form of knowledge production is unique from other disciplines in that it requires an ethical obligation through the imagination to that which cannot be contained, that which is beyond the self. In less esoteric terms, the imaginative moment that a literary encounter produces necessitates a faith in what is beyond comprehension and commodification. This moment requires “an infinite attention to the other” (Blanchot qtd. in Readings 161). The call of the text, a hailing, places readers under obligation to the presence of the other and demands a response, but it is the impossibility of the return of that response which frames this encounter as a matter of ethics. In this chapter, I show how Mary Louise Pratt’s contact zone approach to the classroom provides a foundation for understanding the pedagogical space as a location of encountering difference¹. Situating Pratt’s contact zone within Louise Rosenblatt’s transactional model provides a context from which to understand how reading theory can

¹ I draw my understanding of difference from the poststructuralist exploration of the gap between signifier and signified which yields an unending openness for meaning. Derrida characterizes this experience as “difference,” which arises from the combination of the French verbs “to differ” and “to defer.” When Derrida brings these two terms together, they result in an idea that expresses how “meaning is always deferred, to the point of an endless supplementarity, by the play of signification” (Norris 391). Derrida’s work radically rethinks representation and Stuart Hall uses this work to explore how the constant deferment of meaning is also at work in identity construction. Hall suggests that difference is not simply a comparative framework in which X is not Y but that there are difference even between X and another X. Identity is always in the process of becoming and difference is that which is “left over,” beyond a framework which can stabilize identity into a fixed category.

help negotiate this moment. I explore how cross cultural literary engagements often produce asymmetrical power relations between reader / text interaction but fail to distinguish how to best negotiate the ethical dimensions of this space. I introduce a Levinasian ethics as a way of navigating this space without attempting to fix or stabilize the otherness of the other. By turning to Levinas' work on ethics, I demonstrate how readers can respond in kind to the demands the text places on readers, and I provide an ethical grounding for the participatory cosmopolitanism model I incorporate. Homi Bhabha's work with cultural difference and the Third Space of enunciation provides an alternative framework from which to interrogate literary encounters in the hope of producing a cosmopolitan reading practice predicated on the condition of unhomelieness which emerges from the disruption of self. To translate these theories into practical pedagogy, I describe a unit I teach on Afghan refugees. The unit is constructed to establish a cosmopolitan ethos in relationship to the texts and establish the skills necessary for students to build ethical engagements with difference and critique problematic assumptions inherent in Western discourse, especially in the human rights regime.

Cosmopolitan Pedagogy Tenets

To give a better sense of what a cosmopolitan pedagogy works to accomplish, I have constructed a list of the core tenets of this approach to teaching postcolonial literature. First, a cosmopolitan pedagogy is centered on the reader / text relationship, privileging this interaction as a way to uncover the ethical dimensions of reading postcolonial literature in an age of globalization. Of particular importance in this encounter is

recognizing the call of the text. I define the call of the text as the literary and cultural cues that resonate across literary and literal borders. This call places readers under a responsibility not only to recognize from where it emerges, but also it requires students to be accountable for the difference of the other that emerges through that call. How a reader responds to that call is a matter of ethics. The second component of a cosmopolitan pedagogy is recognizing the world in the classroom and the classroom in the world. Too often the classroom is detached from the material realities of the world beyond the classroom walls. Through a specific type of reading practice, the aim of this pedagogy is to help build connections between the work students undertake in the classroom and its application outside of the classroom. A cosmopolitan pedagogy builds the skills necessary to ethically engage with others and otherness both inside and outside the classroom. The third element of a cosmopolitan pedagogy is the orientation toward the other. This is a specifically cosmopolitan disposition that is cultivated and fostered in order to provide students with the foundation from which to address questions of difference. Cosmopolitanism has long been used to describe a particular way of life, but how one becomes cosmopolitan is rarely addressed. Through specific pedagogical practices, students build a cosmopolitan outlook which provides the basis for the way they see the world. Finally, the last aspect of a cosmopolitan pedagogy is the unmooring of the reader and text through the recognition of the universal condition of unhomeliness. The always already presence of other within the self destabilizes the coherence of a subject. In locating that condition in both literary work and in the student, there is a dislodging of the fixity of position. Disrupting the positionality of both the text and

reader opens up a cosmopolitan space which is not predicated on particularist characteristics but instead relies on the recognition of the interconnectedness between the two. These four components comprise the basic tenets of a cosmopolitan pedagogy, providing the core components for this pedagogy to fulfill its goals.

Contact Zones, Clash of Civilizations, and Area Studies

Mary Louise Pratt's oft-cited essay, "Arts of the Contact Zone," offers a useful vocabulary from which to understand the classroom space as a location of power relations. By describing the classroom as a "contact zone," Pratt draws attention to the encounters which are a natural part of this space. Her characterization of the contact zone as "social spaces where cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other, often in contexts of highly asymmetrical relations of power" (33) recognizes the prevailing, often violent, struggles which inhabit these locations as well as the imbalance inherent in them. The transcultural dynamism of this space is a key component in knowledge production, but this outcome can be overshadowed by turning these moments of contact into superficial recognitions of difference. Pratt draws her theory from the anthropological explanation of transculturation as the "processes whereby members of subordinated or marginal groups select and invent from materials transmitted by a dominant or metropolitan culture" (37). In the classroom space though, transculturation need not flow only in one direction. In fact, one of the key components of creating a cosmopolitan pedagogy is destabilizing those positions of dominance and subordination in order to challenge the flows of knowledge and by extension power. Cosmopolitanism relies on the supposition that in negotiating difference there is not a privileged or assumed

hierarchy, however, the institutionalization of knowledge production in the academy does often normalize particular, typically Western, epistemologies. The pedagogical challenge is to instill in the classroom a dynamic which recognizes the worth of competing discourses, establishing a setting which at the very least makes visible the unrecognized assumptions that are a part of knowledge production. To achieve this pedagogy, I work to interrupt and unmoor instead of stabilize and ground. In other words, by defamiliarizing the familiar students must reassess what they thought they already knew in relation to that with which they are coming into contact. This establishes a more fluid dynamic between positionality and knowledge production, opening non-Western epistemologies for consideration outside of a center-periphery model. This is an important move as it helps to dismantle binaristic power structures which marginalize ways of knowing and interrupts asymmetrical relations which have historically been a part of colonial / postcolonial encounters. Facilitating these engagements through literary encounters adds another component which further destabilizes the interaction. The contact between reader and text is already provides a useful instability because while it takes place in the classroom, a stable structure, the struggle for the imaginative ground from which this interaction takes place is always shifting. In other words, in which imaginative world does the interpretive moment take place? It might seem like the easy answer is the reader's imaginative world because that is where the reader interprets the signs, but we should also consider how texts naturally resist appropriation, causing the reader to enter the world of the text². Ultimately, the reader / text relationship provides a

² The power dynamics between reader and text are interesting because it presents a shifting ground in which

transcultural moment, which raises concerns about how readers engage with difference. Transculturation argues for a negotiation with difference, not a complete absorption or appropriation of it. Presented this way, transculturation becomes a question of ethics mediated through pedagogy.

While Pratt has created a helpful framework for understanding transcultural encounters, theorizing those points of contact and understanding what happens in those moments provides an opportunity to better recognize the hegemonic tendencies between asymmetrical powers. As R. Mark Hall and Mary Rosner suggest in “Pratt and Pratfalls,” “rather than privilege contact blindly, we need to do more to examine what actually takes place *at the point of contact*” (original emphasis, 108). It is the ethical dimensions of the relationship to difference that are too often overlooked in this space. In “Encountering the Other,” Gary Olson argues that Pratt creates a “multicultural bazaar” environment in which students sample culture but remain unengaged. Olson’s criticism is that much contact zone scholarship “deemphasizes systems of oppression and attempts to flatten out differences in order to strive for some mythical, elusive harmony” (87). Olson’s critique of Pratt’s argument might be too reductionary, but it does raise the issue of to what ends the contact zone generates. I come at this problem from a different angle. Rather than just emphasize what happens at moments of contact, I argue for rethinking and reimagining the space that houses those encounters. When attempts are made to

at different times the reader can assert power over the text through appropriation and imaginative control but there are also moments when a text can intimidate and limit student engagement. My point in making this observation is simply a reminder that control in the reader and text encounter is fluid and dependent on many mitigating circumstances. It is necessary to always look at the contexts which shape these encounters in order to make those moments of control more visible.

smooth out difference without changing the environment in which these points of contact are made the tensions of engaging with others are pushed aside in favor of seemingly amenable relationships but which still reinforce asymmetrical power relations. The benefit of transcultural encounters is not to achieve “some mythical, elusive harmony” but rather to learn how to live with the tension present in the irreducibility of difference (Olson 87). To me, that is the only way to achieve a foundation for ethical relations. Unfortunately, the academic environment, an environment that has thrived on its reputation as a site of critical engagement with knowledge and knowledge production, too often reinforces totalizing relationships to difference, especially when it comes to dealing with cultural difference in reading. Pratt’s model for the contact zone does describe the site of transcultural encounter in the classroom and recognizes some of the power imbalances, but more work needs to be conducted to consider the contexts within which these encounters take place.

“Arts of the Contact Zone” was published in MLA’s *Profession* in 1991, only a few years removed from the fall of the Berlin wall, the symbolic and literal dismantling of Cold War binarism. Pratt’s essay is timely in that it emerges at a moment of technological advancement as well as affordable and quicker transportation options resulting in more face-to-face transcultural encounters, ostensibly illustrating geographer David Harvery’s idea of time-space compression. As mentioned in Chapter One, the 1990s ushered in a flood of new attempts to understand and organize global structures which could manage the forecasted dissolution of the nation-state as the primary identity marker. Competing models for understanding these new formations and increased

contact across difference prospered in the early 1990s but not all of these theories were optimistic about the outcomes. This is, after all, the decade that saw the release of Samuel Huntington's "The Clash of Civilizations" as a strategic plan for understanding future conflicts. Huntington suggested in his 1993 *Foreign Policy* article that

differences between civilizations are real and important; civilization-consciousness is increasing; conflict between civilizations will supplant ideological and other forms of conflict as the dominant global form of conflict; international relations, historically a game played out within Western civilization, will increasingly be de-Westernized and become a game in which non-Western civilizations are actors and not simply objects. (48)

Obviously, Huntington sees these moments of contact as destructive, ultimately leading to armed conflict, a far cry from what proponents of contact zone theory profess. The critiques of Huntington's hypothesis were many and swift. Some of the most notable attempts to challenge Huntington's argument include Homi K. Bhabha's theory of hybridity and Edward Said's humanism³. In fact, in "The Clash of Definitions," Said offers a criticism of Huntington's hypothesis, arguing that "the truly weakest part of the clash of civilizations thesis is the rigid separation assumed among civilizations, despite the overwhelming evidence that today's world is in fact a world of mixtures, of migrations, of crossings over" (587). Said's argument, while addressing his specific concerns about Huntington's attempt to return to a conflict model that justifies the West's role as global policemen, also offers a critique of the methodology that has produced cultural commodification by way of knowledge production, a continuance of his

³ Said's humanism dates to his work from the late 1970s and 1980s but it gained even more momentum in the 1990s when understanding globalization's impact on societies became more pressing.

arguments from *Orientalism*. Huntington's ideas appear to have emerged from theory to actual foreign policy in the United States in the early 2000s, further complicating the belief that contact zones can produce anything other than conflict. It is precisely this political philosophy which shapes the classroom space as a site of contestation rather than communication. Huntington's approach, though, is not without academic precedent. It grows out of a legacy of area studies that brokered a relationship between the academy and the government. Producing knowledge about others, specifically those who posed a threat to the United States, has a long-standing presence in university research. Obviously, the effect of this relationship is an unwillingness to learn from but rather to learn about otherness. This approach trickles down into reading theory because it suggests that there is some essential quality to a text or culture that can be uncovered, studied, and mastered.

The popularity of formalism in the early twentieth century and New Criticism for much of the middle part of the twentieth century attests to this point. New Criticism, while critiqued in contemporary scholarship for its archaeological approach of uncovering truths, still circulates in many high schools and universities as the close reading strategy needed to garner an understanding of a text. The 1970s saw a rise of reader response criticism to literature in order to provide a counterbalance to an approach that focused exclusively on the text. However, in some cases, reader response merely inverted this structure and privileged the reader above the text. The problem with both a text-centric interpretive approach and an exclusively reader oriented approach is that neither incorporates the text and the reader in making meaning. The fundamental ideas

behind reader response suggest that the reader is an active agent in making meaning, but when this theory is institutionalized in high schools and even in many universities, it often gets reduced to how a reader feels about a text. Ironically, what ends up happening in a lot of literature classrooms is the simultaneity of both a new critical approach and a reader response method. As a result, the engagement between reader and text is ignored, and a text becomes something to be mined for information while simultaneously creating response and reactions by readers. What is lost in this schizophrenic approach is an understanding of the how and why of a text's ability to create responses in readers. Reading becomes problematic in either of these two scenarios; through a new critical approach the text becomes static, creating a fixed meaning from which student's attempt to unearth the meaning or essence of a particular work through a reader centered approach, texts are radically decontextualized, removing them from the historical and temporal context that shaped them. How do we find a balance from which to establish the interpretive moment?

Louise Rosenblatt's Transactional Theory

Louise Rosenblatt offers an enduring reading model from which to understand the relationship between reader and text as a mutual exchange. While new reading theories emerge, looking at the nuances of what happens between reader and text, Rosenblatt's transactional model remains the foundational structure from which to understand this interaction. She carves out a middle ground between New Criticism⁴ and reader response

⁴ Rosenblatt remains under appreciated for her work with reading theory. In many ways, she was a victim of bad timing and popular trends. Writing in the middle of the twentieth century, Rosenblatt had to work against the popularity of New Criticism, which insisted on completely textual readings. Rosenblatt's inclusion of the reader in the process of making meaning was a radical shift from previous approaches.

which allows for a fluid negotiation. Rosenblatt suggests that there is a continuum on which readers approach a text. It is important to note that Rosenblatt makes the distinction between what readers do and what role the text plays in that process. Rosenblatt is clear that a “text is merely an object of paper and ink until some reader responds to the marks on the page as verbal symbols” (23). Her characterization of what a text is suggests that there is no innate meaning, but it is through the encounter that meaning is created. As such, a reader’s approach to a text shapes the purpose of the event, the coming together of reader and text. This is a particularly salient point for understanding reader interaction with non-Western texts because it reinforces the point that meaning is made through the encounter with the text and not through an anthropological reading. It also suggests the necessity of a balanced relationship between reader and text in generating meaning. Rosenblatt constructs a continuum on which readers might interact with a text, ranging from an efferent to an aesthetic position. A reader who performs an efferent reading of a text attempts to derive knowledge or something knowable from the encounter. Rosenblatt characterizes this approach as “focused primarily on what will remain as the residue *after* the reading – the information to be acquired, the logical solution to a problem, the actions to be carried out” (23). In this scenario, readers suspend the imaginative engagement in favor of uncovering the information presented. At the other end of the spectrum, the aesthetic approach suggests that readers have to negotiate the form and the stylistic elements of a text, what I would refer to as the “call of the text,” in order to produce some sort of understanding at the moment of reading. In Rosenblatt’s words, “in aesthetic reading, the reader’s attention is

centered directly on what he is living through during his relationship with that particular text” (25). The idea of the transactional approach hinges on the reader’s outlook toward the activity of reading, which I would argue is necessarily a pedagogical concern. That determination shapes the experience, but Rosenblatt is clear to point out that we are constantly shifting between these polarities. She argues that “the reader who adopts the aesthetic stance can pay attention to all of the elements activated within him by the text, and can develop the fusion of thought and feeling, of cognitive and affective, that constitutes the integrated sensibility” (46). While literature might seem to call for an aesthetic approach, it does not deny the potential for an understanding beyond the mere experience. Postcolonial literature presents a unique challenge to this transactional approach. Since the setting and sometimes the language are often foreign to students, it is almost incumbent on them to read efferently in order to understand the historical, cultural, and/or linguistic differences. For some readers of postcolonial literature, there is hardly an opportunity to engage aesthetically because they are still trying to figure out a way to negotiate difference⁵. When students of postcolonial literature only read from an efferent position though, they risk turning the experience into an anthropological approach which exoticizes difference, turning it into commodifiable knowledge. The problem for readers who rely solely on an efferent approach is that it forces a text to act as a representation of a people or a place. Unfortunately, the tendency for students to learn about a place or people instead of from it or them is often an inherent part of the classroom experience. The goal of a cosmopolitan pedagogy is to facilitate a space where

⁵ In this context, difference continues to refer to the alterity of the other.

the reader / text encounter can contain both the positionality of the reader and text but still provide a space in which the event of reading can happen in a space between those two positions. In Rosenblatt's model, this would require readers to continuously by slide between efferent and aesthetic approaches, encouraging an understanding of particular traditions, customs, languages, etc and simultaneously accommodating a space in which the experience of reading is also privileged. What is fundamental to this process then is the recognition of the dialogue between reader and text, which is a matter of ethics. The responsibility of learning how to negotiate between efferent and aesthetic reading need not rest only on students' shoulders, but instead this moment should be understood as a pedagogical problem where teachers can intervene to help facilitate that engagement between reader and text. Cosmopolitanism, specifically the participatory cosmopolitanism I described in the first chapter, provides an approach that complements Rosenblatt's transactional model because it easily accommodates the fluid positionality which Rosenblatt's model requires. The key to realizing these possibilities rests on pedagogical implementation through the teacher's role in facilitating these encounters. This idea is explored in greater depth at the end of the chapter.

To read postcolonial literature solely from an efferent position is to limit its potential as a counter-hegemonic force, one that challenges long-standing beliefs and narratives. What is missing when students approach postcolonial texts solely from an efferent position is the negotiation with the call of the text. There is little to no engagement to speak of, which limits the possibility for new knowledge to emerge from this encounter. It is a problem that dialogue is silenced in favor of a one-way approach to the text. Paulo

Freire critiques one-sided approaches to learning suggesting that it requires others to inhabit one's own worldview. Reading from an efferent position replicates this one-sided approach, allowing readers to simply reinforce what they already know about the world. When dialogue between both positions emerges, the chance for a collaborative, cosmopolitan understanding of the world increases. In "Pedagogy of the Oppressed," Freire writes that

It is not our role to speak to the people about our own view of the world, nor to attempt to impose that view on them, but rather to dialogue with the people about their view and ours. We must realize that their view of the world, manifested variously in their action, reflects their *situation* in the world. Education and political action which is not critically aware of this situation runs the risk either of 'banking' or of preaching in the desert. (85)

The type of relationship that Freire suggests is one that is not only grounded in respect for others but also requires individuals to participate in this generative project of making the world. Preceding this engagement is an ethical relationship which creates the conditions under which productive dialogue can take place. In reading practices, this is manifested in the ability for readers to shift fluidly from efferent and aesthetic reading positions. I suggest in this chapter and others that cosmopolitanism provides the theoretical foundation which can support this reading structure. For cosmopolitanism to work in the classroom it requires an ethical component which precedes the reader / text relationship. I choose to incorporate a Levinasian ethics in a cosmopolitan pedagogy as a way to foreground the relationship by acknowledging the responsibility to and for the other.

Levinasian Ethics

Emmanuel Levinas characterizes ethics as the first philosophy because it precedes being. As such, Levinasian ethics breaks from Western phenomenological philosophical traditions in that it suggests that ethical responsibility emerges from a radical alterity rather than shared sense of belonging. For Levinas, it is not what makes people similar that create a responsibility to others; it is the irreducibility of the Other's⁶ difference which commands attention. The call of the Other precedes will and puts an individual under obligation to be responsible to the other without promise of reciprocity. Drucilla Cornell explains this relationship as one in which "the call to responsibility is prior to our subjectivity, prior to our choice. We may not answer, but we are not free to simply silence the call" (1617). I see cosmopolitanism working in a similar fashion as it moves from a theory based on sovereign subjectivity to one grounded in intersubjective relationships which reveal the presence of the other as always already a part of the self. In understanding cosmopolitanism this way, our responsibility for others is founded through a mutually enabling subjectivity not in relations between autonomous subjects.

In *Totality and Infinity* Levinas establishes this encounter between Self and Other as the ethical moment. For Levinas, the Self or 'I' has a metaphysical desire for completion that can only be reached through the relationship with the Other. In this relationship the 'I's' autonomy is put into question by the presence of the Other. The 'I' is faced with two possible decisions concerning the Other, annihilation or responsibility. Annihilation

⁶ I choose to capitalize "Self" and "Other" here to stay consistent with Levinas' use of these words. The capital letters represent the radical alterity which cannot be reduced. In other parts of this work, I use a lower case "s" and "o" to express the possibility of multiple alterities within ourselves and others.

is not in and of itself a physical violence to the Other but it is an appropriation of the Other's difference, situating it within the Self. As such, it reduces the Other to the same and interrupts "their continuity, making them play roles in which they no longer recognize themselves" (Levinas 21). Interestingly, the inverse of this relationship, defining Self in opposition to the Other is still a violent act in that it places the relationship in a totalizing structure. Levinas suggests that an ethical relationship is constitutive of the radical alterity of the Other. Another way of phrasing this idea is that an ethical relationship is one in which an infinite relationship emerges between Self and Other in which the idea of the Other is more than the Self can contain. This overflow, which is constantly made anew by the presence of the Other, is an indelible spectral presence which demands responsibility. Levinas characterizes this encounter with the Other as a face-to-face meeting which calls into question a being's autonomy. The privileging of the face-to-face meeting stems from Levinas' idea that the face is unique and cannot be devoured in a way that an object might. It is present but elusively out of reach. It is the face of radical alterity which resists appropriation. In Levinas' words, "the expression the face introduces into the world does not deny the feebleness of my powers, but my ability for power" (198). For Levinas the presence of the face of the Other proposes that there is a perceived challenge to the Self's autonomy because it is not able to be contained. That is to say, the Other is always the absolute Other and as a result, the "I" must understand the subject position of the Other. Since the relationship between Self and Other is based on language and thus infinite, it will constantly be renegotiated, but this is also the result of the continual desire to approach the Other with

the hope of fulfillment. However, the presence of the Other serves as a constant reminder of the Self's limits, complicating the relationship once again. Thinking about the reader / text relationship allows us to move from purely theoretical terms to a practical manifestation of this relationship. The text acts like Levinas' "face" of difference in that it resists appropriation because it is constructed through language which constantly defers meaning. Thus, when a reader and text interact, the interaction requires the reader to enter into a non-totalizing relationship that acknowledges the continued emergence of meaning with each subsequent encounter. The face-to-face encounter also suggests the presence of language to mediate between the Self and Other. Sean Hand argues that "Levinas ... presents the face-to-face situation as one that actually founds language, for it is the face that brings about the very first signification" (43). The relationship with the Other through language is a non-totalizing relationship because the gap between signifier and signified opens an incommensurable space which can never quite be bridged. Readers mediate their relationship with a text through language, but it is similar to the relationship between Self and Other in that the reader is always already in a non-totalizing relationship with a text. This ethical relationship does not always materialize in the engagement between reader and text because there is a tendency to render the text static through an exclusively efferent approach, thus making it commodifiable. In reality, the reader can never grasp the text fully because its meaning is always deferred. To attempt to commodify and consume a text, a practice that is all too prevalent in literature classrooms, is an unethical move. Before I go on to discuss the negotiations that take place between reader and text, I need to clarify the link between

self/other⁷ and reader/text. It is the retention of separation, the acknowledgement of the presence of the other, which I see as critical in a cosmopolitan reading process. It opens a space where the self must consider something which cannot be contained. This unhoming moment challenges readers of postcolonial literature to maintain an ethical relationship with a text, one in which a space for difference remains. While this is a concept easily understood, in practice it becomes much more difficult. These are the precise moments where Rosenblatt's transactional model are helpful because it provides readers an opportunity to both experience a text aesthetically but also provide contexts which can help them process the historical, temporal, and linguistic contexts from which a text emerges. However, this process takes significant pedagogical work in order to curb the tendency for students to appropriate difference in their existing knowledge systems, creating an environment where difference can be smoothed out to reinforce what students already know about the world. This is a damaging move on many different levels. First, it reifies hegemonic epistemologies, normalizing a center / periphery model. In doing so, it reduces postcolonial texts to aberrations within the classroom. That is, these texts come to represent the position of the other because of their perceived differences from Western perspectives. Secondly, reducing the other to the same inhibits the development of new knowledge and the recognition of non-Western epistemologies. It is in the contact zone with difference that existing knowledges can come together to generate new ways of understanding and knowing. For Homi Bhabha, this Third Space is one of productivity, one in which cultural difference is negotiated in order for, in Salman

⁷ In my own work, I choose not to capitalize the "o" in other and the "s" in Self in order to present the possibility of multiple alterities within the self and other.

Rushdie's words, "newness to enter the world" (qtd. in Bhabha, *LC* 324). In more theoretical terms this moment can be considered "a transferential function, whereby the past dissolves in the present, so that the future becomes (once again) an open question, instead of being specified by the fixity of the past" (Forrester qtd. in Bhabha 314). If the reader / text relationship is negotiated through an ethical encounter, this moment of literary engagement enables the possibility of newness with every encounter. Getting to that point is difficult and requires more understanding of what constitutes ethics and how it can shape this moment.

Reframing ethical relationships as moments of educational opportunity re-imagines the benefit that contact with the other provides. The interruption of the sense of autonomy of the self by the other disturbs the comfort of independence. I would argue that this unsettling, which stems from the presence of the other, provides a productive space for learning because it requires individuals to reevaluate what they thought they understood as stable and familiar. Levinas underscores the teaching moment through the ethical engagement with the Other in transcultural interactions. In *Totality and Infinity*, Levinas writes

to approach the Other in conversation is to welcome his expression in which at each instant he overflows the idea a thought would carry away from it. It is therefore to receive from the Other beyond the capacity of the I which means exactly: to have the idea of infinity. But this also means: to be taught. The relation with the Other, or Conversation, is a non-allergic relation, an ethical relation; but inasmuch as it is welcomed this conversation is a teaching. Teaching....comes from the exterior and brings me more than I contain. (qtd. in Dutta 466)

Levinas' characterization of teaching is useful in that it shows that knowledge emerges from a location beyond ourselves, through encounters, and brings us what we do not and cannot contain - difference. These "conversations" ask us to confront the fundamental difference of the Other. Situating this dynamic in the contact zone between reader and text can be problematic because it requires a willingness to engage responsibly with difference, something that has proved to be a significant pedagogical challenge. One of the most difficult aspects of teaching is opening students to the call of the text, that is, the recognition of difference as something outside us and our established epistemologies. Presenting this moment through cosmopolitanism allows readers to approach the other with an openness toward that which is outside the self. In doing so, readers do not have to mediate their understanding of a text solely through that which they already know; there exists the possibility of growing from the contact with difference. The participatory cosmopolitanism that I incorporate necessitates that students negotiate with difference instead of totalizing it.

Wolfgang Iser's Wandering Viewpoint

The growth that takes place for students reading postcolonial literature emerges from a tension between the desire to domesticate difference and the realization the otherness of the other cannot be reduced to the same. Once students recognize that it is problematic to reduce a text, through a comparative framework to what they already know, then they must reconcile how to live with the remainder of that encounter, that which is beyond their comprehension. A feeling of unsettledness emerges from this tension. For readers, this means never feeling quite comfortable with a text, not knowing how to negotiate the

inability to identify with the characters or setting. Wolfgang Iser suggests the “wandering viewpoint” as a way to describe the various positions readers inhabit in a text. Iser’s work in *The Act of Reading* is helpful in understanding the cogitative process of interpretation. Iser provides a location between structuralism and poststructuralism, recognizing the gaps that need to be bridged in the reading process that continually revises a reader’s interpretation. Iser argues that texts provide directions for readers, guiding their reading to produce “a virtual text.” One of the ways a text accomplishes this, according to Iser, is through a “wandering viewpoint.” In other words, readers continually inhabit new perspectives in a text which help readers fill the gaps or blanks, enabling a constant reevaluation of expectation and understanding. Iser suggests that there are four viewpoints that a reader can inhabit: narrator, the characters, the plot, and the fictitious reader. In Iser’s words,

as the reader’s wandering viewpoint travels between all these segments, its constant switching during the time flow of reading intertwines them, thus bringing forth a network of perspectives, within which each perspective opens a view not only of others, but also of the intended imaginary object. (1677-78)

In this model, one viewpoint gives way to another in order to progress the interpretation and understanding of a text. The text provides “structural operations in the reader, the execution of which transmits the reciprocal interaction of textual positions into consciousness” (1682). As such, “the shifting blank is responsible for a sequence of colliding images, which condition each other in the time flow of reading” (1682). Once one blank is filled, “the discarded image imprints itself on its successor, even though the latter is meant to resolve the deficiencies of the former” (1682). In Iser’s model, “the

images hang together in a sequence, and it is by this sequence that the meaning of the text comes alive in the reader's imagination" (1682). While I think Iser's model is insightful in helping identify the different positions that reader's inhabit, it assumes that the gaps in a text can be bridged by either a shared knowledge between the reader and the text or by clues or cues in a text. However, in some examples of postcolonial literature, and I would argue literature in general, there are gaps that are not meant to be filled or inhabited. In other words, there remains a gulf between the reader's world and the world of the text. I am not saying that these texts are preventing interpretation, but they problematize identification and understanding of particular experiences and events. In a cosmopolitan pedagogy, these moments are important because they require students to find a new set of terms, from which to understand a text often outside of that with which they are familiar. This disruptive moment is productive because it reminds readers of the problems of appropriating difference into one's own knowledge system. A helpful example is located in Chris Abani's novella, *Becoming Abigail*. There is a section of the text that describes an intimate, shared moment between two characters who have experienced the degradation of sexual abuse, the pain of physical violence, and the helplessness of structural oppression. The particular passage begins in third person narration and shifts points of view twice between Abigail and Mary:

And she wept as Mary warmed her limbs in the electric blanket. How Abigail would follow the red line in the snow. The electric cord becoming the umbilical for a new birth. A divine birth. And Mary's tears would melt the snow. And Abigail would whisper: I know. I know. I know.

And the sound of the words was a hoarse rasp. Formless.
And Mary would echo: I know. I know. I know. (92).

This example illustrates the difficulty of fully closing the gaps between reader and text. The characters share a moment of identification but readers are pushed outside of that experience, highlighting their inability to “know” or have access to exactly what Abigail and Mary share. Abani continues this tactic throughout the novella, incorporating pronouns which leave the reader unable to locate the antecedent. In chapter X, mid-way through *Becoming Abigail*, Abani constructs a particularly cryptic passage. He writes:

Sometimes there is no way to leave something behind. Something over. We know this. We know this. We know this. This is the prevalence of ritual. To remember something that cannot be forgotten. Yet not left over. She knew this. As she smoked. She knew This. This. This. And what now? (59).

The question at the end of the passage, “And what now?” is precisely what readers must ask themselves throughout the reading experience (59). What happens when you cannot fill the gaps, when the sequence of images is interrupted by an irreconcilable gap? In other words, when the cues or the call of the text is heard but unrecognizable to the reader, an ethical moment arises. Some readers might choose to fill that gap with their own experience or even leave it blank and move on, but I suggest that cosmopolitanism allows us to recognize that irreducible difference as a moment which calls for the accountability of the other, providing an ethical response to the situation. Participating in the recognition of the incommensurability of the reader’s experience with that of the text is an uncanny moment, disrupting the sense of familiarity in which most readers find comfort.

Unhomeliness in the Reading Experience

In an alterity model, the self is haunted by “the Stranger who disturbs the being at home” (Levinas 39). To me, the result of the presence of “the Stranger” or difference in a text creates a state of unhomeliness for the reader. The idea of unhomeliness emerges from Freud’s concept of *unheimliche*, which is roughly translated as uncanny. Freud used this idea to express the incompleteness or repression of the past that haunts us in the present and can shape our actions. It is an unsettling state and often in psychoanalysis a non-desirable one. However, Julia Kristeva and Homi Bhabha have developed this state of uncanniness beyond Freud’s psychoanalytic approach. For Bhabha, culture presents the uncanny through its perpetual mutability. Bhabha argues that on one side that culture is canny in that it relies on the coherence of meaning through participation, but he argues that on the other hand it is uncanny in that it “has to be translated, disseminated, differentiated, interdisciplinary, intertextual, international, inter-racial (LC 136-7). The result of this state is a defamiliarization with the familiar. Bhabha expresses the nature of unhomeliness more fully in his essay “The World at Home.” He works through the negative connotations of alienation and dislocation to show how this state can be productive. Bhabha writes that

in the stirrings of the unhomely, another world becomes visible. It has less to do with forcible eviction and more to do with the uncanny literary and social effects of enforced social accommodation, or historical migrations and cultural relocations. The home does not remain the domain of domestic life, nor does the world simply become its social or historical counterpart. The unhomely is the shock of recognition of the world-in-the home, the home-in-the-world. (141)

Bhabha's articulation of this idea illuminates the false perception of the boundaries between private and public, in many ways the very same boundaries between self and other. The other is always already a part of the self, insisting on recognition. However, that recognition is often pushed aside in favor of a naïve belief in the sovereignty of the individual subject, resulting in a dismissal of our responsibility to the other. What I would like to suggest is that this state of unhomeliness, of recognizing the "world-in-the-home" is ostensibly a cosmopolitan state. Cosmopolitanism has often been characterized as a condition of being at home in the world, but I believe that belies its potential, limiting it to a lifestyle for the elite. Recognizing that the world is with us opens us to an orientation towards difference and unsettles that false sense of home that denies the always already presence of difference. While some cosmopolitan theorists suggest that there needs to be "a willingness to engage with the Other" (Hannerz 239), I argue that in an era of globalization the engagement with the other is not a choice but a part of being in the world. We become accidental cosmopolitans simply by our constant exposure to the increased flow of culture through the world. Not everyone recognizes the presence of the "world-in-the-home" but that does not mean that it is not there. A cosmopolitan pedagogy makes those moments visible through a reading framework that requires students to negotiate the difference of the other. By situating this endeavor in the postcolonial literature classroom students can begin to see themselves among others more clearly. I explore this concept of the unhomely cosmopolitan more fully in Chapter Four by tracing this concept through Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* and Chris Abani's

GraceLand but for now, my focus is on the ethical dimension necessary for readers to navigate what it means to come into contact with otherness.

The unsettledness, or unhomeliness as I refer to it, that occurs when readers react to difference is a moment of great importance to how readers negotiate their relationship with a text. The calling into question of self, often in the form of counter-hegemonic perspectives and alternative epistemologies, can be unnerving for students who have not faced that challenge before. The previous encounters with literature which might have reinforced student identification with the text fail to prepare students for the alienation that can emerge in relation to postcolonial literary texts. This moment is heightened in postcolonial literature classrooms because the literature often implicates structures that many of the students already inhabit. As Henry Giroux reminds us, “postcolonial texts make visible the ideological supports of global economic and political arrangements” (263). This implicated reader status often leaves students in a liminal space in which they are at once pulled into the work but simultaneously pushed away. I see this space as potentially productive because it breaks the complacent, or unconscious, reliance on pre-existing knowledge and requires students to engage with difference in order to produce new ways of seeing the world. Once again, this is an ethical situation as it stems from how a reader receives and negotiates the otherness of the text.

In “Innovation, Literature, Ethics: Relating to the Other,” Derek Attridge continues from Levinas’s foundational characterization of the self/other relationship and makes an innovative move to connect alterity in its traditional format with reading and writing. Before he addresses the responsibility involved in approaching a text, he situates

Levinas' alterity ultimately as a relationship to God, but suggests that the other is represented and adapted differently in other fields. He defines the relationship of the other in postcolonial studies as representing "the colonized culture or people as viewed by the dominant power" (23). His attempt at examining what the self and other represent in various fields is a way for him to understand the underlying principle of this relationship. Attridge's conclusion regarding alterity is that it works as "an impingent from the outside that challenges assumptions, habit, and values that demand a response" (23). His examination of the fundamental nature of alterity is helpful to me here. His description of something from outside of the self "that challenges assumptions, habit, and values" is precisely what I see as a characteristic of postcolonial literature through the critique of established systems of power and Western-centric perspectives. The product of that challenge is a state of unhomeliness which can be considered a productive space in as far as it destabilizes the positionality of the reader in order to provide the conditions necessary for an ethical engagement with difference. In this sense it is parallel to Levinas' idea that the other puts the self in question. Similarly, literature challenges the fixity of the self because it requires the reader to confront his/her own assumptions about the world. Cosmopolitanism provides the orientation for readers to enter this relationship with an ethical foundation. The second half of Attridge's analysis of alterity states that a response to the other is requested. This is also of importance to me because the very nature of literature is such that it requires a response. There is a call to the reader that demands recognition and response. The question of how one responds is indeed a question of ethics as much as it is a question of making meaning.

Gary Olson, in “Encountering the Other” addresses some of the same issues that Attridge raises. Like Attridge, Olson also builds his thoughts on the relationship with the other on Levinasian alterity. Olson recognizes the baggage that is brought to this contact by readers. He explains that

we all bring to these interactions our own agendas – our own wishes, desires, needs, motivations – and because these agendas are often in conflict (or at least not in perfect concordance), we are constantly negotiating and renegotiating our interactions (85).

Olson’s point here is one that is frequently overlooked. It is easy to forget that there is usually a context for interaction. We need to recognize what assumptions are embedded and embodied, particularly in the self, when these meetings take place. He refers to the encounter with difference as contact zones, and he points out that sometimes those contact zones serve as a location to adopt a “multicultural melting pot approach to pedagogy” (88). Consequently, there is often an essentializing or idealizing of the other. A very real danger then exists that if this problem is not addressed, encountering the other becomes an opportunity to categorize or label that in turn reinforces the relationship between center and periphery or self and other. Olson uses Abdul JanMohamed’s Lacanian analysis to further illustrate this point. Locating his argument in colonialism, Olson, through JanMohamed, argues that there is a deep seated desire “to be recognized by the Other” (91). He continues, “What’s at play here [...] is that in the very act of domination, the one who dominates is able ‘to compel the Other’s recognition of him and, in the process, allow his own identity to become deeply dependent on his position as a master’” (91). Olson suggests then that imperialist’s own identity and ‘narcissistic self-

recognition' are dependent on the Other, on the power imbalance that constitutes the relationship" (91-92). He concludes his point by arguing that "once such a relationship of dominance and submissiveness is constituted, the one who dominates derives 'affective pleasure' from the perceived moral superiority over the Other" (92). JanMohamed uses this power dynamic in colonial domination, and Olson utilizes it for the classroom. There are numerous parallels between the encounter of colonizer and colonized and reader and text, particularly texts that are perceived as exotic or other. Olson's insights suggest the need for an unmooring of student positionality as a way for them to access an ethical relationship with the other. The idea of unhomeliness is one that promotes the destabilization of reader positionality and asks for a more cosmopolitan perspective to be adopted. This move ruptures the dialectic, suggesting that we are not constructed through our opposition to others but through the presence of difference within ourselves.

The reason why cosmopolitanism works effectively to dismantle comparative frameworks is that it offers readers the ability to encounter difference without having to totalize it. In other words, when students encounter a text, the meaning that they create does not need to quantify difference. It is that which cannot be absorbed, reduced, or measured, the spectral meaning in a text, which haunts readers, creating that proximal relationship which a cosmopolitan pedagogy values. As discussed in the previous chapter, a cosmopolitan pedagogy builds on and from previous pedagogical approaches such as multiculturalism, but it offers an important distinction. Like multiculturalism, a cosmopolitan pedagogy carries with it the respect for difference and a space from which

once silenced voices can speak, but since the relationships are fluid and individual, the reification of center / periphery positions dissipate, revealing a constantly shifting space in which the encounter with difference is always becoming. In practical terms, this challenges readers to inhabit both their local temporality, that of everyday life, and the time and space of the literary event, echoing the efferent and aesthetic positions suggested in Rosenblatt's transactional theory. Importantly, a cosmopolitan pedagogy acknowledges the rootedness of the reader and the text while not fixing either to those positions. To radically decontextualize the student or the text would be problematic because it would not account for the local ways of knowing which shape these encounters. More importantly, it would alter the call of the text, disconnecting it from the material conditions which influenced its production. However, since these relationships are dynamic, a cosmopolitan pedagogy alleviates the risk of fixing a text to a specific cultural, political, religious, etc. setting. This becomes an important point in the reader / text relationship because it excuses the text from representational responsibility while still maintaining its grounding in a particular setting. This approach creates the conditions in which the text is present in the reader's world and the reader is simultaneously present in the world of the text. It is this multiple positionality which creates a space for unhomeliness.

To reiterate an earlier point, what postcolonial literature has to offer students is not information about a particular location or event. That information can be obtained in many other ways. Postcolonial literature provides a powerful impetus for student engagement with difference through an imaginative experience. The power of the

literary event is the implication of the reader into “the ethical experience of the impossible” (Spivak, “Thinking Cultural” 336). It is in readers understanding their relationships to these texts that they can begin to engage critically, not simply emotionally, with the issues being raised. At its most basic level, a cosmopolitan pedagogy is predicated on the ability to recognize and respond to the call of the text; something that will help students in any reading situation. The challenge, of course, is in transferring the impossibly utopian ideals of this project into the everyday classroom experience.

Cosmopolitan Pedagogy in the Classroom

In order to offer a clearer understanding of the way this pedagogy works in the classroom, I will draw from a particular unit on Afghan refugees that I have taught in several postcolonial and human rights related courses. In this particular unit which focuses on Afghan refugees, I incorporate Khaled Hosseini’s *The Kite Runner* and Michael Winterbottom’s *In This World*. One of the reasons I like to incorporate Hosseini’s novel in the classroom is because it has a unique ability to accommodate a multitude of different readings. In the article, “Afghanistan Meets the Amazon: Reading *The Kite Runner* in America,” Timothy Aubry explores the broad spectrum of supported readings for *The Kite Runner*. Aubry writes that

what is remarkable about Hosseini’s novel is its capacity to appeal to readers who understand it as categorically supporting neoconservative interventionist philosophy and to those who understand it as categorically opposing this position, while also earning praise among many for apparently avoiding a determinate political stance. (34)

By incorporating a novel with such divergent readings, I hope to challenge how their relationship with a text often determines the interpretive outcome to a larger degree than we might normally acknowledge. Additionally, building a unit around human rights discourse provides a challenging complication for the incorporation of a cosmopolitan pedagogy. As I demonstrated in Chapter One, cosmopolitanism is susceptible to being co-opted for ulterior motives such as regime change or economic exploitation. When appropriated in this way, cosmopolitanism remains constructed as elitist and West-centric. Part of the challenge of a cosmopolitan pedagogy is to navigate the ethical dimensions of human rights discourse in order to resist reification of power structures that only uphold a structure of rights based on a benefactor and beneficiary model. Cosmopolitan pedagogy that relies on an outdated, elitist model could create a similar structure in which the student feels empowered by his or her position vis-à-vis the text. This outcome would manifest itself in student responses such as “I am thankful I don’t have to go through that” or “why can’t they just be more like us.” In other words, when the discourse remains untheorized, the contact that a cosmopolitan pedagogy creates might not necessitate an ethical outcome. The type of cosmopolitanism that I introduce in the classroom offers a counter-hegemonic element which critiques the systems of power which govern relationships. This participatory cosmopolitanism, mindful of the ways in which power circulates, challenges students to create ethical relationships through the encounter with a literary text as a model for engaging with others and otherness outside of the classroom. An important component to a cosmopolitan pedagogy

is the theoretical engagement with the larger discourse, be it human rights, postcolonial, or something else.

Before we get started reading *The Kite Runner*, my first order of business in the classroom is to address any preconceived notions students might have about human rights, refugees, Afghanistan, and the United States' relationship to Afghanistan. This pre-reading discussion is particularly interesting because many students have at least some familiarity with Afghanistan. In fact, more than once in my class, I have had relatives or friends of American soldiers who have been deployed to Afghanistan. Obviously, this personalizes the discussion, which can generate some strong reactions, but getting those connections out in the open helps students understand their positionality in regards to the upcoming texts. Allowing students to verbalize their positions before they read the novel or view the film brings to the surface potentially influential relationships of power. In order to unmoor students from a particular position, they need to be able to recognize that they are holding that position. In Freire's terms, this conscientization, a critical consciousness, allows students to create an awareness of their place in the world. It is amazing how much of what a person believes is so fundamentally embedded in who he or she thinks he or she is. I have found that many students are familiar, even though they may not at first recognize it, with the US government's rhetorical stance as liberators of Afghanistan and defenders of freedom. This period of the unit is dedicated to creating an orientation toward the texts that reveals potential biases. This move helps construct the cosmopolitan framework which will

enable students to navigate alternative positionalities with an understanding of what factors shape their encounter.

Interestingly, as the semester unfolds, it becomes quite clear that students actually have very specific expectations about what human rights literature is and what it looks like. To me, this stems from a cultural understanding not only of how we conceive of human rights in the United States⁸, but also of how we understand the US's role in human rights work. Typically, I find that students expect to encounter a narrative trajectory in the literature we read which moves from gross human rights violations, usually involving brutality and some sort of violent oppression, to overcoming a major obstacle before moving to a redemptive ending in which the victim has been vindicated in some way. I realize that I am grossly over simplifying to a large extent. While there are some students who possess a much more sophisticated understanding of human rights literature, I find that a large portion of students I encounter⁹ arrive with subconsciously predisposed ideas of what human rights literature looks like. Where do those expectations come from? How do these ideas enter the collective cultural consciousness? Unpacking these questions in class is the key to ensuring the effectiveness of an implementation of a cosmopolitan pedagogy.

In the Codicil of *Human Rights, Inc.*, Joseph Slaughter quotes a speech President W. George Bush delivered to the Afghan people on March 1, 2006. President Bush describes

⁸ I draw my examples from teaching experiences in the United States. I recognize of course that every geographical and political location creates a different relationship with human rights discourse.

⁹ The majority of the teaching which has informed this project has taken place at a southern, regional state institution. As such, it draws particular from very particular demographics, including first generation college students.

what an honor it is to be involved in helping Afghanistan build its future. He goes on to say that, “we like stories of young girls going to school for the first time so they can realize their potential” (317). Only a few lines later, President Bush reiterates his point, explaining, “we like stories, and expect stories, of young girls going to school in Afghanistan” (317). These lines are revealing not only because they lift the veil, exposing the cultural expectations about what human rights “look like,” but also because they offer a less than subtle reminder to those who have endured human rights violations of what stories their self-proclaimed protectors wish to hear. This perspective creates a supply and demand in terms of expectations for human rights literature. It is not unsurprising then to see how students might walk into a classroom with the sense of what human rights literature should be, especially when the New York Times best seller lists includes works like *Reading Lolita in Tehran*, *The Kite Runner*, and *A Long Way Gone*, narratives that offer arcs which reinforce the basic premise of President Bush’s comments. Not only are students living in a political climate which instills in them a desire to be the benevolent protectors or givers of rights, but also they are in educational environments that prize the commodification of knowledge. These two influences, together, shape reading practices of human rights literature, causing it to be consumed as anthropological adventures or emotional testimonies which do not implicate the reader in global political, social, and economic structures.

If students enter the classroom with expectations which reinforce a fixed structure of rights, how can we challenge them to reconsider their positionality? The selection of texts is a crucial part of the process. As teachers, we have the responsibility to

understand that the texts we choose often shape how students will engage with these issues. For instance, selecting texts which reify the relationship between the West and, to use Spivak's term, "the children of the rural poor" does not challenge the status quo ("Righting Wrongs" 526). Instead, a judicious assessment of texts provides an opportunity to interrupt students' expectations. In particular, texts that work to call into question representations of victims and/or positions of human rights givers and receivers through narrative structure, character development, among other methods often challenge students to consider human rights from a different perspective cosmopolitanism facilitates that process. Among the most effective texts I have found at achieving this task are Chris Abani's *Song for Night* and Michael Ondaatje's *Anil's Ghost*. In *Song for Night*, Abani creates an ambivalent relationship between the narrator and the reader. In the first line of the novel, the narrator, who is a ghost, informs readers that "what you hear is not my voice" (19). The distancing of the narrator from the reader at the outset of the novel creates a deferred relationship in which the reader will never be able to inhabit that subject position. Alexandra Schultheis describes this bond between the narrator and readers in "African Child Soldiers and Humanitarian Consumption" as a "joint contract to imagine the unimaginable as an (unattainable) goal" (38) The space which opens from the "ethical experience of the impossible" creates an opportunity for interrogation of the relationship readers have with the complexity of human right discourse rather than simply arousing feelings of pity or sympathy (Spivak, "Thinking Cultural Questions in 'Pure' Literary Terms" (336). By resisting empathetic identification, students are unmoored from fixed locations of identification. *Anil's Ghost* raises a different set of issues through

questioning where the best solutions for human rights problems emerge. This novel suggests that the West does not always provide the most fitting location from which to address and prosecute human rights violations. Instead, it challenges readers to consider the possibility that the local might offer more potential for human rights intervention. The novel sets up these competing approaches through a juxtaposition of two different methodologies of scientific inquiry, a Western based forensics approach and an indigenous artisan one. In critiquing the scientific rationalism of the West, Ondaatje's novel suggests that local epistemologies can offer an alternative to addressing human rights violations. Importantly, both *Song for Night* and *Anil's Ghost* provide instances in which literary representations move beyond the mere legal imagining of human rights issues, illustrating the importance these types of texts provide for human rights discourse.

In addition to selecting texts that foster this orientation, assignments crafted with a cosmopolitan theoretical basis can also facilitate openness to difference. A cosmopolitan pedagogy is not a radical reshaping of the classroom, which makes it an easily adapted model. Many classrooms already incorporate the types of assignments that I advocate. What makes these assignments productive in creating a cosmopolitan literary engagement is the philosophical and theoretical positioning through which students conduct their work. In order to infuse these assignments with a cosmopolitan perspective, teachers need to work on developing strategic questions which initiate "a willingness to engage with the Other" (Hannerz 239). These questions help open up students' imaginations to the call of the text.

One of the major ways I encourage this interaction is through students keeping journals. Specifically, I have used two types of journal activities. The first one is a topic based writing assignment, and the second is a double entry reading journal. Journaling promotes self-reflexive opportunities for students to recognize their own stance in relationship to a text. Additionally, introducing students to theoretical terminology that names these feelings and gives them a language with which to express their ideas is instrumental in creating a cosmopolitan orientation. Optimistically, students would have these moments of reflection naturally, but realistically, as many teachers know, they usually try to finish their reading assignments as quickly as possible. By asking students to slow down and think metacognitively, they are more able to recognize their emerging relationship with the text and the potential responsibilities that might arise from that connection. This is precisely the cosmopolitan moment in which the individual must consider the alterity of the other, recognizing this otherness as a part of the self. How students respond to the presence of the other depends largely on how they negotiate the disquieting presence of alterity. Obviously this is a key pedagogical moment for teachers to help students learn to live in the presence of the irreducibility of difference.

When giving specific journal prompts, I attempt to initiate a moment for students not only to understand how they feel about a text but also to examine what type of relationship they are establishing with it. Journaling is unproductive when it becomes a moment for students only to reflect on their feelings without thinking critically about why they feel that way. The goal after all is not for students simply to think about how this piece of literature makes them feel, but instead the first step is to help students confront

the complexity of these issues and how they might be implicated. If students think exclusively about their subject position in regards to a text, then it can reinforce a power dynamic with the text in which students reinscribe already established positions of a human rights protector and human rights beneficiary. In order to break out of that framework, students must engage imaginatively, investing themselves in this relationship since this is the opportunity for students to orient themselves toward the other. From the start of the semester, I advocate short writing activities which challenge students to work towards a better understanding of their relationship with the course material. For instance, during the first class, I incorporate two activities which work to make more transparent the positionality and expectations students bring to the course. First, I ask students to participate in a short cartography exercise in which they are to draw a map of the world, labeling it in as much detail as possible. Clearly this is a difficult task, but even if students are unable to reproduce much of the world in their map, students can still learn from the activity. After students complete their maps, as a class we talk about scale, central focus of the map, and amount of detail. I have conducted this exercise in the United States, Hong Kong, and Lebanon and there have been strikingly similar tendencies. Students typically place the Atlantic in the center¹⁰, which locates Europe as the focal point of the map. As a class, we talk about how when we construct the geographical representation of the world in this way, it reveals an inherent reliance on European knowledge. Another revealing pattern for students is the ability to draw and

¹⁰ There were a few Chinese students in Hong Kong that placed Asia in the center of the map. During the follow up questioning, many of those students explained that they intentionally placed Asia at the center to show its importance.

label their own geographic region in more detail than other areas. For example, students from North Carolina invariably draw the east coast of the United States in great detail, stressing the Florida peninsula while their depictions of Asian and Eastern European nations remain vague. While this is unsurprising when we talk about it as a class it serves to emphasize how positionality influences that which we are familiar with and that which remains foreign. After looking at the student maps, I project two different maps of the world, one that is Atlantic centered and one that is Pacific centered. By showing students these two different perspectives, I illustrate how something as familiar as a map of the world can become unfamiliar when viewed from a different vantage point. In a Pacific centered map, Europe is pushed to the periphery, making it look marginal and inconsequential. This activity begins the process of establishing a cosmopolitan perspective.

The second task I ask students to complete is a short writing activity expressing their expectations for the course. Almost to a person, students respond that the course fulfills a requirement, typically a global or non-Western designation. During the follow up discussion, I push students to consider the implications of signing up for a course that deals with human rights issues. It amazes me that students usually refuse to acknowledge that the course will have an impact beyond fulfilling a requirement. The reason I press this issue is that at the outset, I challenge students to confront the fact that by signing up for a course which deals with human rights literature students are engaging in a discourse in which they are implicated. As students read texts for class, teachers can continue to adapt prompts to specific works. One prompt that I have found to be enormously useful

in helping students recognize the call of the other is to bring attention to names. I ask students to write about how they negotiate names of people or places that are culturally or linguistically dissimilar¹¹. The responses that I receive vary from abbreviating long names to anglicizing names to eliding them completely. Of course some students do sound out the name phonetically and pronounce it as best they can, but the vast majority tends to alter the name in some way. This journal offers a moment for students to consider the ethical implications of changing a character's name. How might he or she be re-representing or misrepresenting that character? How does this give power to the student in the relationship between reader and text? It is in these moments that the cosmopolitan principles which underscore this pedagogical approach emerge. Journals help students recognize the power dynamics emerging between reader and text, however, it is imperative that these journals are supplemented by class discussions so that students are not left to make connections on their own, and they can draw from their classmates' experiences, which can be linked to their own.

The second type of short writing assignment, the double-entry notebook, offers a way to move beyond initial emotional responses. Ann Bethoff's double-entry style notebook helps students reflect on their thoughts while engaged in the reading process. As Berthoff explains, the double-entry journal "raise[s] consciousness of texts as [an] intermediary form ... develop[ing] a method of critical reading" (46) The goal of the journal is to help students understand why they are responding the way they are to the

¹¹ I recognize that some students may indeed come from the culture that the text is representing and at those moments, it allows students the opportunity to speak openly about any cultural aspects that may be helpful in understanding a text. Additionally, not all texts produce these moments.

text. On one side of the page, students record their reactions, responses, and emotions to the narrative. On the other side of the page, they identify what in the text prompted those first responses. As the journals progress, I ask students to offer more critical readings of the novel in these double-entry journals as a way help the complexity of the text emerge. I find this type of journal to be particularly effective in works that use traumatic and upsetting passages because it requires students to acknowledge and engage with issues that often remain outside of public view. The double-entry notebook was particularly effective with the Uzodinma Iweala's novella *Beasts of No Nation*. The story centers on a pre-adolescent, African boy who is forced to become a child soldier. The narrative is told from the viewpoint of the boy, Agu, in sparse and simple language, which only highlights the young man's inability to process the events in which he participates and witnesses. It can be extremely upsetting for students to see a young boy put in situations where he is raping a woman or killing. The double entry notebook provides a space for students to process their emotional reactions and then proceed to engage with the work that the text is undertaking. This particular type of journal is effective not only at helping students realize that they are unconsciously responding to the call of the text, but also it offers a self-reflexive element which attunes readers to what that call is asking. I do not want to down play the evocative element of many human rights literary texts. In *The Kite Runner*, there are several emotionally charged scenes, including the pivotal confrontation between Amir, the protagonist, and Assef, the Taliban strongman. While this scene moves readers to the edges of their seats through the use of suspense and graphic violence, it also offers an interpretive moment regarding the US' policy of intervention in

Afghanistan. I have found that if students have not processed their visceral responses, they are more prone to remain engaged only on the surface level and ignore political readings. *The Kite Runner* remains a particularly challenging work to teach because it is so good at emotionally drawing readers in that they sometimes lack the perspective to recognize the larger work the text undertakes. Students get so wrapped up in Amir's family dynamics that they eschew the historical and political dimensions of the text. Using a double-entry notebook with this novel enables students to find that balance between emotion and critical engagement. Similarly, in *In This World* viewers are positioned in such a way as to react emotionally to the situations Jamal and Enayatullah face. If they only are responding emotionally, students miss out on the important critique of human trafficking. In other words if students attempt to only have an empathetic relationship with these characters, they lose sight of the larger systemic issues that produce the conditions under which this type of dehumanization can take place. The double-entry notebook helps students work from that surface reaction to a deeper reading by recognizing the call of the text, processing it through initial reactions, and then responding to it through a more critical engagement. In Rosenblatt's terms, this moment depicts "the event" between reader and text.

Throughout the unit, I incorporated both aforementioned types of journals. One of the specific topic based journals I used to bring out a cosmopolitan orientation dealt with which character students most identified with and why. Cosmopolitanism as a theory works to find similarities, but sometimes that similarity is the shared sense of unhomeliness or uncanniness of the other within the self. Most students answered the

journal prompt by saying that they related with Amir, and saw him as they saw themselves. Amir's story became their story. We followed up the journal activity with an in class discussion of students' responses in which we attempted to tease out the complexity of characters that showed the distance between their experience and our realities. This began the task of moving beyond the superficial identification with the characters to get at some of the more complex issues: gender roles in refugee communities, unearned privilege, racism, and interventionism, to name a few. For homework, I had students read Elaine Scarry's "The Difficulty of Imagining Other Persons" and Susan Sontag's "Regarding the Pain of Others" in preparation for a discussion of the ethics of imagining others in order to provide follow-up to our previous discussion. The following class period, I asked students to write about how they thought the United States (all of my students were US citizens) imagined the issue of refugees in order to initiate a conversation about positionality and ethics in relation to refugees. This orientation of seeing the problem from a particular perspective was important in understanding the power structures at play in global refugee crises. Students began to interrogate their own perspective when thinking about these issues and gradually considered counter-hegemonic approaches that deconstructed the structure of rights.

The following class period, we watched *In This World* as a way to defamiliarize the familiar in order to restore that non-totalizing relationship which promotes productive ways of engaging with these ideas. This film details the overland journey of Afghan refugees Jamal and Enayat from a refugee camp in Pakistan to London. Thematically, this film addresses the harsh economic conditions which necessitate these dangerous

migrations, revealing the transformation of humans into cargo as they make their way westward. Since we discussed positionality at the outset of the unit, students were able to begin to see their own role in these issues through the economic globalization portrayed in the film. *In This World* is filmed in a documentary style with handheld digital cameras, which allows the viewer simultaneously to be a part of the journey while also disorienting and constantly reminding students of the distance between themselves and the character. The sense of nausea that viewers feel as the camera bounces around in trucks and buses physically discomfort viewers. Often this leads to negative emotions and reactions about the film, but it offers an opportunity to explore how and from where those thoughts arose. Again, I employ topic based and double entry journals to unpack these complex feelings. While students want to identify with Jamal, they end up realizing that they are not in Jamal's world, drawing attention to structures of power. This disorientation unhomes students from an authoritative position, challenging them to recognize what separates their world and Jamal's. The way students relate to Jamal is diametrically opposed to their earlier relationship with Amir. This is the ethical moment, the cosmopolitan moment if you will, that reconciles their relationship to difference, which is important in human rights literature.

At the end of the unit, I ask students to write a more extended work on these two texts, negotiating the seemingly contradictory nature of their relationships to *The Kite Runner* and *In This World*. Framing this question through the *bildungsroman* structure challenges the telos of development and socialization is challenged, forcing students to account for the Amir and Jamal's location in a globalized world. Additionally, I invite

students to reconsider legal representation of human rights in favor of imaginative engagements. Underscoring this entire process is the belief that “the way we act toward ‘others’ is shaped by the way we imagine others” (Scarry 40). Like Elaine Scarry, I believe that this is indeed a difficult process and it needs to be approached both at structural and individual levels. Utilizing a pedagogical approach, which provides rigorous examination of how and why we imagine others the way we do, promotes this ethical imagining. I reiterate that these assignments are familiar ones, but what is different is the cosmopolitan orientation to reading which highlights the entire process. Building those connections across difference challenges students to destabilize their positionality in order to establish an ethical engagement.

The reading process provides a critical moment of engagement because it implicates students negotiating human rights issues. By utilizing cosmopolitan pedagogy, teachers open up a space in the classroom not only for the presence of difference but also for our responsibility to preserve it. How students negotiate that difference says a lot about how they will engage with human rights issues. Consciousness-raising is not enough; teachers need to help students push beyond superficial readings and invest in the complexity of these issues. Our pedagogical strategies influence how students will interact with these ideas and ultimately how they will face the material realities from which these imaginings emerge. Additionally, simply giving journal prompts is not enough. Teachers need to theorize their own pedagogy and find ways for students to be open to considering new ways of knowing the world. As I mentioned in Chapter One, cosmopolitanism does not describe a person, but rather it describes a person’s actions. It

is the ethical imagining which is the cosmopolitan action in the classroom. It is only then when we recognize and engage the presence of the other that our actions will reflect an ethics of responsibility. Introducing a cosmopolitan orientation to reading human rights literature offers a way for us to initiate that process. After all, this is a project about how students read not necessarily about what they read. As Spivak reminds us, “the ethical situation can only be figured in the ethical experience of the impossible. And literature, as a play of figures, can give us imaginative access to the experience” (“Thinking Cultural Questions in 'Pure' Literary Terms” 336). A cosmopolitan pedagogy can be a valuable contribution to human rights discourse because it provides an opportunity for an imaginative engagement which helps recognize and preserve the alterity of the other, taking up Domna Stanton’s challenge “to deconstruct fixed and unexamined ideas, language, and representations in human rights (1523).

Literature evades totalization through the trace of the saying, which is the remainder of any linguistic encounter. The irreducibility of the saying provides a constant challenge to our being. When students get fixated on the said, the unchanging words on the page, they appropriate those ideas into their already established knowledge systems. What I hope to do is challenge students to build a nontotalizing relationship in which the literary texts they are reading challenge them and make them ask questions about their responsibilities. Hearing that call, the very call of the text, demands responsibility from us. When we think of these ideas in terms of reading, the task is not to capture the difference of the other, but to recognize the saying within the said. By locating that trace of difference and acknowledging its power over us and its infinite separation from us, we

preserve the otherness of the other. In doing so, we heed the responsibility to protect the uniqueness of the other. This approach recognizes the importance of the difference of the other and our responsibility to hear the call of the text.

The Role of the Teacher

Up to now, I have focused on the particular reader / text event, but in the remaining pages, I would like to explore what type of space is created from an ethical engagement between reader and text. One of the variables that I have left out of the reader / text equation is the teacher. While I presented specific assignments in the preceding section, I did not communicate the delicacy with which teachers must approach their roles.

Teachers are responsible for the interpretive community that is formed in the classroom.

As Paul Armstrong notes,

the assumptions and habits of understanding of the interpretive community to which we belong may have power over us because they can restrict and direct our way of reading a work, and these constraints matter in turn because interpretive practices have power over texts – configuring them in one form or another to serve different visions of human life and social relations. (137)

Armstrong's reminder helps teachers recognize that they play a very real role in determining the types of interpretations and interactions that will emerge in a classroom.

I like to characterize teachers as cultural brokers. The teacher functions as the person who introduces reader and text and establishes the nature of the meeting. This introduction often comes in the form of information about the author, the context surrounding the production of the text, and the historical and cultural traditions from which the text is emerging. This requires a delicate balance so as not to turn the reading

experience into an attempt to reaffirm what was learned in the pre-reading stage. For example, when I teach *The Kite Runner* I provide the historical overview of Afghan leadership in order to prepare students for the text's use of that history. This maneuver allows students the ability to see the fluidity of history or culture through literary representation. In making these moves, my goal is to create a space akin to Bhabha's Third Space.

In the Third Space, which emerges when readers move between the efferent and aesthetic poles of reading, the text and reader will continually enter into unique relationships due to the nature of the interpretation of signs? However, determining the meaning of those signs beforehand once again places the text in a static location. For Bhabha the Third Space "constitutes the discursive conditions of enunciation that ensure that the meaning and symbols of culture have no primordial unity or fixity; that even the same signs can be appropriated, translated, rehistoricized and read anew" (LC 55). Teacher involvement in reader/text relationships should foster the continual exploration of possibility rather than the stabilization of meaning. What I refer to as meaning, Bhabha calls newness. Bhabha locates newness at the interstices of cultures. This is not a theoretical space. It is a very real location for people. It is through a necessity of survival in these narrow passages that newness enters the world. Cultural translation or more precisely the untranslatability of culture creates a space where people can negotiate the incommensurable. The example Bhabha provides is Chamcha from Rushdie's *The Satanic Verses*. He looks at Chamcha as trying to negotiate his background as part of a culture of colonized to living in the culture of the colonizer. In the course of this

attempted translation, Chamcha takes cultural elements from their historical or cultural location and places them in a new context. While Chamcha does this as a matter of survival, there is something subversive in this process. There is a destabilization of culture and history, which threatens the continuous narrative of culture. Bhabha points out that this is precisely why Rushdie faced such backlash from *The Satanic Verses*. Rushdie was accused of blasphemy, and Bhabha writes that “Rushdie’s sin lies in opening up a space of discursive contestation that places the authority of the Koran within a perspective of historical and cultural relativism” (323). Bhabha continues his explanation by reminding us that “it is not that the ‘content’ of the Koran is directly disputed; rather, by revealing other enunciatory positions and possibilities within the framework of Koranic reading, Rushdie performs the subversion of its authenticity through the act of cultural translation” (323). This example shows that the Third Space is in many ways very threatening because it is able to interrupt context. Bhabha uses the example of migrants as creating newness as a means of survival. I propose that this can be attempted in the literature classroom through cultural difference.

Bhabha juxtaposes cultural difference with cultural diversity. These are dual approaches of facing otherness with vastly different outcomes. Bhabha explains the power of cultural difference comes from the rearticulation of

knowledge from the perspective of the signifying position of the minority that resists totalization - ...the minus-in-origin that results in political and discursive strategies where adding to does not add up but serves to disturb the calculation of power and knowledge, producing other spaces of subaltern signification (232-33).

In other words, it is the difference of the other, its very irreducibility, which disrupts the totalizing process of hegemonic knowledge production. Bhabha's point is well taken in regards to the treatment of a text. The presentation of a text simply as an object of knowledge once again reifies its static position. It is difficult for students to consider another way of approaching a text though because most classrooms are designed for the acquisition of measurable knowledge. Therefore, a student is put into a position in which he/she is predisposed to look for some piece of intact knowledge, be it cultural or a meaning in a text. Again, Bhabha suggests a way of dealing with this problem of fixed meaning. He proposes that

we must rehistoricize the moment of 'the emergence of the sign', or 'the question of the subject' , or the 'discursive construction of social reality' to quote a few popular topics of contemporary theory. This can only happen if we relocate the referential and institutional demands of such theoretical work in the field of cultural difference – *not cultural diversity*. (47)

In order to break the structure of cultural diversity, readers need to come to a text on a relational level as opposed to arriving at a text with prefigured constructions. One of the major benefits of cultural difference is the dislodging of the rooted historical narratives of both reader and text. There is an interruption to the myth of some originary beginning. The break of the link between past, present, and future allows for a renegotiation of positions, through an unhoming of the reader. In other words, there is a chance to work outside of embedded hierarchies. This is mutually beneficial for text and reader because both are loosed from their set positions. It is at this point that an ethical encounter can begin to occur.

While I have spent the majority of this chapter looking at the self/other relationship in regards to reader/text within the classroom, there are implications outside of it as well. At the end of the first chapter of the *Location of Culture*, Bhabha speaks to the benefits of negotiating otherness through a method of difference. He writes that

For a willingness to descend into that alien territory – where I have led you – may reveal that the theoretical 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*. To that end we should remember that it is the 'inter' – the cutting edge of translation and negotiation, the *inbetween* space – that carries the burden of the meaning of culture. It makes it possible to begin envisaging national, anti-national histories of the 'people'. And by exploring this Third Space, we may elude the politics of polarity and emerge as the others of our selves. (56)

The importance of treating the other as complex and worthy of conversation is a lesson that resonates far beyond the classroom. We only need to turn on the television to see images or stories which involve the domination of the other or the complete rejection of the other. By helping students in literature classes learn how to approach the other in an ethical manner, we might be able to move away from a very real violence and the polarizing politics we now face, but it begins in resisting the totalizing grasp of a text and instead requires that we allow it to open up not once or even twice but *ad infinitum*.

When teachers help students move into unfamiliar imaginative worlds, they are asking students to accept the disruption of the self and open up to the difference of the other, a very unsettling affair. In working through that tension, the singular gives way to collaborative ways of making and remaking the world. These moments emerge through the literary engagement. As Gayatri Spivak so eloquently yet simply reminds us, "The

imagination is the possibility of being somewhere that is not the Self. This is related to being human, as already being open to a connection with something other. That is what to be human is” (“Interview with Geert Lovink”). Spivak expresses the inherently cosmopolitan endeavor that comprises the literary event. In order to access this potential we must be at home with our unhomeliness.

CHAPTER IV

IMAGINATION: CULTIVATING COSMOPOLITAN CLASSROOM COMMUNITIES

“How does one remain specific yet global at the same time? It's something with which, across the world, we are struggling with more than ever.” Chris Abani

The epigraph by Chris Abani's reflects several of the key challenges caused in part by the weakening of the nation-state: How do we live in local and global temporalities simultaneously? What kind of individual does it take to navigate these two positions? How does this fluid position reshape how we think about community? In this chapter, I locate these questions in the university setting to better understand how the dissolution of the nation-state as the primary reproducer of capital, and subsequently identity, has significantly altered the university's mission and, intentionally or not, opened up a space in the classroom to inhabit the interstices between this local / global binary. The modern university, which existed from Enlightenment Europe to the latter half of the twentieth century, served as the inculcator of culture, transforming students into citizens of the nation. Rationalism, one of the guiding principles of modernity, ensured that the individual was the center of knowledge production. Through reason, students could better understand the world and recognize its truths. It was in the university, however, that the link between the individual and nation-state was institutionalized and further

solidified. In *The University in Ruins*, Bill Readings gives a lucid, concise explanation of why the citizen became the primary concern of the nation-state. He writes that

instead of being subject to the arbitrary rule of a monarch, the modern citizen becomes the subject of a nation-state, a state whose political discourse is legitimated by recourse to the collective enunciation of a subjective 'we,' as in the phrase 'we, the people.' Hence the aim of the modern state is the revelation of the identity of a national-subject. (45-46)

Historically, the university provided the socialization necessary for individuals to move from that first person singular, "I" of the individual, to the first person plural, "we" of the nation. In this respect, the university offered the necessary training to ensure that young adults transitioned from individualism to a more collective understanding of his, and later her, responsibilities to a larger community. To frame this as a syllogism: the university prepares citizens; citizens do the work of the nation; the nation is therefore invested in the work universities do. This structure and mission remained unchanged for the better part of two hundred years. If anything, in those two hundred years there was a continued strengthening of that mission through the categorization of disciplines, canonization of texts, and general education requirements. In the past two decades though, there has been a major sea change in the university's mission, reflecting a transformation in social structures. No longer the bastion of national values, among other things the university now serves as a training ground for the vast transnational corporations that have become the economic foundation of global capitalism. Because the weakening of the nation-state provided the tipping point for change in the university, we would be remiss not to see this

as an opportunity to utilize the uncertainty of the university mission for meeting the challenge that Abani describes¹.

In this chapter, I explore how the shift in the university's mission necessitates a pedagogical shift in classroom dynamics, specifically a move away from the mythical autonomous individual supported in the Enlightenment university to an approach predicated on collective interpretive communities. I locate this pedagogical challenge in the literature classroom, specifically the postcolonial literature classroom. These spaces are discursive, fostering encounters with difference which require students to negotiate their relationship with others. I incorporate Mikhail Bakhtin's dialogical approach to reading to further demonstrate how the reading process is always already a social act. The postcolonial literature classroom is one of the most suitable locations for students to engage with questions of cultural difference. Not only does the engagement with this literature implicate readers in global power structures and questions of difference, postcolonial studies provide a vocabulary from which students are able to critically engage these issues. I work to re-imagine the possibilities of literature, transforming the perception about the act of reading from a solitary endeavor to one grounded in the responsibility to/for the other, a move which recognizes the inherently social nature of the educational experience. Using two literary examples as my guide, I draw on Salman

¹ In *Beyond the Culture Wars: How Teaching the Conflicts Can Revitalize American Education*, Gerald Graff, provides a slightly different trajectory and reading of the American university of the early 1990s. Graff, like Readings also acknowledges a shift, but Graff is more optimistic about the change that is taking place. He observes that "today's university is rocked by unprecedented conflicts is a measure of its vitality, not its decline" (4). Graff does not shy away from introducing these debates as a way to make the university a useful space of knowledge production. In my work, I incorporate both Reading's and Graff's perspectives, suggesting that a commitment to "doing justice of thought" (Readings 165) can be coupled with "teaching the conflicts" (Graff 15) as a way to create an environment conducive to an ethical engagement between reader and text.

Rushdie's *Midnight's Children* and Patrick Chamoiseau's *Texaco*. Through and extended reading of these two novels, I work to show why a bottom up, participatory approach to cosmopolitan community formation is a more effective and sustainable method of community development than a top down approach. Ultimately, this chapter works to provide a pedagogical intervention to the question of the university's responsibility to ethically engaging with difference in an era of globalization. This methodology allows for the possibility of the university maintaining its role in local, grounded communities but suggests that there is a larger responsibility that can be fulfilled through a commitment to theorizing knowledge production in the classroom.

Rise of the University of Excellence

The fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 served as both the symbolic and literal dismantling of Cold War binarism. The thawing of relations opened an unprecedented opportunity for the rise of global capitalism. Corporations were no longer restricted to operating within a network of "friendly" nations. The scope of their reach became limitless. As these transnational corporations grew, the importance of the nation-state eroded as it became less and less vital in defining an individual's identity because like money, culture was no longer tied to specific geographic designations. The result of making borders more porous was the increased cultural flows between locations (typically in one direction, from more powerful to less powerful). Previously, the nation-state had been the primary location where capital was reproduced, but the rise of transnational corporations provided an economic rival. As of 2000, 51 of the top 100 global economies were corporations (Anderson). The need for a class of global

technocrats to staff these transnational corporations has created a new way of understanding identity, located outside or between nations. It should be no surprise then that in this new economy, the university has started shifting its purpose from producing national subjects to producing employees of these corporations. Students are being prepared to enter into the world of global capitalism, but unlike previous generations of students, I would argue they are not as prepared to shoulder the responsibilities that arise from joining a larger community. Entering into a corporate culture can create a conflict of interest between working for share holders and humanity at large. This does not have to be a mutually exclusive dichotomy, as some corporations are dedicated to creating sustainable relationships between themselves and local communities, but there are many incidents which suggest corporate loyalty for the sake of profit comes before a commitment to others.

The fallout from the shift in the university from the Enlightenment *bildung* narrative to one that embraces a corporate model is that as students participate in their academic development, their allegiance can change from the imagined community that the nation-state provided to the mighty dollar. While I paint a bleak picture, the weakening of the nation-state need not be understood as entirely bad. The possibilities of multiple affiliations and identifications rise as the primacy of nation-state declines. This move also helps to break the binary thinking so easily propagated through nationalism. The exclusivity of the with “us” or against “us” mentality is harder to sustain under a strengthening global economic system, especially when we understand how easily the

money trail travels through national borders². As the flow of capital becomes more transnational, peoples' movements and commitments naturally become more transnational, yet higher education still relies on pedagogical models that produce a socialized individual. The question we must now ask is: what is he/she being socialized into? If becoming a citizen of the nation-state is no longer the *telos* of the education process, what community is the student being asked to join? Perhaps the most troubling question is: to whom or what does the student feel responsible to and for? In many ways, the current university system produces consumers: of culture, education, etc. As students leave the university, they are "no longer a political entity" (Readings 48) but trained to "move to meet the demands of the global market" (49). For me, this is a troubling sign because it indicates that students might lack the understanding of what it means to belong to a larger, imagined community. Under this current system, students potentially miss the ethical understanding of responsibility and obligations to others. The current university-as-training-ground helps students become financially adept and business savvy enough to enter the world of global capitalism, but does it help them understand what it means to be responsible to and for others? This newly emerging managerial class might feel at home in the world, but they are missing that accountability to others whom they share that world with because they no longer have the tools to imagine themselves as part of a larger community.

² That is not to say that the rise of a global economic system is entirely positive. The continued exploitation of the economically disenfranchised and the widening gap between rich and poor obviously necessitates a critique of the current system. For my purposes, I am examining the possibilities that arise out of increased global contact that comes from the continued trend toward a global economic marketplace.

Bill Readings' *The University in Ruins* describes a shift in the core value of the university from culture to excellence. Historically, culture has acted as the unifying principle which linked citizens to the nation-state. Formerly, the university provided that cultural education which helped create those bonds between individual and nation. This guiding attitude stems from the rise of the modern university which embraced Enlightenment values, signifying a shift from a society built around the church to one centered on the state. Today, however, the idea of excellence is adapted from business culture and provides a new model on how a university is to be run. Readings is critical of this move because he describes excellence as having "the singular advantage of being entirely meaningless, or to put it more precisely, non-referential" (22). "Excellence" becomes an arbitrary term used across disciplines to achieve some sort of universal standard. But what do you do when that standard is hollow? The fallout, as Readings' describes it, is that "the University of Excellence serves nothing other than itself, another corporation in a world of transnationally exchanged capital" (43). In the University of Excellence the state has been replaced by the corporation as the center of a student's life, but the troubling realization is that at the center of the corporation is a commitment to reproducing capital. What is lost for students is the ethical engagements with others outside of a totalizing economic framework.

The fallout from this shift is noticeable both inside the university and outside as well. Inside the university, the necessity to restructure and replace outdated departments and courses has become increasingly evident. No longer needed as an ideological arm for Cold War battles, the university has had to find its footing as a corporate identity. The

English department serves as a good location from which to view the struggle to understand the university's structure and purpose. The culture wars of the late 1980s and early 1990s, and even today, represent the battleground between those attempting to hold onto the university's roots in Enlightenment European thought and those who wish to see a plurality of epistemologies circulate through English departments and the university as a whole. Opening this space has proved to be a contentious process. The rise of the "culture wars" stems from "those who hold cultural power but fear that it no longer matters and those whose exclusion from that cultural power allows them to believe that such power would matter only if they held it" (114). This scramble for control neglects the realization that the center the university does not actually produce a coherent subject. Readings argues, and I agree, that "there is no ideal individual that might achieve either total self-consciousness or a harmonious, balanced relation to others and the world" (116). The centered subject of the Enlightenment university no longer exists, if it really existed beyond the imaginative. The "Culture Wars," perhaps best exemplified in battles over the canon, only serve as a diversion to the more important questions that arise from the shift in the university's mission, which is why I locate this shift at the systemic level of the university and not only a problem in English departments. Focusing only at the departmental level neglects the structural influence the university has on English departments, from funding for new tracks to turning English departments into skills based locations. If the mission of the university is no longer to be the inculcator of culture, than what is its purpose? In a "University of Excellence" can meaning be found? How can we use the structures in place to bring about a change to the university's mission?

When education is approached solely from a commodity exchange point of view, then the teacher / student relationship simply becomes about transactions. The teacher passes along skills, knowledge, or some other commodifiable ideas to the student so that he/she can then claim to be proficient in a particular subject. The scene of teaching loses one of its major characteristics, the ability to engage ethically with ideas and thoughts without reducing them to concrete terms. The fallout from this mentality is a university which could turn into a service based industry. Under this system, a diploma becomes the physical representation, the commodity if you will, of the transaction between university and student. While I project a rather pessimistic view of the contemporary university, I believe good work takes place and the potential for the university to critique the systems of power, particularly economic, with which it is engaged. For me, the way to accomplish this is through a shift in pedagogical commitment from a service based model for the individual to one which recognizes and interrogates knowledge production through collective engagements with learning. I do not want to suggest that the older, Enlightenment university was free from problems. On the contrary, its exclusive privileging of Western rationalism, socio-economic elitism, and reification of the nation-state structure are indeed problematic. What I am arguing is that there is a window of opportunity in the current historical moment as we see a shift from the primacy of the nation-state as the sole guarantor of culture and producer of capital to a transnationalism which opens up spaces between borders for new relationships and identities to form. Capturing the possibilities of this moment in the university requires resisting the continuation of the development narrative for the individual, especially now in economic

terms, and making visible the new connections across borders which require a collective commitment to an ethical engagement with knowledge production. It is in the classroom where this idea is manifested.

The Postcolonial Literature Classroom

By understanding how postcolonial literature can often work to subvert systems of power or commodification of knowledge, I argue that postcolonial literature is very receptive to, if not specifically calling for, a cosmopolitan pedagogical approach. Through the development of a community of learners environment, supported by a cosmopolitan ethos, we can reinvigorate the classroom space as one predicated on commitment to engagements with difference instead of the longstanding focus on the individual. By decentering the individual in the learning process, we can recognize the classroom as “sites of *obligation*” not simply locations of knowledge transactions (Readings 154). However, this is a challenging task in most literature classrooms because historically the canon has functioned to normalize cultural values, especially the *bildung* narrative, which emphasizes a telos to the education process, the formation of the citizen. What concerns me is the potential for the literary experience to stabilize culture through the transmission of values, norms, and beliefs from text to reader. As such, the experience of reading can become a way for students to tap into the collective unconscious of a culture and in turn adopt those characteristics to become one with the culture. This is not a foregone conclusion; a cosmopolitan pedagogical approach to reading carries with it the potential for the act of reading to destabilize those norms.

Creating an environment which unmoors student positionality and challenges readers to consider what it means to be a part of communities is part of the pedagogical process.

Surprisingly, reading remains thought of as a solitary act. The university often privileges canonical works which possess a centripetal force, normalizing and unifying culture. It is through the encounter with canonical texts that the reader negotiates the process of being included into a nation's imaginary community, but, interestingly, this is not perceived as a social process, instead, it is played out as an internal struggle. Lisa Lowe argues in *Immigrant Acts* that

the novel of formation has a special status among the works selected for a canon, for it elicits the reader's identification with the bildung narrative of ethical formation, itself a narrative of the individual's relinquishing of a particularity and difference through identification with an idealized 'national' form of subjectivity. (98)

The myth of the autonomous individual remains unchallenged and in some ways strengthened while simultaneously training students to be national subjects. In Chapter Four, I examine how postcolonial literature courses can work against the development narrative to disrupt that socialization process thereby challenging individuals to understand the self among others, but in this chapter, I am more concerned with creating classroom interactions that actively seek to cultivate community engagement with literature, arguing that it is not just about what students read but about how they read.

In challenging the solitary reading practice, I am working to build an environment committed to fostering collective engagements to knowledge. For Bill Readings, this move reframes the purpose of pedagogy and thus "teaching becomes answerable to *the*

question of justice, rather than the criteria of truth” (154). Spivak suggests that the responsibility a reader has to a text as one that is both singular and secret. Here “secret” does not mean outside of public, literally in secret, instead, it should be thought of as describing an intimate encounter. The important point that Spivak makes is that “ethical action is not an object of benevolence, for here responses flow from both sides. Yet on both sides there is always a sense that something has not got across” (270). It is this gap that prompts Spivak to make the seemingly paradoxical claim that “ethics is the experience of the impossible” (270). That is not to say that ethics are impossible but rather that ethics, like love, exists as something intangible and always becoming. My goal is to help students recognize the need for an openness to the other before they are faced with that literary encounter. This move establishes an ethical framework that provides the basis for the continued negotiation between self and other, reader and text. Since I argue that ethics is a dynamic process, I, like Spivak, understand its unattainability. What this means for readers is that ethical relations are always becoming and must constantly be renegotiated anew. I find that postcolonial literature is particularly effective in prompting students to consider questions of alterity that bring ethics to the forefront, while simultaneously ensuring that students remain mindful of their responsibilities to the text. In particular, postcolonial texts which challenge Western epistemologies, the autonomy of the individual, and the primacy of the nation-state are helpful because they bring into question many of the assumptions upon which students have built their worldviews. This destabilization of core beliefs the cosmopolitan pedagogy enables opens up the possibility of renegotiating some fundamental questions of knowledge

production. In this chapter, the particular question that I take up is the role that community plays in shaping knowledge production. Addressing these questions helps students understand that knowledge production is a collective responsibility to the other, not merely an individual experience. The primacy of the *bildung* narrative that has persisted in the university has continued to organize knowledge construction around individual encounters. Readers are inherently a part of a social world and the experience of reading takes place within that framework. Language by its very nature necessitates a social dynamic, but that dynamic is often constructed through ideology. Once again, situating this process in the postcolonial literature classroom, with its insistence on engaging with and interrogating oppositional frameworks and interrogation of power structures, helps call attention to those social forces that shape reader / text encounters.

Bakhtin's Dialogic Reading

Language does not exist in abstraction. It is situated in social contexts which communicate values, perspectives, and beliefs from the speaker/writer to the listener/reader and vice versa. Language works as the building block of alterity because it situates the other as present in the enunciative moment, linking the self and other but not collapsing them. The problem with believing that writing or reading occurs in isolation is that it ignores language's social construction. In failing to recognize that reading is a social act, we fail to see our connection with those material realities which produced the text, and I would argue, more importantly, we fail to see our connections with the shared imaginative experience which occurs across time and space when we read. As a result, when we do not implicate ourselves in the language we read or speak,

we escape that ethical responsibility to the other. Instead of sticking our head in the sand, so to speak, we should spend more time realizing how the text connects us to others.

Mikhail Bakhtin's dialogical approach to reading offers a helpful theoretical explanation of what occurs in that reading process.

Bakhtin suggests that every word enters into a dialogism, that is a continuous state of making and remaking based on what has come before and what is to come. His work resists any frameworks which attempt to render language, or to a larger extent culture, fixed. This constant fluctuation of words comes as a result of an ever mutable social system. Language is always becoming and no final word can ever be uttered because it is always unstable. The same theoretical perspective applies to texts. The "conversation" in, between and with texts constantly shapes and reshapes them, always suggesting the possibility of reading anew. This relational understanding of language really emphasizes the social nature of reading. In particular it shifts the idea of reading as a solitary act to one of community involvement. The more we can recognize ourselves among others, the more our reading experience becomes a collective activity. As Bakhtin so states: "the word in language is half someone else's" (293). What we do with that other half is a question of ethics. The presence of an other in language requires our participation in the preservation of that difference. That shared responsibility for language is the foundation of an ethical reading practice, particularly in the novelistic genre. As Bakhtin suggests in *The Dialogic Imagination*, the novel as a form encompasses a plurality of voices. That is, any given text has various voices, Bakhtin's way of articulating that many dialects and jargons are present within the novel. He explains this idea by suggesting that

the novel orchestrates all its themes, the totality of the world of objects and ideas depicted and expressed in it, by means of the social diversity of speech types and by the differing individual voices that flourish under such conditions (*Discourse in the Novel* 263)

Recognizing “social diversity” in a novel is one thing, but understanding ourselves as also a part of that heteroglossia is more difficult. Ostensibly, when we see the literature classroom as a dialogic space, it opens up as a location where ideas can be exchanged more openly. The institutional, centripetal pressures pushing toward coherence, unity of thought and commodified knowledge falls away in the recognition that the classroom walls are indeed permeable. In this regard, the reading process becomes a transcultural experience³. This understanding transforms how we see and imagine the classroom experience. It is not just students and teachers who make up the classroom community but also imagined others. The presence of these imagined others ask classroom participants to recognize their commitments to those beyond the physical space and time of the classroom. How we construct these classroom communities proves a more challenging experience than we might think.

One of Bakhtin’s lesser known theoretical concepts, addressivity, offers a way to reconceptualize the foundation of classroom communities. Bakhtin defines this concept as “the quality of turning to someone” (99). Thinking back to the first chapter which described basic cosmopolitan principles, we can see how Bakhtin’s addressivity echoes Ulf Hannerz’s definition of cosmopolitanism as “an orientation, a willingness to engage

³ Mary Louise Pratt’s “Arts of the Contact Zone” gives a good description of how the classroom space is characterized by the power dynamics that occur in cross cultural encounters. While Pratt focuses on the classroom dynamics, I choose to include the power dynamics exerted between reader and text as well.

with the Other” (239). Hannerz continues that cosmopolitanism “is an intellectual and aesthetic stance of openness toward divergent cultural experiences, a search for contrasts rather than uniformity” (239). Cosmopolitanism’s comfort with the centrifugal nature of dialogical reading allows it to work as an organizing principle in the classroom because it encourages the possibilities of living with difference. Therefore, when we understand that addressivity “requires addressees who participate together in the creation of the meaning of any utterance” we begin to understand that the process of literary interpretation is always a negotiation with difference which does not necessarily yield an “answer” (Dimitriadis 52). What is important about the process of interpretation is that it requires cooperation and participation both between reader and text but also between readers who work at building a collective reading of the text. The question then remains of how to construct a community which is essentially Janus faced, at once looking inward toward the classroom community but simultaneously looking outside the classroom walls as well. This challenge echoes Chris Abani’s paradox of, “How does one remain specific yet global at the same time?” (Abani 5).

Cosmopolitanism: Bringing us Together, Pulling us Apart

Cosmopolitanism offers a way to begin to work through Abani’s question of balancing local epistemologies with global responsibilities in order to create a community capable of meeting this challenge. By offering an extended reading of Salman Rushdie’s *Midnight’s Children* and Patrick Chamoiseau’s *Texaco*, I look to juxtapose two approaches to cosmopolitan community creation, a top-down model and a grass roots, participatory model of instruction. I turn to literary representations of these communities

with Gayatri Spivak's words in mind: "of course the literary is not a blueprint to be followed in unmediated social action, but if as teachers of literature we teach reading, literature can be our teacher as well as our object of investigation" (*Death of a Discipline* 23). In reading these two novels, not only do I examine two examples of how community is constructed to accommodate difference, but also I explore how those models might translate to community construction in the classroom.

Both *Midnight's Children* and *Texaco* undertake the same problem: how to manage the internal diversity of postcolonial communities in the wake of decolonization. *Midnight's Children* relies on the nation-state structure as a guiding principle, but it critiques this structure through the narrator Saleem's search for meaning and coherence as well as through the form of the novel. *Texaco* eschews the nation-state structure altogether, presenting a grassroots, local community as an alternative to the top-down approach incorporated by the nation-state. Both communities attempt the same challenge of unifying diverse populations under one community. How these communities are constructed determines to a large extent the relative success or failure of the overall mission. Historically, postcolonial nations have been plagued with famously disastrous results at replicating the European nation-state models. Civil wars, genocide, and ethnic cleansing are just a few ways in which these newly emerging nations have struggled with managing the internal diversity within their borders. Obviously, many of the current problems arise from the process of colonization that often worked to fracture communities and further stratify societies in order to more effectively and efficiently

govern them, but identifying the cause does not always provide the solution to the present concerns.

Both Salman Rushdie and Patrick Chamoiseau navigate the turbulent waters of identity formation with mixed success in their novels *Midnight's Children* and *Texaco*. In each case, narrators are charged with the responsibility of giving their personal histories in an effort to represent a larger community. However, the approach of the narrators, Saleem in *Midnight's Children* and Oiseau de Cham⁴ in *Texaco*, arise from opposite positions. The following lines from the novels exemplify this differentiation:

Consumed multitudes are jostling and shoving inside me; and guided only by the memory of a large white bedsheet..., I must commence the business of remaking my life from the point at which it really began. (Rushdie, *Midnight's Children* 4)

Little fellow, permit me to tell you Texaco's story...That's probably how, Oiseau de Cham, I began to tell him the story of our Quarter and of our conquest of City, to speak in the name of us all, pleading our cause, telling my life..." (Chamoiseau 27)

Saleem feels he is inextricably connected with India and therefore, his identity formation is tied up with India's identity formation, a kind of synecdoche. Rushdie's construction of Saleem as slightly inept and self-aggrandizing gives readers pause to think about the futility of what Saleem is attempting to accomplish. Saleem's attempt to find a way to manage the multitudes gets lost in his own fragmentation and eventual physical disintegration. Rushdie takes careful measures to ensure that Saleem can never work as a

⁴ There are several layers of narration in *Texaco*. In most cases this paper will deal with Marie-Sophie's narrative, however, in order to show the overall purpose of the narrative approach in *Texaco* it is important to use the quote from Oiseau de Cham.

stand-in for the nation. This move reveals the fundamental problem of attempting to stabilize difference in a unified narrative. Conversely, the narrator(s) in *Texaco* do not try to define the community of Texaco as some fixed identity. Instead, by narrating the history of Texaco through personalized accounts, Marie-Sophie hopes that the story of the formation of this community will contribute to its continuous development. The biggest difference in the narrators' methods lies in the approach to identity formation, specifically how they imagine the community they are trying to establish. In *Imagined Communities*, Benedict Anderson differentiates between how communities are perceived and conceived by explaining that "all communities larger than primordial villages of face-to-face contact (and perhaps even these) are imagined. Communities are to be distinguished, not by their falsity/genuineness, but by the style in which they are imagined" (6). Saleem attempts to implement his vision of India on the "amnesiac nation" (Rushdie, *Midnight's Children* 530) through a top down approach which utilizes a western nation-state framework, while Marie-Sophie hopes to take a bottom up, more grassroots manner of developing the Texaco community in which she draws on local epistemologies. The narrators are not acting independently though; their views of identity formation echo the philosophical approaches of their authors. Rushdie's concern for how India handles its heterogeneous populations manifests in Saleem's embracing of the "multitudes,"(4) however, Rushdie's playfulness in creating such a ridiculous character also reveals the limitations for cosmopolitanism in this context. Presenting a narrator as self-absorbed as Saleem uncovers the challenge of cosmopolitanism in a context which is so focused on the individual. Chamoiseau's belief in Creoleness shapes

the way community functions in *Texaco* and serves as a literary extension of his political and philosophical writings.

The inseparable histories of colonizer and colonized complicate the ability of self-definition for both individual and nation in these novels. It is impossible for an individual or a newly emerging postcolonial nation to gloss over that colonial period because it so deeply shapes the present. However, what can be done, and often with great struggle, is to take control of that history and reimagine it in order to achieve a better understanding of self. In fact, one of the challenges that the framers of these new communities are faced with is the very idea of community. In the case of *Midnight's Children*, Saleem is working with the traditional nation-state model, which carries with it a belief in the telos of the nation as a stable, coherent entity. Therefore, Saleem's energies are directed toward shaping the identity of India as a whole through a reflection of his own coherent subjectivity. This challenge is undermined throughout the novel by Saleem's own shortcomings, which lead to the opposite of unity, disarray. As Linda Hutcheon argues about *Midnight's Children* in *A Poetics of Postmodernism*, "Despite the presence of a single, insistent, controlling narrator - a writer who knows he both reports and creates public and private history - the (male) center of this novel is constantly displaced and dispersed. The search for unity (narrative, historical, subjective) is constantly frustrated" (Hutcheon 161-62). The sheer enormity and improbability of the project of pulling together India under one identity is made apparent by an impotent, balding narrator. On the other hand, in *Texaco* Marie-Sophie is working on a much smaller scale, not only because Martinique is much smaller, but also because she is

working on a micro-level approach to community formation. By the end of *Texaco*, Texaco, the community, is only a portion of the ever-encroaching “City,” however, it is clear that Texaco will not be completely subsumed by its relationship to City, maintaining an autonomy to grow and develop through an organic process. What is revealed in this process is that Marie-Sophie provides only one of many stories which complement and construct this community. The underlying principles that form the foundation of Texaco are located in the philosophy of Creoleness. The cornerstone of this philosophy, as stated in the essay “In Praise of Creoleness,” co-authored by Chamoiseau and Jean Bernabe, Raphael Confiant, and Mohamed B. Taleb Khyar, is to eventually achieve a pan-Caribbean culture whose diversity is the foundation of its unity. Chamoiseau and the other authors of this essay attempt to work with a model that breaks free from the traditional nation-state approach. The connection Chamoiseau incorporates is not based on nationality, but shared experience, specifically shared diversity.

In many instances, national or collective narratives effectively offer a person or a group a sense of shared experience, and therefore, shared identity. Timothy Brennan unpacks this idea, explaining that “nations, then, are imaginary constructs that depend for their existence on an apparatus of cultural fictions in which imaginative literature plays a decisive role” (8). Rushdie’s approach to writing a fictional India may have served to make sense of the “consumed multitudes” for himself but it also served a larger purpose (4). In “Imaginary Homelands,” he explains that “what I was doing was a novel of memory and about memory, so that my India was just that: ‘my’ India, a version and no more than one version of all the hundreds of millions of possible versions” (10).

Ironically though, *Midnight's Children* creates a space for those many multiple India's to come together to create a collective imagining through the novel genre. The shared experience that the novel creates allows readers to come together to collectively imagine community. Anthony Appiah argues that "if nationals are bound together, it is not *in propria persona*, but through their shared exposure to events: in folktale and novel and movie, in newspapers and magazines, on radio and television, in the national histories taught in modern national schools" (245)⁵. *Midnight's Children* works as a national text because, precisely as Appiah describes, it is a shared text. However, the novel ultimately works to describe the disintegration and fragmentation of the populations in India, but in doing so it provides a kind of collective belief that India will always be a cacophony of voices.⁶

Patrick Chamoiseau attempts a similar project with *Texaco*, writing a fictional narrative for Martinique. Yet, his narrative resonates on an even larger scale throughout the Caribbean and to the world, presenting a model of community development from the ground up, but even more importantly, it recognizes the intersubjectivity of all people thereby suggesting that difference is not something to be managed or consolidated but rather something to be understood as always already present in community construction.

Again, Appiah, in *The Ethics of Identity*, highlights the relationship between an

⁵ Appiah is working with the traditional nation-state model. His ideas of cosmopolitanism, specifically rooted cosmopolitanism suggests that there can be an allegiance to both nation and the world community. I think it is important though to note the model from which he is working.

⁶ A similar point is argued by John Su in his article, "Epic of Failure: Disappointment as Utopian Fantasy in *Midnight's Children*." Su concludes that "failure contains an implicit utopian promise. This promise locates in the unrepresentability of the future the possibility of unraveling deterministic national narratives and discovering political formations that are presently unimaginable" (17). Thus, there is a collective hope in the unimaginable.

individual narrative and the larger community. Appiah explains that “modern political communities ... are bound together through representations in which the community itself is an actor; and what binds each of us to the community – and thus to each other – is our participation, through our national identity, in that action. Our modern solidarity derives from stories in which we participate through synecdoche” (245). This idea of synecdoche, a part representing the whole, is a key concept in understanding how *Texaco* can speak beyond the local to the national and even regional communities. *Texaco* presents a participatory community in which each member’s participation contributes to Texaco’s growth. In *Midnight’s Children*, a similar endeavor is attempted, but rather than creating a dynamic in which the community is an actor in the collective imagining, Saleem becomes the central figure, absurdly connecting his birthright to India’s future, which in turn negates the possibility of bringing something larger than individual experience into existence.

As I mentioned earlier, the fundamental difference, and the determining factor in the sustainability or limitations to community development, is the approach of the implementation of the collective identity. *Midnight’s Children* offers an interesting look at community formation because it critiques communities whose premise is based on exclusivity, opting instead to look for cosmopolitan avenues for the creation of sustainable communities. One example Rushdie employs in order to critique community development is the formation of Pakistan. The example of Pakistan serves to show how a nation built on religious identification will never become fully functional. In Pakistan,

Saleem shows how “the Land of the Pure” (Rushdie, *Midnight’s Children* 328) is wrought with political and military dissention. Karachi, in Pakistan, is described as being

clearly constructed on top of entirely unsuitable cords, it was full of deformed houses, the stunted hunchback children of deficient life-lines, houses growing mysteriously blind, with no visible windows ... whose inadequacies as living quarters were exceeded only by their quite exceptional ugliness (354).

The description highlights the concerns about community formation. When the description of Pakistan is juxtaposed with Bombay, the differences are striking. For example, when Saleem describes Bombay’s origins and its growth, he traces difference through the various types of rice. Saleem states that “Patna rice, Basmati, Kashmiri rice travels to the metropolis daily; so the original, ur-rice has left its mark upon us all (103). While there are very clear origins, the influx of variety into the city only makes the city richer. In “Midnight’s Children” an essay for the collection *The Novel*, Homi Bhabha captures the energy that is generated in the descriptive passages of Bombay. He writes, “A mere taxi ride reveals the itinerant taxonomy of the material culture of this city where every detail registers both plenitude and plurality” (723). Bombay’s cosmopolitanism is privileged over Pakistan’s monoculture. However, Saleem does not spare India from critique either, calling into question Indira Gandhi’s regime for its intolerance. The two most important failed communities to examine are the magicians’ community and the Midnight’s Children Conference (MCC) because they illustrate the failure of both plurality and participation.

Saleem arrives at the magicians’ ghetto after a long exile from India, which involves time in Pakistan and in the newly formed Bangladesh. Upon Saleem’s arrival, India is

basking in the *glory* of Indira Gandhi's political reign in which "Mrs. Gandhi's New Congress Party held a more-than-two-thirds majority in the National Assembly" (444). There is a compulsion in Saleem after he arrives "to save the country" (444). Saleem's proclamation begs the question: save India from what? On the heels of this announcement, Saleem expresses his love for India, whom he refers to as his "true birth-sister," once again illustrating Saleem's self-aggrandizing attempt to write himself into history (444). This sibling love still does not fully explain what he is saving India from; it only gives a hint to his motivation. What I propose is that Saleem, (and Rushdie, whose motivation will be discussed later) is responding to the Congress Party's national narrative. With a two-thirds majority in the National Assembly, Indira Gandhi's party controls the direction and to a large extent the identity of India. Throughout the time Saleem spends in the magicians' ghetto, readers become increasingly aware of the strong critique Saleem offers of Indira Gandhi. The magicians' community tries to provide an alternative political philosophy in the form of communism. However, the magicians' ghetto is not successful in providing a competing political ideology to that of the Congress Party. In fact, Saleem explains that "the problems of the magicians' ghetto were the problems of the Communist movement in India; within the confines of the colony could be found, in miniature, the many divisions and dissensions which racked the Party in the country" (459). Not surprisingly then, this is another example of a failed community in *Midnight's Children* because of the fractured interests and objectives. Eventually, under the guise of the Emergency, the community itself is wiped out by

bulldozers sent by the Gandhi regime. They relocate but are never able to compete with the dominant political party and thus, their bid at shaping India's identity is denied.

With the failure of so many communities, Saleem searches for a different method and model from which to influence India's consciousness. From the time of his birth, he has cultivated an inextricable link between his identity and India's. Saleem's search for personal meaning is mediated through an absurdly self-important identification with the nation. Myths have long been a part of India's identity. Rushdie in talking about one common mythologized period in India history, the Nehru-Gandhi family, describes "myths as being composed out of compressed meanings. Any mythological tale can bear a thousand and one interpretations, because the peoples who have lived with and used the story have, over time, poured all those meanings into it. This wealth of meaning is the secret of the power of any myth" ("Dynasty" 48).⁷ In Saleem's attempt to challenge the new myths that are being created, particularly by Indira Gandhi, he decides to create his own metanarrative as a sort of birthright, his and India's. Saleem describes India at its birth as "a country which would never exist except by the efforts of a phenomenal collective will – except in a dream we all agreed to dream" (Rushdie, *Midnight's Children* 124). Yet Saleem continually undermines that possibility by constructing a

⁷ In the essay, "Dynasty," Rushdie goes on to explain that the Nehru-Gandhi family had a hand in developing the myth about themselves. He reserves his harshest criticism for Indira Gandhi and the Western leaders that attempted to reinterpret the Emergency. Rushdie is vehement in his disdain for the handling of those events, explaining that "It would, obviously, be possible to offer counter-myths to set against the mythologized Family. One such myth might usefully be that of Pandora and her box. It has seemed to me, ever since it happened, that the imposition of the Emergency was an act of folly comparable to the opening of that legendary box; and that many of the evils besetting India today – notably the resurgence of religious extremism – can be traced back to the days of dictatorship and State violence." (52).

narrative for India through his own unreliability and limitations. He reminds readers at the end of the novel that

I fell victim to the temptation of every autobiographer, to the illusion that since the past exists only in one's memories and the words which strive vainly to encapsulate them, it is possible to create past events simply by saying they occurred. (510)

What does this say about the prospects of creating a shared identity when the "dream we all agreed to dream" is a fiction (124)?

Outside of the Saleem's unreliability, there are two central problems with Saleem's idea of unifying India.. First, his method of creating an identity for India rests on the shoulders of one individual, even if Saleem does believe he embodies the diversity in India. Working as an individual, Saleem's only recourse is to impose his version of India on the population and the only manner in which he sees this task as achievable is through a top down approach. Even if Saleem's vision is positive, it still requires coercion. The approach is problematic and its methods can be seen in newly emerging political parties such as Shiv Sena⁸ and the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)⁹ which rely on unified idea of India. Saleem is unable to find a method of introducing his vision of India that does not require the same tactics as the ones employed by those he opposes. The other problem that Saleem faces is that he looks to the past and reinterprets or even mythologizes events in a hope that this will shape the future of India. At the end of his narrative, he even

⁸ Shiv Sena is the political party that is responsible for initializing and succeeding in the name change of Bombay to Mumbai.

⁹ The BJP party was formed in 1980 and it quickly catered to Hindu fundamentalists. This party is associated with *Hindutva*, a radicalized, fundamentalist version of Hinduism.

confesses that “new myths are needed; but that’s none of my business” (527). Saleem’s business seems to be a reinterpretation of India rather than a building and shaping of India. He looks to the past instead of preparing for the future. Saleem’s work concerning the past is his way of preparing for the future, but he never does anything tangible to impact the future, which is emphasized through his impotence. Perhaps he is leaving the job of creating new myths to his son Adam. In essence then, India’s identity is already established and Saleem’s job is to change the collective imaginings of people like Indira Gandhi and Shiv Sena. However, the difficulty of shaping other people’s imaginations lies in the fact that Saleem’s political vision, unlike that of Indira Gandhi and Shiv Sena, lacks both practicality and a physical manifestation, thus rendering his ideology ineffectual. In other words, the inability to find a participatory approach to identity formation for India means that one system is just replacing another rather than creating a transformative approach to national identity formation. Rushdie’s treatment of Saleem is an acknowledgement that the subject/nation equation is not sufficient, thus, the Saleem’s narrative and eventual fragmentation may be read as a space-clearing gesture, making room for other articulations of identity and belonging. This distance is emphasized in the novel’s structure which remains open ended and unfinished. The novel itself is a blending of styles, epic, oral narrative, magical realism, mythic, autobiographical, and more, but like Saleem, it cannot contain that heterogeneity in one coherent narrative.

The closest Saleem gets to seeing his ideology come to fruition is in the form of the Midnight Children’s Conference. This conference is comprised of the 1,001 children in India born in the hour of midnight in 1947. As a ten-year-old, Saleem unearths his

supernatural power – the ability to enter the heart and mind of any individual. Saleem carves out a space in his mind, which allows all of *Midnight's Children* to get together to discuss issues of national concern. He describes this group as a “sort of loose federation of equals, all points of view given free expression...” (252). The model that Saleem creates is similar to Habermas’s idea of “the public sphere.” Nancy Fraser describes Habermas’ concept as

a theater in modern societies in which political participation is enacted through the medium of talk. It is the space in which citizens deliberate about their common affairs, hence, an institutionalized arena of discursive interaction. This arena is conceptually distinct from the state. (2)

Saleem attempts to create a participatory space free from state influence, but this plan is fundamentally flawed. Habermas’s model stresses the need for equality of status in the forum in order to reduce power structures within this conceptual space, but as Fraser points out it has a history of soft coercion and exclusivity, which makes sense that Saleem would incorporate this model. Even a quick look at the model Saleem uses reveals the great inequality between himself and all the other participants. Saleem is the vehicle through which all the children participate. This indicates a very real issue of control. Saleem determines when everyone will meet, and perhaps more importantly, he knows what all of the members are thinking. The imbalance of power in this model already reveals cracks and fissures in Saleem’s public sphere. The lack of physical representation reveals another serious flaw of the *Midnight's Children* Conference that needs consideration. This conference takes place in virtual space, solely in Saleem’s mind, void of physical embodiment. There is never a physical gathering of the

participants, leading to concerns of the negotiation of physical differences and potential questions of gender equality. I recognize that this is an attempt to exist purely in an imaginative space in order to reconceptualize the problems the country faces, but this approach, like Habermas' public sphere, ignores very real issues of caste, class, and gender which can't be separated from the body. Additionally, this approach never impacts India in *Midnight's Children*, which is in stark contrast to how we see other political groups exercise their political ideologies. The dominant example is Indira Gandhi's Emergency. She takes very real action, action that Saleem does not seem capable of mobilizing. Indira does not let her slogan "Indira is India, India is Indira" ring hollow. Her actions against the magicians' ghetto demonstrate her frighteningly strong capabilities. Saleem's last recourse to shape India's imagination resides in the completion of his personal narrative. The problem that Saleem still encounters is that the physical action, the writing, is only a way to convince himself of his link with India's history, but as he admits, even those events are fictionalized. He still does not know how to enact a participatory approach to community development which can exist in material reality. Saleem's last ditch attempt, putting bits of his story into the pickles that are being bottled, seems destined for failure. If by chance, this method does work, it still employs a structural problem in that it relies on coercion rather than participation. That is to say, he would be convincing people to believe his dream rather than have them participate in the collective dreaming. The fact that Saleem cannot find a way to demonstrate his ideas leaves his task incomplete of both community identity formation and personal identity formation unfulfilled.

In *Texaco*, there is a clear progression of community formation, a distinct contrast from Saleem's attempts, long before Texaco is established. The failed communities in *Texaco* offer lessons that serve to ensure the success of Texaco's future. One of the most important lessons in the sustainability of a community is in how it is formed. Marie-Sophie understands the necessity of the bottom up, grassroots method of community building. Juxtaposing this bottom up style of development with the top down approach used in *Midnight's Children* emphasizes the elemental factors in creating a successful community out of a heterogeneous population. One particular contrast that merits attention is located in how public space is used to support this community development. In *Texaco*, the housing of Marie-Sophie's and the Urban Planner's documents at the Schoelcher library is of particular importance. The conceptual approaches in the two novels contrast greatly, that is not to say they should be reduced to successful or unsuccessful in regards to community formation, but they should be understood as engaging with the difficulties of community formation from heterogeneous populations.

Marie-Sophie, like Saleem, spends a large portion of her narrative on the past, for it is through historical events, private and public, that the present is shaped. However, while Saleem seems almost subversive with his desire "to include memories, dreams, [and] ideas" that will be "unleashed upon the amnesiac nation," (530) Marie-Sophie incorporates an approach that will allow the community to participate in her past as well as in her dreams for Texaco. One way in which she is able to create a collective past for Texaco is through chronicling the types of communities that precede Texaco. The communities that are presented in *Texaco* run roughly parallel to the historical

development of Creoleness as presented in “In Praise of Creoleness.” Marie-Sophie’s historical tracing of communities begins with “The Big Hutch” or plantation life. In this setting, the reader encounters Marie-Sophie’s father, Esternome. His struggle on the plantation reflects his inability to achieve self-determination. At the beginning of his life, his physical being as well as physical space is defined by the Beke. “In Praise of Creoleness” associates this period with the inability to achieve interiority. There is very little opportunity for self-definition with primary identification coming through one’s position as a slave. Through the course of Esternome’s youth, he is given increasing freedom on the plantation, which provides him with the time to be tutored by a Mentoh¹⁰. Esternome’s interaction with the Mentoh and his subsequent founding of the Nouteka community in the hills of Martinique reflect another step in the drive toward creating a successful community. Nouteka is an isolated community in the high hills of Martinique. The community learned to be self-sufficient, growing enough to keep themselves nourished. This step in the process of Creolization parallels Aime Cesaire’s philosophy of Negritude in that it draws on African traditions as a means of sustaining the community at the exclusion of other, local ways of being. However, ultimately Nouteka was not successful because it simply replaced one illusion, one created by the slave owners with another rooted in Africa, denying opportunities for a plurality of being. Chamoiseau et al. level the same criticism at Cesaire’s Negritude, while still crediting it was an important step towards creolization. They argue that “Negritude replaced the

¹⁰ Mentohs serve as the preservers of the collective humanity of the slaves. They maintain the roots of slaves with Africa.

illusion of Europe by an African illusion” (889). But they are quick to note that “it was a necessary dialectical moment, an indispensable development” (889). Nouteka eventually fell prey to the lure of “City,” nevertheless, it was a necessary step toward creating a community that has a connection with its past. Nouteka lived under the illusion that the past could be re-created in the high hills of Martinique, but it did not recognize that the fluidity of culture, embodied in the heterogeneity of the present, prevents a turning back to what was. The Martinican landscape is a blend of cultures and ethnicities and retreating to an unattainable precolonial period ignores the complexity of identity on the island.

City serves as the point at which the diversity of Martinique meets, but this community was not without problems either. When Estrenome and the remainder of the Nouteka community left the hills for “City,” they faced the danger of losing the little bit of past they recovered while living in Nouteka. Marie-Sophie describes the trap of “City,” saying,

City they say, everyone wants City and starts running to it like flies to syrup, but I, posted here, I see the other side of the light, I know the wanderings which peel memories, I see the scales of the seven headed beast, I feel its blood, its chiggers, its filth, its slops; they say City, they want City but what to do with all of this, where to throw it, City mingles its feet in City and no longer knows what to do with its own body, they say City I say the *beke's kitchen*. (Chamoiseau 281)

This step from Nouteka to City mirrors the step in creolization from Césaire’s Negritude to Édouard Glissant’s Caribbeanness. Caribbeanness moves beyond the European and African illusions and instead examines what comprises Martinican society. However, the same danger that Estrenome and Marie-Sophie face in City was faced in realizing

Caribbeanness. Chamoiseau and his co-authors of “In Praise of Creoleness” explain that “the paths of penetration in Caribbeanness were not marked out. We went around them for a long time with the helplessness of dogs on board a skiff” (890). It is clear that there is a progression happening in the development of community. The exteriority as seen in the plantation community is giving way to an interiority that allows individual as well as community self-definition. The culmination of this progression is materialized in Texaco.

The construction of Texaco, then, mirrors the construction of Creole identity. Marie-Sophie erects the first home in Texaco, and “then things went very fast. My hutch attracted other hutches. Word about the place blew about like the wind” (Chamoiseau 300). Marie-Sophie may be the founding mother, but she does not control the direction in which Texaco will grow. By looking at the labyrinth-like layout of Texaco, it is difficult to say who is responsible for Texaco’s growth. It seems to be an organic movement that works in harmony with the landscape and the residents. The community is confronted with the rationalizing principles of the Urban Planner when he comes to survey Texaco’s development. The nature of the Urban Planner’s job suggests his proclivity for organization and order and because he represents City, Texaco’s future ability to maintain its own, local logic is questioned. Through the telling of her tale, Marie-Sophie convinces the Urban Planner of Texaco’s necessity. In turn, the Urban Planner relays to the Word Scratcher, Oiseau de Cham, the reason for preserving Texaco. He explains that “crossing out Texaco as I was asked to do, would be like amputating a part of the city’s future and, especially, of this irreplaceable wealth which is memory”

(336). The Urban Planner acknowledges the dual purpose of Texaco, preserving history and creating the future. This history and the possibility of future are also embraced by Marie-Sophie's narrative. Her story becomes as important as Texaco itself.

As recognition of the importance of Marie-Sophie's words and the Urban Planner's understanding of the creole city, Marie-Sophie's notebooks and notes of the Urban Planner are housed in the Schoelcher Library¹¹. In *Midnight's Children*, Saleem tried to create a democratic space in the form of the Midnight's Children Conference. It failed because of its inherent inequality. Saleem controlled the forum and others did not have a share its making. The Schoelcher Library achieves the democratic space that *Midnight's Children* failed to because it truly is open to all. There, community members can read, consider and interpret these documents in a way that is not dependent on one person. This allows Marie-Sophie's story to serve as a foundation for the history of Texaco and Creoleness. Unlike Saleem, Marie-Sophie is not trying to write herself into history. She is providing her history so that others have a history to imagine. Through this effort, she is able to create the "collective fiction" that Saleem fails to achieve (*Midnight's Children* 125). Marie-Sophie echoes this point at the end of the novel when she expresses her hope that her words are "sung somewhere, in the ears of future generations, that we had fought with City, not to conquer it (it was City that gobbled us), but to conquer ourselves in the Creole unsaid which we had to name – in ourselves and for ourselves – until we

¹¹ The Schoelcher library was originally erected in Paris in 1889 as a part of the Paris exposition. After the exposition, it was dismantled and shipped to Martinique. There it housed the library of French abolitionist, Victor Schoelcher, and was subsequently named for him. The Schoelcher library has been and remains an active library and is open to all. By situating Marie-Sophie's transcripts here, Chamoiseau suggests the communal nature of her text and the suggestion that there is that same communal authorship of Texaco.

came into our own” (Chamoiseau 390). Her journey to Texaco is the journey toward Creoleness, and in order for this life-philosophy to flourish, its past must be documented. By the end of the novel, Texaco is so firmly entrenched in the landscape that not even Marie-Sophie’s death seems to slow the development of this community. Marie-Sophie started as the lone voice of Texaco, but at the end of the novel, listening bureaus have been established to hear the chorus of voices that are Texaco. These listening bureaus serve as a space of collective concern for the community. Power does not reside in one pair of hands, but instead is hoist onto the shoulder of all the residents. In order for Texaco to function, it must draw on all of its inhabitants to participate in Texaco’s day-to-day reality. Through the tangled maze of houses rises a Creole identity for which no one person is responsible for. It can only be achieved through the collective will of a people.

Chakrabarty’s History 1 and History 2

Dipesh Chakrabarty’s *Provincializing Europe* offers a useful way of framing how *Midnight’s Children* and *Texaco* work within larger narrative structures¹². As I have already looked in depth at how these communities are constructed, I believe it is necessary to shift to locate the work that these texts are undertaking within a larger historical narrative of Enlightenment modernity. By exploring how they work within and

¹² I choose to focus on how these novels work within Chakrabarty’s History 1 and History 2 designations, but I would be remiss if I did not recognize the gendered aspects of these novels which serve a similar purpose, namely to comment on hegemonic and counter hegemonic community constructions. Specifically, there is room to examine Saleem’s attempt to construct community through top-down means, while noting Rushdie’s critique of that model through Saleem’s impotence. Additionally, *Texaco* can be read to represent a feminine model of community development through Marie-Sophie’s organic approach to building Texaco which incorporates the traditions of past generations and the diverse voices of the current community.

against this tradition, we can see how *Texaco* begins to interrupt the totalizing forces of European thought and history. Later in the chapter, I will further explore how Chakrabarty's use of History 1 and History 2 provide a way of understanding the role that cosmopolitan pedagogy can function in the classroom through a disruption of the standard Enlightenment narrative of university mission. For now, I concentrate on how these two texts work with Chakrabarty's theory. In *Provincializing Europe*, Chakrabarty examines how historicism within the academy has played a part at universalizing European history and thought, one example is the privileging of the nation-state as "the most desirable form of political community" (41). As such, all other projects must juxtapose themselves with this standard. Chakrabarty suggests that his project is not a rejection of European modernity but rather a project which writes "into the history of modernity the ambivalences, contradictions, the use of force, and the tragedies and ironies that attend it" (43). He continues to add that subaltern groups have benefited from many of these modern political structures but there is a history of "repression and violence that are ... instrumental in the victory of the modern" (44). Making these moments visible displaces "hyperreal Europe from the center toward which all historical imagination currently gravitates" (45). This move opens a space for once silenced histories to become evident in the project of modernity.

Chakrabarty's use of History 1 and History 2 is helpful when thinking about the work that *Midnight's Children* and *Texaco* undertake. Chakrabarty situates these histories within Marx's writing on capital. History 1 is a totalizing project which takes any antecedents to capital and frames them in terms of the logic of capital. In other words

History 1 “forms the backbone of the usual narratives of transition to the capitalist mode of production” (63). The project of History 2 is not to subsume History 1 and take its place but rather it “is better thought of as a category charged with the function of constantly interrupting the totalizing thrusts of History 1” (66). History 2 then provides resists the universalizing tendencies instead locating itself in the “multiple ways of being human and their relationship to the global logic of capital” (67). *Midnight’s Children* directly engages with the logic of the nation-state to attempt to provide a structure for holding the multitudes that are India. Instead of working to disrupt that totalizing narrative of modernity, Saleem attempts to fit the plurality of being in India into this nation-state framework, but the result is not a coherent individual or nation, but instead a disjointed, fragmented person and narrative. In this regard, *Midnight’s Children* presents itself as a History 2 project. When we think about how Saleem is constantly battling the Indira Gandhi regime, we can see how this novel is also working to disrupt that “official” history created by political figures. And thus, it should not be surprising that *Midnight’s Children* pushes figures like Mohandas Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru to the periphery to present an autobiographical, however problematic, account of India’s emergence. Part of the work that *Midnight’s Children* undertakes is to critique and undermine the dominant narratives which have circulated about India through an absurd, unreliable narrator whose ambitious goal of his and India’s autobiography remains incomplete and inconclusive. The novel opens a space to challenge authorized histories and leaves an opening for counter narratives to emerge. Community formation in *Texaco* provides an insightful contrast to *Midnight’s Children’s* but still engages with a form of History 2. In

Texaco, Maria-Sophie's narrative serves to disrupt the totalizing presence of City. While *Texaco* may become incorporated by City, it still will make visible "the politics of human belonging and diversity" (67). *Texaco*'s community, with its ramshackle housing and labyrinthine streets challenges the city planners organizing principles, calling into question the totalizing logic presented in City. Existing side-by-side with City, *Texaco* accomplishes what Chakrabarty argues for, namely "diverse ways of being, the infinite incommensurabilities through which we struggle – perennially, precariously, but unavoidably – to 'world the earth' in order to live within our different senses of ontic belonging" (254).

Thinking about these two novels within Chakrabarty's History 1 and History 2 opens a way to see the different projects which they undertake. *Midnight's Children* remains committed to destabilizing Enlightenment projects which attempt to stabilize the individual and the nation-state as coherent entities. The novel challenges the sovereignty of these two identities and insists that replacing one top-down approach to identity configuration with another will only result in futility. Saleem attempts to be the modern individual; after all he is born precisely at the moment of India's recognition as a sovereign nation. However, he never finds a path to be able to provide an alternative to this construction. I am not suggesting that Saleem should attempt to or even could overturn that tradition, but it does speak to *Midnight's Children's* inability to locate the voices that offer counter-narratives to the narrative of modernity. By contrast, *Texaco* is committed to providing a community whose very presence is a manifestation of that challenge. Chakrabarty reminds us though that these communities "while documentable,

will never enjoy the privilege of providing the metanarratives or teleologies of our histories. This is partly because these narratives often themselves bespeak an antihistorical consciousness, that is, they entail subject positions and configurations of memory that challenge and undermine the subject that speaks in the name of history” (37). Marie-Sophie’s history is one of the many histories which make up Texaco. The role of that history in the logic of modernity is as a spectral presence which haunts the universal and totalizing project of History 1. The presence of the transcripts of Marie-Sophie’s narrative history in the Schoelcher Library gives hope that it will be included as a part of City’s past.

Cosmopolitanism at Work

While it is insightful to look at the success and failure of communities from the actions of the primary characters in these respective works, it is perhaps more important to examine the underlying political ideologies at work. In *Midnight’s Children*, Rushdie appears intent on embracing and celebrating the diversity in India. In “the Riddle of Midnight: India, August 1987,” Rushdie expresses how he has always viewed India. He writes, “I come from Bombay, and from a Muslim family, too. ‘My’ India has always been based on ideas of multiplicity, pluralism, hybridity: ideas to which the ideologies of the communalists are diametrically opposed” (32). These thoughts shed light not only on Rushdie’s cosmopolitan view of India, but the competing views as well. Rushdie’s cosmopolitanism is not universalist in its approach, namely because it works inside the framework of the nation-state. The cosmopolitanism that was popularized in the 1990s stressed the bond created at the supra-national level. However, in India there is so much

diversity, and as a result, Rushdie seems to be proposing the idea of not finding how all humans are connected but rather how Indians are connected through its diversity. Rushdie's ideological outlook seems motivated by the rise of communalism and nationalism in the 1970s and 1980s. He even goes so far as to credit Indira Gandhi's emergency with "the resurgence of religious extremism" currently facing India (Rushdie, "Dynasty" 52). Rushdie's displeasure with the nationalist and communalist revival is palpable, but he does not appear to have a concrete answer for it, much in the way Saleem is unable to battle the same forces. In some respects, the failure of Saleem to draft an autobiographical narrative of India is Rushdie's success. The inability to close off India into a unified narrative ironically opens it up to the myriad of voices which inhabit the country. Rushdie has commented that "writers and politicians are natural rivals. Both groups try to make the world in their images; they fight for the same territory. And the novel is one way of denying the official, politicians' version of truth" (Rushdie, "Imaginary Homelands" 14). The idea of writing a competing narrative for India is a step toward proactiveness. By creating a narrator so self-aggrandizing and incompetent, Rushdie parodies the project of creating a national narrative. As Linda Hutcheon explains in *A Theory of Parody*, parody works

not only to restore history and memory in the face of the distortions of the 'history of forgetting,' but also, at the same time, to put into question the authority of any act of writing by locating the discourses of both history and fiction within an ever-expanding intertextual network that mocks an notion of either single origin or simple causality. (29)

The novel is not a failure because it cannot find a way to reconcile the plurality of being in India, but a success because of this. It works to create space for other narratives to emerge. Saleem's attempt to create a top-down model for managing difference is ultimately flawed but there is hope that India will be able to keep moving forward in spite of this. Rushdie supports this reading, believing that his only recourse is to have faith that "the old functioning anarchy will, somehow or other, keep on functioning, for another forty years, and no doubt another forty after that. But don't ask me how" (Rushdie, "the Riddle of Midnight: India, August 1987 33). This powerlessness that Rushdie expresses manifests itself in a character like Saleem and renders his attempts at community development ineffectual. My one critique of Rushdie's perspective is that he relies on an elite cosmopolitanism, as described in chapter one, in which only a select few have the ability to move across difference seamlessly. Rushdie's childhood background in Bombay prepares him to recognize the diverse populations in India, but he fails to recognize the difficulty that rural communities in India might face in embracing the plurality of identities in India. Those communities do not have the same access or voice in the process of national construction and as a result they become recipients, many times unwilling, of structural change. Because Rushdie's cosmopolitanism lacks development, he is left with a bumbling narrator who doesn't know how to connect across difference. In some ways, both Rushdie and his narrator are left with a hopeful dream of the possibility of an India united in diversity. While Rushdie's dream is admirable, it does not provide any ways to reach across to neglected and underrepresented voices, especially compared to Chamoiseau's work.

Chamoiseau faces a similar challenge in creating a political ideology that promotes inclusion of the diversity in the Caribbean, but specifically Martinique, as opposed to the exclusivity that occurred under colonial rule. Chamoiseau's solution, and the one he presents in *Texaco*, is Creoleness. As opposed to Rushdie's brand of cosmopolitanism, Chamoiseau's Creoleness is a well-conceived philosophy. In fact, two years before *Texaco* was written Chamoiseau, along with several co-authors, wrote "In Praise of Creoleness" which laid the groundwork for the premises of Creoleness. This essay does not just examine what it means to be Creole or how it takes shape in art; it looks to the future and declares that "the claims of Creoleness are not just aesthetic in nature, as we saw, they also have important ramifications touching on all fields of activity in our societies, and especially the most fundamental ones: political and economic" (904). Chamoiseau's use of Creoleness in *Texaco* allows the *Texaco* community to identify with a concrete philosophy. He spends time showing the development of the philosophy in the form of the failed communities that precede *Texaco*. Whereas Saleem is falling apart at the end of *Midnight's Children*, Marie-Sophie develops a rootedness not only with the land, but also with the community due to Chamoiseau's pan-Caribbean Creoleness. Marie-Sophie has gathered the scraps of material available to her and created a successful community, much in the way that Chamoiseau has gathered the tattered history of Martinique, represented by Asians, Africans, Europeans, and the indigenous peoples, to form the Creole community. The reader leaves this nascent community knowing that a plan is in place. For Chamoiseau, *Texaco*, both the community and the novel, is merely a starting point for the further development of Creoleness in the Caribbean region.

In putting these two novels into conversation, we can see that they both are working to destabilize official histories, but we also see two different ways of opening a space for difference to be recognized. *Midnight's Children*, through its fragmented narrative structure and disintegrating narrator, creates an opening for the possibilities of other narratives to emerge. *Texaco* shows what happens when those voices join together through a grassroots, participatory effort at the creation of a community. Rather than seeing these novels as simply successes or failures at community development, it is helpful to consider the scope and scale of the projects as well as what both of them ultimately accomplish. Through Saleem, Rushdie has created a space-clearing gesture from which to initiate a shift from official national narratives to individual imaginings that might make up the collective fiction that is India. Marie-Sophie, on the other hand, has no difficulty enlisting help in *Texaco's* construction. By the end of the novel, she is just one of the residents of *Texaco*, and while her link to its formation is noted by the preservation of her words, she is no more responsible for *Texaco's* future than the rest of its residents. The benefit of Marie-Sophie's approach is not only recognized in the sustainability of *Texaco*, but in the recognition that each individual has an opportunity to contribute to *Texaco's* growth. *Texaco* is an example of a community that maintains a commitment to local epistemologies, as seen in the architecture and construction of the houses, while recognizing the demands that City, the region, and to some extent world are placing on it. In this regard, *Texaco* is fluid between the individual and the community and between the local and the regional, offering a space that can adapt to meet the demands placed on it

From the Novel to the Classroom

Echoing Spivak's words, we need to remember that "literature can be our teacher as well as our object of investigation" (*Death of a Discipline* 23). Thinking about community formation in *Midnight's Children* and *Texaco* helps teachers not only re-imagine the classroom space and consider ways of constructing a space which embraces a commitment to recognizing the social nature of literary engagements, but also offers insight on how to construct a community equipped to deal with encounters with difference. One of the principle features of these novels, the destabilization of the belief in sovereign subjectivity, opens a space for a counter-hegemonic cosmopolitanism which works through the recognition of the presence of the other within the self. As such, learning becomes accountable not only to recognizing the presence of the other but also in Spivak's terms, "learning to learn from below" ("Interview with Gayatri Spivak). Additionally, examining these two novels provides contrasting social formations which attempt to embrace the naturally heterogeneous populations which comprise their communities. Translating these models to the classroom requires an imaginative engagement with the underlying social structures. Looking at how these communities are organized and run offers insight into our own pedagogical challenges, to encourage Chakrabarty's formulation of a disruptive History 2, which creates a space for difference.

What a cosmopolitan pedagogy can accomplish is a commitment to acknowledging and incorporating the voices of those that have been silenced by official histories. Incorporating marginalized voices into the process of knowledge production provides a way to positively incorporate the natural heterogeneity that comes from the reader/text

encounter. By participating in this project of creating new knowledge, students are faced with the challenge of accountability to and for others. Walter D. Mignolo describes participatory cosmopolitanism as a project which is designed to include not only the voices of those whom Enlightenment modernity has been imposed upon, but also it connects those outlying positions to each other in order to create a new organizing principle based on a plurality of voices and positions instead of always working through the “center.” Mignolo explains that

A cosmopolitanism that only connects from the center of the large circle outward, and leaves the outer place disconnected from each other, would be a cosmopolitanism from above, like Vitoria’s and Kant’s cosmopolitanism in the past and Rawls’s and Habermas’s cosmopolitanism today, and like the implications of human rights discourse, according to which only one philosophy has it ‘right’ (184)

If we imagine what the flow of conversation looks like in a participatory cosmopolitan classroom, we can see that the discussion moves in a more dynamic and fluid manner, much in the way that Texaco grows organically from its surroundings. Students bounce ideas between each other and build a community of learners environment from their interpretive acts. This model provides the recognition of the inherently social nature of the literary engagement by turning the very process of interpretation into a collective event. The individual is no longer the center of the class and thus the process of knowledge production shifts from an individual, internalized endeavor to a collective responsibility for what is being produced. This approach ultimately asks readers to be responsible for creating collective readings which respect the multiple points of engagement with texts. Ultimately, this model works as a History 2, in Chakrabarty’s

terms, to reconnect “the relationship between thought and modes of human belonging” (255). The universalizing tendency of History 1 “produce forms of thought that ultimately evacuate the place of the local” (254-55). What my pedagogical approach attempts to do is repopulate the local in the universal through a cosmopolitan pedagogy which recognizes the social and collective process of reader / text engagement, thereby carving out a space for difference in the classroom and beyond it.

From Theory to Practice

To illustrate the point of how power is decentered in the classroom, I will draw on an example from my teaching experience. During my first semester of teaching a university class, the composition director visited my freshman composition class for a formal evaluation. The class went really well. We discussed the use of *Ethos*, *Logos*, and *Pathos* and their use in academic settings and outside the classroom. I worked through inductive reasoning, allowing students to draw from what they already understood. To say the least, I was proud of that class. Later that week, I was scheduled to conference with the composition director about the class. I had no trepidation walking into the director’s office; after all, I felt that the class went extremely well. As the conference proceeded, I began to recognize that the class was not as perfect as I had imagined. The issue that began to emerge was the flow of conversation in the classroom. While I thought that the students were particularly talkative, I did not pay attention to how that conversation was managed. The director showed me a flow chart of the conversation and after every student comment, there was an arrow pointing back to me. Looking at the entire map of the conversation, it became painfully clear that I was the center of the

conversation. Even when students contributed to the discussion, their comments had to be filtered through my acknowledgement or response. The result is that authority was centralized in the classroom, inhibiting students from learning from each other.

Today, my classroom dynamics are completely different. I have become ultra aware of my presence in the classroom and the need to decenter that authority. Accomplishing this task is a complicated process. I utilize assignments, manipulate the physical space in the classroom, and alter the types of responses to students in order to achieve a classroom more consistent with a cosmopolitan pedagogy's goal of learning to learn from others. Rather than presenting material for students to respond to, I always utilize a student discussant nearly every class period. The student is responsible for setting the agenda for a particular reading. This requires them to think through the plan for the day and consider what they hope to accomplish. This type of accountability changes the way students approach texts, thinking about how they will engage others in discussion rather than rendering the text static by trying to "find the meaning." Most students are uncomfortable in this role, but that discomfort often produces positive outcomes because it asks students to move from passive recipient of material to actively engaging with it. The second aspect I have changed, repositioning myself within the classroom, seems simple but causes a dramatic change in the focus of a classroom. Due to class size and types of classrooms, I am often not able to reposition the desks. As a result, the traditional model of student rows with the blackboard at the front is what I am often forced to use. The way I break the flow of everything facing forward is to simply sit amongst the students. Since I have a student presenter, there is usually someone at the

front of the room who draws attention. However, when the teacher sits with the class, it breaks the traditional roles. Students appear more willing to turn to face the person they are responding to or to hear what others are saying. This creates a slightly more dynamic class where the physical orientation towards others is noticeably different from traditional models. The final change, altering the type of responses to student comments, is the component which stimulates interaction in the class. Instead of simply reforming and recasting student comments to fit my goal for a particular discussion, I incorporate more response questions and connective comments. For example, when a student makes a point about a text, I might respond with a follow-up question for that student or for the entire class. This helps initiate that continued conversation. Additionally, from time-to-time I will respond to a student comment by connecting it with something another student has said earlier. This way, I am fostering dialogue in the classroom at moments when students might not see those connections. As a teacher, I can change the flow of conversation, even building new lines of communication where students might not have seen them. When I look at flow charts of discussions in my classroom now, I see arrows pointing from student to student or if a comment does come to me, it continues on, connecting with another student. Understanding this in Mignolo's cosmopolitan framework, the center / margin structure that was in my classroom and that is a part of the power structure of elite cosmopolitanism gives way to a model in which the margins are connected directly to each other instead of through the center. What this means for knowledge production in the classroom is that students can and should learn from each other instead of just from the teacher. Accomplishing this task is a matter of pedagogical

intervention in the classroom. Utilizing cosmopolitan principles of orientation toward others and fostering dialogue across difference helps build the methodology to support such a system.

Exploring community in the classroom is more than just making an argument for discussion based classes versus lecture format classes. While I am arguing explicitly for a dynamic environment which does incorporate collaborative learning, I also believe that making visible the heteroglossia of language, of literature, and of the classroom creates an environment in which learning is a product of an encounter with difference. Using the reader/text relationship as a starting point, this project works to help students build the ability to recognize the call of the text and respond ethically. In this way, a cosmopolitan pedagogy can work to provide a mission for the university outside of simply stocking companies with employees. A cosmopolitan pedagogy establishes the foundation for what it means to belong to the global community today. Through these pedagogical practices, students can respond to Abani's challenge of remaining "specific yet global."

CHAPTER V

THE UNHOMELY COSMOPOLITAN: ADRIFT IN THE GLOBAL PUBLIC SPHERE

Martha Nussbaum argues in her 1994 essay “Patriotism and Cosmopolitanism” that “becoming a citizen of the world is often a lonely business” (15). She goes on to add that cosmopolitanism does not create a community akin to family, “it offers only reason and the love of humanity, which may seem at times less colorful than other sources of belonging” (15). Nussbaum’s essay sparked a multitude of responses, affirming her position and critiquing it, which are assembled in the collection *For Love of Country?*. Interestingly both Nussbaum’s critics and supporters find her construction of cosmopolitanism as a solitary endeavor problematic, arguing the need for thick relationships grounded in local affiliations. The most recognized theoretical response to Nussbaum’s depiction of the rootless individual, Kwame Anthony Appiah’s rooted cosmopolitanism, explores the possibility of the simultaneity of local and global responsibilities. In “Cosmopolitan Patriots” Appiah uses his father as an example of someone who negotiated the local / global divide through multiple relationships, including affiliations to the Asante region of Ghana, Ghana, England, Africa, and the world. On the opposite end of the cosmopolitan spectrum, Gertrude Himmelfarb gives a strong defense for the exclusivity of rooted identity, stating that “we come into it [the world] complete with all the particular, defining characteristics that go into a fully formed

human being, a being with an identity. Identity is neither an accident nor a matter of choice. It is given, not willed” (77). Himmelfarb maintains that “parents, ancestors, family, race, religion, heritage, history, culture, tradition, community –and nationality ... are not ‘accidental’ attributes to the individual. They are essential attributes” (77). Himmelfarb refuses to acknowledge the privileged position that informs her critique, but additionally, she categorically dismisses the potential for identity develop through encounters with difference. While Appiah and Himmelfarb present two radically different approaches to rooted identities, they do agree on one thing: the necessity of local affiliations, which work to establish a sense of place for individuals, grounding them in a specific historical temporality. I am no Nussbaum apologist, in fact, I would argue her work oversimplifies many of the complexities inherent to cosmopolitanism, but I do think she raises an interesting point about cosmopolitanism being a “lonely business.” Far from being at home in the world, a phrase which has come to represent new cosmopolitanism especially with the publication of Timothy Brennan’s 1997 work, *At Home in the World: Cosmopolitanism Now*, I argue that there is a contemporary cosmopolitan who emerges from the postcolony as an unhomely figure. The rooted cosmopolitanism so popular since the 1990s, is a privileged condition only open to those who have the economic and cultural capital to smoothly transition from one community to another. The unhomely cosmopolitan I write of is produced from the margins and is recognized in locations of cultural difference, migratory wanderings, and diasporic displacements. In this chapter, I explore how the unhomely cosmopolitan emerged from the colonial encounter, displaced yet displacing Enlightenment narratives of modernity.

Additionally in this chapter, I explore two potential unhomely cosmopolitans, one from the colonial subject position and one from the postcolonial subject position. I juxtapose the experiences of Marlow in Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* and Elvis in Chris Abani's *GraceLand* to reveal how the colonial enterprise which ultimately grounds Marlow within a specific historical tradition unhomes Elvis from tradition and nation. In exploring these two cases, I demonstrate how the unhomely cosmopolitan is a product of a colonial modernity which destroys narratives of belonging and development which exist outside of a Western Enlightenment tradition and continues this legacy today in the form of a globalization.

The Unhomely

Das Unheimliche, Freud's term which expresses the repressed desires which return to haunt an individual, is derived through a negation of the German term "*Heimlich*." "*Heimlich*" has two principle meanings. First, it can mean of or belonging to the home while the second definition suggests something concealed or hidden. Freud pulls these two definitions together which allows us to understand *Heimlich* as something that combines the security and familiarity of the home with something private or to be hidden. The home, understood as a private space, a location at once secure and intimate is shielded from public view. If *Heimlich* means of the home or familiar as its first definition, then the first rendering of *Das Unheimliche* is understood to be something unfamiliar. Similarly, the second definition of *Heimlich*, private or concealed, then yields "revealed" as its opposite. Put together, *Das Unheimlich*, then emerges to suggest a defamiliarization of the familiar. Translated from German, the term "uncanny"

characterizes this condition. In “The Uncanny” Freud incorporates Friedrich Schilling’s definition which further explains the state of uncanniness. Schilling explains that “‘*Unheimlich*’ is the name for everything that ought to have remained secret and hidden but has come to light” (Freud, “The Uncanny” 224). David Huddart elaborates:

for Freud the uncanny contains its apparent opposite: if the canny is the homely, what is close to home, it none the less has a tendency to morph into the profoundly unfamiliar, the uhomely, which alienates or estranges us from what we thought was most properly our own. (83)

The uncanny is a haunting, a presence of something familiar from the past which disturbs the present. As such, it interrupts the sense of cohesiveness of the present, through a memory of the past, yielding an uncertain future. It is in this regard, the disturbance of what we thought was sacred, safe, or pure, that Homi Bhabha begins to make the transition from a purely psychoanalytic approach to the uncanny to one grounded in cultural difference. But before Bhabha can make that theoretical leap, he is indebted to Kristeva’s inquiry into identity politics and the uncanny. Kristeva’s work also serves to link the uncanny with a cosmopolitan tradition, developing the idea that alterity is always already a part of the individual prompting a universal condition of otherness.

Julia Kristeva’s *Strangers to Ourselves* links the uncanny with subjectivity in order to suggest an always already present alterity within the self. She characterizes the uncanny as a depersonalization in which the alterity of “the other leaves us separate, incoherent” (187). It is the very foreignness of the other that “shocks me” (187), but that shock emerges in the familiar space of the self, interrupting a unified subjectivity. Kristeva moves her work beyond the individual, showing how the same characteristic of the

uncanny is at work in the nation-state. For Kristeva, as the unified subject of the individual dissolves, so does the coherence of a unified the nation-state. This move is encapsulated in the following enthymeme from Kristeva “the foreigner is within me, hence we are all foreigners. If I am a foreigner, there are no foreigners” (192).

Kristeva’s argument disrupts the narrative of a coherent, unified nation-state through the presence of difference as always already a part of the nation. Colonial projects’ reliance on binary logic resisted the presence of the other within the nation, suggesting that there was distinction between the “us” and “them” and this oppositional framework marked those differences through contrasts such as enlightened / primitive, modern / traditional, and unsurprisingly white and black. However, it is from the position of the margins, liminal spaces, and colonies that the initial fissures of an imagined national unity emerge. Rather than denying the presence of difference, Kristeva suggests that embracing it provides an ethical foundation for our relationships with others, enabling the possibility of living with the irreducibility of difference. This implicitly cosmopolitan perspective suggests a way to recognize that the difference of others is always already a part of ourselves. The outcome of this approach is a universal condition of otherness.

Cosmopolitanism can arise out of being unhomey in the world rather than at home in the world because it forges a collective bond of displacement, creating identification with the other as the foundation for an ethical relationship across difference. When we recognize our unhomeiness, we are calling “ourselves disintegrated in order not to integrate foreigners and even less so to hunt them down, but rather to welcome them to that uncanny strangeness, which is as much theirs as it is ours” (192). Colonialism was

particularly damaging because while it brought peoples into contact, it divided, classified and ordered according to difference established by European thought. Not only was this a denial of the presence of the difference within the self, it was a reaffirmation of the difference between self and other. For Europe it reified their positionality as the center of modernity and displaced other traditions. For cultures and individuals from the colonial margins, colonialism was the force of displacement from that which was home, namely culture and tradition. Under globalization, the same type of dynamic is taking place. As I have explored in the previous chapters, the dissolution of the nation-state as the primary political identity has opened a space for new conceptions of belonging, in particular cosmopolitanism. However, there are two types of cosmopolitanisms which emerge from globalization; one squarely in the tradition of colonial modernity and one from the postcolony. Cosmopolitanism which emerges from European Enlightenment traditions is a privileged cosmopolitanism which caters to those who are rooted in a specific historical tradition that recognizes and legitimizes their location. The cosmopolitanism from the margins, what I refer to as an unhomey cosmopolitanism, is a disorientating and destabilizing project that casts individuals adrift outside of narratives of modernity. I believe there is an agency possible for the unhomey cosmopolitan through a collective solidarity that connects at the margins and through the margins rather than seeking legitimization through the West in order to introduce new ways of being which can destabilize the normativity of the European Enlightenment narrative. Kristeva describes this form of cosmopolitan as project which cuts “across governments, economies, and markets, [and] might work for a mankind whose solidarity is founded on the

consciousness of its unconsciousness – desiring, destructive, fearful, empty, impossible” (192); it is an unhomely cosmopolitanism.

Bhabha picks up on this turn of the uncanny from a psychoanalytic position to a political one and argues for a politics of cultural difference as a way to recognize this space of enunciation. Bhabha reads the uncanny through cultural terms as a way to establish this Third Space of difference in which “the border between home and world becomes confused; and, uncannily, the private and the public become part of each other, forcing upon us a vision that is as divided as it is disorienting” (“The World and the Home” 141). The condition Bhabha describes is necessarily a product of the postcolony. The postcolonial nation emerged with the promise of “modernity outside the tutelage of colonialism,” but contemporary globalization has undermined that project (Gikandi 610). In the postcolony, the nation-state structure takes on an ambivalence becoming “both the form that structures modern identities and the sign of their displacement and alienation” (615). As Simon Gikandi argues in “Globalization and the Claims of Postcoloniality,”

recognition of the ambivalent role nationalism plays in the construction of culture, and the insistence that culture can actually flow between national boundaries, undermines one of the key terms in the narrative of modernity – the assumption that cultures are, by their nature, national in character. (615)

In the postcolony, the nation becomes the site of unhomeliness; it is at once a location of identification yet simultaneously it produces an estrangement. Bhabha unpacks culture’s uncanniness through a look at how culture intrinsically possesses and produces a location of ambivalence. At once, culture maintains its hold and idea of cohesiveness through communal commitments and actions. The familiarity of these beliefs creates a shared

sense of intimacy and security, forming the bounds of the nation-state. However, culture necessarily defines itself in opposition to other cultures in order to establish its uniqueness. Thus the presence of the other reinforces the unity of a culture. The presence of this cultural difference which represents the uncanny, the existence of that which would compromise the homogeneity of culture, destabilizes the originary myth of culture as fixed. For Bhabha, in the postcolony, this state of unhomeliness “marks a deeper historical displacement” initiated through colonialism (LC 18). Once this myth of culture as being tied to nation has been destabilized through many forces, but in particular globalization which promotes flows of capital as well as people through increasingly porous borders, identity no longer rests on geography. With culture no longer intimately tied to the nation, the state apparatus has a vested interest in securing the link between nation and state in order to maintain its legitimacy. In the case of Nigeria, the location of Chris Abani’s *GraceLand*, the construction of a nation by England out of numerous different tribes reinforces the artificiality of the nation as a cohesive culture while simultaneously solidifying Englishness through these colonial projects. As a result, a novel like *GraceLand* marks the disruption of the postcolonial nation-state, which culminates in the emergence of the unhomely cosmopolitan. However, before the emergence of the unhomely cosmopolitan from the postcolony, colonial projects created a cosmopolitan who was rooted in the historical project of colonial modernity. Marlow in *Heart of Darkness* is the epitome of this colonial cosmopolitan.

If the colonial cosmopolitan is rooted in history through colonial modernity, the unhomely cosmopolitan is cast adrift from “a deeper historical displacement” (Bhabha,

LC 18). This state is not merely to be homeless, in fact, it carries “the condition of extra-territorial and cross-cultural initiations” (LC 13). As such, it suggests an unmooring of individuals and communities from their rootedness, opening up a space for negotiations with cultural difference. Often that uprooting has been forced on individuals through slavery, war, and more recently economic globalization. Yet, those negotiations with cultural difference play out in public and private spaces initiating moments of enunciation, which loosen the grip of a homogenizing, ordinary past and open the future to an unknown heterogeneity generated from encounters with difference. Emerging from this state of unhomeliness is the unhomely cosmopolitan who surfaces as an unintentional consequence of history and enters an “unhomely world, to find its ambivalences and ambiguities” and “affirm a profound desire for social solidarity” (LC 27). In the remainder of the chapter I explore two literary characters, *Heart of Darkness*' Marlow and *GraceLand*'s Elvis, to show how they are products of historical rootedness and historical displacement. These characters are located at both ends of the colonial spectrum, representing the indelibly intertwined relationship between colonizer and colonized, but it is through that entanglement that a cosmopolitan ethos emerges, questioning the public and the private, the local and the global and prompting a consideration of cultural difference through a shared alienation.

Heart of Darkness

At the outset of *Heart of Darkness*, Marlow, sitting apart from the rest of the passengers on the *Nellie*, breaks into story, startling his passengers, gesturing toward a connection between their position on the Thames and the outlying, colonial world.

Marlow is surrounded by the pillars of British colonial society, the captain, who is a Director of Companies, an accountant, a lawyer, and the unnamed narrator. These men represent successful British society whose wealth is likely to have emerged from Britain's growing empire. Marlow's assertion that "this also ... has been one of the dark places of the earth" (9) reminds the passengers and readers that England does not exist outside of history. Its legacy is one in which empire has played out on these very shores. The narrator's description of Marlow also reinforces his unique position of being connected to these passengers but also situated as an outsider both in his physical location on the boat and because of his experiences in Africa. The narrator explains that

Marlow was not typical ... and to him the meaning of an episode was not inside like a kernel but outside, enveloping the tale which brought it out only as a glow brings out a haze, in the likeness of one of these misty halos that, sometimes, are made visible by the spectral illumination of moonshine. (Conrad 9)

This portrayal of Marlow suggests that all meaning is framed within a historical context, specifically a colonial historical context. Marlow's story is brought to light by this context and that "spectral illumination of moonshine" reveals the haunting of the unhomely brought about by colonialism. The colonizer's position is elaborated when Marlow explains how the Romans must have felt when they entered Britain. He tells us through the anecdote of an imagined Roman colonizer that "he has to live in the midst of the incomprehensible" and "it has a fascination ... that goes to work upon him" (10). The opening of Marlow's tale situates listeners, both on board the *Nellie* and readers, as implicated within colonial modernity. This move prevents ahistoricization of events and reminds us that readers are always working through a historical legacy of colonialism.

The oral narrative frame technique employed in *Heart of Darkness* acts as the means by which the world is brought into consciousness of Marlow's shipmates and readers. The frame narrative provides a bond between speaker and listener, writer and reader that extends beyond content of the message to connect at a basic level of alterity. As Ihor Junyk observes in "Beyond the Dialectic: Conrad, Levinas, and the Scene or Recognition," "language is not primarily important because of the constative statements that it is able to make, but as utterance addressed to the Other" (149-150). The specifics of what is said is not necessarily what is most important, but the relationship created through the telling of the tale suggests that an ethical relationship must unfold between speaker and listener. It is important to note that we do not hear the story directly from Marlow. Instead, it is through the unnamed narrator that the tale unfolds, suggesting a continuance of the ethical obligation between speaker and listener from the unnamed to narrator and from the reader to the unnamed narrator. It is not the specific relationship between the narrator and Marlow but the frame which carries the obligation to otherness. Junyk's argument echoes the distinction Levinas makes between the Saying and the Said. The act of saying places listeners under a responsibility for the other. Levinas articulates this point in *Totality and Infinity* by arguing that

[t]he saying is a way of greeting the Other, but to greet the Other is already to answer for him. It is difficult to be silent in someone's presence; this difficulty has its ultimate foundation in this signification proper to the saying, whatever is the said. It is necessary to speak of something, of the rain and fine weather, no matter what, but to speak, to respond to him and already to answer for him. (88)

This position is reinforced midway through the novella when the unnamed narrator in the pitch black darkness reveals that “I listened on the watch for the sentence, for the word that would give me the clue to the faint uneasiness inspired by this narrative that seemed to shape itself without human lips in the heavy night-air of the river” (Conrad 30). The “uneasiness” that the narrator feels is characteristic of the unhomely. Marlow’s tale breaks down the barriers between public and private that separate English homes from the colonies. The barrier between domestic life in England and their colonial endeavors allowed England to maintain a sense of blissful ignorance to the ravages of colonialism while resting comfortably at home. Marlow is the messenger from those colonies, arriving to unsettle the dominant narrative of English history which has categorically excluded peoples on the periphery from having a voice in shaping the world. However, Marlow’s complicity in the colonial project, even while carrying the other of history in his tale, historicizes his actions in a colonial framework, locating his participation in a racist project. As such, Marlow tests the limits to which he could be characterized as an unhomely cosmopolitanism. While Marlow feels disoriented by his experience in Africa, he fails to transcend the historical context which shapes his worldview. The unfortunate fallout from Marlow’s implication within the historical narrative of colonial modernity is that the ethical framework of the saying and the said, that responsibility to and for the other, only serves to recognize European bonds at the exclusion of the colonial other. Through the frame narrative, *Heart of Darkness* risks reifying and recreating the binary opposition between colonizer and colonized with each subsequent reading.

Marlow's journey from Belgium to Africa and ultimately to Kurtz's compound is one of continuous disorientation, for Marlow and readers. Marlow attempts to resist the incomprehension by reaffirming an Enlightenment narrative of rationalism in which "I belonged to a world of straightforward facts" (17). Through his work and his mission for the Company, for a time Marlow was able to resist the advancement of a destabilizing uncertainty. Readers get signs along Marlow's journey of the continuing absurdity of the proceedings. Situations ranging from French gun boats aimlessly lobbing cannon balls into the African coastline to an almost maniacal desire for rivets serve as a reminder of the ever increasing meaninglessness of the journey. Marlow is able to fend off those feelings of ridiculousness, but as he traveled further up the river, it was like "traveling back to the earliest beginnings of the world, when vegetation rioted on the earth and the big trees were kings" (35). In this pre-historic state, Marlow confronts the disquieting silence that "did not the least resemble a peace; It was a stillness of an implacable force brooding over an inscrutable intention" (36). Conrad's depiction of Marlow's unearthly surroundings sets up a contrast between an Englishman and the African environment. Conrad's use of setting is problematic though in that it reinforces the logic of colonialism which suggests that Africa remains untamed, and it is in this wilderness that the enlightened man must rely on his civility to battle the incomprehensibility of Africa. Conrad does not provide readers with a vantage point from which to critique Marlow's racism. Readers are left to understand this narrative through Marlow and the unnamed narrator who are located within that colonial project, and as a result, rather than interrupting an enlightenment narrative of progress, *Heart of Darkness* works in

complicity with this project. Ultimately, the outcome is not an unhoming for Marlow but instead a fixity within history and modernity. Rather than working against binaries, which Marlow seems to suggest at the outset of the narrative by suggesting that England was once a dark place, his racist discourse reinforces a binary logic between England and Africa.

What Marlow finds in Kurtz is someone who has recognized the other within the self but exploits it through his own aggrandizement. Rather than seeing the other within the self as a moment of ethical engagement, Kurtz asserts his dominance over the other. Instead of taking responsibility for the other's difference, and recognizing that difference within his own subjectivity, Kurtz reigns over the other. As Kristeva reminds us in *Strangers to Ourselves*

The uncanny strangeness can be evacuated: 'No, that does not bother me; I laugh or take action – I go away, I shut my eyes, I strike, I command . . . ' Such an elimination of the strange could lead to an elimination of the psyche, leaving, at the cost of mental impoverishment, the way open to acting out, including paranoia and murder. From another point of view, there is no uncanny strangeness for the person enjoying an acknowledged power and a resplendent image. Uncanniness, for that person, is changed into management and authorized expenditure: strangeness is for the 'subjects,' the sovereign ignores it, knowing how to have it administered. (190)

This passage is frightening in its similarity with Kurtz's behavior. The paranoia and power that Marlow sees in Kurtz is not borne of insanity but arises from Kurtz's refusal to acknowledge his relationship to the radical other. As such, Kurtz assumes the power position within the tribe he joins. The heads on the fence are signposts of Kurtz's denial of a responsibility to others. While members of the colonial infrastructure condemn

Kurtz because he has become a threat to the power of the company, Marlow realizes all too well that “all Europe contributed to the making of Kurtz” (50). Kurtz’s behavior is an implication and indictment of all Europe, of all colonial missions. This is what makes Marlow’s actions so important both in terms of passing along this story but also in confronting Kurtz’s Intended. There is an opportunity to interrupt that legacy, but instead, we see Marlow’s participation in its perpetuation.

As readers witness Marlow’s journey down the Congo, descending ever deeper into a world of unhomely alterity, they see his behavior in response to being confronted by the other who puts the self into question. While Marlow must consider the cultural otherness of the indigenous people in Africa, it is Kurtz who ultimately wakes Marlow up to an always already present alterity which recognizes the other’s difference. It is precisely this point which gives credence to Achebe’s critique of *Heart of Darkness*. Achebe’s argument that the novel “projects the image of Africa as ‘the other world,’ the antithesis of Europe and therefore of civilization” is problematic (252). It is clear that *Heart of Darkness* establishes “Africa as a foil for Europe” (251) and “depersonalizes a portion of the human race” (257) for the purpose of recognizing the other within the European self. Marlow and Kurtz are provided an exotic backdrop from which to play out a European narrative of development. At times the novel seems to disrupt that narrative but without a vantage point to critique the practice, the participants only reinforce the colonial project, rooting them in an historical context. The principles on which colonialism rests are sometimes problematized but ultimately the gendered structure of the narrative reinforces colonial practices. In particular, the depiction of Africans as primitive and childlike and

women, both in Africa and in England, as dependent on European men for their understanding of the world positions the novel within colonial discourse.

Just as Marlow observes that “the earth seemed unearthly” as he travels into the interior of Africa, he is similarly feeling displaced when he returns to the sepulchral city, Brussels. Marlow returns to the imperial center with a different burden of responsibility. He has unyoked himself from the responsibilities of being a good company man but now carries with him Kurtz’s legacy. This new burden which grew out of sharing Kurtz’s last moment, a moment which afford Kurtz the opportunity to peer into the abyss and sum up. Kurtz did sum up what he saw which is captured in the infamous refrain, “‘The horror! The horror!’” (68). As he describes, “it is his extremity that I seem to have lived through. True, he had made that last stride, he had stepped over the edge, while I had been permitted to draw back my hesitating foot” (69). Marlow has come face-to-face with Kurtz’s and it is from that moment that he has “remained loyal to Kurtz to the last” (70). One way of reading this moment, which reinforces the fixity of Marlow and Kurtz within a colonial modernity, is to think of this as a moment of self-discovery afforded to men by colonialism. Rather than unhomeing Marlow through the insight into the colonial mission, the commitment to Kurtz grounds Marlow. That loyalty is played out upon Marlow’s return to Europe in which the narrative of colonial brutality is hidden from Kurtz’s Intended. Rather than carrying back a cosmopolitan unhomeliness from Africa, Marlow carries back Kurtz’s legacy, a legacy steeped in colonialism, rooting them both to European modernity.

Marlow's arrival in Belgium underscores the distance he feels from the everyday workings of a society which ignores the presence of the colonial other. This is the same society which contributed to Kurtz and ultimately abandoned him for acting out the end game of colonialism. If "the conquest of the earth" is only redeemed by "an idea at the back of it" then Kurtz has shattered that design for Marlow (10). When he sees "the sight of people hurrying through the streets to filch a little money from each other, to devour their infamous cookery, to gulp their unwholesome beer, to dream their insignificant and silly dreams," he is disgusted by "the assurance of perfect safety" (70). Yet, Marlow cannot quite let go of the binary construction that colonialism produces. The critique that Marlow momentarily offers when observing city life in the streets of Belgium is immediately undermined when he arrives at Kurtz's Intended's home.

Marlow arrives at the Intended's front door with Kurtz's words weighing heavily on his mind. It is a moment in which readers wonder if Marlow will shatter the illusions of the domestic space, bringing the world into the home, revealing the presence of the colonial other even in the private space. Marlow recalls a conversation with Kurtz in which Kurtz explains that the ivory he has collected "at a very great personal risk" will more than likely be claimed by the Company (72). Kurtz continues, now pondering to Marlow, "what do you think I ought to do – resist?" (72). Ultimately, Kurtz concludes "I want no more than justice" (72). With those words echoing in his ears, Marlow "rang the bell before a mahogany door" (72). The justice that Kurtz and Marlow are contemplating is not material; it is not about compensation for ivory, instead it is about recognition of who Kurtz was and what he represents. The Company has turned away from Kurtz,

writing him off as an outcast, but Marlow struggles to uphold Kurtz's project. Marlow enters the Intended's home as "dusk was falling" (72). In the drawing room, Marlow waits in contradictions of "monumental whiteness" and "dark gleams" for her (72). In the drawing room, Marlow gives an account of his relationship with Kurtz and Kurtz's final moments. As he narrates these events "the room was growing darker and only her forehead smooth and white remained illumined by the unextinguishable light of belief and love" (73). This battle of light and dark is the battle between public and private, between self and other. Marlow has brought the world into the Intended's home and is set to break down the illusion that was established through a colonial regime. When Marlow is asked what Kurtz's last words were, he backs away from taking the final step of shattering the lie that has held the empire together. In his essay "Beyond Evil in *Heart of Darkness*," Lewis Livesay argues that "the 'lie' at the heart of the novella stems from the rationalizations of civilization itself, fostering our blind commitment to comfortable ways of reading, consuming, and possessing the marginalized other" (93). Marlow responds to the Intended's question with a lie of his own, that Kurtz's last word "'was – your name'" (75). Marlow remarks that "the heavens did not fall for such a trifle," but he does wonder "would they have fallen ... if I had rendered Kurtz that justice which was his due?" (76). He surmises that telling her the truth "would have been too dark – too dark altogether" (76). At once Marlow fails to break down the barrier between domestic and public sphere and is forced to withdraw from this space to one more suitable for his station.

We are quickly transported in the last paragraph of the novella from the drawing room back aboard the *Nellie*. Marlow is once again placed in context with his peers, which is noticeably a gendered space, but readers get a sense of increasing distance between Marlow and society; the very loneliness of the cosmopolitan of which Nussbaum spoke. The unnamed narrator reinforces this underlying distance through a spatial depiction: Marlow was sitting “apart, indistinct and silent, in the pose of a meditating Buddha” (76). The colonial project which created in Marlow a privileged cosmopolitanism also separates him from his companions and it is only through the frame narrative that they are linked. I return to Levinas to express the intentionality of the saying which places the listener under a responsibility for the other. It is Marlow’s enunciative moment that brings him into being and asks for recognition of his alterity from the listeners for himself and for Kurtz, but their denial of the presence of the African other reinforces a Eurocentric cosmopolitanism. In doing so, the listeners must grapple with the recognition of alterity but within a colonial framework. Earlier in the novel, we are reminded of the power of the saying. The narrator interrupts Marlow’s tale, showing the impact it is having on him. He says, “I listened, I listened on the watch for the sentence, for the word that would give me the clue to the faint uneasiness inspired by his narrative that seemed to shape itself without human lips in the heavy night-air of the river” (30). What is evident in this statement is the trace of otherness that lingers in the saying, unsettling the narrator. As I mentioned earlier, it is the frame narrative itself that provides this otherness rather than Marlow’s tale. His tale is one which ultimately upholds a colonial narrative of modernity. Marlow’s cosmopolitanism is produced

through colonial modernity, and as such it is grounded in a racist discourse which does not provide a space for the world-in-the-home and the home-in-the-world. The limitations of Marlow as an unhomely cosmopolitan are because of his fixity of position. If as readers we are to recognize and respond to Marlow's alterity in the way that Marlow has done for Kurtz, we risk reifying a colonial positionality. Rather than interrupting an Enlightenment narrative of modernity, *Heart of Darkness* upholds many of the conditions which made colonial projects work. What this reading provides is a limitation to the possibility of an unhomely cosmopolitan who works within a colonial structure, but it is through the displacement that those structures create that gives rise to an unhomely cosmopolitan from the postcolony.

GraceLand

At the tail end of the twentieth century, we find the unhomely cosmopolitan, dealing with an uncanniness borne out of colonialism, emerging from a failing postcolonial nation-state. Elvis Oke, the protagonist in Chris Abani's *GraceLand*, is alienated from himself and his surroundings. The novel alternates settings between Elvis's boyhood village of Afikpo and the bustling, labyrinthine mega-city, Lagos, in order to juxtapose what it means to be "home" both in terms of family and in terms of the nation-state. The move to Lagos also provides a space to explore the flows of global capital in order to showcase an increasingly neo-colonial Nigeria, further illustrating the challenge of the postcolonial nation-state to provide a home for its citizens in an era of globalization. In fact, it is the Nigerian government's struggle to maintain its power that ultimately pushes Elvis from his home into an unfamiliar world. Elvis' unhomely cosmopolitanism arises

from self-preservation and necessity more than from a willingness to embrace the cultural difference which emerges in the interstitial space Elvis inhabits at the end of the novel. Abani's critique of the postcolonial nation-state not only implicates corrupt domestic regimes that attempt to bring order to Lagos and ultimately Nigeria, but it extends to readers as well. Through Elvis' displacement, Abani also disturbs reader appropriation of the novel, challenging readers to problematize narratives which suggest the possibility of authenticity. Elvis' sense of unhomeliness is then mirrored by readers' own sense of displacement, occurring from the critique of narratives of develop, ultimately leading to a space in which reader and text come together in recognition of the presence of the self within the other.

Fashioned as a contemporary *bildungsroman*, *GraceLand* tells the story of Elvis Oke's coming-of-age, tracing his growth from a rural Nigerian community, Afikpo, through the slumscapes of Lagos, leaving Elvis on the precipice of transnationality. The *bildungsroman* structure generates reader expectation that Elvis will emerge from his experiences a fully integrated member of Nigerian society. Historically, the *bildungsroman* form has worked to tie the modern subject to the nation through a narrative of development, culminating in socialization of the individual into society. As Lisa Lowe argues in *Immigrant Acts*,

the novel as a form of print culture has constituted a privileged site for the unification of the citizen with the 'imagined community' of the nation, while the national literary canon functioned to unify aesthetic culture as a domain in which material differences and localities were resolved and reconciled. The novel of formation has a special status among the works selected for a canon, for it elicits the reader's identification with the bildung narrative of ethical formation, itself a

narrative of the individual's relinquishing of a particularity and difference through identification with an idealized 'national' form of subjectivity. (98)

Reading Lowe's assessment of the *bildungsroman* through Elvis' failed socialization, the novel challenges the "idealized 'national' form of subjectivity" (98). By resisting the development of a unified subject, the novel is enacting a fluid subject, defined only through its mutability. As Elvis contemplates the many ways of being in Lagos (traditional Igbo path, anti-governmental protestor, street hustler, criminal, just to name a few), so too must the reader reconcile with the plurality of being in Lagos. Elvis' assertion at the end of the novel, that "nothing is ever resolved...[i]t just changes," opens a space of ambiguity for readers in which they are required to read Elvis on his own terms instead of through a national framework or some anthropological study of Nigeria(320). By destabilizing the nation-state structure and any perceived authenticity of Nigeria, Abani works to create solidarity through a shared uncertainty instead through national identification. As Abani attests in an interview with the *South China Morning Post's* Bron Sibree, *GraceLand*

hinges on the question of becoming. How we become who we are. What we really become is not so interesting to me, because I think that whenever we think we've become something we are just catching our breath before we begin the transformation again. So the books are always about moments of change. (5)

Placing this constant mutability of identity in the *bildungsroman* genre problematizes a coherent national identity. *GraceLand* eschews the telos of the classic *bildungsroman*, socialization, in favor of an instability which asks readers to constantly renegotiate their expectation of what it means to belong. Readers are left to consider a heterogeneity of

being, even within the nation-state. The space that Elvis inhabits is an unhomely space, at once familiar but ultimately alienating.

In addition to appropriating European literary traditions, Abani incorporates traditional Nigerian literary techniques but also pushes the genre forward in new directions. In general, Abani works against the traditional reception that African novelists act as native informants to the West. He argues that “[t]he West wants you to be a good African, and there’s a little dance you have to do. But the Nigerians ... have their own expectations for how you should represent Nigeria. And you, the writer, are stuck in the middle, trying to find a sense of integrity” (34-35). Abani recognizes the double bind that many emerging writers of postcolonial literature face.

They are in a catch-22 of recognizing the demands from both the domestic and international audiences. Caught up in a paradoxical relationship, many African novels have incorporated this genre which was borne out of European tradition but attempt to make it fit the contours of non-Western life. The established normativity of the novel as European in origin has reshaped how novels from “the periphery” are received. Eileen Julien develops this argument fully in “The Extroverted African Novel.” Her contention that the African novel¹ is one that faces outward, toward the center “represent[ing] locality to nonlocal others, be they expatriate communities abroad, other African nationals on the continent, Japanese, Europeans, Brazilians, or U.S. students” (684). This turning outward can be a productive gesture. When a text calls to the reader across culture, it also welcomes the reader into a transcultural space. When postcolonial

¹ One particular type of novel from Africa. I would also argue that other literary traditions, such as those from the Caribbean and India also face these challenges.

literature turns outward, one of the risks is that in doing so they do not engage but rather inform. An unfortunate consequence is that a text is in jeopardy of presenting a unified idea of culture which encourages readers to understand that experience as an accurate representation of life in a particular place. In the past, some authors even found it necessary to present their culture to the West as a way of taking back the power to represent. This view is echoed in some of the first generation Nigerian novelists' works, most notably Chinua Achebe. In an interview with Simon Gikandi in 1991, Achebe proclaimed, "[I]f someone is in search of information, or knowledge, or enlightenment about the total life of these people – the Igbo people – I think my novels would be a good source" (qtd. in Huggan 26). The problem with such a view is that novels are transformed into ethnographic and anthropological representations. The power of the novel to imagine and create is usurped by readers taking a cultural tour. In *The Postcolonial Exotic*, Graham Huggan refers to this process as the anthropological exotic. He explains that

The anthropological exotic ... describes a mode of both perception and consumption; it invokes the familiar aura of the other, incommensurably 'foreign' cultures while appearing to provide a modicum of information that gives the uninitiated reader access to the text and, by extension, the 'foreign' culture itself. Thus, the perceptual framework of the anthropological exotic allows for a rereading of African literature as the more or less transparent window onto a richly detailed and culturally specific, but still somehow homogenous – and of course readily marketable – African world. (37)

Abani has recognized the danger that can befall a writer communicating across culture. He has carved out a space between speaking to and speaking for as a way to communicate the interstitial realities of identity. This space, which is inherently

cosmopolitan, allows Abani to present culture as always already becoming. The way Abani opens this space both for his novel and for readers is through disorienting and disrupting, a characteristic of the unhomely which will be examined in more detail later in the chapter. Like Elvis, who is a product of dislocation, readers also find themselves equally displaced.

In addition to the genre, *GraceLand* also employs narrative techniques which shape the structure of the novel in a manner that locates a space of cultural difference. At the outset of each chapter, Abani includes two descriptions of the kola nut ceremony, one from an insider position and one from an anthropological position. The juxtaposition of these two readings of the ceremony signifies a gap between cultural understandings of the kola nut ceremony, opening a space of cultural translation. At the beginning of Chapter Eleven, part of the Igbo kola-nut ceremony is described in the following way: “Four lines on the King’s head mark the destination; the moment of royalty, the full crown. This star, spread like a child’s smile or the reaching of four fingers, is rare” (107). This passage is followed by an anthropological reading: “the four-lobed kola nut is the King nut. Rare, it is always a good omen. Four, in Igbo cosmology, is the number of completion, of dominion over the physical universe. It is also the number of energy pockets that true sorcerers and sorceresses need to perform their sacred duty” (107). Readers are easily caught up in trying to decipher the “meaning” of the ceremony in the book, but it is in the narrative passages which follow these kola nut ceremony descriptions that undermine traditional Igbo practices, depicting Elvis’ ambivalence toward and eventual rejection of traditional Igbo culture. He recognizes that this culture

is a part of him, but it does not define him. Readers see this sentiment echoed in the eagle-sacrifice coming-of-age ritual in the novel. The ceremony turns into a farce when the eagle is substituted with a baby chick, which is already struck by an arrow. For Elvis, the hollowness of this ritual reflects the emptiness of traditional Igbo practices in contemporary Nigeria. Elvis resides in a conflicted space which shows the incompatibility of traditional ways of life in a modern society.

Abani reinforces the idea of living in contradistinctive worlds through another narrative technique incorporated at the end of each chapter. Following Elvis' narrative, Abani places recipes, homeopathic remedies, and plant descriptions taken from Elvis' mother's journal at the end of each chapter. Elvis keeps this journal with him at all times. In moments of reflection, he often leafs through the pages, thinking about his mother. The odd thing for Elvis about this journal is that he can't remember anyone actually preparing the recipes contained in the journal. At the end of the novel as Elvis is about to board a plane to the US, he transfers his mother's journal to his carry-on bag. In that moment, Elvis reflects that the journal "had never revealed his mother to him. Never helped him understand her, or his life, or why anything had happened the way it had" (320). That is not to say that the journal was entirely unhelpful for Elvis. It did provide a way to keep memories of his mother alive and offer a potential alternative epistemology in the face of an ever growing distance from nature. The fact that Elvis does not feel that same connection to the natural world that his mother did illustrates his disconnection from his physical surroundings. Elvis' culture and his surroundings do not offer him a sense of self. We can read this space as a condition of the modern postcolony in which

the nation-state structure, one grounded in the belief that “cultures are, by their nature, national in character” is incommensurable with economic and social opportunity (615). Identity is removed from traditional ways of life and the nation-state, forcing individuals into metaphorical exiles and diasporas even within their own national borders in an attempt to find home.

In some ways, the space that Abani creates with *GraceLand* is one which uses postcolonialism to comment on postcoloniality. Graham Huggan makes the distinction between these “two regimes of value” (5). Huggan explains that postcolonialism is “an ensemble of loosely connected oppositional practices ... and by an aesthetic of largely textualized, partly localised resistance” (6). As such, postcolonialism “becomes an anti-colonial intellectualism that reads and valorizes the signs of social struggle in the faultlines of literary and cultural texts” (6). Abani’s appropriation of the *bildungsroman* form along with an aesthetic construction of the chapters resists conspicuous consumption. According to Huggan, postcoloniality, on the other hand, is a “regime of cultural value ... within the global late-capitalist system of commodity exchange” (6). Postcoloniality then comes to represent “marginal products in the global marketplace” (6). Huggan argues that postcolonialism is ultimately implicated within this larger system of postcoloniality whereby postcolonialism becomes a commodity, stripping it of its oppositional power. Through *GraceLand*, structurally, aesthetically, and through the figure of Elvis, Abani critiques this global capitalist system which attempts to locate these oppositional forces within a process of commodification. The unhomely cosmopolitan emerges as a product of the displacement of postcoloniality but this figure

provides postcolonialism's critique of a totalizing colonial modernity which lies at the heart of globalization.

Abani maps this displacement onto Elvis' body, marking it as a site of gender ambiguity which serves to disrupt the connection between heteronormativity and the perpetuation of the nation-state. Throughout the novel, Elvis continually slips between gender positions, refusing to uphold the binary structure of man / woman. From his ineptitude at performing the rites of manhood as a boy of five to his sexual exploration and to his experimentation with make-up, Elvis continually refuses to perform the role of "man" which is expected from him both by his culture and his nation. Elvis is surrounded by male relatives who continually prove their manhood through sexual acts and violence, holding up the patriarchal structure which replicates the family as a micro-level representation of the nation-state. In a flashback to Elvis' youth, readers learn of a particularly traumatic experience between Elvis and his father. On a Friday evening, while Elvis watches his Aunt Felicia and her friends get ready for an evening out, he dreams of taking part in this ritual. Eventually,

Aunt Felicia finally gave into his badgering and wove his hair into lovely cornrows. One of the other girls put lipstick on him. Giggling, and getting into the game, another pulled a minidress over his head. On Elvis, it fell nearly to the floor, like an evening gown. He stepped into a pair of Aunt Felicia's too-big platforms and pranced about, happy, proud, chest stuck out. (61)

After Elvis is all made up, he spots his father, Sunday, returning home from work.

Before the women are able to get Elvis cleaned up, because they are all too aware of the danger Elvis is in, he bolts out the door thinking "that somehow his father would like him

better with the new hairdo” (61). Instead of being met with an embrace, Elvis “ran straight into the first blow, which nearly took his head off” (61). Elvis is bewildered by his father’s reaction and does not grasp what Felicia and her friends and Sunday understand implicitly – boys do not wear make-up. To further reinforce his point, Sunday shaves Elvis’ head, explaining that he is “doing dis for your own good” (63). This was an early lesson for Elvis on the cultural expectations for boys and girls. Ironically, immediately after his haircut, Elvis bursts into the house to grab some money and finds his Uncle Joseph raping his cousin Efua. The juxtaposition of these events serve to undermine male authority and problematize the patriarchal structure which refuses to allow boys to explore questions of gender but preserves the power of a father to rape his daughter. This perversion of power replicates the same relationship the nation-state takes with its subjects, forcing them to recognize the state’s legitimacy through acts of violence. For example, at one point in the novel Elvis is arrested at a political protest and tortured by the police. They attempt to gather information on the King of the Beggars and when Elvis refuses to cooperate, he is strung up by his arms and beaten with the inner tube of a bicycle tire. The Colonel explains to Elvis that “Dis is what happens when my questions are not answered” (296). It is through physical abuse that the state attempts to maintain control.

As an adolescent, Elvis experiments with make-up again, but this time under the guise of impersonating Elvis Pressley. While not entirely socially acceptable, the idea that the make-up is being used for economic gain makes it more palatable in hyper-capitalist Lagos. Still, Elvis

thought it a shame that he could not wear makeup in public. That's not true, he mentally corrected himself. He could, like the transvestites that haunted the car parks of hotels favored by rich locals and visiting whites. But like them, he would be a target of some insult, or worse, physical beatings, many of which were meted out by the police, who then took turns with their victims in the back of their vans. It was exasperating that he couldn't appear in public looking as much like the real Elvis Presley as possible. (77)

What emerges from this passage is a clear distinction between public and private spheres, something that is maintained through policing. Elvis' performance of Elvis Presley is not only problematic because of the threat to gender normativity, but also it challenges a global social hierarchy which prevents a boy from the slums of Nigeria from impersonating an American icon. The ridiculousness that others see when Elvis is all powdered up and sprayed is just a reminder of the limitations being placed on Elvis within a global capitalist structure. As a man, Elvis must appear in public as upholding the values of the nation-state or risk drawing the ire of police, much in the same way that he had to fear his father in the domestic space. Both the police and his father represent spectacles of power whose histrionic displays of force enact their very authority. For much of the novel, this authority is played out on Elvis' body through constant physical abuse by both his father and the police. Elvis' presence as difference within society challenges the complete authority that is a staple of the modern nation-state. Anything that undermines the legitimacy of heteronormativity and the family structure is othered. The state attempts to organize civil society in a manner which provides policing of the public by the state and policing of the private by the patriarch. Homi Bhabha suggests that the unhomey breaks the binary of public and private "by the difference of genders

which does not neatly map on to the private and the public, but becomes disturbingly supplementary to them” (*LC* 15). The outcome is that the “the personal-is-the-political” and the recognition of “the world-in-the-home” (15). In *GraceLand*, Elvis marks that disruption which poses a threat to stability and order. The state is forced to respond to this challenge and attempt to restore the social structure to one which maintains a distinction between public and private and upholds gender roles.

The performance of authority in the postcolony is closely tied with legacies of colonialism. In *GraceLand*, the state is masculinized through a portrayal of an authoritarian, patriarchal power structure which responds to threats through violence and destruction. It is through these acts of force and spectacle that power is legitimized in the eyes of the nation. Often these projects take the form of “official” operations with vague and vapid slogans used to reinforce a sense of stability and security. In “Criminal Obsessions, after Foucault: Postcoloniality, Policing, and the Metaphysics of Disorder,” Comaroff and Comaroff explain that it is through “the spectacle of policing, the staging of which strives to make actual, both to its subjects and to itself, the authorized face, and force, of the state – of a state, that is, whose legitimacy is far from unequivocal” (276). In *GraceLand*, Operation Clean de Nation, an organized dismantling of several slums in Lagos, including Maroko, the slum where Elvis lives, is the campaign enlisted to legitimate state control. The need for this theatrical action arises from the postcolony’s inability to provide “modernity outside the tutelage of colonialism” (Gikandi 610). Gikandi argues that the process of decolonization which promised to produce sovereign nation-states which could “fulfill the nationalist mandate” of economic opportunity has

failed in the face of a contemporary globalization which remains rooted in Enlightenment modernism (610). The celebrated hybridity that arises from cultural flows and encounters under globalization has come to undermine the attempt at development, security, and prosperity within the postcolonial nation-state because these influences end up being hegemonic representations of the West. As a result “the nation becomes both the form that structures modern identities and the sign of their displacement and alienation” (615). The process of decolonization was often girded by an expressly cultural turn which attempted to give coherence to the scattered remnants of pre-colonial communities through the construction of a single culture in the form of the nation-state. However, once that nationalist rhetoric cooled, citizens began to recognize that the nation-state could not provide the economic opportunity which would bring individuals and countries into prosperity. Nation-states were forced to turn to international organizations such as the IMF and World Bank to fulfill their mandate. Instead of providing independence for these countries, this move reestablished imperial control through a system of economic loans which required specific conditions to be met before money was delivered. Many of those conditions were established to create open local markets to global competition. Instead of nurturing the desired effect of economic stability, the result was often the destruction of local markets due to an inability to compete with heavily subsidized transnational corporations. The result is that “like the legendary subalterns of colonial culture, the majority of the postcolonial subjects who live through the experience of globalization cannot speak” because they are cut off from economic independence (622). Not only are these individuals cut off from entering into

global public discourse they are often othered within their own nation-states. Comaroff and Comaroff remind us:

where governance is seriously compromised, law enforcement may provide a privileged site for staging efforts ... to summon the active presence of the state into being, to render it perceptible to the public eye, to produce both rulers and subjects who recognize its legitimacy. (280)

These police actions are often the literal and figurative displacements which create a state of unhomeliness for citizens. This scenario plays out in *GraceLand* as Elvis becomes physically unhomed by police action, casting him onto the streets as a spectral being whose presence is unnoticed but whose actions form the basis of the informal economy which supports Lagos. Targeting the slums of Lagos is a particularly important strategy for the police because the very make-up of these spaces resists control. Slums grow informally without governmental planning and supervision, often existing off any official grid. Mike Davis in *Planet of Slums* argues that “slums... are frequently seen as threats simply because they are invisible to state surveillance and, effectively, ‘off-Panopticon’” (111). By referencing “Panopticon,” Davis invokes Foucault’s *Discipline and Punish* which carries a very specific message of order and control. The labyrinthine streets of the slums of Lagos resist easy observation by the state, making those spaces not only threatening but also more economically taxing to patrol. The Panopticon works through its efficiency of control, using only a few to manage many. In order to create a space more conducive to state observation, Operation Clean de Nation sweeps through Maroko with initial resistance briefly offered in the form of community solidarity, but the power of the state over local collectives proves too commanding. The nation-state which was

supposed to provide identity, opportunity, and security has now turned to martial control in order to justify its authority.

As the novel concludes, Elvis, physically unhomed and disconnected from his culture, turns to the only option left, escape. His friend, Redemption, hands over a passport and a visa to the United States, telling Elvis, “America is better dan here. For you. Your type no fit to survive here long” (318). As Elvis waits to board a flight to the United States, he opens up James Baldwin’s *Going to Meet the Man*. Far from being a reassuring moment, the pages of the novel acknowledge the global struggle of the unhomely. Suddenly the United States does not appear able to provide Elvis with the home for which he has been searching. As Elvis reads, he “began to see a lot of parallels between himself and the description of a dying black man slowly being engulfed by flame” (319). In closing the book, Elvis reflects on “that degradation that no metaphor could contain” (320). For Elvis the unhomely is unrepresentable and as he waits at the gate to board the plane for the United States, he is in a literal and figurative no man’s land. The only solidarity Elvis finds is in the similar struggle with unhomeliness played out the world over, which is ultimately the only redemption he finds.

Throughout the novel, Elvis is constantly referring to all the books, films, and music he reads, watches, and listens to. The literature ranges from Nigerian popular literature to Western classics. Early on in the novel, Elvis falls asleep while reading Ralph Ellison’s *Invisible Man*. The link established between Elvis and the unnamed narrator in *Invisible Man* offers a helpful way to read the challenge of identity formation in the novel. Just a few pages later in the novel, Elvis opens “his current inspirational tome, a well-thumbed

copy of Rilke's *Letters to a Young Poet*" (7). These books provide insight for Elvis as he attempts to negotiate his own way in the world. Elvis is surrounded by competing narratives, traditional Igbo society, Catholicism, a life of crime, etc. but it is in these cross-cultural texts that Elvis can contemplate his own complex identity. The mention of these works should not be read as a simple homage, but instead they should be understood as offering a glimpse of how crossing literary borders opens the possibility of crossing literal border. The transcultural nature of literary engagement interrupts the sovereignty of the nation-state and problematizes genres like the *bildungsroman*. Literature speaks across borders, not to elucidate others on a particular way of life, but rather open readers up to the more universal struggles. In Abani's own words,

this is the beautiful thing about literature, that books have multiple possibilities and multiple lives. That's what writers dream about, that their books can have that kind of life. That's what I hope for my books, that they don't close the world down into 'them and us' categories, rather that they open it up. (Sibree)

Recognizing the inherent cosmopolitan characteristic of *GraceLand* helps readers negotiate the transcultural space in a way that does not appropriate difference, situating it in what we already know about the world, but rather it reveals to readers up to what it means to be human, even if that disrupts the Enlightenment narratives of development.

These unhomely cosmopolitans are reminders of the presence of difference within seemingly totalizing categories, disrupting narratives of *homeland* as cohesive and welcoming spaces. These figures carry with them the displacement of modernity but it is a space "‘otherwise’ than modernity ... not outside it" (*LC* 26). As such, when we recognize historical forces such as colonization or globalization at the level of the

individual, this presence breaks apart the public / private binary and opens the world into the home and the home into the world. For readers though, this should not be received as a moment of alienation, but one of potential solidarity. Homi Bhabha reminds us that “to live in the unhomely world, to find its ambivalencies and ambiguities enacted in the house of fiction ... is also to affirm a profound desire for social solidarity” (*LC* 26-27). The cosmopolitan quality of this openness to the recognition of the unhomely provides the potential for a moment of connection through the literary engagement. It is in this sense that we can mark the rise of an emergent global literature which makes visible the inhabitants that exist in the global sphere, from the subaltern to the elite, and which asks readers to step out of their own homes and inhabit the unfamiliar.

AFTERWARD

On October 2nd 2000, in the first days of the *al-Aqsa Intifada*, a member of the Seeds of Peace family, a friend of mine, Asel Asleh was killed by an Israeli Defense Force soldier. He was present at a protest in the village of Arabeh, in northern Israel, and it is widely documented that he was observing the protest as a bystander. He was chased by soldiers, beaten and shot in the neck at close range in a nearby olive grove. He died on the way to the hospital.

Asel was a 17 year-old Arab-Israeli, living in-between clashing cultures, inhabiting a shrinking interstitial reality. Asel was a bright, engaging young man who spent three summers at the Seeds of Peace International Camp, and in that time I saw him grow from an inquisitive boy into an assured young man. He could communicate fluently in Arabic, Hebrew, and English, moving between languages as seamlessly as he moved between groups. It seems that Asel knew he occupied a unique space, the in-between. When helping others, at camp or at home, navigate the challenges of identity and allegiance, he was famous for quoting the Persian poet, Rumi. A particularly favorite line that Asel often referenced was: "Out beyond ideas of right-doing and wrong-doing, there is a field. I'll meet you there" (Barks 16). Asel dared to use his experiences as a way to teach the world of the connection between peoples. I refuse to read Asel's death as anything other than a tragedy, but I do recognize that in his short time on earth, he has left an indelible impression on those he came into contact with, including myself. I hope Asel has found

that field beyond right-doing and wrong-doing and I only hope we can meet him there. I owe this project to Asel because I want to be sure that this project is not divorced from the world—keeps it mindful of the material realities of the world.

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