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LOYOLA UNIVERSITY CHICAGO

PAX ECCLESIA:

GLOBALIZATION AND CATHOLIC LITERARY MODERNISM

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO
THE FACULTY OF THE GRADUATE SCHOOL
IN CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE OF
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

PROGRAM IN ENGLISH

BY

CHRISTOPHER B. WACHAL

CHICAGO, IL

MAY 2011

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Nothing big worth undertaking is undertaken alone. It would certainly be dishonest for me to claim that the intellectual journey of which this text is the fruition has been propelled forward solely by my own energy and momentum. There have been many who have contributed to its completion – too many, perhaps, to be done justice in so short a space as this. Nonetheless, I would like to extend my sincere thanks to some of those whose assistance I most appreciate.

My dissertation director, Fr. Mark Bosco, has been both a guide and an inspiration throughout my time at Loyola University Chicago. His words, whether critical or supportive, have always assured me that what I was doing mattered. His enthusiasm for the work of literary criticism and commitment to teaching model the life of the scholar-teacher all who seek to join his professional ranks should emulate. For his help and encouragement, I am exceedingly grateful.

I have also been fortunate enough to have two very thorough and attentive readers on my committee. Dr. Mary Reichardt's contributions helped shape the tone of this project and reminded me of the larger community of scholars to whom I am always responsible. Though we have been separated by distance, I am thankful that this project has brought us into the same world. Dr. Paul Jay has guided this project long before I could imagine it. By introducing me to new ways of imagining the world and literature, he inculcated in me new habits of thought I never would have dreamed possible. For his contributions throughout my professional development, I thank him.

I would also like to thank those in Loyola's English Department whose support made this work possible. Dr. Pamela Caughie, graduate program director, has helped navigate the difficult administrative terrain all graduate students must traverse, and she has always done so cheerfully and sympathetically. Dr. Joyce Wexler, department chair, served on the exam committee out of which this project was born. For being simultaneously demanding and supportive, I am in her debt. Dr. Vicky Anderson has been incredibly helpful, mentoring me as a first-time instructor and accommodating my interest in the classroom. To all my graduate colleagues, who have been both sounding board and crying shoulder (sometimes simultaneously), I express my deepest thanks. I should also like to thank my many students over the last five years. Their interest and commitment push me to improve as a scholar and teacher.

A special word of thanks is due to Dina Berger and Jessica Horowitz, whose "boot camp" approach to dissertation writing ensured this project would be completed in a reasonable time frame.

It would be inappropriate to thank those who have contributed to this project without acknowledging its origins at Creighton University. I owe a special debt to Drs. Greg Zacharias and Bridget Keegan for guiding my academic interests and encouraging me to see them through. Drs. Eileen Burke-Sullivan and William O. Stephens showed me friendship and hospitality, demonstrating that there could be life worth living beyond doctoral study. Of course, I must thank my closest friends – Pat Phillips, Adam Young, Josh Herigon, and Sean Burke – whose company and good humor I have always treasured.

I must also thank my family, who has always supported my academic career, even if they didn't always understand it. None of this would have been possible without them.

Most importantly, to my companion and confidante throughout this entire journey: Jennie, you make me want to do big things. You make all the other things worthwhile. Thank you for undertaking this with me.

Here Comes Everybody.

— *James Joyce*

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ABSTRACT

The transnational turn in literary studies has brought new rubrics and critical vocabularies to the study of cultures experiencing the destabilizing effects of globalization. It gives special attention to the ways cultural forms, including literature, must be reformulated in the absence of the coherence of the nation-state. Often unremarked upon, however, is the role of religion in providing other channels of affinity around which to cohere. Many writers in the 20th century respond to the shocks of globalizing modernity by writing in light of particular faith traditions, especially the aesthetic strategies and thematic concerns that characterize the Catholic literary tradition. This project examines three authors who identify with this tradition but repurpose it for literary visions of the global future that arise from particular locations and interests. It argues for Graham Greene's concern with expansive moral horizons in two novels from his early "Catholic cycle," *The Power and the Glory* and *The Heart of the Matter*. It examines the ways global forces invade and transform Flannery O'Connor's American South in ways that demand new vision. Finally, the project argues that the novels *Silence* and *Deep River* by Japanese author Shusaku Endo present visions of religious practice across cultural and national boundaries. The works examined here evince the principles that animate Catholic literary modernism while presenting sometimes competing, sometimes complementary visions of the responsibilities those principles demand in a globalizing era.

CHAPTER ONE

GLOBAL NEGOTIATIONS, AN INTRODUCTION

The most universal and most human works of art are those which bear most openly the mark of their country.

– Jacque Maritain, “Art and Morality”

So far as I am concerned as a novelist, a bomb on Hiroshima affects my judgment of life in rural Georgia, and this is not the result of taking a relative view and judging one thing by another, but of taking an absolute view and judging all things together.

– Flannery O’Connor, “The Teaching of Literature”

When the American Catholic writer Flannery O’Connor died in 1964, her passing was mourned by members of the literati in her native South, throughout the United States, and across the globe. Following a solemn ceremony at Sacred Heart Catholic Church, where O’Connor and her mother attended daily mass, a funeral procession moved toward Memory Hill Cemetery in the center of Milledgeville, Georgia. Many mourners left town following the burial (Beauchamp & Matchen 84). Those who traveled north out of Milledgeville along US 441 or toward the O’Connor family farm at Andalusia passed a large barn like those common in that part of Georgia. Attached to the side of this barn, however, was a bright white sign displaying freshly painted red letters. Its message was as clearly discernible as the red letters against the white backdrop: “GET US OUT OF THE UNITED NATIONS!” (McKenzie 7)

The journey traversed by these particular mourners reflects in significant ways the developing identity of 20th century writers like O’Connor whose aesthetic and

creative vision grow from their Catholic faith. The development of this Catholic literary identity begins with a commitment to the sacramental nature of reality, inspired through the ages by both Catholicism's philosophical and theological traditions and the experience of Catholic writers who attempted to live their faith in an intellectual culture often at odds with religious claims of meaning. These artists seek to portray in literature a Catholic habit of mind and being, as well as a Catholic vision of the created world. The 20th century writer who claims to be Catholic is identifying with both a religious tradition and a tradition of aesthetic practice. That is not to say, however, that the Catholic writer in the 20th century is bound solely to the concerns that animated previous generations of Catholic artists. Indeed, as the painted barn outside Milledgeville would attest, there are new dynamics in the 20th century to which all writers, Catholic or otherwise, must give attention. Beginning in earnest in the Inter-War period (though with sporadic antecedents), artists and writers begin wrestling with the complexity of an increasingly interconnected globe. What begins with the decline of imperialism initiated by the First World War, develops through the Cold War internationalism of the middle of the century, before accelerating in new and unpredictable ways with globalization, the dominant economic and political paradigm of the final decades of the century. The work of Catholic writers, like the work of their non-Catholic colleagues, engages this phenomenon, though usually not as boldly and loudly as painted red letters along a busy highway.

Criticism concerning the Catholic literary tradition and what has more generally developed into the field of Catholic studies, offers a robust discourse surrounding the first element of Catholic identity outlined above. Much has been said about what makes

this literature Catholic. Critics generally trace the origins of the “Catholic novel” to the aesthetic revival of Catholic thought in French anti-Enlightenment movements around the turn of the 20th century. As the revival developed a literary sensibility in the works of the French novels of Georges Bernanos, Francois Mauriac, and many others, its influence reached writers across the globe. Graham Greene and Evelyn Waugh in Britain, Flannery O’Connor and Walker Percy in America, Sigrid Undset in Norway, and Shusaku Endo in Japan are among the many writers often associated with a renewed interest in Catholic philosophy. What binds them together is a set of related concerns that extend beyond a shared faith. An emphasis on tradition, a sacramental view of life, the sense of a fallen creation, the importance of ritual – these are among the characteristic elements of Catholic literature as identified by its attendant criticism. Each of these elements shapes a shared set of aesthetic practices. Critics of Catholic literature seek to uncover the aesthetic choices toward which Catholic writers are predisposed, whether by dint of a philosophical tradition or a shared habit of mind. This emphasis on aesthetics reflects the interplay between various critical schools and Catholic writers themselves. Beginning with French scholars and writers before taking root in the American academy, critical discourse on Catholic art shapes the development of Catholic identity in the twentieth century. The Catholic writers who document and manifest this developing modern Catholic identity are influenced by the historical tradition of humanist teaching and writing of Catholic critics, philosophers, and theologians. What develops in the interplay between the two is a Catholic mode of thought that reveals itself in literature in a critical posture standing against much of the enlightenment presumptions of the modern world. Catholicism interpreted by twentieth century criticism and scholarship provides artists

and writers a basis from which to examine and critique modernity. Catholic studies and criticism of Catholic literature has produced a great deal of commentary on this posture. What such criticism has not adequately addressed is the world Catholic writers survey, particularly its global character.

The goal of this project is to begin to address this deficiency by reorienting the discourse surrounding Catholic writers in a more global direction, to bring the insights of the transnational turn in literary studies to bear on 20th century Catholic literature. Postcolonial studies, globalization theory, theories of cosmopolitanism, and related critical discourses begin with the recognition that politics, economics, and culture are increasingly globalized in the 20th century. By this they mean that culture is no longer exclusively (or perhaps even primarily) local. The circulation of goods, ideas, and people accelerated by the world wars fundamentally alters the cultural production of thinkers and artists throughout the world. Contemporary theorists seek to globalize cultural criticism in a similar way. For literary study, this means a new approach to the nationalist boundaries that have often guided its formation, one that recognizes the complications and challenges presented by global and transnational forces. This diminished role of nationalist boundaries mirrors the decline in the nation-state relative to trans- and supra-national powers in the second-half of the 20th century. Contemporary theories of transnational or global cultural exchange also places great emphasis on the formation of bodies of allegiance across national boundaries. These may be diaspora communities, political movements, or, of particular interest here, communities of religious commitment. Globalization theory and postcolonial studies provide critical

frameworks for understanding the formation of modern Catholic identity, not just in any one place, but across the various nations Catholic writers call home.

This examination of the intersection of modern Catholic literature and rising global interconnectedness in the 20th century begins with three foundational claims. The first, noted above, is that literary study is and will increasingly be globalized. It is no longer appropriate to allow the borders of the nation-state to provide the primary axes along which we divide literatures. The second is that Catholic writers of the 20th century depict political issues in ways consistent with their Catholic faith. As we shall see, Catholicism provides writers “a place to stand” or a “point of view” from which to respond to social pressures. Indeed, this critical posture is central to the Catholic identity of this community of writers. The third claim is that, although criticism need no longer be defined by national boundaries, Catholic writers do deal with both the exigencies of nationalism and the new pressures of transnational exchange. They deal with transnational political flows in the language and aesthetics of the Catholic cultural tradition. Each of these claims will receive full treatment in this project.

The central claim toward which these foundational ideas gesture concerns the role of literature by Catholic writers in a century defined by global encounter. This role is two-fold. First, Catholic literature provides a space for the formation of a modern Catholic identity in a world where nation-state boundaries no longer confine culture. By this I mean an identity apart from the local Catholic identities defined by various nation-states (e.g. the foundational role of Catholicism in Irish culture, the immigrant status of American Catholicism). Second, Catholic writers respond to increasing global interconnectedness in a Catholic manner. Their literature engages with the dominant

system of political and cultural exchange in a way in keeping with the intellectual and aesthetic tradition so well defined by Catholic studies in recent years. In this regard, I do not seek in this project to displace the excellent work done by previous critics of Catholic literature in the 20th century. Indeed, their work is central to the argument and readings presented in the following chapters. What I hope this project offers is a new sense of the possibilities open to Catholic studies when it expands its interrogations beyond what characteristics mark Catholic culture.

The image of 20th century Catholic writers that emerges from the new questions asked here is in some significant ways at odds with the popular image of the writer with religious concerns. These are not solitary monastics retreating into the wilderness to contemplate more fully the mysteries of the Divine. Here, writers are engaged with contemporary political and social conflicts. They inhabit and participate in the world rather than retreat from it. The Catholic writer is critical as well as reflective. She is as informed about global politics as she is about Scholasticism. This is not an image of learned sentimentalists shouting down the evils of modern life. It is a much more complex picture. Perhaps most unexpectedly, the interpretation of Catholicism manifested in the work of 20th century Catholic writers hardly resembles the quiet sensibility portrayed in popular culture. In the work of Flannery O'Connor, it involves violence and death. Graham Greene's Catholicism includes subterfuge, deception, and sexual promiscuity. The religious dimension of Shusaku Endo's novels depicts heresy and apostasy as holy acts. How such disparate and seemingly profane elements reflect a commitment to Catholic teaching and practice is well documented in the critical discourse. The argument presented here expands the purview of that critical discourse to

include social developments it has thusfar insufficiently considered – namely, transnational contact and economic, cultural, and religious forms of globalization.

It is, of course, necessary to go beyond the rough sketches of both Catholic studies and the transnational turn in literary studies provided above. The remainder of this chapter expands and deepens those pictures. It begins by tracing the development of a modern Catholic literary movement both over time and around the world. Here, I also provide an introduction to the theoretical and critical discourse surrounding Catholic cultural production. From there, the chapter continues with a discussion of the transnational turn in literary studies. I trace the origins of the move in new conceptions of nationalism arising out of postcolonial theory through contemporary concerns with new cultural forms made possible by technology. Particular attention is given to the debate concerning the historicity of globalization (i.e. How old is globalization?). Finally, this chapter concludes with a preview of the argument and readings presented in subsequent chapters.

Catholic. Literary. Modern.

Any argument like the one proposed here must begin with the recognition that Catholicism in the 20th century is a global phenomenon. It does not simply radiate outward from Rome in waves of decreasing intensity. Instead, Catholicism in the 20th century reflects the combined influences of an orthodox faith and the multitude of local traditions wherever that faith takes root. This is not to deny the historical reality of the spread of Catholicism to all corners of the globe, often accompanied by the apparatuses of empire and colonialism. Indeed, key to understanding the development of a modern,

transnational Catholic identity is tracing the historical development of modern Catholic thought and cultural production, as well as its rapid expansion throughout the world.

Significant elements of what is here called Catholic literary modernism find their roots in French thought in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The generations that came of age a century after the Revolution viewed the bourgeois comfort and scientific rationality of French culture with disdain. Thinkers, philosophers, and writers increasingly focused on the romantic character of everyday life and the spiritual vacuum created by the modern turn from faith. Their work betrays anger with positivist thought and the cold rationalism of Enlightenment culture. Each, in one form or another, seeks to resuscitate Catholic modes of thought in a manner fit for the modern age.

Chief among this group of French thinkers is Léon Bloy. In a pair of novels and dozens of published essays, Bloy utters the prophet's call for justice and spiritual renewal in the face of disinterested modernity. His decadent language – what one biographer calls his “riotously excessive” prose (Heppenstall 21) – reveals the existential stakes for such writers. Bloy's writing is everywhere concerned with the injustices of life. In both fiction and criticism, Bloy passionately defends the idea of faith in the Absolute as the only reasonable response to such injustice. The necessity of pain, suffering, and poverty receive particular attention in his work. Indeed, for Bloy, such suffering was not only necessary, but salvific. “You do not enter into paradise tomorrow or the day after or in ten years,” he writes in “Blood of the Poor.” “You enter it today when you are poor and crucified.” (*Pilgrim of the Absolute* 17) Bloy's oppositional strain of Catholicism appealed to many Catholic writers in later decades, including Graham Greene and Flannery O'Connor. Of Bloy, Greene says, “He hated the world as a saint might have

done” (*Collected Essays* 103). From the beginning of the French efforts to resuscitate it for the modern world, Catholicism negotiates the competing demands that it be both of the world with all the accompanying suffering and critical of the structures that reproduce such injustices.

Another French thinker and writer, Charles Péguy, amends Bloy’s sense of the salvific potential of suffering by considering the Christian drama. In Péguy’s formulation, it is not for oneself that suffering must be taken on but for the pains and sorrows of others. The ultimate Christian act is to imitate the crucified Jesus, who takes on the suffering of all sinners, by suffering and dying on behalf of another. In this way, the modern person of faith participates in the “mystical substitution” at the core of the redemptive Christian drama. This strain in Péguy’s thought also recenters the Christian narrative, placing “the sinner at the very heart of Christianity.” Only the saint is “so competent as the sinner in matters of Christianity.” For Péguy, “they are the same man.” Péguy shares with Bloy a concern for the suffering of fallen humanity. In seeing the sinner and saint as the same man, he places Catholicism at the point where human sin and suffering intersect with the divine drama of creation, suffering, and redemption.

What each of these interpellations of Catholicism shares is a concern with the status of the created world. These are not theologies of what O’Connor calls the “thin abstractions” of goodness, beauty, and truth (*HB* 520). Instead, they emphasize three dimensions of Catholic thought concerning the material world inhabited by humanity. First, the vision of Catholic theology that gives rise to Catholic literary modernism begins with the Incarnation, the Divine’s presence in the flesh of a fallen creation. It takes root in the mystery that enables Godliness to exist within and inhabit mortal human

form. The challenge, according to O'Connor, lies in how to see the material world in light of the Christian mystery, namely "that it has, for all its horror, been found by God to be worth dying for" (*MM* 146). Again, this Catholic interpretation of the Incarnation is much more concerned with the realities of life in creation than the ineffable Divine. Chief among those realities is a second point of emphasis for this mode of Catholic thought, human mortality. Most startlingly in Péguy but in the thought of others as well, suffering and death become sanctifying acts of sacrifice. *Kenosis*, Michael Murphy points out, becomes the central element of praxis for the Continental theologians whose work influences later developments in Catholic culture. It is by emptying oneself on behalf of another that modern subjects participate in the Christian narrative. Finally, this vision of Catholicism emphasizes sacramentality, the mysterious relationship between sacred words and practices in the created world and the realm of the Divine. The contemporary critic Paul Fiddes echoes his French antecedents when he contemplates the power that "can create an analogy between human speech signs and the reality of God, between the word and the words" (254). Here again, Catholic thought in the 20th century begins from the concerns of the real world which is both fallen and imbued with Divine presence.

For the Catholic writer, the challenge lies in how to manifest these concerns in literature. What aesthetic strategies or formal choices are appropriate for a writer committed to this vision of Catholicism? Answering this question has been the project of both critics and writers for much of the last century. It is a question of particular importance given Catholicism's "emphasis on the primacy of theological aesthetics over rational modes of theological discourse" (Bosco 7). It is also, unfortunately, one that has

proven rather difficult to answer for reasons highlighted by the theologian Michael Murphy. Murphy notes that the idea of a coherent “Catholic imagination” or set of Catholic aesthetic strategies strikes some as hegemonic and exclusive in its totalizing claim; it strikes others as so multifaceted as to be indistinct from larger developments in aesthetic practices (5-6). Nonetheless, critics of literature by Catholic writers have developed a rather robust apparatus to accompany the particular vocabulary with which to discuss modern Catholic literature. That apparatus and vocabulary cohere around the ideas of realism, analogy, and revelation.

Just as before, the movement to critical coherence finds its origins in France, with the philosopher Jacques Maritain. Both a Thomist and a convert, Maritain is one of the early important voices advocating a Catholic aesthetic rooted in realism. A friend of Bloy, he shares Bloy’s sense of the existential stakes of modernity and the attendant need to renew spirituality in a way relevant to the modern world. However, Maritain’s arguments reflect the calm consideration of the philosopher rather than the prophetic excesses of Bloy’s writings. His consideration of aesthetics begins with the purposes of art. In *Art & Scholasticism* – a book on which O’Connor claims to have “cut my aesthetic teeth” (HB 216) – Maritain argues that art belongs among the “practical order” of thought because its virtues lie in action (8). Practical though it may be, he also argues that the act of creation is a necessarily religious one because the goals of art belong to the work of art and art not yet produced, not to the artist. This aesthetic paradox at the heart of Maritain’s thought informs much of Catholic literary modernism: the work of art is a product of human endeavor but its purpose is not bound by the limits of the human

sphere. It is for this reason, Maritain insists, that the artist must not moralize in his work (40-52).

Maritain juxtaposes this sense of a religious purpose for art with the secular reality of artistic creation:

[A]rt does not reside in an angelic mind; it resides in a soul which animates a living body, and which, by the natural necessity in which it finds itself of learning, and progressing little by little and with the assistance of others, makes the rational animal a naturally social animal. Art is therefore basically dependent upon everything which the human community, spiritual tradition and history transmit to the body and mind of man. By its human subject and its human roots, art belongs to a time and a country. (“Art and Morality” 61)

For this reason, Maritain finds that art which seeks to elevate spiritual consciousness must reflect the social, historical, and political realities of its place of production – a place Maritain understands as belonging to “a country.” An artist with Christian concerns should begin with lived experience in all its forms. In a chapter on “Christian Art,” Maritain claims, “Everything belongs to it, the sacred as well as the profane” (53). What becomes clear here at the beginning of the discussion of modern Catholic aesthetic practice is that the pressure of orthodoxy is, if not displaced, then certainly complemented by a commitment to realism rooted in culturally and politically defined localities.

As the discourse on Catholic aesthetics moves from French philosophy into the American academy, this emphasis on representing the real takes on new functions. The most significant voice presenting these purposes is the Jesuit critic William Lynch. Building on Maritain’s sense of the religious nature of art, Lynch seeks to describe the intersection of the religious imagination and artistic creation. In *Christ and Apollo*, he develops the idea of the “generative finite,” the dynamic by which the Christian

imagination achieves insight through recognizing and engaging finitude. According to Lynch, the religious artist who presents the spiritual world as one radically divorced from the finite world presents an incoherent or irrelevant vision to his audience. “Such dissociations from the real,” he claims, “very often produce, not the mysticism or the dream or the power or the poetry they seek, but *ridiculousness*” (Lynch 23). The only effective means of accessing that ineffable realm of spirituality is by engaging what it means to be finite. For Lynch, the Catholic writer is one whose imagination elevates his reader’s consciousness to spiritual contemplation by way of a journey down into the material, temporal, real world. Engaging the finite in productive ways generates meaning the finite cannot contain (3-27).

The imaginative work Lynch discusses receives fuller treatment in the work of another American scholar, the systematic theologian David Tracy. Tracy extends Lynch’s thoughts on the religious imagination in *The Analogical Imagination*. The title comes from Tracy’s term for the dominant mode of the creative Catholic mind. He describes the Catholic aesthetic as one structured by an analogous relationship between the finite and the infinite. This stands in opposition to the dialectical imagination (or mode) often dominant in Protestant Christianity that emphasizes the discontinuity and dissimilarity of the finite and the infinite. Tracy roots the Catholic emphasis on analogy in a theology of Incarnation. “At the center of Christianity,” he notes, “stands not a timeless truth, nor a principle, nor even a cause, but an event and a person – Jesus of Nazareth experienced and confessed as the Christ” (317). Here, Tracy has identified the source of the realism characteristic of modern Catholic writing: a God who once lived in a particular time and place.

Realism for the modern Catholic writer must exist alongside a sense of mystery. The challenge, according to O'Connor, is to take the reader "through the concrete situation to some experience of mystery" (*HB* 520). What critics find in much Catholic literature is an aesthetic of revelation – an emphasis on the need for a proper hermeneutic approach to the material world. Here again, scholars in the American academy provide examples. Paul Giles examines American Catholic culture in various forms and finds a specific conception of realism as the rejection of Romanticism. Discussing Catholic writers in the American South, Farrell O'Gorman terms this a "realism of the here-and-now" (6). This sensibility does not seek meaning in historical narratives or in visions of alternative futures. Instead, it seeks to show or, more properly, reveal meaning extant in reality. O'Gorman describes the aesthetic as "a common emphasis on the concrete and a faith that the immediate world itself holds a mystery and a meaning that does not have to be imposed by the artist but is already present, if only recognized" (108). Indeed, Catholic writers seem to imagine their role as revealing meaning rather than creating it. In "Writing Short Stories," O'Connor describes the writer as a "guide" who "rearranges nature" in order to "discover" meaning not apparent at first glance (98). In "A Message to French Catholics," Graham Greene aligns his audience with "Doubting Thomas" – they must be shown reality as they have not seen it before. In both formulations, the responsibility of the writer is to cause the reader to see reality in a new way, a way more attuned to the mystery and meaning present within it.

Aesthetics in modern Catholic literature cohere around realism, analogy, and revelation. Critics have also identified recurring thematic and plot elements in much Catholic fiction. In an oft-cited introduction to Francois Mauriac's *Vipes' Tangle*, the

British Catholic writer David Lodge identifies four common attributes. The first is Péguy's sense of the sinner at the heart of Christianity. The second is the idea of mystical substitution. A third is an implicit criticism of the materialist logic of modernity. Fourth is what Lodge calls "the tireless pursuit of the erring soul by God, the 'Hound of Heaven' in Francis Thompson's famous metaphor" (xiv of intro). To this list, Mark Bosco adds "conflict between the corrupt flesh and the transcendent spirit, usually devised as sexual tension" (8). The point here is not to create an exhaustive list of the common elements of Catholic fiction. Rather, I hope to show how critics of modern Catholic literature attempt to answer the question of what makes a given piece of writing Catholic. Answers extend beyond the author's fealty to Catholic orthodoxy or the aesthetic strategies deployed in the text. They include common thematic concerns and plot elements. One goal of this project is to add a particular vision of the exigencies of transnationalism to this shared list.

A final word on the development of both Catholic literary modernism and its accompanying criticism is necessary. Traced above is the intellectual trajectory of criticism of Catholic literature. What is also mapped is the expansion of a Catholic mode of thought from France, through Britain, to America and the rest of the world. The rapid exchange of ideas about how to produce and respond to Catholic literature is representative of the new methods of identity formation made possible in the globally interconnected world of the 20th century. Accelerated means of production and transport enabled O'Connor to read *Art and Scholasticism* in English, Maritain to read O'Connor's novels in his native French, and both to discuss their work with common friends on both sides of the Atlantic. Increased transnational contact brought Greene to Bloy and Péguy,

figures rarely published outside France even today, as well as Mauriac and Georges Bernanos, the former of whom Greene worked to have published in England. The relative freedom to move across national boundaries enabled Shusaku Endo to study those same authors at the Université de Lyon just five years after Japan surrendered to the Allies. What we shall see time and again is Catholic identity being worked out in ways without regard for national borders. Given the movement's commitment to revealing truth in the dynamism of the real world, it would be surprising if this transnational development were not manifested in modern Catholic literature. A more complete critical account of this body of literature must recognize and engage the globalizing developments of the 20th century world its writers seek to represent realistically.

Turning Over Nationalism

Before addressing the implications of an increasingly interconnected globe for the study of literature by 20th century Catholic writers, it is worth considering how globalization and other models of transnational contact are treated in the broader discipline of literary studies. Indeed, among the most fruitful developments in the discipline in recent decades has been the new attention paid to the movement of ideas and texts across national boundaries. This “transnational turn” in literary studies has opened new areas of inquiry and exposed familiar areas to new critical questions. The new emphasis on the global character of culture is, in many meaningful ways, a response to the economic and political forms of globalization that dominate the latter half of the 20th century. It evolves from the insight that the same institutional changes that connect nations to one another in trade and political alliances make possible cultural exchange

across national borders. That such exchange destabilizes many traditional forms of cultural practice and production is to be expected. That the debate about whether this instability is fruitfully liberating or an exacerbation of historical inequalities should become heated is perhaps less predictable (Li 2-4). Still, such robust debate signifies a mode of cultural criticism in the process of maturation. What particular institutional or disciplinary forms the transnational turn in literary studies will generate is still to be determined, but there is no doubt that the critical apparatus associated with postcolonial studies, globalization theory, and the discourse surrounding cosmopolitanism brings a fresh perspective to 20th century literature.

Of the various iterations of the transnational turn, postcolonial studies has had the deepest and broadest impact in the academy. Associated figures such as Edward Said, Homi Bhabha, and Gayatri Spivak have exerted considerable influence over the development of a critical vocabulary for discussing the international context of culture in the 20th century. Said's "orientalism," Bhabha's "mimicry," and Spivak's "subaltern" and "strategic essentialism" maintain currency in critical conversations despite being decades-old concepts. They remain current, in part, because of the dramatic unfolding of the historical period that gave rise to them. Postcolonial criticism concerns itself with the historical legacy of late colonialism, decolonization, and nation-building. At the core of this history are attempts to cast off imposed identities and develop new ones simultaneously aware of the colonial experience but not defined by it. These attempts to negotiate new identities are endlessly fruitful subjects of analysis, which explains, in part, the continued popularity of the critical concepts first used to engage them. However, other transnational critical discourses develop in response to two needs generated by

postcolonial studies. The first is a need to contextualize historically the new forms of identity developed after the colonial encounter. How, for example, is one to situate ideas of postcolonial nationalism in a history of the nation-state that predates colonialism? The second need concerns the efficacy of nationalist identities. Postcolonial criticism traces the development of identities (both nationalist and otherwise) in opposition to colonial hegemony. However, this oppositional posture gains currency at a time when nation-state ideology is waning throughout the world. Of what use are postcolonialism's various hybridized, *avant garde*, or strategically essential forms of identity in opposing nation-states whose logic is already being destabilized? Answering both these needs begins with historicizing nationalism. Benedict Anderson provides an appropriate point of departure.

The transnational turn in literary studies was accelerated by the 1983 publication of Benedict Anderson's *Imagined Communities*. Its immediate significance and continued currency in literary studies derive from Anderson's argument concerning the central role of culture generally and writing specifically in the logic of modern nationalism. This argument establishes a historical and theoretical connection between the rise of print capitalism and the development of nation-state ideology. The nation-state, Anderson argues, is an "imagined community" insofar as the social connections among its inhabitants rely on a shared vision of affinity rather than the reciprocal entanglements that characterize regular interaction in a more traditional community. The nation-state first exists in the minds of its citizens. "The members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them," Anderson argues, "yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion"

(Anderson 6). Because it exists first and foremost in the imaginations of its subjects, the nation-state is particularly susceptible to the presentation of ideology in art and literature. Indeed, the modern nation-state reflects the development of particular forms of cultural production and consumption. It relies on the linguistic stability of print culture and the capitalist economic institutions that enable its circulation.

Anderson identifies the rise of the nation-state as coterminous with the rise of a capitalist print culture. It is the combination of technology, creativity, and economic efficiency signaled by this phrase that makes possible the fragmentation, pluralization, and territorialization of the lands of Europe at the beginning of the modern age. Anderson's most influential formulation associates the formation and regulation of national consciousness with the growth in vernacular literature made possible by print capitalism. It is the production and promulgation of vernacular literature that define the beginnings of the imagined national community. Vernacular literature makes nationalism possible by stabilizing three distinct spheres. First, it creates "unified fields of exchange and communication" (44). In the print languages of vernacular literature, speakers of various dialects find a common tongue in which to communicate – even if they could not understand one another should they be speaking face-to-face. In this way, vernacular literature bounds various spoken language communities while excluding others. Second, vernacular literature fixes language. As Anderson notes, print capitalism meant language and literature were no longer subject to the whims of monastic scribes (44). By fixing language in its development, print capitalism allows cultures to foster historical consciousness. The peoples to whom one is bound share a cultural past presented in an identifiable language. Those who do not identify with the language of that history do not

belong to the nation of subjects that do. Finally, vernacular literature authorizes “languages-of-power” (45). It not only fixes one version of any given language, it imbues that version with the authority of administration. The common language of the nation becomes the official language of the state, thereby making all who speak it subject to a central administrative body.

Anderson notes that the nation-state also requires a sufficiently robust set of capitalist institutions through which to manifest the imagined community of the nation. The capitalist dimension of Anderson’s conception of print capitalism serves three main functions. First, it enables the dissemination of the dominant forms of written language discussed above. The production of print culture requires an audience to consume it and, more importantly, some standardized means of providing it. Second, capitalist institutions regulate exchange within national boundaries. The rise of national currencies, for example, parallels the rise of linguistic standardization. Both make possible exchanges of value among people sharing national identities. Finally, print capitalism’s emphasis on quantitative reasoning provided a means of comparing one’s nation with others.

Anderson’s concepts help provide the groundwork for the development of globalization theory and other conceptions of transnational exchange apart from postcolonial studies. How? First, they break from the dialectical model of the formation of national identity on which postcolonial theory insists. Identities, national or otherwise, need not be formulated in an oppositional manner. Anderson demonstrates how communities of affinity have been based in common culture rather than opposition to institutional otherness. Second, they historicize the nation-state in such a way that the

fundamental changes in the logic of nationalism during the second half of the 20th century do not appear unprecedented. It is this second change with which much globalization theory is concerned. Virtually all who study it agree that one of the central characteristics of globalization is the decline of the nation-state as the locus of political, economic, and cultural power. World system theorists, building on the ideas of Immanuel Wallerstein, argue this decline was inevitable. It is, they argue, the next stage in the development of the institutions that characterize modernity (and modern identity) whose initial purpose was the management of the “world system” of colonialism. For others, particularly Marxist critics like Terry Eagleton, globalization is little more than the drive of postindustrial capitalism into new markets – a development Eagleton finds predicted and implicitly criticized in the work of Marx and Engels (*Marxism and Literary Criticism* xi). Regardless how one evaluates the ascent of global powers, what is clear is that the late 20th century bears witness to the waning of the dominance of the nation-state.

How precisely to mark the emergence of globalization out of the postcolonial world is a tricky task, one with obvious repercussions for how to formulate a “globalization theory” distinct from postcolonial theories. World systems theorists view colonialism, postcolonialism, and globalization as merely the latest iterations of the modern world system. Others mark a difference between the two in how they relate to great power conflicts. G. John Ikenberry, for example, traces globalization to the end of World War II and the Western powers’ attempts to prevent German aggression by “tying Germany down” in a network of international economic and cultural institutions. New York Times foreign affairs columnist Thomas Friedman places the beginnings of

globalization more recently still, to the end of the Cold War. It is only when the threat of further great power conflict is eliminated that the economic forces that drive globalization are let loose, according to Friedman. Paul Jay takes a slightly different approach. He argues that what we term “globalization” is simply the latest moment of acceleration in a long history of increasingly frequent transnational cultural and economic exchanges. He asserts that all forms of transnational literary study must “begin with a recognition that cultures have always traveled and changed” (88). In this way, Jay complicates any attempt to divorce discussion of globalized culture from the exigencies of the postcolonial condition. My sense is that the “larger history” of globalization Jay sketches – one that views colonization, decolonization, postcolonialism, and what we term contemporary globalization as part of a long tradition of cross-cultural contact, exchange, imposition, and appropriation – is the view most relevant here (87). It enables us to examine the transnational character of 20th century literature with a single critical frame and vocabulary without anachronistically projecting contemporary modes of thought onto unrelated historical periods. Seeing the bulk of the 20th century as participating in a larger historical movement also provides intellectual coherence without obfuscating the various and uneven ways it took root in different places and at different moments in time.

So how are we to think about the decline of the nation-state and the rise of global interconnectedness in the 20th century? And what are the implications of these developments for critics of literature by Catholic writers during this period? Countless critics and theorists have undertaken to answer the first question. Among the most influential is the cultural anthropologist Arjun Appadurai. His *Modernity at Large*:

Cultural Dimensions of Globalization, develops a robust language and critical apparatus with which to understand the global character of 20th century culture. Appadurai extends Anderson by examining the constitutive elements of the “imagined worlds” of globalization. He identifies five dimensions of global cultural development and terms them ethnoscaples, mediascaples, technoscaples, financescaples, and ideoscaples. Each “-scape” refers to an area of life during globalization that is both deeply rooted and amorphous. What is more important (at least here) than what each of these terms designates is how Appadurai uses them to develop a theory of globalization. For Appadurai, the 20th century is characterized by disjuncture and difference. It is the discontinuities and fissures between the shifting “-scapes” that allow for what Appadurai calls “global flows.” These flows may involve the movement of people (emigration), the circulation of capital and goods (global trade), the instantaneous exchange of culture and information (the internet), or the expression of solidarity across national borders (liberation movements). What is important from this perspective is movement. Catholic writers, as we shall see, reveal a particular concern with the movement of peoples uprooted by war, persecution, and tragedy – a particular type of global flow. At the same time, they attempt to move among various formulations, originating in all parts of the globe, of what it means to be Catholic in the 20th century. Movement in both these senses is made possible by the constant renegotiation of the relationships between the various dimensions of social life. It is this pairing of shifting social dimensions and movement, Appadurai argues, that characterizes the global age.

Among the challenges for the critic of 20th century culture is the need to locate identity amidst the various forms of destabilizing global flows. If the period is

characterized not only by increasing complexity and global interconnectedness but by shifting boundaries and disjunctures, as well, where is identity to be fixed? Specifically, where, beyond the halls of the Vatican, does Catholic identity get worked out in the 20th century? The point, of course, is that we must go beyond asking “where.” Identity, national or otherwise, is no longer synonymous with location. This level of meaning has been displaced or, to use a popular term from the vocabulary of globalization theory, ‘disembedded.’ Instead of rejecting any role for the local altogether, though, Appadurai reinterprets “disembedding.” Rather than insist the local (or national) is merely deemphasized, Appadurai argues that the global era witnesses the production of new forms of locality which are not necessarily spatially bounded. He refers to a relational and contextual sense of space and locality. What occurs in the era of globalization is less the decline of the local than the ascent of new “imagined” localities (echoing Anderson) not bound by national borders. For Catholic thinkers and writers witnessing the rise of these new localities, both the challenge and the opportunity lie in formulating conceptions of locality consistent with Catholic modes of thought. The task of working out the various possible responses to this challenge falls to the imaginations of Catholic writers. The narratives that authorize and reify these localities (which may be spatial or virtual) constitute a new area of inquiry for criticism.

What identities populate these new localities? Borrowing from the language of postcolonial studies, Appadurai focuses on the correspondence between the citizens of these new localities and members of global diaspora communities. His conception of “diasporic public spheres” rests on a theory of the social imagination in which individuals and local groups “annex the global into their own practices of the modern.”

In this view, globalization has both liberatory and oppressive potential. By aligning culture with the work of the imagination (at both personal and communal levels), Appadurai retains power for those who do not occupy centers of global power. More importantly, he expands the horizons of the imagination beyond national borders. In this regard, Appadurai's work parallels that of Catholic writers - chiefly Graham Greene with his various narratives set in Mexico, Africa, Vietnam and elsewhere - who seek to expand the boundaries of the imagination, especially the moral imagination, beyond the immediate context of location, community, or nation. Key to the Catholic project is exploring the various bases in which communities can imagine themselves to be rooted. This coheres with the view Appadurai outlines in the essay "Patriotism and its Futures." Both establish a role for the imagination in the formation of transnational identities and social communities centered on non-national commitments. Such commitments may be primarily political, racial, economic, or, most important to this project, religious.

What we see in the global character of 20th century culture are artists, critics, and theorists turning over nationalism. There are two senses in which I mean this. The most obvious is the sense of surpassing or going beyond – as in to turn the page or turn over a new leaf. Producers of culture seek alternative means of identity and community formation beyond the boundaries of the nation-state. For the Catholic writer at mid-century, this means considering what it means to be part of a globally interconnected Catholic community rather than only a member of a local parish or diocese. In another sense, though, turning over nationalism requires pondering it, worrying about it, or considering it from all angles – as in to turn over in one's mind or to toss and turn in a worried sleep. Displaced and weakened as it may be, the nation-state retains a significant

measure of political force throughout the 20th century. The challenge for writers of the period is to understand and document the forms that force takes while simultaneously creating new forms of allegiance outside its reach. The means by which writers navigate these competing forces are the proper subject for all critics interested in the literary impact of globalization, but they are especially important for the critic concerned with the formation of non-national global communities, such as global Catholicism.

Pax Ecclesia

As noted at the outset, the primary goal of this project is to reorient criticism of Catholic literary modernism toward a new focus on the role of transnational contact and exchange. Toward this end, this project puts forth two main claims about Catholic literature in the 20th century. First, the production of modern Catholic literature provides a space in which to negotiate a new transnational Catholic identity appropriate for a self-consciously global age. Second, Catholic writers marshal their faith as a point of certitude from which to critique other forms of transnational order being worked out in political, economic, and cultural spheres. The picture that emerges is of a modern Catholic literary movement wrestling with how to globalize its identity while simultaneously responding to the deficiencies in other global identities in formation. An argument such as this one requires work both theoretical and critical. Therefore, this project first presents an extended argument concerning the shape of Catholic literary modernism under the pressures of various forms of globalization followed by readings of key Catholic writers from various points on the globe.

The extended theoretical argument at the center of this project comprises its second chapter. This argument evolves from two fundamental questions. The first

begins from Anderson's history of the displacement of sacred language by vernacular literature in the early stages of the development of national consciousness. Anderson portrays this shift as a crucial way in which the 18th century's "dusk of religious modes of thought" coincides with the rise of new certainties in nationalism. The special role for literary language in this dynamic is of particular concern. Anderson's argument amounts to nothing less than a new political role for symbolic thought. However, as we shall see, this version of symbolic thought is not one shared by the Catholic imagination as defined by Lynch and Tracy. Among this chapter's goals is a consideration of what structures of power are amenable to the Catholic habit of mind. Rather than organizing power around shared "certainties" of language and culture that can be disciplined and spatially defined, Catholic thinkers present models of power legitimized by common experiences that cross local boundaries. The second fundamental question concerns the Catholic writer's commitment to realism. If, as O'Gorman has it, Catholic literary modernism is characterized by a "realism of the here-and-now," how broadly are we to interpret that 'here' in a global age? What does it mean to manifest mystery in a concrete time and place when that place at that time is imbricated in relationships with other, sometimes radically different places? At the intersection of these questions we find Appadurai offering new ways of forming non-national diasporic identities and communities and Paul Giles's insistence that Catholic culture finds coherence in an oppositional stance toward dominant cultural forms. The depiction of Catholic identity and aesthetics that emerges in this chapter is one particularly concerned with the destabilizing forces of transnational contact, such as global war, migration, diaspora, and the refugee experience.

This argument concerning the global dimensions of Catholic literary modernism guides the readings undertaken in subsequent chapters.

Chapter three of this project concerns Graham Greene. This chapter builds on the work of Greene scholars like Bosco and Bernard Bergonzi to reposition Greene as a key figure, not just in British modernism, but in the development and spread of a global Catholic identity. This chapter discusses Greene's debt to the French Catholic writers who influenced the realism at the heart of his aesthetic. This realism manifests itself in Greene's treatment of non-English cultures in his early novels, especially *The Power and the Glory* and *The Heart of the Matter*. More importantly, Greene's Catholicism, most prominent in his earlier work, influences the way he represents various forms of global exchange. This chapter will analyze transnational exchange in two Greene novels: *The Power and the Glory* and *The Heart of the Matter*. What these novels share is a distinctly Catholic treatment of global culture and a decidedly global role for Catholicism.

The fourth chapter deals with Flannery O'Connor, almost certainly the best known Catholic writer in the American tradition. Much O'Connor criticism has identified her with the South where she sets most of her short stories. While this is certainly a reasonable designation, too frequently critics characterize O'Connor's South as detached from the rest of the world. Worse yet, some critics portray O'Connor (and her characters) as isolated from broader political concerns. Richard Giannone, for example, refers to O'Connor as a "hermit" and aligns her theological vision with the eremitic tradition of the early Christian Church. What criticism in this vein ignores is the role of outside elements in O'Connor's South – what Jon Lance Bacon calls "the invaded pastoral." This chapter seeks to move these foreign elements, especially those from

outside the United States, to the center of O'Connor criticism. This chapter seeks to combine criticism focused on O'Connor's theological concerns with a new assessment of her treatment of global exchanges. It will involve a new reading of her depiction of migration and the refugee experience in "The Displaced Person" and reinterpretations of two characters whose experiences abroad affect their Southern encounters, Hazel Motes from *Wise Blood* and O.E. Parker from "Parker's Back." What these readings yield is a picture of O'Connor acutely aware of developments in Catholic thought regarding ecumenism, as well as political developments in an increasingly interconnected globe.

The fifth chapter focuses on the Japanese Catholic writer Shusaku Endo. Endo writes from the rather unique position at the intersection of Catholicism and Japanese culture. Endo's fiction reflects this particular identity. His most well-known novel, *Silence*, tells the story of seventeenth-century European Christian missionaries attempting to spread Christianity in Japan. The aesthetic of *Silence*, though it shares much with Greene and O'Connor, differs in its treatment of the transnational exchanges that characterize globalization. This chapter focuses on Endo's depiction of Catholicism as a foreign, immigrant force. The language of globalization theory brings to light new ways of reading the work of an author whose faith marks difference in both religious and national/cultural terms. This chapter argues that Endo annexes the language and aesthetic practices of Catholicism into local Japanese depictions of an alien Catholic Church. Endo's position complicates the common conceptions of the analogical and dialectical imaginations. This chapter explores those complications in two Endo novels, *Silence* and *Deep River*, as well as in select short stories.

Chapter six, the project's epilogue, examines ways in which the intersection of Catholic literary studies and globalization theory can be adapted to different forms of globalization. Much of this study deals with how Catholic writers respond to periods of great power conflict. This chapter gestures toward interpretive possibilities for reading Catholic writers in other world systems. It discusses the Cuban-American Catholic writer Oscar Hijuelos's depiction of migration in the post-Cold War period. It also discusses the recent short stories of Uwem Akpan, a Nigerian Jesuit whose fiction responds to the realities of the contemporary era of global capitalism and mass mediation. Seeing how Catholic writers respond to different contemporary forms of globalization should help to historicize the formation of a transnational Catholic identity.

Finally, a word regarding the title of this project seems appropriate. *Pax Ecclesia* means "peace of the church." It is, of course, meant to echo *Pax Romana*, the term Edward Gibbon uses in *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* to refer to the period at which Rome's grasp reached farthest. As Gibbon notes, the first centuries of the Common Era witnessed Rome's imperial energies directed inward. Beginning with the reign of Augustus, Rome abandoned its expansionist project, choosing instead to build the empire from within. This was, according to Gibbon, an uncomfortable transition for the citizens and administrators of Rome for whom conquest was the default state of affairs. It required nothing less than rethinking what it meant to be Roman. Similarly, Catholic writers in the 20th century rethink what it means to be Catholic in a changing world, redirecting energies previously turned to the defense and promotion of the faith inward to the concepts and experiences that give it meaning and coherence. Just as with

the Romans, citizens of *Pax Ecclesia* from all corners of the globe reaffirm their shared identity at the same time they redraw its boundaries.

CHAPTER TWO

ANCIENT TRADITIONS, ALTERNATIVE FUTURES

Anyone can recite immigration statistics, but to apprehend those silent areas where religion flies free of rigid conceptual pigeonholes and begins exerting pressure in a more intangible fashion seems a more interesting and valuable task.

— Paul Giles, “Tracing the Transformation of Religion”

Well, if it’s a symbol to hell with it.
—Flannery O’Connor on the eucharist, letter to Betty Hester, December 16, 1955

Trample! Trample! It is to be trampled on by you that I am here.
— vision of Jesus in *Silence* by Shusaku Endo

Catholic writers who “turn over” nationalism in the manner described in the previous chapter inhabit two distinct literary movements. The first, the tradition of the Catholic literary revival, shares a common set of aesthetic practices and thematic emphases. The second movement includes literature that troubles the logic of nationalism and seeks to transgress the boundaries that define literary production and criticism. Each movement has given rise to a robust critical discourse whose theoretical principles are articulated in identifiable ways. Of course, as is common in contemporary criticism, Catholic studies and globalization studies have had very little to say to one another.¹ As noted in the previous chapter, the primary goal of this project is to examine the implications of the transnational turn in literary studies for critics of literature by 20th century Catholic writers. To begin this examination, this chapter

¹ For a more complete treatment of this type of ‘balkanization’ as one aspect of the ‘crisis’ in literary studies, see Josephine M. Guy and Ian Small’s *Politics and Value in English Studies: A Discipline in Crisis?*, especially the section of Chapter 1 called “Theory: institutional and intellectual arguments.”

develops a theory of cultural production and critical reading at the intersection of these two movements. It includes three main parts. The first examines the ways globalization troubles nationalism's assumed relationship between geographic space and cultural affinity then demonstrates why such a challenge holds particular resonance for Catholic thinkers and writers. Second, I identify the common global themes of modern Catholic literature. Finally, the third section of this chapter builds on the ideas of the previous two and presents the critical reading strategy deployed in subsequent chapters.

Symbols and Globalization

The need for criticism that responds to the pressures of globalization arises, predictably, from the effects it has on the production and consumption of power. Critics have not always agreed that culture and globalization are intimately linked. For much of the second half of the 20th century, much of what we now call globalization was understood in terms of economic development. In the 1960s, political scientists referred to 'developed' and 'underdeveloped' nations. In the '70s came the first, second, and third worlds. By the 1980s, the terminology became 'more developed' and 'less developed.' As Malcolm Waters points out, each of these conceptualizations shared a sense of transnational difference determined by economic sophistication. Certain central nations participated in market economies with robust systems governing the trade of goods with other central nations. Peripheral states displayed lower levels of economic sophistication and were to varying degrees dependent on trade with (or more frequently exploitation by) central nations to subsidize their underdeveloped market systems. What we have come to call globalization is initially understood in terms of global economic

integration – a given people participate in the global sphere insofar as their economic policies reflect the most recent thought in market systems (Waters 19-26).²

Beginning with the transnational turn in literary studies, various thinkers and critics began asserting that the primacy placed on the economic dimensions of global integration obscured the omnipresent rhetoric of modernization and modernism that accompanied the discourse on economic development. Cultural dimensions of transnational exchange had accrued the same hierarchies of the center and the periphery, the developed and the developing.³ Postcolonial studies traces this dynamic to the particular exigencies of the colonial encounter. Critics concerned with globalization (especially the “larger history” spanning multiple centuries of political and cultural development which Jay identifies) examine the central role of cultural exchange in the development of global institutions, social practices, and collective imaginations. For most in this strain of criticism, it is inaccurate to say cultural practices merely ride the coattails of the forces of economic expansion toward global integration. Culture does not globalize in the aftermath of economic development. Cultural production and exchange are central to shaping the global sphere. Malcolm Waters highlights the role of culture in his well-known, if controversial, formulation. Delineating economic, political, and cultural spheres in terms of their respective material, political, and symbolic exchange relations, Waters goes on to argue that it is the symbolic exchanges defining culture that

² This view retains a great deal of currency. In *The Lexus and the Olive Tree*, *New York Times* columnist Thomas Friedman refers to “the golden straitjacket” – a set of neo-liberal economic policies developing nations must implement in order to gain access to the benefits of the “global horde” of contemporary capitalist culture.

³ See Simon Gikandi’s introduction to *Modernism/Modernity* 13.3 (September 2006).

truly drive globalization. “Material exchanges localize; political exchanges internationalize; and symbolic exchanges globalize,” he argues (9). At first glance, Waters’ argument runs counter to the dominant history of globalization. Capitalist material exchanges forge transnational connections through liberalized trade and the search for new markets and sites of production. Only then can political and symbolic exchange systems cross national borders.⁴ What Waters is arguing here is not necessarily an alternative history of globalization but a more complete picture of the content of transnational social contact. Systems of symbolic exchanges that define culture travel with the agents of economic expansion and integration. Once established, only mutable cultural symbols have the capacity to inhabit multiple social spheres in ways that enable the production of meaning. Cultural symbols “can be produced anywhere and at any time and there are relatively few resource constraints on their production and reproduction,” according to Waters (9).

Leaving aside for the moment the uneven access to the means of cultural production and reproduction Waters seems to ignore here, his premise is basically right. Symbolic exchanges are key to extending the imaginary boundaries of various subjects to a global scale. A consumer in an American shopping mall may be vaguely aware that the shoes she buys are produced by individuals whose lives unfold in dramatically different circumstances than her own, but there is nothing in the exchange of cash for material goods that integrates their lives or contexts once the purchase has been made. Similarly, a sweatshop worker in Southeast Asia may be aware that the shoes she produces make their way to American shopping malls, but she is likely more concerned with making

⁴ This is, in essence, Tomlinson’s critique of Waters in Chapter 1 of *Globalization and Culture*.

sure the product reaches the next stop on the assembly line than with contemplating the possible lives made available to her by transnational capitalism. The point here is that meaningful sustained contact between and integration of social spaces requires more than economic exchange. Only in the sphere of culture can symbols be produced, consumed, remade, reproduced, and consumed again in new ways. It is this ongoing process of cultural exchange and renewal that opens the social imagination to new narratives and possible lives inhabiting different parts of the planet. In this view, globalization is characterized by both the increased movement of people and goods across national borders and shared experiences of cultural production and consumption sustained by mediating technologies.⁵

It is not difficult to see that this view of the role of culture in globalization presents a challenge to traditional understandings of the role of cultural criticism. By making the most of culture's ability to 'stretch' mutable symbols of exchange to fit new contexts and forms of contact, globalization challenges many long held assumptions about culture in general, and literature in particular. The challenge for critics and theorists has been how to formulate new conceptions of cultural production, consumption, and reproduction that do not resort to these outmoded principles. Such a challenge is particularly important for critics of Catholic literature, laden as it is with assumptions about the importance of tradition and truth in culture. The following paragraphs discuss two conceptual challenges globalization levels at the assumptions of

⁵ To these two aspects, Tomlinson adds "globalatinization" – the extension of a Euro-centric form of philosophical humanism growing out of the Judeo-Christian tradition ("Globalization and Cultural Analysis"). As we shall see, this strain of thought is not central to the experience of global culture. The Catholic writers whose work is taken up in subsequent chapters chafe at the idea of a single dominant global philosophy. The resilience of cultural difference extends to religious and philosophical realms, as well.

cultural criticism and consider their significance for critics of literature by Catholic writers.

Perhaps the most recognizable challenge a globalized conception of culture mounts to traditional critical practices involves deterritorialization. Territorialization, according to Anderson, refers to the fracturing and delineating of geography in the modern era (17). Following the rise of vernacular literatures, Anderson argues the political dimensions of territorialization extend into cultural spheres, as well. The modern nation-state imagines itself arising from both a common history and a common cultural tradition, with national borders serving as the political instantiation of this imagined commonality (44-45). Deterritorialization refers to the falling away of restrictions on the production and consumption of culture previously manifested in these national borders. Accelerating globalization and its accompanying technologies of production and distribution enable art or literary texts produced within one national sphere to travel easily to other national spaces where it is consumed by persons quite distinct from the local cultural heritage in which it is produced. In this way, globalization deterritorializes culture. Creating and sustaining new audiences in other places requires a new cultural map – one whose boundaries are not coterminous with national borders.

For the critic of literature by Catholic writers, deterritorialization is as much an opportunity as a challenge. It demands we complicate the critical emphasis on nationality by focusing on the constitutive elements of cultural identity that we may think of as non-national or non-local. One example of this kind of element is, of course, religious identity. Still, Catholic studies has tended to reinforce the dominance of

national identity in the ways critics organize and cluster the various authors they examine.⁶ It often renders the question of Catholic identity as one quite apart from the questions of national or other local means of identification. The deterritorialization of culture in the global era ought to provide critics of the Catholic literary tradition the opportunity to examine the religious character of this literature alongside other articulations of sameness and difference, evaluating how they engage and complicate each other. In a related vein, critics of Catholic literature need to examine the relationships between sites of cultural production and the various other points on the globe with which that place is connected. What other areas of the world influence Flannery O'Connor's conception of the South? How do Britain's imperial networks affect Graham Greene's construction of place? Thinking beyond the strict confines of the nation-state, a move made necessary in the global era, clearly has special significance for the critic concerned with Catholic thought.

For some critics, however, deterritorialization is but one example of another, larger challenge to critical assumptions about cultural production, namely, disembedding. As long as there have been social scientists and cultural critics, there has been an assumption that culture reflects the location of its production – that culture is embedded in localities. This localization of culture is so fundamental to contemporary criticism that even those most dedicated to the democratization of culture reinscribe its embedded

⁶ Many of the texts central to the argument presented in this project reflect this tendency. Paul Giles takes up *American Catholic Arts and Fictions*. Farrell O'Gorman pairs Flannery O'Connor and Walker Percy in his study of Catholic literature in the postwar American South. Michael Schiefelbein confines his study of the Catholic revival to Britain. Patrick Allit's *Catholic Converts* spans the Atlantic, but even there the emphasis is on the common religious heritage of America and England and how Catholic intellectuals responded to its pressures. Wherever possible, critics of Catholic literature deploy national identity as the backdrop against which Catholic difference is articulated. It is almost never treated as one mode of difference among many or as common ground among otherwise different artists.

quality. Raymond Williams follows his definition of culture as “a whole way of life” with various circumscriptions of what delineates one culture from another including, predictably, social class and location (8). Until very recently, the connection between locality and culture has been inviolable. Under the pressures of globalization, however, it becomes less clear that this connection is essential. In a very real sense, globalization not only deterritorializes culture (i.e. expands its reach beyond politically defined boundaries) but disembeds it from location altogether. It does so in two ways. First, the global circulation of culture establishes a dialectical relationship between the global and the local – a pairing in which the global is consistently privileged. Writers and other producers of culture who wish to have their work taken seriously must work to disentangle it from local moorings (this includes national affiliations but other markers of locality are deemphasized, as well). Thus, the tendency of cultural products to “speak for” a people or a place is largely surpassed by other demands. Second, globalization transforms localities in various unpredictable ways. The movement of cultural products and ideas into new places can bring with it alien forces that dislodge meanings from their ‘anchors’ in local cultural practice (Tomlinson 29).

It is this second consequence of disembedding with which much contemporary criticism of globalization is concerned.⁷ Globalization transforms not only particular local places but the very concept of locality, as well. John Tomlinson conceives of disembedding as a response to James Clifford’s work on “traveling cultures”:

⁷ This is in part because of the work of critics like Robert Eric Livingston on ‘glocality’ – the interpellation of global exchange by local structures of power. Their work does not diminish the local/global dialectic, but it calls attention to the global consequences of changes in local culture. Thus, the emphasis here and in much relevant criticism is on the ways in which globalization transforms locality.

It's not that we have to reverse the priority between 'roots and routes', insisting on the essence of culture as restless nomadic movement. Rather we need to see 'roots and routes' as always coexistent in culture, and both as subject to transformation in global modernity. [...] We have to remember that a huge proportion of cultural experience is still for the majority the day-to-day experience of physical location, rather than of constant movement. (29, emphasis in original)

Implicit in Tomlinson's response to Clifford is the sense in which physical location no longer provides only the 'roots' of culture, but the effect of various 'routes' as well. Arjun Appadurai, on the other hand, conceives of disembedding in terms of the transformation of the category "location." He seeks to reposition locality as "primarily relational and contextual rather than as scalar or spatial" (178). Conceiving locality in this way requires an alternative logic of affiliation to replace (or substitute for) patriotism, nationalism, and the like (158f). Appadurai's sense of disembedding is thus liberatory and reflects the sentiment, made very real in the global age, that the most deeply felt affinities are often not bound by political geography or physical space.

Building on this interpretation of the disembedding effects of globalization, Catholic studies should consider the alternative bases of affiliation implicit in Catholic literature. If, as in Appadurai's formulation, global modernity produces new conceptions of locality in addition to transgressing existing local boundaries, the roots of a modern, global Catholic identity ought to be found in new conceptions of location and space distinct from the logic of nationalism. In this sense, Catholic writers throughout the world who identify with one another may do so in ways that not only transgress borders but in ways that complicate or undermine nationalist concepts and practices. This is not to say that disembedding requires thinking of Catholic writers solely in terms of their religious commitments. Indeed, critics should resist the temptation to bracket the

Catholic identity of particular writers apart from their other social identities.⁸ The Catholic writer's invocation of his faith in literature is shaped by his experience of globalizing culture just as his ideas of global politics reflect the concerns of his Catholic faith. Disembedding simply pushes the critic to consider the ways in which the dynamic relationship between these self-conceptions no longer reflects local interests alone.

In doing so, the critic concerned with literature by Catholic writers in the 20th century encounters a curious correspondence between the destabilizing effects of global flows and the often oppositional stance Catholic thinkers take toward modernity. Deterritorialization and disembedding challenge the logical coherence of political geography and cultural affinity, perhaps to the point of fracturing it entirely. As we shall see, Catholic thought has always been uncomfortable with this coherence because it rests on a modern logic of symbolic thought that Catholicism rejects. The related Catholic emphases on sacramentality and analogy make for an uneasy relationship between Catholic cultural production and the intellectual architecture of modern nationalism. While the changes that would eventually displace the nation-state were just beginning to arise, Catholic writers expressed discomfort with the assumptions implicit in the modern version of the relationship between culture and geographical space. The rise and fall of the nation-state as the primary locus of cultural power is illustrative of the political and cultural consequences of this logic.

⁸ I have in mind here critics like Richard Giannone who equate Catholicism with a withdrawal from other commitments into asceticism or something similar. Rather than consider the ways her Catholicism either troubled or amplified her political commitments, Giannone argues that O'Connor's faith demanded she disavow such worldly concerns. While this is certainly an important strain of Catholic thought – and one that enjoyed some currency during the Catholic revival in America – it too easily elides much of what we know O'Connor thought important and what she imagined the function of her writing to be. This will be dealt with in greater detail in Chapter 4.

Anderson is indispensable in helping to trace precisely this history. Given the primacy of vernacular literature and print capitalism in his history of the rise of nationalism, it should not prove surprising that much of Anderson's work focuses on changes in the logic undergirding the social imagination. The simultaneous shift to vernacular literature in various parts of the world is not simply illustrative of a localizing tendency in this period in history. It reflects a much more fundamental shift in symbolic thought at the beginnings of modernity – a shift that simultaneously makes nationalism immensely powerful and presages its decline. Briefly tracing Anderson's history of the symbolic logic of nationalism will help illustrate where this mode of thought departs from Catholic alternatives.

Before nationalism, Anderson argues, the world was dominated by vast territorial communities governed by dynastic networks and bound by adherence to sacred traditions. "Few things are more impressive," Anderson writes, "than the vast territorial stretch of the Ummah Islam from Morocco to the Sulu Archipelago, of Christendom from Paraguay to Japan, and of the Buddhist world from Sri Lanka to the Korean peninsula" (12). Such large sections of the globe imagined themselves whole "through the medium of a sacred language and script" (13). The symbolic logic of religious dynasties deviated very little from the logic of their respective religious traditions. More importantly, the multitude of local languages and social systems present in such vast territories were made subservient to the centralizing pull of sacred languages. The inward looking orientation of religious dynasties manifested in the social imagination both a sense of unity and a sense of cosmic importance – one may be aware that other religious traditions populate the globe, but these exist at a distance from the truly sacred

traditions, languages, and (most importantly) places of one's own people.⁹ In terms of symbolic thought, Latin presented pre-modern Christendom with a means of accessing the ontological truth of the Divine. Latin's status as sacred language bonded the lands of Christianity with a sense of their own holiness. The same is true of the ideographs of classical Arabic throughout the Ummah and the Chinese symbols of the Middle Kingdom. Throughout the world, sacred languages were conceived as emanations from some holy center. As Anderson notes, "in principle everyone has access to a world of pure signs" (13). The imagined affinity of pre-modern dynasties relies on this symbolic logic. By placing Latin at the center of the social imagination, for example, Christendom unselfconsciously coheres around religious texts and principles, as well as the literate administrators who can interpret and apply them. Thus the symbolic logic of pre-modern dynasties is rooted in the belief that signs emanate from a sacred ontological truth, and this truth is knowable or at least translatable.

Two important changes at the onset of modernism destabilize this symbolic logic and make the rise of nationalism possible. First, the ages of European exploration brought into the social imagination of Christendom worlds and possible lives previously unaccounted for (Auerbach 282). The intrusion of these alternative worlds both expanded and flattened Europe's dominant conceptions of the globe. By populating the world with "unforeseeable diversity," to use Edouard Glissant's phrase, European exploration caused the various peoples of Christendom to think of themselves as first

⁹ I am aware that this depiction of pre-modern thought ignores the long history of cosmopolitan cities throughout the world populated by traders and travelers who exchange goods and ideas, as well as the local institutions that arise to serve them. Worth noting, however, is the presence within such cities of substantial numbers of administrative officials (e.g. soldiers, tax assessors, bishops, etc.) tasked with defending dynastic logic from foreign intervention. Where the sacredness of the dynasty is most threatened, there is its defense the most robust. See Kurt Iveson's "Strangers in the Cosmopolis" for more.

among the many peoples of the world, rather than as citizens of divinely chosen populations and places. In short, it turned the inward gaze of dynasties outward to a diverse, comparative world. At the same time, the full effects of the Reformation destabilized Latin's dominance over Europe. Luther's "universal priesthood" constituted a direct challenge to the administrative power of those literate in Latin whose responsibility it had been to interpret the words of the Divine. Other Reformation movements fractured the unselfconscious coherence of Christendom, often along lines that recurred in nation-state territorialization (Anderson 17). The demotion of Latin from its place as a unifying sacred language combined with the rise of localizing vernacular literatures fundamentally altered the symbolic logic of Europe making an expansive Christendom impossible and a patchwork of ethnolinguistic nation-states inevitable.

This shift is inevitable because the change in symbolic logic from coherent non-arbitrary emanations of the Divine to countless networks of arbitrary signifiers equidistant from ontological truth necessitates a new spatial logic and new structures of administration. The displacement of sacred languages creates a vacuum no single principle of organization can fill. Instead, various peoples begin to cohere around languages of trade and vernacular literature in self-conscious and political ways. Spoken languages take up a more revered position in the social imagination, creating new types of imagined affinity, and the technologies of print capitalism provide the structures through which nations are territorialized and administrative power is centralized. Underlying these structures is the familiar symbolic logic of modern languages. Sign systems hold no essential connection to ontological reality. Signifiers within individual sign systems are fixed. In the same manner, nation-states have no essential character;

their force does not arise from special knowledge or secret access to ontological certainty. Instead, they present new certainties rooted in common culture, history, and language. “Truth” no longer transcends localities in sacred languages but resides in diverse epistemologies bounded by languages of administration. By demystifying the known world (by breaking the connection between truth and global truth languages), the symbolic logic of modernity renders all sign systems arbitrary and subject to new political structures governing new imagined communities.

The history of the fall of nation-state ideology in the 20th century should be familiar to critics of globalization or global culture. At the same time that global war and the fall of empires cast refugees and émigrés to different parts of the world, thereby undermining the linguistic coherence of some nationalisms, the accelerated spread of market capitalism to new corners of the globe provided alternative possibilities for social organization. The combined effect of these changes is to disrupt the continuity between national languages and national geographies. Individual nations found themselves increasingly populated by peoples who could not speak the languages of state. Simultaneously, the integrating global market made local actions – whether in the realms of economics, politics, or culture – consequential in other locations. Individual citizens could now imagine alternative lives or social systems, not as distant or across the border, but as accessible and tangible. In other words, at the same time that national borders become increasingly porous, the boundaries of the social imagination expand far beyond the scope of the nation-state – it becomes deterritorialized and disembedded. Once the symbolic logic on which a culture is built is disembedded from the land it has historically inhabited, it is able to stretch and morph to accommodate the various social realities it

encounters. It is in this way that the nation ceases to exercise a controlling grasp on the social imagination. Operating at a different level, the integrating power of global market capitalism bifurcates national consciousness in productive ways. Effectively, it creates a tiered system divided by competency in select global trade languages. In one “upper” tier are those able to communicate in these languages and navigate global social codes to receive access to capital. In the other tier are those rooted in local culture who welcome new imaginative possibilities and new channels through which to circulate their work, if not new capital itself.

The history of the development of symbolic thought traced above evolves from non-arbitrary emanations of ontological certainty, through a plurality of systems of arbitrary signifiers bound by imagined (or real) cultural borders, to a bifurcated system of global symbolic exchanges that produces new cultural forms and social alliances. Obviously, the next question that must be asked is: of what consequence is this history to the critic of modern Catholic writing? An answer begins to take shape once one realizes that none of the symbolic systems outlined in this history correspond with the modes of thought characteristic of modern Catholic writers. We may be tempted to align the Catholic social imagination with that of pre-modern Christendom, complete with the intellectual dominance of Church ideology and political power wielded by ecclesial institutions. To do so, however, would ignore both historical developments (is a pre-modern mode of thought even possible in the modern world?) and the particular views of Catholic writers in the 20th century (Graham Greene’s whiskey-priest does not seem worthy of much political power; the strangeness of Flannery O’Connor’s short stories does not seem to grow from wholly non-arbitrary language systems.). Instead critics of

literature by Catholic writers should recognize the tension between Catholic symbolic thought and the corresponding culture of nationalism as well as the possibilities for Catholic culture in a global system. Toward this end, it is important to trace the outline of Catholic symbolic thought.

As noted in the previous chapter, criticism of modern Catholic literature identifies several elements of a modern Catholic aesthetic, the most important of which are realism, analogy, and revelation. The social imagination that produces this aesthetic thinks about symbolism in a way that reflects its pre-modern origins but is attuned to the insights of modern thought. Two thinkers briefly glossed in the previous chapter, classicist William Lynch and theologian David Tracy, provide a starting point for examining the foundations of Catholic symbolic thought. Lynch, an American Jesuit priest whose thought greatly influenced O'Connor, begins with the seemingly commonsensical assertion that symbols are finite. Even if one believes, as in pre-modern thought, that signs emanate from the Divine, one cannot realistically hold that they are themselves ontologically other, else they would be unintelligible. However, Lynch argues, to the Catholic mind, the finitude of symbols does not render them wholly arbitrary or entirely divorced from ontological truth. To the contrary, he states:

My own attitude toward these images of limitation [...] is that the images are in themselves the path to whatever the self is seeking: to insight, or beauty, or, for that matter, to God. This path is both narrow and direct; it leads, I believe, straight through our human realities, through our labor, our disappointments, our friends, our game legs, our harvests, our subjection to time. There are no shortcuts to beauty or to insight. We must go *through* the finite, the limited, the definite, omitting none of it lest we omit some of the potencies of being-in-the-flesh. (7, emphasis in original)

It is in their finitude that symbols have any power whatsoever. This is, it must be said, a very modern conception of symbolic thought. It reserves creative power for the artist or writer or speaker, rather than determining linguistic power by its proximity to the Divine. At the same time, Lynch's thought makes clear that there is *some* connection between definite symbols and ontological reality – a connection the modern mind insists is illusory. In *Christ and Apollo*, he posits the concept of the “generative finite” as an explanation for how the Catholic mind conceives of this relationship. In short, Catholic theology's emphasis on the Incarnation and sacramentality insists there are connections between the fallen world populated by finite symbols and the realm of the Divine and ontological truth. Lynch's insight is to note that particular symbols that make the viewer or reader aware of the restrictions of his own finitude generate awareness and contemplation of the infinite.¹⁰ It is the mind's movement ‘down’ into the world of finite symbols that generates the move ‘upward’ into the sphere of the Divine.

Systematic theologian David Tracy refines Lynch's insight in his massive study of *The Analogical Imagination*. Tracy's contribution primarily gives the symbolic logic of the modern Catholic aesthetic a structural dimension. He places analogy at the heart of that aesthetic, thereby providing a sense of how Catholic writers and artists manifest

¹⁰ Lynch is gracious enough not to claim this insight as originally his. Of those who have said it before, he writes:

Plato tells us that we should not go too fast from the many to the one. The theologians have their own vocabulary, sometimes with divine sanction: St. Paul seems to attribute the ascension of Christ into Heaven causally to his descent into the earth, and generally we ourselves will be stressing the great fact of Christology, that Christ moved down into all the realities of man to get to his Father. The homely truth is that there are thousands of people who could put this matter better than hundreds of writers, so that nothing nebulous is meant at all. What we are saying can have endless concrete senses and can only be filled in by wisdom, by the accumulated wisdom of the race, in life and in art. (13)

their symbolic logic in culture. Echoing Tracy in his study of Graham Greene, Mark Bosco describes the structural character of analogy. “Analogical language,” he writes, “views reality in ordered relationships that express a similarity-in-difference, building on a prime analogate as reference and focus” (Bosco 12). Worth noting again is how the Catholic mind insists on a relationship between the created world and ontological truth. However, Tracy’s emphasis on analogy points toward the difficulty in understanding that relationship.¹¹ Truth does not simply emanate from an ontological other to the realm of the definite in sacred symbols. It is everywhere interpellated and remade by its encounter with the finite:

These now articulated similarities-in-difference will prove clues to the possibly ordered relationships disclosed by the event as each analogue is focused, interpreted, related through newly formed propositions to the other analogues as similarities-in-difference by the primary analogue, the Christ event. (408)

The symbolic logic of the modern Catholic aesthetic, as Tracy defines it, assumes an analogous relationship between the visible and invisible worlds – a relationship that is much more complex than the emanations of pre-modern sacred languages.

What I have been trying to highlight here is the fact that Catholic symbolic thought resides in neither the arbitrariness of the modern world nor the non-arbitrary certainty of pre-modern Christendom. It simultaneously insists that symbols can and do grant ontological insight, that this insight grows out of an awareness of the finitude inherent in arbitrary sign systems, and that the relationship between the definite and the infinite is structured by analogous relationships interpellated through history and across

¹¹ Experiencing the indeterminacy of narrative is crucial to the interpretive task described here. The unfolding of truth in the act of reading is central to Paul Ricoeur’s combination of theology and hermeneutics in *Time and Narrative*.

geographical space. This is, to put it bluntly, a complex picture. What we must notice, however, is how this strain of symbolic thought both incorporates elements of the modern version undergirding nationalism and rejects its insistence on bounded arbitrary systems. It is this dynamic that makes Catholic symbolic thought both identifiably modern and at odds with much of the modern (i.e. nationalist) world. The key to interpreting the tension between the two systems, it seems to me, lies in their conceptions of the knowability or translatability of the sign. Both reject the pre-modern notion that one can access ontological certainty if one merely “speaks the language” through which the Divine communicates. However, in the dialectical world of modern pluralism and nationalism, all signs are arbitrary and the intelligibility of a symbol is culturally determined. Knowledge is only ever partially translatable. The Catholic imagination struggles to order reality in such a world. It asserts truth’s relationship to language in indirect, analogous, but decidedly non-arbitrary ways. Knowledge may not be wholly translatable, but it can be apprehended in the diverse sign systems of the planet. For the Catholic writer to deny this would be to deny a central truth of the Christian faith. Thus the Catholic response to the “unforeseeable diversity” of the planet is not the establishment and defense of cultural boundaries, but the assertion of transcendence within and beyond each cultural sphere. As Tracy has it, “the route to the future concreteness of the whole – a truly global humanity – lies through the concreteness of each particularity” (451).

To refer to a monolithic “Catholic imagination” – one that strains against the logic of modernity and seeks ontological truth in particular analogical relationships - may strike many as totalizing in the same ways that trouble discourses of ethnic and national

identities. How can it make sense to talk about a coherent social imagination binding members of a particular faith tradition who inhabit countless particular social contexts in all parts of the world? The works of Anderson and Appadurai begin with the assumption that the social imaginations of various communities – be they national, dynastic, or diasporic – produce recognizable habits of thought and behavior that mark their difference. Critics within the field of Catholic studies argue that Catholic difference – marked by religious ritual, social convention, and aesthetic practice – reveals a coherent social imagination unique to this community of faith. Best known of the studies of this collective unconscious is Andrew Greeley’s *The Catholic Imagination*. Greeley presents a sociological argument for understanding Catholic difference in terms of its social imagination. Specifically, Greeley argues that social practices (e.g. the treatment of sacred spaces, political participation) and cultural production (e.g. Michelangelo’s *Pieta*, Lars von Trier’s film *Breaking the Waves*) associated with Catholic communities and individuals arise from a shared “enchanted imagination” (18). Reading these practices and artifacts, Greeley articulates some of the values a collective imagination with such observable effects might hold.¹² Focusing on the aesthetic traditions of American Catholics, Paul Giles extends both Greeley and Tracy to contend that the Catholic imagination’s “predilection for analogy” manifests in modern literature by Catholic writers (28). Thus, to speak of a coherent Catholic imagination is to speak of that which animates the shared habits of thought and practice common to modern Catholics. It

¹² Greeley’s terms for these values – enchantment, sensuality, maternal love, hierarchy, etc. – are not the same as the vocabulary associated with those whose interests are primarily in the Catholic aesthetic tradition. Nonetheless, his emphasis on enchantment and hierarchy, for example, reveal the analogical habits of thought Tracy argues are central to Catholic difference.

refers to both the complex interpretation of symbols outlined above and a particular set of concerns born of Catholicism's intellectual tradition. In both areas, Greeley and Giles assert, Catholic thought strains against the confines of modernity.

This vision of the uncomfortable relationship between the Catholic imagination and the symbolic logic of modern nationalism portends an acute awareness of difference implicit in Catholic cultural production. Aesthetically and thematically, literature produced by the Catholic imagination simultaneously asserts its own dialectical distance from the dominant cultures of modern nationalism and the analogous similarity-in-difference of Catholic thought throughout the world. It is here that the transnational turn in literary studies has much to contribute to criticism of this literary movement. By conceiving of Catholic literary modernism as a particularly Catholic response to the political and intellectual exigencies of modernity, we can assert a coherent basis for interpreting Catholic cultural production from diverse points on the planet. We recognize the deterritorialized and disembedded quality of global Catholic culture. For literary critics, the central questions then become: In what ways do the works of 20th century Catholic writers respond to the global and globalizing aspects of modernity?¹³ How do Catholic writers conceive of and represent Catholicism in a pluralistic world criss-crossed by networks of economic and cultural exchange? Along what principles do the diverse iterations of the Catholic imagination envision future imagined worlds will be organized? The mode of criticism that can respond to such questions draws heavily on

¹³ I use the word "respond" here and throughout rather than "criticize" or "engage" to signify that Catholic thought locates itself at a remove from the modern world, but its commentary on modernity is not always oppositional. Bosco explores the implications of the turn in Catholic thought on modernity at the Second Vatican Council and finds it no longer maintaining a reactive critical posture (9, 117-19). For this reason, I am hesitant to call the larger Catholic response to late modernity "criticism."

the insights of globalization studies while recognizing the peculiar ways Catholic thought colors aesthetic responses to the pressures of a global age.

Catholic Responses and Representations

An appropriate critical posture that recognizes the roles of both Catholic thought and globalizing modernity in the work of 20th century Catholic writers grows from the recognition of the ways the two ideologies influence the representation of one another. It takes as one of its central questions: How does the Catholic character of this body of literature affect its representations of global dimensions of modernity? While to this point we have distinguished Catholic literature by its use of common aesthetic strategies, we can begin to notice common thematic elements, as well. The frequent presentation of these elements in literature by Catholic writers from various parts of the world gives some sense of how Catholicism influences the depiction of globalizing modernity. To provide a basis for some general conclusions about how to read the intersection of these ideologies, below I examine four thematic elements that recur in the Catholic literary revival – articulation of Catholic difference, the primacy of place, a concern with physical (as opposed to virtual) movement across borders, and a focus on the destabilizing effects of global conflict –and trace how they arise from commitments in the Catholic imagination.

The tension between the symbolic logic underlying Catholic cultural production and the ideology of modern nationalism generates a great deal of creative energy in modern Catholic writers. The clearest representations of this energy appear in the various articulations of Catholic difference that pervade this body of literature. To be sure, this tendency is in part a reflection of the discomfort Catholic thinkers and writers

experience in the modern age. It would be odd to expect them to depict Catholicism as in the main sympathetic to national ideology. Still this tension cannot entirely account for the resilient portrayal of difference as a constitutive element of Catholic identity. They must serve some function. Indeed, critics aligned with Catholic studies find the emphasis on Catholic difference provides authority for the critical posture it often accompanies. Before the Catholic writer can speak of the modern world from the standpoint of his faith, he must first establish where that faith departs from the dominant cultural modes of his time and place. Of the convert Greene, Bosco writes:

[A]rguing that Greene has a discernible Catholic imagination cannot mean that Catholic difference is always in reference to the Protestant intellectual and religious heritage from which he came, that his conversion to Catholicism and the imaginative use of it was a rejection of his English cultural heritage. Rather, Greene's religious imagination finds in Catholicism a perspective, a place to stand, and in doing so, a place to reflect on and critique the world, including the world of Catholicism. (27)

We can extend this sense of the function of Catholic difference to other authors, as well. The Catholic imagination does not mandate obliterating other modes of thought. Rather, it insists on its unique status as a living theological, social, and cultural tradition as a basis on which to construct responses to modernity.

It should not be surprising that such articulations of Catholicism's differentiated perspective often require populating fiction with Catholic personae who stretch the boundaries of what it means to be Catholic. Even when Catholic characters bear the imprimatur of ecclesial authority, they call into question precisely how far afield one can venture and remain identifiably Catholic. Within the fictive priesthood alone one finds Greene's whiskey priest and Fr. Quixote, the curt Fr. Finn of O'Connor's "The Enduring Chill," the heterodox Otsu in Endo's *Deep River*, and many others. Similarly, lay people

of faith such as the unnamed protagonist of O'Connor's "A Temple of the Holy Ghost" and *The Heart of the Matter's* Major Scobie call into question the boundaries of Catholic identity. The point here, as in the literature, is not to provide a definitive answer for when a Catholic character ceases being Catholic. Such characters enable Catholic writers to articulate Catholic difference in terms other than the minutiae of theological arguments. What makes them different is not adherence to the intricate teachings of their church – they clearly hold to no strict set of principles. Instead their difference is articulated along ways of seeing, engaging, and criticizing their worlds.

This difference often manifests itself when Catholic characters or discourses encounter the ideologies of nationalism. We have already noted that the period in Catholic literary history with which we are concerned here overlaps with the beginning of the waning of the nation-state. Nonetheless, within the worlds of fiction, national narratives retain a great deal of currency. Indeed, for many Catholic authors the starkest depictions of Catholic difference appear when contrasted with the backdrop of secular and/or Protestant national cultures that are totalizing in their ideological formulations. The result is a sense of Catholicism out of place – that the totalizing claims of nationalism leave no room for Catholic thought or criticism. One may think of Kijichiro from Endo's *Silence* or Pinkie, the criminal teen from *Brighton Rock* – characters who cannot imagine that the world can be made compatible with their faith. There are obvious echoes of the conflict between the Catholic imagination and the symbolic logic of modern nationalism. At both the theoretical level and this social one is Catholic culture's sense of its own difference – that it traffics in alternative meaning systems and

presents an alternative narrative of possible lives under modernity. It is also clear that modern nationalism rejects these alternatives.

There is some measure of irony in the desire among Catholic writers to expand networks of exchange between nations and imagine affinities beyond nationalism given the primacy of location in their fiction. Within the tradition, location is portrayed as coterminous with particular ideological convictions. The mannerly women of O'Connor's short stories could only inhabit the American South. Greene's whiskey-priest consciously returns to Tabasco knowing persecution awaits him. Bendrix and Sarah Miles are separated by the experience of tragedy made real by the ironically named "Commons." Such locations often serve to highlight the articulations of Catholic difference as outlined above. Still, the emphasis on location is a curious one, seeing as the movement develops this tendency at the exact time locations are being destabilized by the globalizing aspects of late modernity. Location takes pride of place at the same time it is losing meaning in the social imagination. However, what we find in these various depictions of place in 20th century Catholic literature is a recurring vision of what locality looks like once transformed by nascent globalization. These transformations take two primary forms. In the first, locality is transformed by the invasion of non-native peoples, forces, and ideas. I have in mind here locations like Mrs. McIntyre's farm in O'Connor's "The Displaced Person," a pastoral setting in rural Georgia. The Guizacs, a family of Polish refugees resettled in rural Georgia, upset the imagined order that gives the location coherence. In their wake, the farm is broken into smaller pieces and dissolved. There are of course more literal examples of invaded localities – the German

bomb that destroys Bendrix's roof in *The End of the Affair*, the Jesuit missionaries who minister in secret in Endo's *Silence*.

A second related form of transformation involves characters who encounter locality after spending significant amounts of time traveling to various parts of the globe. Here we find O'Connor's depiction of O.E. Parker and Hazel Motes, both veterans of global war, returning to their homes in the South and not recognizing them. Another veteran, *Deep River*'s Kiguchi, must leave his native Japan in order to find the peace he lost in battle. In both types of transformation, what we find are experiences of locality interpellated by experiences of and encounters with other locations. Correspondence between place and experience is broken. This is, of course, familiar terrain to scholars of globalization. Due in part to its discomfort with the territorializing logic of nationalism, the Catholic imagination welcomes disembedding and deterritorialization as forces that productively fracture the coherence of nationalism's dominance of the imagined uses of space. In this way, Catholic literary modernism traces the evolution of locality in the middle of the 20th century.

The emphasis on presenting transformed localities reflects a heretofore unremarked upon element of the modern Catholic aesthetic – revelation. Aesthetics of revelation begin from the Catholic conviction that the finite world can communicate both meaning and mystery. What one needs is a proper hermeneutic approach to interpret the possibilities of the material world. It is the Catholic writer's task to foment "some experience of mystery" (*HB* 520) in the representation of the finite world. In other words, the challenge is to present the familiar in ways that make it seem unfamiliar so that the mind may be opened to new possible interpretations of reality. Among the more

common ways Catholic writers accomplish this is the transformation of locality discussed above. At their particular moment in history, modern Catholic writers have available to them no better way to hold the familiar at a critical distance than the changes in locality wrought by globalization. In the hands of these writers, locations – even long familiar ones like home – become unintelligible unless one has developed the proper habit of mind. In “The Displaced Person,” Mrs. Shortley cannot recognize the possibilities for truth in a McIntyre farm invaded by Guizacs, so she leaves with her family before making her way to her “true country” (CW 305). Conversely, seeing the created world in the proper manner generates great depth of meaning. Ruby Turpin, the protagonist of O’Connor’s “Revelation,” literalizes the aesthetic that gives its title to her narrative when she casts her gaze over her family farm and receives a vision that inverts the hierarchies by which she has structured her life. What is more interesting than this particular vision is the role the location of the farm plays in deepening the sense of a world imbued with mysterious potential:

In the deepening light everything was taking on a mysterious hue... The color of everything, field and crimson sky, burned for a moment with a transparent intensity... Then like a monumental statue coming to life, she bent her head slowly and gazed, as if through the very heart of mystery... Until the sun slipped finally behind the tree line, Mrs. Turpin remained there with her gaze bent to them as if she were absorbing some abysmal life-giving knowledge. (CW 653)

As we shall see in the chapters that follow, both globalization and Catholic aesthetics transform locality in ways that reveal to the imagination new possibilities for interpretation.

A third common thematic element in modern literature by Catholic writers plays a crucial role in the process by which localities are transformed, namely the transnational

circulation of people and goods. One would expect such movements to appear in literature documenting early forms of global culture. However, as noted above, globalization is characterized by both the increased and accelerated movements of people and goods across national borders and shared experiences of cultural production, consumption, and reproduction sustained by mediating technologies. From the purview of the Catholic imagination, the former characteristic is of significantly greater importance, and this emphasis manifests in the portrayal of transnational networks in modern Catholic literature. Newsreel footage of the Holocaust does not disrupt the McIntyre farm, nor does some experience of common cultural consumption or production. It is only the presence of Holocaust refugees in the location of the family farm that transforms it. Similarly, Mitsuko from Endo's *Deep River* finds reading French literature or factbooks about India makes her feel less connected to either locality. Only when she travels to each does she forge a connection that alters the boundaries of her imagined world. Within its narratives of globalization, we consistently find Catholic literary modernism depicting bodies on the move rather than exchanges of cultural products across national borders.

The reasons for this are likely varied, but a key may be found in certain readings of literature by American Catholics. In particular, both Paul Giles and Farrell O'Gorman produce criticism of American Catholic culture that takes as its starting point the anti-romantic disposition of American Catholic intellectuals. For Giles, the various ideologies active in the formation of criticism on American literature have excised this tendency from the imagined whole of the American canon – an elision Giles goes on to

redress.¹⁴ What he finds are various articulations of Catholic difference, such as those discussed above, that begin from anti-romantic suppositions. In his study of Flannery O'Connor and her fellow Catholic Southerner Walker Percy, Farrell O'Gorman terms the anti-romantic aesthetic common to Catholic writers in America a "realism of the here-and-now" (109). His genealogy of the aesthetic is more thorough than what I could hope to recount here. Suffice to say that Catholic theology's insistence on the truth of the Incarnation and the "real presence" of Christ in the Eucharist combined with the special role of the definite in Catholic symbolic thought leave little room for anything but the concrete and the real in the work of the Catholic imagination (103-108). Romantic abstractions have no place.¹⁵

O'Gorman notes how this anti-romantic sentiment manifests in literature by American Catholics not just by the absence of abstractions but by critical and satirical depictions of romantic figures, as well. Asbury, the self-styled aesthete in O'Connor's "The Enduring Chill," comically contemplates the works of Joyce on his death-bed until the finality of dying shatters his romantic pretensions. Percy's *The Moviegoer* traces Binx Bolling's journey out of the romanticism that is his familial heritage, represented especially clearly in his father (who was shot down over Europe with a copy of Housman in his pocket) and his Aunt Emily (who longs for the forgotten days of Southern chivalry). While O'Gorman never strays far from American shores, the critic who insists

¹⁴ Giles is clear that he is not setting out to create an alternative canon. To do so would simply reinscribe the problematic assumptions much American criticism has made about the status of literature. "Without at all waging war on Emerson," he writes, "it is important to recognize that not all American literature conforms to the premises of the Emersonian tradition" (25).

¹⁵ O'Gorman notes that Maritain denigrates the tendency toward abstraction as "angelism" – the naive faith that insists human minds and souls are trapped by corporeal bodies. For a fuller discussion of how angelism fits within Maritain's broader critique of post-Cartesian philosophy, see Thomas Wood's essay on Swift and Maritain in *Jacques Maritain and the Many Ways of Knowing*.

on a global scope will find similar depictions in Catholic fiction originating in many parts of the world. The sensualist O.E. Parker would find common ground with the naïve Rose, Pinkie's "romantic" interest in *Brighton Rock*. Binx Bolling would likely recognize familiar habits of thought in the Sanjo's, newlywed tourists in *Deep River*. This suggests that the commitment to realism and an anti-romantic disposition is not exclusive to American Catholic writers.

The ubiquity of this disposition in part explains the tendency of Catholic writers to construct their narratives of global modernity along the movements of people across national borders. To focus on other aspects of globalization – particularly the role of mediating culture – would be to traffic in abstractions. For the Catholic writer, the concrete realities of the transnational movement of people carry a great deal more potential insight into the truth of their moment in history than could any network of mediated cultural abstractions. Moreover, the anti-romantic disposition allows the Catholic imagination to produce characters outside modern typologies. The Guizac's experience does not allow the reader to interpret them solely in terms of their refugee status. Greene's depiction of the African servant Ali in *The Heart of the Matter* similarly resists easy categorization. What we find throughout this literary movement are bodies in motion across the globe, crossing borders, and carrying in their concreteness the potential for productive transformations of localities, narratives, and readers.

Yet these narratives of movement do not portray any and all travels of persons across the globe. Instead what we find in the Catholic literary tradition is particular attention paid to those who move across the globe unwillingly, such as refugees, immigrants, reluctant soldiers, imperial middle-management, the displaced poor, and so

on. The consistency with which this theme recurs points to something beyond incidental choices. It seems that if the symbolic logic of globalization is defined by a bifurcation between those with access to the monetized symbolic networks of global capitalism and those who do not, Catholic sympathies are clearly aligned with the latter. The characters mentioned to this point highlight this tendency. The Guizac's leave their homeland following the horrors of global war. O.E. Parker, Hazel Motes, and Kiguchi do not choose to be transformed by their service in distant lands. Frs. Rodriguez and Francisco travel to Japan on the orders of their superiors. Even Major Scobie, the officer of the Empire, moves and serves at the discretion of those who outrank him. Practically nowhere in Catholic depictions of global flows do we find narratives of people who travel the world willingly.¹⁶ There are few, if any, narratives of the rising global economic and political elite traversing the globe to forge new networks of exchange or new political alliances. Persons with access to such power simply do not appear in the works of the Catholic imagination. Their version of globalizing late modernity remains behind the scenes, its political machinations making necessary the movements of the rest in response.

Why this choice? Why do Catholic writers insist on focusing on these narratives of nascent globalization? An answer lies in the Catholic imagination's commitment to depicting the realities of suffering. Flannery O'Connor gives voice to this commitment by describing the secular world the Catholic writer must inhabit: "These are doctrines the

¹⁶ The tourists in Endo's *Deep River* are, of course, an important exception. Even within that narrative, however, the main characters are pushed to India by "the workings of some invisible power" (24). This is not the same as the political realities that compel other characters to traverse the globe, but it does underline the extent to which such movement is almost never volitional in Catholic literature.

modern secular world does not believe in. It does not believe in sin, *or in the value that suffering can have*, or in eternal responsibility” (MM 185, emphasis mine). Graham Greene takes Leon Bloy’s defense of suffering as the epigraph to *The End of the Affair*: “Man has places in his heart which do not yet exist, and into them enters suffering in order that they may have existence.” This view of suffering as constitutive of religious experience and constructive of spiritual revelation is at the core of the Catholic aesthetic. Such a strange view evolves, Tracy explains, from the Catholic emphasis on the cruciform body of the Incarnate God. It relies on the insistent memory of a Christ who inhabited human history and took on the pains of suffering and death. “It is the dangerous and subversive memory of the one who proclaimed the coming reign of God,” that animates the Catholic concern with the downtrodden, “who lived with a freedom which did not hesitate to unmask human pretension or to take the side of the outcast” (Tracy 427). For writers documenting the fall of nationalism and the beginnings of the global age, to “take the side of the outcast” is to tell the story of those people whose lives and senses of meaning are destabilized by new social and political pressures. It is to dramatize the global turn through those whose fates are not of their own making.

Here at last we arrive at the heart of the modern Catholic response to globalizing late modernity. In its destabilizing revaluations of place, community, and imagined futures, globalization obliterates the comfortable balance of secular nationalist modernity. For the Catholic writer, such a shift is both welcome and threatening. It is welcome insofar as it breaks up the systems by which modern humanity had distanced itself from the possibilities of encountering ontological truth. It reveals the “new certainties” of modernity and modern nationalism to be no less false than the purportedly

non-arbitrary emanations of ontological truth which organized pre-modern Christendom. The shift is threatening insofar as it provides no easy theories or principles of social organization for the future. It tosses human subjects from their homes without providing new lands in which to locate meaning. The challenge Catholic writers find in globalization is in formulating new foundations for humane imagined worlds without retreating into the outmoded logics of the pre-modern or modern worlds. Literature provides a space in which to tease out the principles on which a Catholic vision of the globe can be built. The demand implicit in Catholic fiction, therefore, is that we begin by listening to those whose experience of the destabilizing forces of this new era in history is most direct and concrete. Our goal in doing so is to learn to apprehend this new world correctly. This is the only way to move forward responsibly.

Reading Forward

The challenges in moving forward responsibly extend beyond the normal interpretive challenges facing the cultural critic. In addition to the position of its literature at the peculiar intersection of global politics and religious vision, Catholic literary modernism challenges critical categories and requires the use of many ways of seeing long lost to mainline criticism. Moreover, the particular historical situation of the movement presents additional tasks. Within the literature of modern Catholicism is an awareness that something new is arising. The task of the Catholic writer is to present the current situation with both its concrete certainties and its durable mysteries. The task of the critic is to see the situation presented in literature properly, then read forward to its implications for possible alternative futures. By reading forward I mean recognizing the consequentiality of culture as Tomlinson describes it: “[culture] marks out a symbolic

terrain of meaning-construction as the arena for global political interventions” (27). Obviously the agenda of modern Catholic writers is not political in the familiar sense. Nonetheless, in the absence of national cultural borders, their work gives shape to the boundaries within which alternative social futures manifesting Catholic convictions and traditions will be possible. The critic can help to illuminate the connections between this imaginary terrain of the present and possible imagined worlds of the future. Tracy highlights the stakes for this mode of criticism: “Each journey through the concreteness of a particular vision or tradition today must be undertaken on behalf of the proleptic concreteness of that future global humanity which the present suggests and the future demands” (449).

Aware of these stakes, I would like to conclude this chapter by presenting six sets of questions designed to guide critical engagement with Catholic narratives of global modernity. The first set of questions concerns where a narrative originates. The second focuses on the construction of locality within a narrative. The third grouping concerns the basis of the challenge religious faith presents to powerful interests within a given narrative. The fourth looks at revelation, specifically what types of encounters create moments of insight. The fifth group of questions asks about the role of suffering and what it reveals about the power dynamics within the imagined world. The sixth and ultimate set of questions concerns toward what alternative models – or what imagined worlds – the narrative gestures. The intention here is not to provide a rubric the application of which will bring forth latent meaning hidden within the texts. To do so would obviously ignore the indeterminacy of modern narratives and betray the complexity of manifestations of truth within the analogical imagination. Instead, my

hope is that this model of critical inquiry helps to trace the outline of anticipated Catholic futures. If the modern Catholic aesthetic is comprised of realism, analogy, and revelation, its proponents are in a very real sense trying to show us how to properly read the world. We must begin by properly reading their stories.

Despite – or perhaps more accurately because of – the disembedding effects of globalization, the part of the globe where a given narrative originates is incredibly important. We should therefore begin by asking “Where does the narrative originate?” To do so is not to discount the very real consequences borne by the destabilizing effects of globalization. Instead it is a recognition that different areas of the globe experience disembedding at different times and in different ways. The networks of material and cultural exchange that define globalization do not extend over the world evenly. It is therefore crucial to ascertain what points in those networks produce which cultural artifacts. Asking where the narrative originates is not the same as asking to which national literature it belongs. Obviously, even within nation-states various locations differ in the degree to which they are integrated into transnational exchange networks. Mary Gordon’s New York experiences globalization in radically different ways than O’Connor’s rural Georgia. Nor is it sufficient to rely on the nationality of a given narrative’s author. The Imperial London of early Graham Greene differs significantly from the French Mediterranean town in which he composed *The Honorary Consul* in 1973.

When we ask where a narrative originates, we are attempting to fix its position relative to other nodes along global exchange networks. Disembedding requires we see location in this relational way rather than strictly in terms of local histories or cultural

heritages. The Japanese origins of Endo's novels are not important solely because the narratives reflect identifiable Japanese cultural traditions. Knowing the narratives originate in mid-century Japan allows us to locate them at a point where American influences are less proximate than European ones. Hence the influence of Mauriac and Greene in Endo's novels is more readily apparent than that of any American writers, Catholic or otherwise. Locating the origins of narratives in this way allows us to see which transnational exchanges and kinds of exchanges are most productive and therefore most likely to form the core of a future imagined world.

Obviously, location matters beyond the place of a story's composition. Critics must also ask "How is location constructed within the narrative?" The Catholic habit of mind does not accept the modern equivalence between geography and cultural coherence. By asserting that ontological truth is both universally applicable and universally accessible, the Catholic tradition leaves unanswered questions concerning the organization of geographic space. Literature provides the space where possible answers are tested against one another. When we ask how location is constructed, what we are asking is what new geography the narrative seems to offer. If, as is likely, locality is transformed by non-native peoples or ideas or the experiences of natives who have gone elsewhere, we ought to note how the boundaries and character of that location respond. This can help the critic attempting to read forward from these depictions of locality to understand fully the malleability of potential future geographies.

The construction of location is also important insofar as it reveals the boundaries along which political structures (broadly understood) may be organized. If Catholic literary modernism places analogical possibility in dialectical settings, we should note

along what axes that difference is articulated (nation vs. nation, faithful vs. heathen, Catholic vs. Protestant, immigrant vs. native, etc.). If certain versions of locality produce certain unwanted dialectical tensions, no latent analogical potential is likely to redeem them in the future. The critic's task is to recognize how writers construct locality in comparative ways, then read forward to attempt to discern what the various visions of locality portend for a global future.

The extent to which these possible global futures differ from other competing visions is, of course, largely a function of the Catholic character of the imaginations producing them. Therefore, depictions of the role of faith should be part of a robust critical reading strategy. More specifically, whether faith is represented as a comfort or a challenge indicates a great deal about the role it plays in Catholic versions of global culture. By this I mean to ask about the social function of religious commitments. Do they form the basis for realized imagined affinities or do they exist uncomfortably in all social structures, only occasionally rising to the surface of the social imagination to criticize dominant ideologies? For the modern Catholic writer, depictions of the experience of faith mark out the terrain in which religious faith can be personally transforming and socially consequential. The critical question is to what extent narratives present faith as a constructive element of social exchange.

As we shall see in greater detail in the readings in subsequent chapters, depictions of religious characters and people of faith do not provide ready examples of the redeeming benefits of the life of faith. Faith rarely provides comfort or forms the basis of social bonds. O'Connor reveals her perspective in a letter to Betty Hester: "What people don't realize is how much religion costs. They think faith is a big electric blanket,

when of course it is the cross. It is much harder to believe than not to believe” (*HB* 354). O’Connor’s view, while identifiably hers, shares much in common with the disposition of many Catholic writers toward the social function of faith. Within their work, rarely do we find characters or communities comforted by their religious commitments. The subsequent question is what about religious faith makes it so discomfiting and of what import is it in a Catholic version of globalization? An answer may surface by considering what it is that faith challenges. As noted above, the Catholic imagination is uncomfortable with the assumptions and logic of modernity and nationalism. Asking what other social structures, traditions, and practices demand a response from the person of faith would indicate which social habits the Catholic writer deems worthy of preserving in a global future. The task for the critic is to determine what challenge religious commitments present and on what grounds they level their criticism.

To most Catholic writers in the 20th century, the tension between the challenges of faith and the comforts of modernity arises from the inability of those in the latter situation to see the world properly. What we find throughout their literature, therefore, is the aesthetic of revelation central to Catholic narratives of transformative experiences. A fourth question the critic must ask concerns revelations, namely, what causes one within a given narrative. In so many stories produced by the Catholic imagination, the task of apprehending the world properly – in both its material and spiritual realities – is fraught with many complications and troublesome exchanges. What enables one to see clearly? Here the critic must return to Tracy on concreteness and Lynch on the generative finite. Within the realm of fiction, what makes one aware of one’s finitude and concreteness? Specific answers will vary with certain works and writers, of course, but the general

focus of modern Catholic writers seems to be on encountering personal limitations, social boundaries, and political conflict. The job of the critic is to attempt to decipher what about these experiences of finitude makes them transformational. Moreover, in identifying what structures and experiences make Catholic visions of revelation possible, the critic must try to read forward to the role they would play in alternative global futures.

The challenge in discerning the role for transformative experiences in Catholic versions of globalization lies in the peculiar function suffering plays in narratives of revelation. As noted earlier, Catholic writers find fruitful opportunities in the narratives of characters whose lives and ways of making meaning are destabilized, whether by globalization or other social forces. For the critic, two questions that arise are “Who suffers?” and “What does their suffering reveal about power in the world of the narrative?” Noting who suffers gives a sense of whose perspective will have primacy in Catholic versions of globalization. Of particular concern are those displaced by global conflict or impoverished by global trade networks. The critic’s task is to discern what criticism of existing models of globalization Catholic writers offer in narratives of those whose experiences of globalization include suffering. Moreover, the critic must examine what depictions of those without power reveal about the distribution of power in the current global moment. This is, of course, familiar terrain to most contemporary critics. What criticism of modern Catholic literature adds is awareness of the role of suffering in narratives of personal and social transformation. Contemporary criticism traffics in a robust discourse on power structures and the potential latent in the unheard voices of the silenced or oppressed, but Catholic literature challenges the impulse simply to illuminate

the fact of suffering (though the commitment to realism makes this important, as well). Understanding what power structures cause suffering is less important than discerning how suffering is made meaningful and how systems of power may be transformed by the experiences of those who suffer. This is a space where globalization studies (e.g. Appadurai's diasporic public spheres) and Catholic studies (e.g. Michael P. Murphy's location of creative energy in the "horizons of existence that challenge, tease, and confound us... which provide precisely for suffering" (36)) find their interests overlapping in insufficiently explored ways.

To read forward to discern the consequences of globalizing culture in the manner I have been describing here requires a sense of the trajectory Catholic writers envision future global developments taking. Finding this direction requires the critic examine how experiences of suffering and other encounters with finitude recast perceptions of social structures. The critic's ultimate question must be, "What alternatives are shown to be possible?" To attempt such a reading is not to deny the Catholic writer's commitment to realism. On the contrary, it is an embrace of the writer's sense of anagogical potential within the material of the created world. "[T]he novelist is bound by the reasonable possibilities, not the probabilities, of his culture," O'Connor writes in "Novelist and Believer" (HB 164-65). Seeing those possibilities within realist narratives requires the critic to attend to their transformations of social structures – even when they are incomplete or the changes exist only in the perceptions of characters or the reader. By discerning what experiences are potentially efficacious, the critic can uncover along what axes Catholic writers see the potential for change. Whether the transformations of social structures are as explicit as the inversion of Ruby Turpin's color-class hierarchy in

O'Connor's "Revelation" or as challenging as the subversive quality of trampling on the *fumie* in Endo's *Silence*, the task of criticism is to understand what they reveal about the directions of global development within the Catholic imagination.

What I have attempted to present here is an argument for reading literature by Catholic writers fully aware of the historical moment they inhabit and the critical moment we inhabit. Both exist along the continuum that forms the larger history of globalization. From our more globally integrated moment in history, we can discern the growing attention paid to developing transnational relationships by writers with diverse concerns from various points on the globe. For the critic concerned with literature by Catholic writers, the task is as Giles describes it in the first of this chapter's epigraphs – not merely to appreciate the facts of global movements of people, goods, and ideas, but to understand the amorphous and multivalent ways religious faith exerts its own pressures against the confining structures of modern nationalism, as well. To apprehend our new world correctly first requires seeing how these twin forces operate together in the imagined worlds of fiction.

CHAPTER THREE

GRAHAM GREENE AND THE VIRTUE OF DISLOYALTY

Such a lot of beauty. Saints talk about the beauty of suffering. Well, we are not saints, you and I.

— the whiskey priest, *The Power and the Glory*

If we enlarge the bounds of sympathy in our readers we succeed in making the work of the State a degree more difficult. That is a genuine duty we owe society, to be a piece of grit in the State machinery.

— Graham Greene, address at the University of Hamburg, 6 June 1969

I can't bear to see suffering, and I cause it all the time. I want to get out, get out.

— Scobie, *The Heart of the Matter*

The imagined fictional worlds of Catholic writers present new visions of global cultural exchange and identity formation in the 20th century. These alternative possibilities grow not only from the Catholic writer's faith and conviction in seeing the material world in a particular way, but also from individual writers' experiences of locality and early globalization. For the British writer Graham Greene, both a sense of place and a vision of the globe arise from the political upheavals in Western Europe that dominate the history of the first half of the 20th century. Within Greene's lifetime, England transitioned from globally dominant imperial center, to front of conflict in two global wars, to declining figurehead of the global Commonwealth, to cosmopolitan nation whose culture is colored by various immigrant and diaspora groups. As a British subject, Greene would have experienced this history not just as shifts in global political power but also as new definitions of both "Englishman" and "England." The chaotic,

often violent expansion of the imagined boundaries of global culture is joined by a similarly disruptive reconsideration shift in the character of the cultural center. Greene's sense of locality and his experience of early globalization are tied to these processes of cultural disembedding – of seeing the roots of culture and the routes of cultural flows as coexistent and efficacious both at home and in the wider world.

Given this particular history, perhaps it should not be surprising that Greene's work inhabits multiple points on the globe, many of which are imbricated in relationships with other locations by the presence of non-native populations. Indeed, seventeen of the twenty-five novels published in Greene's lifetime are set outside England. He explains this tendency in a 1968 interview in *The Listener*: "It's a restlessness that I've always had to move around and perhaps to see English characters in a setting which is not protective to them, where perhaps they speak a little differently, a little more openly" (qtd. in Couto 236). Implicit in this explanation is a particular sense of cultural difference – of the uncomfortable, perhaps threatening experience of inhabiting a land far from one's own. Explicit is the power of this experience to bring to the surface new modes of expression, new habits of speaking differently and more openly. To present the lives of characters living honestly, Greene must take them to locations that make them uncomfortable. We should be careful, however, not to reduce the meaning of these settings to their ability to transform Englishmen. Indeed, Greene's construction of locality consistently represents places transformed by larger historical developments – changes that affect native and English alike. The atheist Mexican state of *The Power and the Glory* marks difference without concern for Englishness. *The Heart of the Matter* places an Englishman in West Africa, only to find it transformed as much by countless cultural influences from multiple

continents as by the dominance of the British Empire. Perhaps most importantly, in these novels and Greene's work more generally, there are alternatives to the modern equivalence of geographic space, political borders, and cultural affinity.

These alternatives are particularly important to this study of transnational discourses in modern Catholic literature. The goals of this chapter are to explore the ways by which the imagined worlds of Greene's fiction challenge the primacy of national allegiances and to illuminate the different models of social organization they present for a new global era. The key questions for this study concern the role of Greene's Catholicism, most explicitly manifest in his early 'Catholic cycle' of novels, in shaping those alternatives.¹ In what ways do Catholic thought and aesthetics color Greene's representations of the exotic, unreal worlds often referred to as 'Greenland'? What we shall find here, and in the readings in subsequent chapters, is that Catholic philosophy and aesthetics simultaneously destabilize the logic underpinning the dominance of national culture and provide broad outlines for alternatives. It is in the realm of fiction that various versions of Catholic global modernity are represented, consumed, reformulated, and reproduced. What we find in Greene's work – or in the work of any other Catholic author – is, therefore, not a definitive Catholic vision of the global future. Instead, his work provides one vision of alternatives to the trajectory of late modernity. In Greene's case, most energy is directed toward expanding the realm of moral consideration to include possible lives historically derided by the cultural and religious

¹ The role of the Catholic imagination in works not generally considered part of this cycle is a central concern of Bosco's book on Greene.

elite. Moreover, he presents a new basis for transnational affinity rooted in the realities of human suffering.

The religious character of Greene's work, especially his best known early novels, has received extensive treatment elsewhere, so I will not remark on it at length here. I do wish to make two points regarding an important influence on Greene's religious sensibility and the aesthetic models on whom his work draws significantly. Importantly, neither originates in his native England. First, much of Greene's religious sensibility is animated by an emphasis on the facts of the world – the ontological truths on which faith is built – and a belief in the consequentiality of faith. Both forces trace their origins to Greene's travels in Mexico in 1938. The work most directly related to that journey, the 1939 travelogue *The Lawless Roads*, begins with an epigraph from fellow British convert John Henry Newman's *Apologia Pro Vita Sua*:

What shall be said to this heart-piercing, reason-bewildering fact? I can only answer that either there is no Creator, or this living society of men is in a true sense discarded from his presence...*if* there be a God, *since* there is a God, the human race is implicated in some terrible aboriginal calamity.

The fact of Divine creation and presence, the truth of humanity's fallenness, the realities of suffering and sin – these are the givens in Greene's world. One cannot proceed truthfully if one seeks to formulate a theology, philosophy, aesthetic, or narrative from starting points other than these. Interestingly, Greene does not merely present these truths in the epigraph from Newman, but concretizes them in his experiences in Mexico. The most enduring passages from *The Lawless Roads* marry this belief in the truths of human experience to a belief that faith is consequential. Whether it be “revolution in the form of the Sermon on the Mount” or the subversiveness of Amer-Indian worship,

Greene finds in Mexico a religious sensibility attuned to the ontological truths of the Christian vision and assured of its own transformative potential. This is clearest in Greene's reading of the legend of the "dark-skinned Indian Virgin":

The legend, one is told by Mexican politicians, was invented by the Church to enslave the Indian mind, but if indeed it had been invented at that period by the Church, it would have been with a very different purpose. This Virgin claimed a church where she might love her Indians and guard them from the Spanish conqueror. The legend gave the Indian self-respect; it gave him a hold over his conqueror; it was a liberating, not an enslaving legend. (86-87)

In Greene's vision of Mexico, religious faith provides the energies by which natives resist foreign impositions – first of Spanish exploitation, then of socialist atheism. This power could not be found in England or other nations of the bourgeois West. Greene had to go beyond the confines of his cultural location to find a religious sensibility suited to respond to the abstractions of modernity.

By the time Greene fictionalizes that sensibility in *The Power and the Glory*, he has developed not just a sense of the importance of an efficacious faith, but formal and aesthetic techniques for representing the human experience of the cosmic struggle, as well. Greene's debt to literature by French Catholics is well-known, so I choose only to highlight the heritage of a particular aesthetic strategy here. French Nobel laureate Francois Mauriac provided Greene a model for writing realism while maintaining a sense of the consequences of religious faith. Of Mauriac, Greene claims, "He is a writer for whom the visible world has not ceased to exist, whose characters have the solidity and importance of men with souls to save or lose" (CE 92). This ability to portray the world in which characters live as imbued with spiritual significance and the consequences of

belief differs greatly from the talents of most modern writers. Of the latter, Greene has little positive to say:

It was as if the world of fiction had lost a dimension: the characters of such distinguished writers as Mrs. Virginia Woolf and Mr. E. M. Forster wandered like cardboard symbols through a world that was paper-thin....The novelist... thought that by mining into layers of personality hitherto untouched he could unearth the secret of 'importance,' but in these mining operations he lost yet another dimension. The visible world for him ceased to exist as completely as the spiritual. (CE 91-92)

With its journey into interiority, modern fiction reduces the material world to a playground for inconsequential narratives of personal development, just as surely as modernity obliterates the spiritual realm. In Mauriac, Greene finds an aesthetic alternative. He finds a commitment to realism existing alongside an awareness of “the forces of Good and Evil,” an awareness “in general, banished from the English novel” (*Reflections* 113). The combined effect of realism and cosmic consequentiality that Greene takes from Mauriac often resembles tragedy.² Yet, as Bosco notes, in Greene’s work, fate is transformed by the activity of the Divine without extracting that destiny from the fallen, limited world (47). Thus what at first glance appear as tragic narratives of fatality are in fact representations of the generative potential of becoming aware of finitude, in the manner Lynch describes. From Mauriac, Greene learns to foster this awareness by coupling a dialectical realism with characters longing for analogical connection.

The portrait of Graham Greene I sketch here has a decidedly transnational hue. He is an Englishman throughout but one with a religious sensibility informed by the experience of persecuted Mexican Indians and aesthetic habits honed by reading

² This is Philip Stratford’s argument in his study of Greene and Mauriac entitled *Faith and Fiction*.

literature by French writers. One imagines the transformative potential of a writer who inhabits such a nexus to be great. To realize that potential, however, Greene cannot commit to any one of many competing spheres of influence; loyalty to homeland and fealty to source material are less important than maintaining the writer's critical prerogative. In a 1969 address at the University of Hamburg, Greene criticized Shakespeare for surrendering the prophetic voice of the poet for "the coat of arms, friendships at Court and the great house at Stratford" (270). He became the voice of the "establishment" rather than its most honest, forceful critic. What Shakespeare needed, according to Greene, is the "virtue of disloyalty" great modern writers require (268).

In the global era, the virtue of disloyalty insists that no nation nor location nor movement lay final claim on any artist or his work. For Greene, this means transgressing locality, reformulating his influences, and conceiving of faith in terms of its evolution in and through history rather than solely in terms of the ontological truths from which it begins.³ Expressing disloyalty in such a way necessitates seeing beyond the logic of modern national culture. It requires the kind of narrative globe-hopping we find in Greene's body of work. "Greene responds to mental and spiritual worlds unfamiliar to the Judaeo-Christian tradition," Maria Couto notes, "and recognizes aspirations of societies who do have an existence deeper than categories that feature in the vocabulary of development economics" (111). According to Couto, it is important to note that this is not just an exercise in cultural archeology; Greene is not merely attempting to resuscitate lost models of cultural practice in the world's poorer places, though this is certainly a

³ This sense of truth unfolding in historical time Greene takes directly from Newman, especially *An Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine* and *Sermons on the Theory of Religious Belief*.

dimension of what he's doing. Instead, his encounters with alien cultures allow Greene to portray the potential in the "transcendental homelessness" of the modern writer. For narratives such as Greene's that occupy multiple localities without calling any one home, "Insights proceed from a sense of isolation and separation from the past towards a courageous confrontation of a changing world order" (Couto 112). There is, then, both a sense that historical geographies are losing solidity and that some new foundation from which to level criticism is in formation.⁴ Greene's attempt to combine this destabilizing political transience of virtuous disloyalty with the demand for new, more global forms of community rooted in Catholic faith gives shape to the terrain of the imagined worlds of his fiction.

To trace this terrain requires reevaluating Greene's fiction in light of the globalizing trajectory of late modernity. We need to examine how his narratives represent the dynamic interplay of transformed localities and trans-local religious commitments. For this reason, what follows are readings of two novels in which the Catholic aspects of Greene's imagination are most apparent, *The Power and the Glory* and *The Heart of the Matter*. These two novels best embody the diversity of perspectives and locations on which Greene draws. Each is set in a different part of the world (neither in England). Each protagonist has a different relationship to the location of the narrative. Each narrative presents the relationship of state power to local populations differently.

⁴ Couto identifies Greene with a literary tradition in which exile is a central aesthetic model. For the exile, the foreignness of home provides the critical distance necessary to challenge it with the authority of one who is both within and without. Echoing Said, Couto claims the exile knows that all homes are provisional at best. My sense is that Couto too easily elides non-local bases for critical challenges. Greene in exile, both literal and psychological, finds power in crossing borders, but there does not seem to be in Greene's work any belief that one cannot or need not find a place to stand. Instead Greene roots his responses in a Catholic vision of modernity – a basis for criticism that transcends locality but does not embrace the power of dislocation.

What they share, however, is Greene's vision of global imagined affinities rooted in the commonness of human suffering, and for that reason I treat them at length.

A Herd of Criminals

The most acclaimed of Greene's novels, *The Power and the Glory* grew from the same travels in Mexico that gave rise to *The Lawless Roads*. The first reference to the novel in Greene's letters appears in October 1938, some six months after visiting Chiapas and Tabasco and refers to the idea as "one of frightening difficulty & hazard" (*Life* 95). The narrative of an unnamed priest traveling surreptitiously throughout the officially atheist states of southern Mexico presents Greene's first consideration of the encounter between Marxism and Christianity, a concern he would maintain for the rest of his life.⁵ The novel is pervaded by a sense of pursuit and escape, highlighted by the epigraph from Dryden's "The Hind and Panther": "Th' inclosure narrow'd; the sagacious power / Of hounds and death drew nearer every hour." As Bosco, notes, the double pursuit of the priest – by both the officials of the state and the Divine he has given up – recalls the French Catholic motif of God as the "Hound of Heaven" pursuing lost souls through the material world (50). More important for the purposes here, the motif of pursuit and escape provides the trajectory of the narrative and marks the axes along which difference is articulated. The whiskey priest's journey also highlights the various ways Greene constructs locality and documents its transformation as a result of the tensions between the state and its subjects.

The globalization of culture requires critical attention to both the disjunctures that fracture existing conceptions of the globe but also to how they are localized in new

⁵ See Bosco, 103-107.

imagined geographies. The transformation of locality by external pressures (e.g. colonialism redrawing maps with little concern for existing affinities) is the most familiar form this dynamic takes. However, just as significant are the ways local social imaginations, expanded by global encounters both material and cultural, reformulate their own sense of place. In other words, localities transform not just because of foreign intervention, but because of competing native visions of the local's relationship with global cultural networks, as well.

This latter sense of transformed locality dominates *The Power and the Glory*. While Greene himself witnessed the extent to which modern Mexico is tied up in relationships with other parts of the world and wrote about this at length in *The Lawless Roads*⁶, the foreign presence is only peripheral to the conceptions of location in the novel. It is not the presence of Mr. Tench, or the Fellows's, or the Lehr's that transforms the character of the state, though it does indicate its complex composition. The key developments in the construction of location within the novel concern the whiskey priest's sense of the tension between competing versions of the space in which the narrative unfolds. Much of the novel characterizes the Mexican state by its emptiness of human life and the corresponding dominance of wilderness. "When he was gone," the whiskey priest thinks, "it would be as if God in all this space between the sea and the mountains had ceased to exist... He lay his hands over his eyes: nowhere, in all the wide flat marshy land, was there a single person he could consult" (65). The description here is as interesting as the dialectical tension implicit in the priest's thoughts. He conceives

⁶ The chief-of-police upon examining Greene's passport: "You've come home. Why, everybody in Villahermosa is called Greene – or Graham" (115).

of “all this space,” rather than “all these people.” There is no one he can consult “in all the wide flat marshy land,” not, for example, “among the villages in the countryside.” The location is conceived of in natural rather than social terms.⁷ Human beings are not part of the whiskey priest’s or the novel’s initial construction of place. It is not that they are absent; they merely do not take a central place in the imagined terrain of the novel. Even later in the novel, the priest conceives of location without considering its human inhabitants. “Shivering and sweating and soaked with rain he came up over the edge of the plateau. There was nobody there – a dead child was not someone, just a useless object abandoned at the foot of one of the crosses” (156). The child’s body is not figured as a sign of human presence or the haunted character of places where religion is persecuted. It is merely a thing – “a useless object” – within an otherwise wild landscape.

The whiskey priest’s flight from his double pursuers marks a shift away from this sense of empty places. On the cusp of escaping the state, atop the plateau with the deceased child, the priest crystallizes the new sense of location the novel has been developing throughout by way of his various encounters with native villagers:

He remembered a map he had once seen of the two adjoining states. The state from which he was escaping was peppered with villages – in the hot marshy land people bred as readily as mosquitoes, but in the next state – in the north-west corner – there was hardly anything but blank white paper. You’re on that blank paper now, the ache told him. But there’s a path, he argued wearily. Oh, a path, the ache said, a path may take you fifty miles before it reaches anywhere at all: you know you won’t last that distance. There’s just white paper all around. (156)

⁷ In a letter he writes while in Ciudad Las Casas in Chiapas, Greene complains, “This is an awful & depressing country for anyone like myself who doesn’t care for nature” (*Life* 94).

By the time the whiskey priest prepares for the final leg of his escape from persecution, the novel's sense of place has reversed itself. The state he inhabits is highly populated while the place he is escaping to is blank, empty, and wild. When the priest's pain "tells" him he is in an empty place, he resists, arguing wearily.

How to account for this reversal of the novel's depiction of location? An answer begins with the central conflict in the novel between the religious natives and the officials of the state who would obliterate religious faith. Each conceives of the novel's space in ways conducive to their vision of the globe and the state's role in it. The Marxist state apparatus envisions a place isolated from the rest of the globe, save those ideologically sympathetic artifacts of culture approved for mass consumption. Early in the novel, the young lieutenant gives shape to the Marxist vision. Of "this obscure neglected state," he thinks, "This was his own land, and he would have walled it in if he could with steel until he had eradicated from it everything which reminded him of how it had once appeared to a miserable child" (25). He seeks, in other words, to empty the state of that which does not naturally occur there. The state's vision of its position in global modernity is as an isolated, self-sustaining, egalitarian community unmoored from the trappings of its history. It neither submits to the forces of global exchange nor embraces its heritage as a guide. It is an empty space to be made meaningful by the exercise of political ideology. The Christian vision within the novel resides in the villages of natives that dot the landscape. Villagers privilege their local customs and traditions while simultaneously welcoming the outsider whiskey-priest because of the functions he can perform. This is an understanding of the global in which the local is not isolated, but elements from without must share some sense of affinity at a deep level in

order to be invited within.⁸ It takes the presence of a people with a history and its own beliefs as its starting point, rather than insisting the state's emptiness be transformed. If the Marxist version is isolated and utopian, the Christian version the Indian villagers demonstrate is a form of cautious realism.

Of what consequence is this shift in the construction of locality? John Tomlinson argues that, even in a time of widespread deterritorialization, locality "continues to exercise its influence in the cultural imagination." Politically, it may represent "the hope for a new settlement" or new system of power. Culturally, locality may be recalled nostalgically as the "locale of original belonging" (155). However deployed, the representation of place in the imagined worlds of fiction reveals a great deal about the dominant values in the social imagination. The point here is not that Greene privileges one ideological construction of locality over another. As Bosco notes, Greene, while at times in his life committed to both, finds strident forms of Marxism and Christianity unpalatable (106). Within the novel, Greene is not demonstrating the superiority of one ideology over another or one way of constructing locality over another.⁹ Instead, the whiskey-priest's journey first out of, then back into the persecuting state models the ambivalence of both imagined geographies. Moreover, his reversed interpretations of the

⁸ Cultural difference is of little consequence in this formulation. Though the priest (apparently Spanish-Mexican as opposed to Mexican Indian) has traveled broadly, is educated, and, according to the lieutenant, "can talk like a Yankee," his differences are obliterated by the ontological truth of his vocation. His ability to access the divine – to "put God in their mouths" – provides the justification for his presence in the native communities.

⁹ In this sense, both Bosco's reading and mine stand opposed to Judith Adamson's readings of *The Power and the Glory* and *The Lawless Roads*. She argues that Greene's concern is "to argue the benefits of Catholicism over totalitarianism, the category in which he stored Marxism" (52). Such a reading ignores the complex picture of both the state and the Church in the novel while reducing religious commitments to ideological discourse without attending to the real consequences of faith Greene depicts in *The Lawless Roads*.

state--first as empty then as densely populated--signifies a much more fundamental shift in his thought out from the abstractions of maps and the tension between wilderness and civilization into the concrete experiences of the communities he serves. To the priest with access to transcendent truth, imagined geographies are less important than the practices that coalesce communities around that truth. Still, the narrative of the novel documents the ways locality is transformed by the conflict between the dominant conceptions of its relationship to global culture.

While the conflict between religious subjects and the secular state marks the primary axis along which difference is articulated in the novel, Greene's Catholic imagination does not reduce religion to one side in a global ideological conflict. Like many of his Catholic literary colleagues, Greene depicts his faith as a threat to modern complacency and comfort. Its power lies not in ideologically revolutionary programs like Marxism but in its presentation of an alternative narrative of modernity – one that eschews materialism, progressivism, nationalism, and other touchstones of modern philosophy. In *The Power and the Glory*, Catholic faith provides a way of making meaning of human experience without resorting to the dialectical sensibility underlying the state's version of the social imagination. Greene's narrative finds coherence in the "facts" the whiskey priest tells the lieutenant the Catholic mind doesn't try to alter: "that the world's unhappy whether you are rich or poor – unless you are a saint, and there aren't many of those. It's not worth bothering too much about a little pain here. There's one belief we both of us have – that we'll all be dead in a hundred years" (194-95). The rather dour tone of the hard facts Greene presents leads many critics to ascribe to him a nostalgic sentiment. Judith Adamson, for example, calls *The Power and the Glory*

Greene's *1984*, "only in Greene's novel the individual triumphs through Catholicism" (64). She goes on to argue that the novel documents Greene's disillusionment with modernity. The modern state and its revolutionary machinations fail to provide hope for a better world. Greene's remedy, according to Adamson, is a return to older models of life rooted in Catholic ritualism and discipline, no matter how impossibly ahistorical such a reversion may be (65-67). Without using the term, she presents Greene as a Jansenist – one who believes modern materialism amplifies the temptation of worldly pleasures and that the only antidote is a regimented life guided by religious rituals and strict adherence to moral codes. Only discipline can overcome the sense of loss that pervades modernity.

My sense is that Adamson misreads the Catholic narrative of modernity Greene presents in *The Power and the Glory*. Yes, a sense of loss pervades the modern world. However, this arises from the fallenness of humanity that is a given in Greene's Catholic vision. Loss is broadly human, not simply modern. The real critique the novel levels at modernity concerns its illusory certainties. Early in the novel, the lieutenant contemplates mystics who claim to have experienced God directly and thinks that he "was a mystic, too, and what he had experienced was vacancy – *a complete certainty* in the existence of a dying, cooling world, of human beings who had evolved from animals for no purpose at all. *He knew*" (24-25, emphasis mine). Greene presents modernity not as the experience of the loss of hope but as the deluded conviction that loss and pain can be overcome by a proper philosophical disposition or adequate political structures. Empowerment in Marxism, a sense of belonging in nationalism, comfort and meaning in capitalist materialism – Greene shows each giving only the illusion of certainty while eliding the hard facts of human existence as expressed by Newman and experienced in

Greene's encounters in Mexico. Alternatives are not to be found in old habits. What is needed is not a programmatic retrenchment into ancient discipline, but a new way of being that takes the common experience of human frailty as its starting point (or a fact one cannot alter) rather than a problem to be solved.

It is here that the Catholic character of Greene's imagination is most apparent. Within *The Power and the Glory*, faith wraps itself in the realities of human suffering in order to stand against the modern certainties represented in both Marxist state ideology and the material comforts of the Lehr's, Fellows's, and Tench's. Greene reserves particular disdain for the inward-looking theology that arises from bourgeois comfort. In the novel, the theology that takes the self as the locus of religious commitment frequently finds expression in the thoughts of the whiskey-priest. When he first commits to escaping the state, he thinks, "The Church taught that it was every man's duty to save his own soul" (65). Later, during a storm along the route out of the state, he thinks, "I have to get to shelter – a man's first duty is to himself – even the Church taught that, in a way" (155). What this mode of the priest's thoughts reveals is an introspective theology that takes salvation of the self as its primary end. It is religious commitment based on pride.

Greene is careful to subvert this sensibility, first by bringing its origins and consequences into relief by placing the whiskey priest in settings characterized by material comfort, then, by radically and violently expanding the boundaries of the priest's moral landscape. While staying with the Lehr's, German-American siblings living on the periphery of the state, the whiskey priest's pietism encounters its logical consequences. Surrounded by the Lehr's material comfort and people who practice their faith largely without fear of persecution, pride comes to dominate the priest's logic. He

negotiates the fee for baptisms based on his own material desires – “there was no need to arrive in Las Casas then as a beggar; he could buy a decent suit of clothes, find a respectable lodging, settle down... He said, ‘You must pay one peso fifty a head’” (167).

Money is not the only signifier of the priest’s newfound comfort:

I shall have a hundred and twenty pesos left. After all these years, it was like wealth. He felt respect all the way up the street: men took off their hats as he passed: it was as if he had got back to the days before the persecution. He could feel the old life hardening around him like a habit, a stony cast which held his head high and dictated the way he walked, and even formed his words. (167-68)

Conversing with an educated merchant over brandy reveals to the whiskey-priest the dangers of his comfortable pride. “He thought: what a play-actor I am. I have no business here, among good people... The brandy was musty on the tongue with his own corruption. God might forgive cowardice and passion, but was it possible to forgive the habit of piety? ... This was another pious person. There were a lot of them about in this world” (168-69). The consequence of material and spiritual comfort is self-centered piety. The whiskey priest identifies the origins of his pietism with the pressures of the persecution. Late in the novel, he tells the lieutenant that, without the priests who left the state and the accompanying pressures of an engaged faith community, “I got careless about my duties. I began to drink. It would have been much better, I think, if I had gone too. Because pride was at work all the time. Not love of God... Pride was what made the angels fall. Pride’s the worst thing of all” (196). The dramatic arc of the novel reveals the whiskey-priest’s journey out of comfortable pietism and into a necessary engagement with existential anguish – a journey literalized in his escape from and return to the dangers of the state.

Greene thus presents his critique of modern certainties: material comfort produces pietism, national borders are easily transgressed, and no one has less power than the subjects of the Marxist state. Most important to note here is the Catholic character of this challenge. It draws its authority not from its progressive potential but from its ability to accurately diagnose the modern situation. That situation is not, as Adamson has it, characterized by a new sense of profound loss. Instead, according to Greene, modernity turns the critical and theological gaze inward to the self and produces social structures directed toward impossible tasks (i.e. eliminating suffering and inequity). The modern problem, therefore, is one of orientation. In philosophy and in practice, modernity seeks refuge from our provisional and ephemeral existence in certainties that appear immutable (the self, the nation, positivism, etc.) The Catholic response, embodied in Greene's fiction, begins by revealing modern certainties to be ephemeral, provisional, and elusive, as well.¹⁰ The only certainties are those that start from the acknowledgment of human finitude, namely the omnipresence of suffering and the limits of mortality.

Among the more common narratives of globalization is one that conceives of it in terms of the international spread of modern sensibilities and structures, first by colonialism then by transnational capitalism.¹¹ The intellectual and social markers of modernity - capitalist economics, nationalist politics, institutionalized identities, rigid public/private distinctions – bring new parts of the globe into the self-narrative of

¹⁰ It is in this respect that many have noted an overlap between Catholic thought and postmodern philosophy. See, for example, Murphy's reading of von Balthasar and Derrida in *A Theology of Criticism*.

¹¹ World-systems theory, building on Wallerstein, is the best known version of this narrative. However, there are versions that complement Wallerstein's economic emphasis by giving pride of place to political structures (Keane), ethics (Meyer, Boli, & Thomas), philosophy (Risse), and culture (Tomlinson). In each, the spread of Western models of modernity to all parts of the globe presages the rise of an integrated global culture, market, and society.

progress rooted in modernity's immutable certainties. How does the Catholic imagination respond to global integration premised on certainties it believes to be illusory? In *The Power and the Glory*, Greene gives some shape to his alternative model of global modernity that begins from Catholicism's own alternative certainties. The most important aspect of his version of the global future is its conception of suffering as a unifying principle rather than an obstacle to progress. In this way, Greene locates his vision on the cusp of the global revolution and within the bounds of Catholic orthodoxy.

What does it mean to say Greene posits suffering as a globally unifying principle? In the narrative of the whiskey-priest, Greene literalizes abstract Catholic conceptions about the role of suffering in accessing spiritual reality. More importantly, he portrays the experience of suffering binding communities together in more fundamental ways than can their national, ethnic, or religious identities. This unfolds on both personal and social levels. At the level of the community, Greene responds to the programmatic revolution of the Marxist state apparatus with a different form of egalitarianism. However, it is not one premised on uplift, empowerment, or the diminution of economic inequity. The lieutenant expresses the modern goals of the Marxist program, "No more money for saying prayers, no more money for building places to say prayers in. We'll give people food instead, teach them to read, give them books. We'll see they don't suffer." The whiskey-priest's response reveals the strangeness of the challenge Greene's version of egalitarianism poses: "But if they want to suffer..." (194) Implicit in the whiskey priest's response and Greene's vision is a sense of the Divine as mediated in the experiences of fallen humanity. Bosco notes that Greene locates signs of the Divine in unusual places, "for the priest it is revealed in the *Imago Dei*, the divine image

analogously rendered in the poor, the ugly, and the persecuted” (61). To see the Divine is to see God suffering with the oppressed. Equality, in this view, is not premised on the fair distribution of material resources but the recognition of Divine presence in those with whom one suffers.¹² One finds this not only in the whiskey priest’s understanding of the Indian communities he serves but in the way the persecuted peoples see one another, as well. Any time an unnamed villager speaks, he speaks collectively of what the community lacks: “We have no food” (43); “We have no money, father, to give you” (44); “But we have only what we wear” (44); “We are very poor here, father” (167); “We are poor, father” (170); etc. When the whiskey priest admonishes the villagers to “pray that you will suffer more and more and more,” (69) they respond with silent assent. Suffering is their only option; it is the experience that binds them.

The inevitability of suffering does not make it meaningful, however. It does not become the basis for alternative, non-national affinity simply by virtue of its ubiquity. For Greene, as for many of his Catholic literary contemporaries, the challenge of modernity is to make the commonness of suffering meaningful. To do so requires a reinterpretation of the function of suffering for the modern era. Traditionally, Catholic thought has figured the telos of suffering in light of belief in the afterlife. Those who suffer in the mortal world, the line of reasoning goes, will be rewarded with eternal salvation. This view contrasts with the lieutenant’s, for example, which allows no

¹² Bosco, Stephen Benz, and many others find in the novel’s emphasis on the suffering community and the practice of justice sympathy for the Latin American movement that would be formalized in “liberation theology.” I do not discuss this sympathy here for two reasons. First, I am less interested in how Greene saw the role of justice in communal religious practice than I am in how he thought about the principles around which communities form. Second, the fundamental tension in the novel is not between those who would liberate and those who oppress (although the lieutenant might cast it as such) but between competing approaches to the realities of material inequity.

purpose in suffering, because his atheism precludes belief in a life after death. An additional challenge of modernity – a particularly acute one for a realistic writer like Greene – is to make meaning without resorting to appeals that extend beyond the realm of experience. To do that would be to transgress the division between literature and catechetical moral instruction.¹³ Within *The Power and the Glory*, then, Greene reformulates the traditional conviction regarding suffering for more earthly purposes. He presents a dialectical world in which suffering can neither be overcome by modern progressivism nor redeemed by religious faith. Instead, its meaning is determined by the extent to which it serves as a unifying rather than a divisive experience. In this way, the suffering of the natives who populate the novel is given a different telos, one uncoupled from doctrines concerning the afterlife. It has real here-and-now consequences of binding the community in the collective “we” that voices the passages cited in the previous paragraph.

Greene’s challenge at the personal level is to bind oneself to others through the experience of suffering. He shows the whiskey-priest’s experiences of suffering as the mirror-image of his experiences of comfort. While comfortable circumstances turn the religious gaze inward, persecution turns the priest’s attention to those with whom he suffers. In jail¹⁴, he thinks, “He was just one criminal among a herd of criminals... he

¹³ On this distinction Greene was adamant. In his letters, he often referred to Newman’s insistence that “a Christian Literature” would be no literature at all. Writing to Elizabeth Bowen, Greene says that the role of literature in moral edification “may be of the highest value, of far higher value than literature, but it belongs to a different world. Literature has nothing to do with edification” (151).

¹⁴ Notice, also, the construction of the space of the prison. The whiskey priest contrasts his memories of it with the comfort of the Lehr’s home: “He thought of the prison cell with the old man and the pious woman, the half-caste lying across the hut door, the dead child, and the abandoned station. He thought with shame of his daughter left to her knowledge and her ignorance by the rubbish-dump. He had no right to such

had a sense of companionship which he had never experienced in the old days when pious people came kissing his black cotton glove” (128). Seeing himself as one of many who suffer leads the priest to a sense of community. He imagines an affinity based on the common experience of suffering. In the climax of his narrative, he willingly takes on suffering on behalf of others. Doing so brings him into full participation in the suffering Christian body – an *alter Christus*. In death, he becomes more than a saint, “the whiskey-priest *becomes* the Christ, the objectification of the Christ-form, participating in that form by being emptied of his bourgeois Christian piety and sacrificing himself for his criminal brother” (Bosco 53). This final act of kenosis – sacrificing himself for another – reveals and deepens the connection between the whiskey-priest and the oppressed communities he has served. Though just before death, he feels “I have done nothing for anybody. I might just as well have never lived,” (210) after his death, the community of believers remembers him as “one of the martyrs of the Church,” “one of the saints,” and “one of the heroes of the faith” (219). Greene here presents a challenging version of modern affinity, one in which taking on suffering and sacrificing oneself for others are the ideal forms of participation in the life of the community.

The kenotic experience Greene’s dialectical world demands reveals much about his conceptions of power both in the historical moment of the novel and the imagined world of the global future. Specifically, the whiskey priest’s death dramatizes Greene’s insistence on the virtues of disloyalty. It shows both the importance and the difficulty of refusing to pledge fealty to institutionalized ideologies. After all, the whiskey priest is

luxury” (164). It is overcrowded with people. It renders absurd the state’s (and the early whiskey-priest’s) vision of the state as an empty, natural location.

executed for refusing to adhere to the mandates of the state. He defies its orders, symbolically and materially nullifying its claims to be liberating the people within its bounded geography. Perhaps more significantly, though, are the ways the priest is remembered by the community and how these remembrances bind him to it. He is not bound to the community by performing his priestly duties or enacting the ideals of the institutional Church. What ensures his full participation in the community is the kenotic act of suffering with and on behalf of its members. In this way, Greene presents a profound aversion to institutionalized power, both political and religious. His imagined world – whether local or global – begins with common experience rather than common ideological commitments.

Of what consequence is this model of community rooted in common suffering to Greene's alternative version of global modernity? At first glance, there appears to be nothing global or transnational about the sense of community promoted in the novel, only local instantiations of challenging theological principles. The key is to recognize that the novel does not articulate difference primarily along national or cultural axes, but those differences are there nonetheless. Greene presents the difference in the backgrounds of the whiskey priest and the communities he serves as incidental. More important is the common faith that brings the priest to the villages, especially in the final experience of human finitude that empties him of the certainties on which his pride is built and binds him fully to the community of faith.¹⁵ What does a version of global

¹⁵In the first chapter of *Modernity at Large*, Appadurai discusses the ways mass media transform and fracture religious communities into various transnational sodalities: "These sodalities are often transnational, even postnational, and they frequently operate beyond the boundaries of the nation." More importantly, such communities of religious affinity are sufficiently complex that "diverse local experiences

modernity based on this model of community look like? The temptation, of course, is to see Greene offering the Catholic Church as a refuge from the illusory certainties of modern communities. This desire grows stronger when reading passages such as the following from *The Lawless Roads*: “In a church the democracy is absolute. The rich man and the poor man kneel side by side for communion: the rich man must wait his turn at the confessional” (46). Submitting to this desire, however, would reduce the Catholic dimension of Greene’s imagination to merely another ideological construct and ignore the discomfort Greene seems to have with the institutionalization of forms of Catholic thought.¹⁶ Perhaps more importantly, allowing one institution to lay claim on a vision of the future runs counter to Greene’s sense of the virtue of disloyalty.

The key to reading forward to the novel’s version of global community lies in recognizing the whiskey priest’s submission to suffering and death as a voluntary act. When he commits to turning back from the road out of the state in order to perform a final priestly act, the whiskey priest consciously chooses arrest, punishment, and death. Yet, his initial reaction is serenity. “He was quite certain that this was a trap...The oddest thing of all was that he felt quite cheerful; he had never really believed in this peace. He had dreamed of it so often on the other side that now it meant no more to him than a dream” (180). The priest chooses suffering as a way of serving on behalf of the village communities – communities that are not his by birth or heritage. Here Greene presents a vision of volitional affinity across local boundaries. It is the final consequence

of taste, pleasure, and politics can crisscross with one another, thus creating the possibility of convergences in translocal social action that would otherwise be hard to imagine” (8). It is in this sense of complex, consequential communities rooted in non-local affinities that Greene’s vision is always potentially global.

¹⁶ On the latter, see Bosco 54f. and chapter two of Cates Baldrige, entitled “Waning Power and Faded Glory: Greene’s Conception of God.”

of the Catholic challenge to the modern self-narrative. By replacing the modern search for certainty with Catholicism's hard facts, Greene produces a new non-national model of imagined community – one is bound to those for whom one is willing to suffer. This is a form of affinity that responds to modern anxieties without retreating into the certainties of programmatic ideologies or the totalizing commitments of the nationalist imagination. The commonness of suffering in Greene's theology presents modern subjects with countless opportunities to forge new connections, just as modern transnational exchange networks present countless opportunities to forge connections across geographic space and political borders. The Catholic version of global integration that Greene shows as a possible world in *The Power and the Glory* rests on the ability of modern subjects to turn their theological gaze outward from the self and expand the horizons of their moral considerations. Greene shows how difficult this transition can be in another novel in his Catholic cycle.

Policing God's Borders

Greene's most explicit engagement with colonialism in his Catholic cycle, 1948's *The Heart of the Matter*, grew, like *The Power and the Glory*, from Greene's travels beyond the English homeland. Also like Greene's travels in Mexico, his visit to Africa produced a travelogue in addition to inspiring fictional worlds. Published in 1936, *Journey Without Maps* details Greene's experience a year earlier traveling through Liberia in West Africa with his cousin, Barbara Greene. The most interesting aspects of that text from the standpoint of this study are Greene's analyses of the religious sensibilities of West Africa. He begins from the conviction that "a Christian cannot

believe in one God for Europe and another God for Africa” (84). However, he is dubious regarding the effectiveness of colonial efforts at converting Africans:

As for the dances and the fetish worship, the missionaries have not the power to stop them if they wished to; Christianity here has its back to the wall. Converts are comparatively few; there is no material advantage in being converted; the only advantage is a spiritual one, one of being released from a few fears, of being offered an insubstantial hope. (84-85)

Greene’s sense of African spirituality – that it is premised on material advantage – echoes the colonist’s misapprehension.¹⁷ This colonial disposition likely served Greene well when stationed in Freetown, Sierra Leone during World War II. His correspondence from there reveals a similar mentality. In a letter to his mother, he describes flying over Ghana: “What I saw of it I didn’t like – except the superbly beautiful old Danish fort in which the Governor lives – like a stage set of Elsinore in dazzling white with the surf beating below on two sides” (*Life* 112).

The dominance of colonialism in Greene’s African experiences leads many critics, quite logically, to examine this work set in Africa in terms of the colonial encounter.¹⁸ Others prefer to focus on Major Scobie’s bizarre moral journey from Catholic convert to despairing suicide.¹⁹ Maria Couto rebuffs what she sees as the

¹⁷ Aimé Césaire’s *Discourse on Colonialism* reads the logic of colonialism as premised not just on violent appropriation of material wealth and political subjugation, but a particular morality that requires intentionally ignoring the local histories of faith traditions, even if they are Christian (20f).

¹⁸ Greene’s fictional treatment of Africa is not confined to *The Heart of the Matter*, of course. Querry, the protagonist in 1960’s *A Burnt Out Case*, takes refuge from his personal demons in a leper colony deep in the Congo. Christine DeVinne, among others, highlights the debt Querry’s journey owes to Conrad and *Heart of Darkness*. The novel also reinscribes troubling associations between the colonial other and disease (445). Nonetheless, the energies of *A Burnt Out Case* focus on the world that will not leave Querry alone – a world which has little concern for the exigencies of the colonial encounter.

¹⁹ See, for example, Torre on “Greene’s Saints” and Bergonzi’s reading of *The Heart of the Matter* under the heading “A Catholic Novelist?”

limiting focus on the novel's religious elements. "*The Heart of the Matter* has for so long been discussed as a Catholic novel," she argues, "that it is quite possible to entirely overlook its subtle representation of the relationship between the colonial officer, the intermediary and the colonized" (119). She goes on to formulate a reading of the novel, discussed below, based on Greene and Scobie's experiences with colonial management. As should be clear from my argument, I believe this presents a false choice. Colonial politics no doubt structures a great deal of Greene's depiction of West Africa in both autobiographical and fictive narratives. Moreover, even in the midst of his colonial experience, Greene remained a practicing Catholic – a commitment consistent with Scobie's habits in the novel.²⁰ In both Greene's life and the life of *The Heart of the Matter*, Catholicism and colonialism coexist and inform the representation of one another. Within the novel, Greene's Catholic imagination exerts outward pressure, pushing both Scobie and the reader to expand their horizons of moral consideration beyond the nation or the dialectic of colonialism. The very real costs of this global perspective complicate and exacerbate Scobie's moral drama.

This is not to say that Greene rejects colonial thinking from the outset. The fictionalized account of West Africa in *The Heart of the Matter* retains some of the same problematic characterizations as the travelogue. From one standpoint, these issues originate with the author's decision to interpolate Africa entirely through the Englishman Scobie's eyes. This is not a criticism that only arises with the attention of postcolonial

²⁰ In the same letter to his mother mentioned above, Greene references his plans to attend Good Friday mass the following day, just as he had attended an illegal service in Chiapas years earlier (*Life* 113).

critics, either. In a *New Yorker* review upon the novel's release, George Orwell excoriates Greene for what is absent:

Why should this novel have its setting in West Africa? Except that one of the characters is a Syrian trader, the whole thing might as well be happening in a London suburb. The Africans exist only as an occasionally mentioned background, and the thing that would actually be in Scobie's mind the whole time – the hostility between black and white, and the struggle against the local nationalist movement – is not mentioned at all.... All he is interested in is his own progress toward damnation. (106)

The assumptions implicit in Orwell's critique recall the logic that led Chinua Achebe to tag Joseph Conrad "a thoroughgoing racist" – namely that the European narrative of colonialism silences the voices of the colonized and elides the existence of native nationalist aspirations. As I hope to show, however, Greene presents a much more complex picture of colonialism in *The Heart of the Matter*, one that takes the colonist's inability to hear outside voices as the starting point for a religious critique of imperialism.²¹

The novel's construction of locality, at first glance, does not seem to offer much resistance to Orwell's critique. Greene deploys many of the tropes common to British literary representations of the non-European world. Two particular tendencies dominate. The first is the representation of the African landscape as burdened by its climate, especially its heat. Africa's trees "smelled of heat and rain" (83). Walking barefoot is uncomfortable due to "the heat in the grass" (230). The air between Scobie and Louise "trembled between them" from heat (42). Heat and its effects pervade even the

²¹ There is, of course, the criticism that, by fixating on the consequences of colonialism for Scobie, Greene reinscribes Euro-centricity in the moral dimension. The novel elides the very real material consequences of imperialism for Africa and Africans, implying that the morality of the colonial project depends on its consequences for the colonizer. From this critique I cannot defend Greene.

manufactured human world. Scobie cannot be comfortable in his office: “As for the cushions and the easy-chair, he had soon discovered how comfort of that kind in the airless town meant heat. Where the body was touched or enclosed it sweated” (15). The stone walls of Scobie’s home sometimes “sweated with cold and sometimes were baked with heat” (89). Lisa Bierman reads the omnipresent heat as Greene placing Scobie in a “sort of hell on Earth” (67). More important, it seems to me, is the effect the heat has on Scobie and other characters. It makes them unable to see and interpret the reality, both material and social, around them. When Louise wonders why no one at the club likes her, Scobie insists, “Don’t be silly, darling. It’s just the heat: it makes you fancy things. They all like you” (43). When Louise returns from her time in the south, the heat makes West Africa unrecognizable. “Through the port-hole, the houses sparkled like mica in the haze of the heat,” she observes (206). The novel uses heat as a stand-in for the disorienting effect Africa has on the European mind. Its landscape is, in the end, unintelligible.²² It is not too difficult to hear echoes of Conrad’s Marlowe or Joyce Cary’s *The African Witch*.

Heat also signifies an element present in *The Power and the Glory*, namely the tension between the natural world and civilization. In his depiction of West Africa, however, there is no such distinction. The African heat and rain dominate the human world, no matter how well made it may be. Here we encounter the second common trope Greene deploys in constructing West Africa. He shows it not just as mysterious but also wild and dangerous. There are dozens of instances in which Greene brings Scobie into

²² It seems this interpretation of Africa is present from the beginning of Greene’s engagement with the continent. In the travel journals of *In Search of a Character*, he traces his affection for the “Africa of the Victorian atlas, the blank unexplored continent, the shape of the human heart” (106).

contact with a wild, foreboding version of Africa. Driving one evening, he has to swerve to avoid hitting a dying pye-dog (35). The men he is surrounded by – both prisoners and policemen alike – smell like “a zoo, of sawdust, excrement, ammonia, and lack of liberty” (15). Scobie often shares his bathroom with rats (41-42). When he cuts himself on a door, Scobie thinks, “The smallest scratch in this country turned green if it were neglected for an hour” (40). As Bierman notes, “Images of death and decay surround” Scobie (66).

What initially emerges from reading Greene’s depiction of West Africa is a vision of a dark, wild, and dangerous place. Again, this is not an alien construction in 20th century British literature. It also is not a complete account of the location of the novel. Scobie’s narrative does not unfold in an undifferentiated village adjacent to the African bush, but in a port city through which pass ships from all corners of the world (or at least of the British Empire). This is not incidental to the novel’s construction of location. Indeed, the novel opens with Wilson, the Englishman fresh off the boat, looking out from his balcony. “Sitting there, facing Bond Street, he had his face turned to the sea. His pallor showed how recently he had emerged from it into the port” (11). The port, while rarely the actual setting of action within the novel, figures prominently in the social character of Greene’s location. Again, this is evident from the very beginning when the only company Wilson has on his balcony is “one bearded Indian in a turban who had already tried to tell his fortune” (11). The diversity of ethnic and national identities that enter the novel through the port problematizes a reading of the novel based only on the exploitative relationship between colonizer and colonized – there are simply too many other types of people present.

Couto attempts to circumvent this problem by figuring the novel's version of the colonial encounter in terms of "exiles, *colons*, and intermediaries" (113). In this schema, Yusef and other Syrian traders serve as intermediaries between British colonial officers like Scobie and African natives.²³ There are two main problems with Couto's conception. First, it does not account for the many other ethnicities and nationalities that populate the narrative. Second, Scobie's dealings with Yusef have less to do with the management of the colony, its resources, or its people than with contravening colonial authority. I am not trying to argue that the logic of colonialism does not pervade the location of the novel; the town is a center of colonial authority and imperial thinking and structures are crucial. My point is that, with regard to how Greene presents its imagined composition, the town's status as a port along major trade routes ensures the colonial dialectic is not the primary articulation of difference.

Instead the novel presents a location defined by the multiplicity of identity groups that passes through it. Indeed, much of the complicated apparatus of books, parts, chapters, and sections Greene deploys in the novel reflects the coming and going of ships and the arrival and departure of key characters to and from foreign lands. Book I begins with Scobie searching a ship for smuggled diamonds and ends with Louise leaving for the south. Book II begins with Scobie and his associates interrogating the survivors of a shipwreck and ends with Yusef and Scobie negotiating how to get illegal diamonds aboard the *Esperança*. Book III begins with the arrival of the ship bringing Louise back

²³ There is, of course, historical precedent for the structure Couto argues is at work in *The Heart of the Matter*. For an overview of how such roles worked, see Lawrance, Osborn, and Roberts's introduction to their collection entitled *Intermediaries, Interpreters, and Clerks: African Employees in the Making of Colonial Africa*.

from her holiday. Greene structures the town, as well as his novel, around the movement of people and goods through the port, not on the violent dialectic of the colonial encounter.

This emphasis on mobility transforms the sense of location in the novel from locus of colonial authority to site of contestation among multiple ethnic and national groups. In welcoming the new arrival Wilson to his new post, Harris compares it to “the original Tower of Babel” and lists its inhabitants as “West Indians, Africans, real Indians, Syrians, Englishmen, Scotsmen in the Office of Works, Irish priests, French priests, Alsatian priests” (14). Setting the novel during a time of global war amplifies this sensibility. Scobie and his administrative colleagues are less concerned with what Orwell calls “the hostility between black and white and the struggle against the local nationalist movement” than with the movement of goods and information “to Portugal and then to Germany or across the border to the Vichy French” (105). Global trade and global war complicate Greene’s West Africa. Imposing upon the text expectations that, because the novel is set in a colony, it should deal primarily with the exigencies of colonialism, is ignoring the transformation of locality Greene finds at the beginning of global modernity.

Critic R.H. Miller equates this transformation of location with the sense of loss that underlies Scobie’s despair by the end of the novel. “Scobie is a man without a country,” he argues, one “without a culture, without most significantly, a philosophical and intellectual framework” (140). In one sense, Miller is precisely right. Scobie’s sense of country and culture is just as malleable as the nebulous moral logic that guides his actions. To say that each is absent, however, ignores the historical and political realities

of the moment the novel documents. Just as the coming-and-going of ships and their cargo transforms the character of Scobie's West African town, the birth-pains of global modernity destabilize the logical certainties of liberal modernity. In Scobie's spiritual drama, Greene presents a narrative attempting to reformulate conceptions of sin and moral responsibility in a global era where boundaries--both political and ethical--are in flux. As in *The Power and the Glory*, Greene begins from different premises than the modern self-narrative of progress and human perfectibility.

Also like the earlier novel, the protagonist of *The Heart of the Matter* embraces an initially unfamiliar variant of the Catholic faith. Scobie's faith begins, not from the ontological truths or hard facts of Catholic thought, but from a transcendent sense of responsibility. He constantly refers to his position as a police officer to explain how he has certain knowledge and to justify unorthodox actions. Bound up with Scobie's self-identification with the role of officer of the empire is a strong emphasis on his responsibility for those who serve under him and those he's charged to protect. Scobie returns to this sense of responsibility throughout the novel as it provides the grounds of his self-conception. Within the first presentation of his domestic space, for example – in which the reader is first made aware of the novel's marital tension – Scobie thinks of the words “responsible” or “responsibility” seven times. Louise's presence in particular causes Scobie anxiety from which his appeal to responsibility is his only recourse. “Fifteen years form a face, gentleness ebbs with experience, and he was always aware of his own responsibility...The less he needed Louise the more conscious he became of his responsibility for her happiness” (16, 21). This extends beyond the domestic sphere, of course. When he first meets Helen Rolt, Scobie mentions her stamp album. When she

asks how he knows about it, Scobie responds, “That’s my job. I’m a policeman” (140). This sense of responsibility emanating from his identification with his profession guides Scobie’s actions and expressions throughout the novel.

Scobie’s obsession with responsibility even underlies his crisis of faith. In what Greene casts as a conversation with a Divine voice, Scobie argues that pursuing the love he feels for Helen would be inappropriate. When the voice indicates living with Helen requires trusting the Divine to care for Scobie’s eternal fate, he bristles at the idea of abdicating that responsibility:

I don’t trust you. I’ve never trusted you. If you made me, you made this feeling of responsibility that I’ve always carried about like a sack of bricks. I’m not a policeman for nothing – responsible for order, for seeing justice is done. There was no other profession for a man of my kind. I can’t shift my responsibility to you. If I could, I would be someone else. (259)

When he tries to explain the realities of mortal sin to Helen, he similarly appeals to the officer’s sense of responsibility: “You can’t get out of it that way. I believe I’m damned for all eternity – unless a miracle happens. I’m a policeman. I know what I’m saying. What I’ve done is far worse than murder” (232). Thus, Scobie’s religious sensibility is intimately bound up with his sense of responsibility. As Bierman notes, this leads to a moral flexibility in which making others happy and maintaining the appearance of responsibility are the twin goals of all moral decisions (66).

The consequence of basing moral sentiment on one’s sense of responsibility is the internalization of justifications for unequal power relationships. Within the novel, this manifests in Scobie’s obsession with pity, which gives emotional justification to the intellectual choices Scobie bases on his sense of responsibility. It also, in Scobie’s mind, is coterminous with love. Leaving Louise to sleep in when he leaves for work, Scobie

thinks that “these were the times of ugliness when he loved her, when pity and responsibility reached the intensity of passion. It was pity that told him to go” (22). Of course, as D.S. Savage notes, Scobie’s reliance on pity for moral guidance ensures he will always think himself superior to those for whom pity makes him responsible. Moreover, this takes the form of moral superiority – Scobie imagines himself better attuned to those who need pity and better able to act responsibly on their behalf (210). It is this equivocation of pity and responsibility with love that Greene seems most determined to undermine. By partnering in crime with Yusef, Scobie abdicates any pretense of responsibility. At that moment, Greene has Scobie walk by a mirror. What he sees is “poised over his own shoulder a stranger’s face, a fat, sweating, unreliable face. Momentarily he wondered: who can that be? Before he realized that it was only this new unfamiliar look of pity which made it strange to him. He thought: am I really one of those whom people pity?” (202) By the end of the novel, Greene has left Scobie unable to rationalize love in the terms most comfortable to him:

When he was young, he had thought love had something to do with understanding, but with age he knew that no human being understood another. Love was the wish to understand, and presently with constant failure the wish died, and love died too perhaps or changed into this painful affection, loyalty, pity...(253)

Greene shows how Scobie relies on pity and responsibility to dictate which of those beneath him toward whom he should feel love. Love dies when he pities himself to the same extent that he pities others, thereby obliterating his pretense of superiority.

Here we arrive at Greene’s critique of colonialism. By imbuing those with a sense of moral superiority with actual power, empire ensures not only material exploitation and political subjugation but moral vapidness, as well. Just as the material

comforts indicted in *The Power and the Glory* produce introspection and bourgeois piety, colonialism similarly provides unwarranted moral certainty and elevates self-regard to an ethical concern. Scobie's repeated appeals to his good intentions – "I didn't mean to..." "I meant to..." "I wanted to..." – reveal the inward orientation of his moral vision. His sense of responsibility is the result of his internalized superiority, a self-regard fomented in the colonial encounter. Though not the novel's primary articulation of difference, colonialism does provide Scobie with his position as a colonial officer – the literalization of the power structures implicit in his concern with responsibility. The problem, then, even in a diverse location like Scobie's West African port, is that the colonial apparatus manifests and reaffirms the modern world's sense of moral superiority. It reinscribes the illusory certainties. In this way, Greene echoes Aimé Césaire's formulation that "a nation which colonizes... a civilization which justifies colonization - and therefore force - is already a sick civilization, a civilization that is morally diseased" (4). He shows that the moral logic colonialism produces cannot be redeemed, even by a finely tuned awareness of cosmic consequence, such as Scobie's.

So what is to be done instead? What models of transnational encounter does Greene reveal to be possible? As in *The Power and the Glory*, Greene here begins from premises other than those of global modernity. To be sure, the trade networks that crisscross his version of West Africa are key to the dominant narrative of globalization in late modernity. The difference lies in how to interpret the relationships made possible by the diversity of people who pass through the port. The modern version assumes any such relationships will be premised on modern goals such as material wealth, personal pleasure, political empowerment, or cultural progress. For example, when first pointing

him out to Wilson, Harris says Scobie sleeps with African women and is “probably in the pay of the Syrians too if the truth were known” (13-14). The only relationships an Englishman can imagine another Englishman having with an other are capitalist or sexual. In either sense, one engages in transcultural exchanges primarily out of self-interest.

Greene’s response to this version of modern globalization is a radical expansion of the horizons of moral consideration. This unfolds in a counter-discourse of love that Scobie is unable to rationalize in terms of pity and responsibility. It begins with the love he expresses for his deceased daughter and ends with the love without object he expresses with his dying breath. Scobie notes that in a place like West Africa, it was impossible to love “a pose, a pretty dress” (36) – both references to the photo of his daughter’s first communion in which she poses in “white muslin” (22). Though he never expresses it in these terms, Scobie loves (loved?) his daughter without pity. As the narrative unfolds, the number of individuals who fall within the sweep of Scobie’s pitiless love grows significantly. It begins with Helen and Louise, both of whom Scobie at times claims to love without understanding why; they slip from the realm of the pitied. Ali joins the circle only in death. Recognizing that he is responsible for Ali’s death, Scobie responds to the corporal’s interrogation with, “I loved him.” More importantly, Scobie understands his love for Ali in terms other than pity: “You served me and I did this to you. You were faithful to me, and I wouldn’t trust you” (248). Greene here expands Scobie’s horizons of love by obliterating the illusory moral reasoning that produced his sense of superiority – reasoning rooted in modernity’s privileging of the

self. Moreover, he models consideration of an other across cultural boundaries without recourse to the goals the modern narrative of transnational contact claims are certain.

In Scobie's final moments, Greene explores the logical limits of an ever-expanding circle of love and moral consideration. As he prepares to take the pills that will end his life, Scobie thinks, "I am absolutely alone," only to be undercut by the narrative in the next sentence: "But he was wrong. Solitude itself has a voice. It said to him, Throw away those tablets" (264). Scobie responds to the silent voice, saying 'No' aloud twice (265). Just before he falls to the ground, Greene places some final words in Scobie's mouth. "He said aloud, 'Dear God, I love...' but the effort was too great" (265). At the boundary between life and death, having transgressed the ultimate moral boundary, Scobie gives voice to love without object. There is no one to pity or be responsible for. There is no other to care for, thereby elevating one's moral self-conception. Within the space of a paragraph, Greene presents a journey from the absolute peak of pride – defying the Divine voice – to the depths of absolute humility – loving without reserve.

Of course, Scobie has to be on the brink of death before he can experience humility or be rid of the boundaries he's constructed around whom he can love or give moral consideration. Here again, Greene shows the difficulty and necessity of passing through suffering in order to apprehend properly the reality of what binds human beings together, across borders or otherwise. While for many of Greene's contemporaries – and

current critics, as well – the fate of Scobie’s eternal soul is of paramount importance²⁴, this critical focus ignores the novel’s representation of the possibilities of accessing ontological truth though bound by material reality. In this regard, his death recalls the emphases of the Catholic imagination. Couto, though purporting to focus only on the dynamics of the colonial encounter, reveals the theological principle that unites both the political and spiritual dimensions of the narrative:

Greene seems to be trying to say that original sin, for instance, is a condition of all men. At this most fundamental level, it gives equality to all: the seediness of the human condition with its vapours of corruption and survival carries with it a sense of sin and guilt which implicates all mankind. (123)

To expand one’s horizons beyond the confines of nationalism or the colonial dialectic requires apprehending the common experience of human limitation. In *The Heart of the Matter*, Greene requires his protagonist to pass through his own final encounter with finitude in order to appreciate this hard fact. Only by bumping up against the reality that all people experience can one hope to begin to imagine a world in which all people are united.

Both the Mexican whiskey priest and the English officer of the Empire meet their ends of their own volition. Both also must encounter human finitude in this way to understand the potential for human community based on ontological truth. For them, the virtue of disloyalty lies in refusing the modern narratives that make such community strictly functional. For Greene the author, to submit to any one culture or nation’s version of global modernity would be to surrender the possibilities of worlds he imagines

²⁴ Among Greene’s contemporaries, Evelyn Waugh considered the ‘suicide question’ in two separate reviews of the novel (*The Tablet*, 5 June 1948 and *The Commonweal*, 6 July 1948) (*Life* 160). Among today’s critics, see Bierman, Torre, Bergonzi, Maini, etc.

possible. By expanding the horizons of moral consideration beyond national borders and replacing modern notions of affinity (national or otherwise) with community rooted in the common experience of human limitations, Greene presents one version of a Catholic imagined future beyond nationalism. It would be too easy to discount such a vision as religious utopianism. Couto responds that Greene's shaping political possibility in light of his faith "should not be dismissed as a spiritual movement beyond history and culture but discussed as an assimilation of spiritual directions within a historical perspective" (121). It is an effort with consequences beyond Greene's lifetime. When Bruce Robbins argues in *Feeling Global* that nations retain real power in a global age because of the limitations of the individual's ethical imagination, he is unknowingly arguing against Greene's vision of an expansive moral imagination that ignores national borders (22). His globe does not include Greenland.

CHAPTER FOUR

FLANNERY O'CONNOR'S TRUE COUNTRY

The novelist is required to create the illusion of a whole world with believable people in it, and the chief difference between the novelist who is an orthodox Christian and the novelist who is merely a naturalist is that the Christian novelist lives in a larger universe.

—Flannery O'Connor, "Catholic Novelists and Their Readers"

The Catholic novel that fails is a novel in which there is no sense of place, and in which feeling is, by that much, diminished.

—Flannery O'Connor, "The Catholic Novelist in the Protestant South"

Where is there a place for you to be? No place.

—Hazel Motes, *Wise Blood*

The disjunctures and movements that characterize late modernity are not distributed evenly across the political geography. Different points on the globe experience the destabilizing effects of globalization in different ways and at different times. Graham Greene's Britain, for example, experienced globalization as a loss of empire and the fracturing of the logic of colonialism. This dynamic certainly shaped his work in the various ways discussed in the previous chapter. Paralleling Britain's fall from global preeminence is the rise of post-war America and the Cold War threat of global great power conflict. American citizens, including Catholic writers like Flannery O'Connor, experience globalization, in part, as the rise of American dominance on the global political stage, as well as the increase in domestic material comforts that accompanies such an elevated standing. At the same time, the existential threat of nuclear war dominates the American social imagination. For Americans at the middle

of the 20th century, being American meant being part of a dominant political power, inhabiting the largest middle class in world history, and being constantly anxious about the possibility of nuclear war destroying it all. In much the same way the redefinitions of ‘Britishness’ in the interwar years shape the work of Graham Greene, the tensions between bourgeois affluence and eschatological anxiety shape Flannery O’Connor’s writing. One goal of this chapter is to demonstrate how O’Connor’s fiction interprets the religious consequences and potential inherent in this central tension of the American experience of globalizing modernity.

Of course, O’Connor is not simply an American citizen undifferentiated from her countrymen in New England or the Midwest. She is, by birth and by disposition, a Southerner. What precisely it means to be a Southerner in the modern era of transnational exchange and affinity is a central concern of writers like O’Connor who seek to represent their region in their fiction without caricaturing the Southern experience in the eyes of non-Southern readers. O’Connor herself often spoke and wrote on what the South means to her as a fiction writer. She resisted attempts to belittle the regional character of her work. Indeed, upon receiving an award from the Georgia Writers’ Association, she observed, “The best American fiction has always been regional” (*MM* 58). Indeed, for O’Connor, the Southern writer has an advantage over her counterparts elsewhere. She notes that upon receiving the National Book Award, fellow Southerner Walker Percy explained that the preponderance of good Southern writers was “because we lost the War.” As O’Connor explains it:

He didn’t mean by that simply that a lost war makes good subject matter. What he was saying was that we have had our Fall. We have gone into the modern world with an inburnt knowledge of human limitations and with a sense of

mystery which could not have developed in our first state of innocence – as it has not sufficiently developed in the rest of our country. (*MM* 59)

This keen “inburnt” awareness of human limitation grows from the particular history of the American South. This is not unlike the rise of regional literatures in other parts of the country where there is the “possibility of reading a small history in a universal light” (*MM* 58). The particulars of Southern life and history, in O’Connor’s vision, do not limit the scope of her fiction. Indeed, it is their particularity that O’Connor believes provides the proper points of access to larger dimensions of human meaning.

One cannot help but hear William Lynch’s conception of the generative finite in O’Connor’s sense of the uses of Southern regionalism. Only by pushing headlong into Southern particularities, she seems to be saying, can one access larger spheres of meaning. The political character of this version of the generative finite should not be ignored. O’Connor is clearly positioning the embrace of Southern difference as central to both her religious and aesthetic sensibilities. Indeed, she seems to be positioning this awareness of difference as central to Southern experience:

The things we see, hear, smell, and touch affect us long before we believe anything at all, and the South impresses its image on us from the moment we are able to distinguish one sound from another. By the time we are able to use our imaginations for fiction, we find that our senses have responded irrevocably to a certain reality. This discovery of being bound through the senses to a particular society and a particular history, to particular sounds and a particular idiom, is for the writer the beginning of a recognition that first puts his work into real human perspective for him. (*MM* 193)

This “certain reality” includes all the trappings and problems of Southern history and politics. Most importantly for O’Connor, it also includes broad appreciation for mystery and deeply felt religious sensibilities. The particulars of Southern religious convictions are of less concern here than what O’Connor perceives as the religious character of the

“particular society” she places at the center of the Southern writer’s work. When asked why Southern writers tend to invoke the grotesque with greater frequency than writers elsewhere, O’Connor appeals to the broadly theological nature of Southern self-conception. She describes the South as “Christ-haunted,” if not specifically “Christ-centered.” What she seems to mean is that, even in the 20th century, the South remains concerned with the religious dimension of human experience, even where the religious dimension is greatly diminished by modern ideology. “The Southerner who isn’t convinced of it,” O’Connor observes, “is very much afraid that he may have been formed in the image and likeness of God” (*MM* 44-45). In O’Connor’s South, the consequentiality of religious faith is a given, even for those of no discernible faith. The job of the writer with religious concerns is to show that consequentiality to modern readers in a manner that neither elevates nor denigrates Southern difference but takes it as a particular starting point.

In *Flannery O’Connor and the Christ-Haunted South*, Ralph Wood notes that O’Connor’s appreciation of Southern Protestantism devolves not only from its sense of the consequences of religious faith, but also from its emphasis on the role of the Word and story-telling in the exploration and communication of moral and religious truths (37).¹ “When the poor hold sacred history in common,” she writes, “they have concrete ties to the universal and the holy which allow the meaning of their every action to be heightened and seen under the aspect of eternity” (*CW* 858). To take Southern difference

¹ Wood appears to me to extend O’Connor’s emphasis on the Word much farther than her fiction or prose merit. It is not the stories of Southern history or Biblical narratives that give rise to convictions, but the sensory experiences of “the things we see, hear, smell, and touch [that] affect us long before we believe anything at all.” Moreover, the storytellers in O’Connor’s fiction (e.g. Mr. Head, the Grandmother, Mason Tarwater) consistently have their stories contradicted by subsequent experience. Nonetheless, on this specific point concerning the importance of narrative in Southern religion, Wood seems precisely correct.

seriously as a starting point for revealing religious consequentiality is to envelop one fully in a Southern storytelling tradition. For O'Connor, the aesthetics of this tradition marry the aesthetic tradition of Catholic culture most fully in the short story form. O'Connor published some thirty-two short stories in her lifetime alongside just two novels.

O'Connor's concern with the form of her fiction arises from two interrelated influences, both Southern in origin and composition. The first influence is the community of writers and scholars referred to as the Agrarians. The group, most closely identified with Frank Lawrence Owsley, Robert Penn Warren and John Crowe Ransom, coalesced around ideals of Southern difference in the interwar years. In their 1930 manifesto, *I'll Take My Stand*, the Agrarians argued that after the Civil War, the industrial North undertook a second, ongoing conquest. In this instance, they argued, there was a "conquest of the Southern mind, calculated to remake every Southern opinion, to impose the Northern way of life and thought upon the South" (qtd. in Bacon 89-90). To shake off this newer form of Northern aggression, the Agrarians, as their name implies, advocated a return to pastoral themes and motifs in Southern art and literature. More importantly, they sought a return to the "simple stories" that dominate much of the Southern literary tradition (173). For obvious reasons, the emphasis on Southern difference in both thematic and formal concerns was of interest to O'Connor.² A second, related formal influence involves the ideas that would come to be called New Criticism. O'Connor first encountered the tenets of New Criticism while at the Iowa Writers'

² From a 1956 letter to Shirley Abbot, a student who had sent O'Connor a review she had written: "I very much like what you've done with the Agrarian business. I haven't seen it mentioned before in connection with my work and I think it should be" (*HB* 148)

Workshop. Sarah Gordon argues that O'Connor found the effacement of the author from works of literature complimented her personality (85). More importantly, however, O'Connor seems to have found in New Criticism an appreciation for the particularities of literary language. While an ardent realist, O'Connor's education as a writer fostered her disdain for sentimentality and attraction to satire, caricature, and irony. At the intersection of these formal influences³ are O'Connor's short stories with their pastoral Southern settings, dramatic irony, and ambiguous climaxes. They are conscious contributions to the Southern storytelling tradition Wood finds encompassing Southern difference and religious obsessions.

Beyond the formal choices that produce O'Connor's identifiable short stories are the aesthetic choices concerning violence and the grotesque to which readers often have the most significant reactions. Both grow from the author's theological sensibility, especially with regard to the influence of the Catholic cultural tradition. Much of O'Connor's aesthetic strategy is shaped by the work of two thinkers, Jacques Maritain and Romano Guardini. Two major aspects of O'Connor's aesthetic trace their roots to Maritain's Thomism. The first is a sense that literature ought not moralize. In a 1956 letter to J.H. McCown, O'Connor reacts to an unnamed novel sent to her for review. "She has an awfully good ear but absolutely no discrimination in using it," she writes, "[Her book] is just propaganda and its being propaganda for the side of the angels only makes it worse." This is not merely a modern form of resistance to a moralizing strain in

³ Literally at the intersection of these two schools of thought are Allen Tate and his wife Caroline Gordon. O'Connor sent "a good many of my things to Caroline" for her input (*HB* 69). Tate, of course, was one of the original twelve Agrarians from Vanderbilt who would go on to formulate a version of New Criticism in light of his Catholic faith. For a fuller consideration of Tate's role in Southern literature, see O'Gorman, especially Chapter 3.

religious literature. “The novel is an art form and when you use it for anything other than art, you pervert it. I didn’t make this up. I got it from St. Thomas (via Maritain)” (*HB* 157). The moral dimension of fiction, according to O’Connor, must be in the service of its role as an object of art. Fiction need not conform to external moral pressures concerning the proper subjects of religious contemplation. A writer is free to concern herself with whatever narratives are best suited to reveal the truth she is most interested in showing. Indeed, to do otherwise is to fail to produce theologically significant art, according to Maritain. A second important element in O’Connor’s aesthetic taken from Maritain’s theology of art is a commitment to realism. In “Christian Art,” Maritain argues that both sacred and profane elements of creation must be reflected in fiction that seeks to be called Christian (53). To create Christian literature, according to both Maritain and O’Connor, requires representing the realities of creation as both fallen and imbued with a holy presence (i.e. grace). “What the fiction writer will discover... is that he himself cannot move or mold reality in the interests of abstract truth... What-is is all he has to do with; the concrete I shis medium; and he will realize eventually that fiction can transcend its limitations only by staying within them,” O’Connor writes in “The Church and the Fiction Writer” (*MM* 145-46). What Farrel O’Gorman calls O’Connor’s “realism of the here-and-now” derives directly from her religious commitments (109).

Of course, as O’Gorman notes, O’Connor’s realism is not altogether recognizable to her readers – her fictive world is populated by grotesque, unusual, and violent characters. This world – described well by George Kilcourse as one with “everything off balance” – grows from another strain in Catholic thought that shapes O’Connor’s aesthetic choices. The existential thought of the Italian-born German theologian Romano

Guardini did much to shape O'Connor's concern with the grotesque and the extreme.⁴ Guardini's treatise on modernity proceeds from the anxieties reflected in its title, *The End of the Modern World: A Search for Orientation*. As O'Gorman notes, Guardini's existentialism is not as apocalyptic as such a title might indicate, but it does begin from the observation that late modernity witnesses a fundamental shift in Western humanism – namely, away from the last vestiges of Christian universalism and toward technologically mediated autonomous subjects (158). In the liminal transition period, humanity experiences a “profound rootlessness” in which it begins to understand “what it means to be cut off from Revelation” (Guardini 123). The orientation for which Guardini's work is a search is not, as one might anticipate, a return to the historical schema of an earlier age. Instead, he argues for a more deeply felt experience of the “fogs of secularism” and the accompanying deep feeling of loss (133). For modern and postmodern subjects, Guardini argues, faith and the Divine are only accessible through this profound sense of loss. There is, as O'Gorman notes, a keen sense of hope in Guardini's portrayal of modern loss (159). When O'Connor writes,

The novelist with Christian concerns will find in modern life distortions which are repugnant to him, and his problem will be to make these appear as distortions to an audience which is used to seeing them as natural; and he may well be forced to take ever more violent means to get his vision across to this hostile audience... then you have to make your vision apparent by shock – to the hard of hearing you shout, and for the almost-blind you draw large and startling figures (*MM* 34)

⁴ Guardini's work was first translated into English in 1954. At the end of that year, O'Connor writes Sally Fitzgerald to say “I am reading everything I can of Romano Guardini's” (928).

she puts into aesthetic terms Guardini's call for a thorough embrace of loss. She takes as her project the existentialist's recognition of modernity as loss and the Catholic's insistence on the possibilities of revelation in the encounter with profound loss.⁵

O'Connor's position at the intersection of reconstructed Thomism and religiously inflected existentialism highlights her position at another intersection, as well- the nexus of multiple transnational exchange networks connecting intellectuals, theologians, writers, readers, and other people of faith. The global nature of O'Connor's influences becomes clear in a 1957 letter to Cecil Dawkins. Asked for advice on defining the role of the Catholic Church in one's fiction, O'Connor points to thinkers from multiple nations:

The French Catholic novelists were a great help to me in this – Bloy, Bernanos, Mauriac. In philosophy, Gilson, Maritain, and Gabriel Marcel, an Existentialist. They all seemed to be French for a while and then I discovered the Germans – Max Picard, Romano Guardini and Karl Adam. The Americans seem just to be producing pamphlets for the back of the Church (to be avoided at all costs) and installing heating systems. (*HB* 231)

Joining these Continental thinkers with the substantial influence of Southern traditions and American New Criticism presents a global picture of the thought that gives rise to O'Connor's fiction. At aesthetic, formal, and thematic levels, O'Connor's work participates in conversations that cross national and cultural boundaries with the intent of discerning the proper relationship of Catholic faith to artistic creation. In doing so, O'Connor's fiction extends beyond the American South where it is set. It reveals

⁵ Kilcourse finds echoes of Guardini in O'Connor's responses to her own work. Of the violence in "A Good Man is Hard to Find," for example, she says it is "strangely capable of returning my characters to reality and preparing them to accept their moment of grace." Kilcourse finds parallels in a chapter from Guardini's *The Lord* entitled "Gods Humility," wherein the theologian argues that the crucifixion obliterates any value in human pride (106).

thought from far outside the “certain reality” O’Connor takes as the basis of Southern writing.⁶

Of course, O’Connor’s transnational interests are not only intellectual. In her personal life, O’Connor encountered much of the “European scene,” often expressing dismay at it. In January 1958, O’Connor dined with a delegate from Ireland to the United Nations, discussing why so many “angry young men” on the British Isles “go the way of Joyce” in terms of religion (*HB* 262). Most famously, O’Connor and her mother traveled to Europe in the spring of 1958, visiting the spring at Lourdes and attending mass at the Vatican. Of the experience, she writes “Europe didn’t affect me none” (*HB* 311) and, regarding Lourdes, “It’s apparent the devil has a good deal to answer to” (*HB* 285). In addition, one of the few romantic relationships in O’Connor’s life involved a Dane named Erik Langkjaer. Biographers Sally Fitzgerald and Jean Cash, as well as Mark Bosco, have explored the extent to which O’Connor’s relationship with Langkjaer inspired or contributed to the events in “Good Country People.” O’Connor’s letters to Langkjaer, beginning in 1954, utilize emotional language rarely present in anything else she has written. “I like so much hearing from you,” she writes. “You are wonderful and wildly original and I would probably think you even more so if I didn’t still hope you will come back from that awful place,” she pleads elsewhere (Bosco 288). The “awful place” O’Connor refers to is Denmark, where Langkjaer had returned in June 1954 after a year-long courtship with O’Connor. Interestingly, in a 1955 letter, she calls Langkjaer

⁶ The converse, of course, is that Southern culture finds an audience among those with no access to its “certain reality.” O’Connor certainly benefited from this growing global audience. Indeed, in a letter to Robert Giroux, she asks that a copy of a French translation of *The Violent Bear it Away* be given to Maritain to complement the copy of *Wise Blood* already in his possession (*HB* 417).

a “displaced person,” echoing the title of the final short story in her first published collection. Worth noting here are the boundaries of O’Connor’s circle of personal relationships expanding. While she very much wished for Langkjaer to return to the South, she continued to correspond years after he returned to Denmark, even when he married a Danish woman in 1955 (Bosco 286). O’Connor’s personal experiences and relationships, just like the intellectual encounters with European Catholic thinkers, extend beyond the parochial American South.

How then to reconcile O’Connor’s commitment to realism rooted in the particulars of the American South with the global scope of her intellectual heritage and personal relationships? An answer begins with the recognition that Southern difference is only a starting point for O’Connor, and, relatedly, that Southern difference becomes just one axis of difference among many in the 20th century American South. The particular history and society in which Southern fiction is rooted gets complicated by intrusive ideas from without and the experiences of Southerners who travel and encounter diverse ideas in foreign lands. At times, O’Connor appears to bemoan the destabilization of Southern difference. In “The Fiction Writer and His Country,” she says of fellow Southerners, “The anguish that most of us have observed for some time now has been caused not by the fact that the South is alienated from the rest of the country, but by the fact that it is not alienated enough, that every day we are getting more and more like the rest of the country, that we are being forced out not only of our many sins, but of our few virtues” (*MM* 28-29). As I will show, however, O’Connor’s fiction reveals a different version of the contemporary South as it relates to other parts of the world. While she may be right that much of the South resents the homogenization of

America in the post-war era, O'Connor's fictive South is neither pure nor homogeneously American. Instead, her commitment to "realism of the here-and-now" demands O'Connor present the 20th century South as it is – enmeshed in the global movements of goods, ideas, and people that characterize globalizing late modernity. The challenge for the Catholic writer is to represent the changing South in a way that does not dilute its appreciation of mystery or its potential as a site of revelation.

What a project such as this requires, of course, is an appreciation of how globalization transforms locality in the American South. This transformation is at the heart of O'Connor's version of Catholic global modernity. It articulates Southern difference in terms of the South's sense of the spiritual consequences of global modernity. In this way, O'Connor's version of globalization takes seriously Guardini's invocation of modern loss as the basis of a return to religious sentiments. What the South loses, of course, is the wholeness of its history. America's rise to global political prominence and the accompanying widespread economic advancement diminish the South's claim on a history all its own. Instead, its history gets subsumed under larger narratives of American greatness and the rising class-free society (Bacon 35). Central to O'Connor's version of a global future is not a resuscitation of this history (or any provincial, particular history), but a sense of how to make meaning out of the rootlessness that accompanies this loss of history at the end of modernity. This effort requires appreciating new relationships that transgress cultural boundaries. O'Connor's emphasis on revelation implies that doing so requires proper vision rather than new bases for affinity. Whereas Greene is concerned with expanding his reader's moral horizons,

O'Connor insists we begin by apprehending what is already there – namely, relationships among people across national and cultural borders.

These two elements – the ubiquity and existential terror of modern rootlessness and the proper apprehension of existing transnational relationships – may be said to sketch the borders of what O'Connor calls her "true country." Responding to challenges concerning the lack of sufficiently nationalist literature in 20th century America, O'Connor wonders how a writer is to understand the term "country." "It suggests everything from the actual countryside that the novelist describes," she writes, "on to and through the peculiar characteristics of his region and his nation, and on, through, and under all of these to his *true country*, which the writer with Christian convictions will consider to be what is eternal and absolute" (*MM* 27, emphasis mine). The true country for the Catholic writer is that which she takes to be eternal and absolute, and this exists both internally and in the broader social world. Later, O'Connor writes, "When we talk about the writer's country we are liable to forget that no matter what particular country it is, it is inside as well as outside him... To know oneself is to know one's region. It is also to know the world, and it is also, paradoxically, a form of exile from that world" (34-35). This paradox, I intend to show, is central to O'Connor's depiction of the realities of the American South during the global era. To access truth through the traditions of one's particular location at a time when that location is being transformed is to experience transcendence and alienation simultaneously. Asking "where is the writer's home?" or seeking one's true country in a reconfigured political landscape is misguided. Instead, O'Connor's fiction insists faith resides at the intersection of that

which is familiar and that which is alien.⁷ Truth, if it is to be revealed and apprehended, will be found in the ongoing transformation of particularities by larger forces, be they global or spiritual.

Tracing the revelation within these transformations requires examining the fundamental political shifts documented in O'Connor's fiction. From the standpoint of American history, the end of the Second World War and the beginning of the Cold War signaled just such a seismic shift. The changing social and political dynamics of the period are bound to the realities of global war (both real and potential), and they are always in the background of O'Connor's fiction (Bacon 17). The goal in the readings below is to expose the connections between O'Connor's portrayal of Southern society in its global relationships and the revelatory potential the Catholic writer insists must be present there. What follows are readings of stories where the effects of global war on O'Connor's South are most pronounced. In each, war has reshaped what the South means, whether in terms of its sense of social propriety, its assertion of political difference, or the experience of its natural landscape. In the first set of stories, Southerners travel abroad to serve in the military and return to find their home region transformed in uncomfortable ways. In the second, global war brings foreign refugees to the Southern countryside, and their alien ideas demand response from Southerners comfortable in their own fading history. What these narratives share is a sense of

⁷ In "The Catholic Novelist in the Protestant South," O'Connor recounts the following story: "In American Catholic circles we are long on theories of what Catholic fiction should be, and short on the experience of having any of it. Once when I spoke on this subject at a Catholic university in the South, a gentleman arose and said that the concept *Catholic novel* was a limiting one and that the novelist, like Whitman, should be alien to nothing. All I could say to him was, 'Well, I'm alien to a great deal.'" (HB 193) The vision of the Catholic writer begins with the acknowledgement of that to which one is alien.

simultaneous transcendence and alienation at the recognition of transformation and loss – in other words, a reconception of one’s “true country.”

A Soldier of his True Country

Given that the moment in history in which she writes is dominated by wars all over the globe, it should perhaps not be surprising that many of O’Connor’s male characters are veterans with combat experience. Hazel Motes, O.E. Parker, Mr. McIntyre, O.T. and E.T. Greenleaf join the centenarian Civil War General Sash in the ranks of O’Connor’s cast of military men. While the preponderance of veterans at mid-century surely provided some reason for so many appearing in O’Connor’s work, there is also a sense in which they stand at ideological crossroads that interest O’Connor. Veterans of global war are better able to apprehend the sudden loss of Southern history than are those who have stayed home and experienced the change as a gradual one. At the same time, of course, soldiers are the personal representatives of the encroaching American ideology. It is their mission to defend American (not just Southern) interests around the world. The tension between the demands of Southern difference and the demands of military service often leads to unusual transgressions of Southern social codes. O.T. and E.T. Greenleaf, for example, marry French women of some means, return to rural Georgia, attend college, and raise their children to be “society” despite the low births of their fathers (*CW* 507-508). Rising beyond their station in Southern society requires marrying foreign women and studying agriculture at college. Similar dynamics recur throughout O’Connor’s portrayals of military men. Their experiences abroad make them better able to identify how the South has changed but more resistant to attempts to resuscitate or domesticate what has been lost.

O'Connor's first novel, *Wise Blood*, shocked and disturbed her neighbors in Milledgeville, Georgia upon its release in 1952. It tells the story of Hazel Motes, a man returning from serving abroad in the Army to a South he does not recognize and his attempts to found a new anti-religious church. His time in Taulkinham, Tennessee involves encounters with a number of for-profit street preachers and a peculiar relationship with the widow who rents him a room, Mrs. Flood. As Richard Giannone notes, O'Connor is careful to make sure Motes never develops significant relationships with any of these characters. Instead, Motes wanders in and out of their lives making bizarre pronouncements about Christ and justification. The effect, Giannone argues, is a sense of desolation permeating the novel. "There is no embracing, no one is safely held," he notes, "Loneliness is in the water everyone drinks" (41). This sense of isolation is universal and has been domesticated by the citizens of Taulkinham. The temptation for O'Connor may be to offer the commonness of this suffering up as the basis for new forms of community in a manner Greene might recognize. Within *Wise Blood*, however, desolation, loneliness, and suffering are preferable to the risk one takes in fostering relationships. When the feel-good street preacher Onnie Jay Holy tries to relate to his audience by asking, "Do you know what it's like not to have a friend in the world?" an old man responds, "It ain't no worsen havinum that would put a knife in your back when you wasn't looking" (CW 84). When Enoch Emery says of Taulkinham, "I ain't never been to such a unfriendly place before," he highlights the absence of anything binding the city's people together in relationships (CW 25).

Into this milieu steps Motes, the nihilist founder of the Church of Christ Without Christ. Of his time in the military, O'Connor tells us little except that "the army sent him

halfway around the world and forgot him. He was wounded and they remembered him long enough to take the shrapnel out of his chest...and then they sent him to another desert and forgot him again” (*CW* 12).⁸ O’Connor also reveals the depth of Motes’s ties to his home in Eastrod, Tennessee. He plans for the day a fellow soldier tries to tempt him to sin. He would simply say “that he was from Eastrod, Tennessee, and that he meant to get back there and stay back there, that he was going to be a preacher of the gospel and that he wasn’t going to have his soul damned by the government or by any foreign place it sent him to” (*CW* 12). What little O’Connor reveals of Motes’s time in the Army indicates a great deal about how it shapes the rootless nihilism that animates his experiences in Taulkinham. Motes goes into the military prepared to resist what he sees as its corrosive and corrupting influence; all he takes with him when deployed are a Bible and a pair of glasses that belonged to his mother. He intends to build his resistance on the twin pillars of his roots and his holiness, represented by his intentions of becoming a preacher. What happens instead is Motes “studies his soul” to “assure himself that it was not there” (*CW* 12). What had been a sense of order born of the combined draw of home and holiness is fractured. “The misery he had was a longing for home,” Motes decides, “it had nothing to do with Jesus” (*CW* 13).

If his time in the military disabuses Motes of any religious sensibility, his return to a transformed South obliterates the accompanying belief in the power of home. Returning to Eastrod having cast off his military attire for a newly purchased suit, he finds “there was nothing here but a skeleton of a house” (*CW* 13). Sleeping in the roof-

⁸ Marcus Smith goes so far as to argue for specific fronts and convalescence camps where Motes may have been. Giannone takes their location in the Middle East as evidence that O’Connor intends the “desert” of Taulkinham’s desolation to mirror the deserts of the early Christian ascetics (42-43).

less shambles of where he had once lived, Motes resolves to go to the city and “do some thing I never have done before” (*CW* 5). O’Connor here literalizes the experience of the Southern soldier returning from global war. His time abroad may have changed many things, but what it could not change is the sense of Southern difference that binds him to his home region (even the Greenleaf boys bring their French brides back to rural Georgia). At the same time, however, the totalizing of American identity in opposition first to totalitarianism then to Communism subsumes Southern difference, figuratively destroying the home the Southern soldier longs for. In other words, the same dynamics that send Southern men to many corners of the globe ensure the region they call home is transformed into something unrecognizable.⁹

Motes returns to a lost home and a community with nothing binding its members together. His sense of meaning is disembedded from the location it had previously inhabited by the changes wrought by global conflict. In the global era, such transformations are omnipresent and ongoing. Here O’Connor attempts to show the transcendent potential in these changes, but first she deals with the dangers posed by the methods of making meaning and forming community that arise once both cease to be coterminous with location. Both rely on the elevation of the self to the center of religious life, manifesting socially in consumerism and politically in the confident equivocation of American greatness with American faith. O’Connor’s version of global modernity begins by rejecting both premises.

⁹ Jon Lance Bacon notes how, by the early 1960s, the pastoral South had come to be treated as surreal and silly. The South is both familiar enough to be humorous but bizarre enough to be unreal to its inhabitants or its Northern neighbors (36-38).

Motes's first experience on the streets of Taulkinham highlights the new bases for social interaction in the transformed post-war South. He simultaneously encounters a department store salesman hocking a potato peeler and the preaching team of Asa and Sabbath Hawks. While the salesman makes his pitch, the ostensibly blind Asa Hawks begins preaching repentance and begging for change. When Hawks scares off the crowd gathered around his card table¹⁰, the salesman asks "What the hell you think you doing?" and complains of Hawks "horning in" on his crowd (CW 20-22). As Jon Lance Bacon notes, the crowd responds to the salesman while being repulsed by Hawks's preaching. In post-war America, preachers like Hawks (or later Motes) "speak the language of fundamentalist religion, calling people away from the consumerism that signified the superiority of the American way of life [which] alienates them from their listeners" (63). If there is a perceived tension between the religious life and the consumer life, the interested crowd that disperses when Hawks begins preaching indicates which side O'Connor thinks most Americans choose. However, as Bacon demonstrates, she also shows how preachers respond to the new social dominance of consumerism. Onnie Jay Holy "offers no challenge" to those in Taulkinham's commercial downtown, instead proclaiming the "natural sweetness" within each individual (63). His church seeks only to help the faithful access this sweetness and to reassure them of the goodness of the world, especially America.¹¹ It centers its beliefs on the elevation of the self, insisting

¹⁰ O'Connor foregrounds the collusion between the religious and consumer worlds by calling this card table "his altar."

¹¹ Bacon finds echoes of this model of preaching in the "cult of reassurance" popular throughout the country in the 1950s. Followers of preachers adhering to this strain of thought sought to combine the optimism of early self-help tracts like Norman Vincent Peale's *The Power of Positive Thinking* with gospel-centered teaching (Bacon 64-66).

followers “interpret” scripture in whatever manner makes sense to them (CW 86). This is an attractive theology to post-war Americans whose obsession with consumption and material comfort reveals the extent to which the self is placed above all other concerns. The murder of Holy’s assistant, Solace Layfield, beneath the wheels of Motes’s Essex ought to indicate what O’Connor thinks of this version of post-war Southern society.

Cast in another light, Holy’s self-obsessed theology appeals to the people of Taulkinham not only because it offers no challenge to consumer society, but also because in doing so, it identifies itself as solidly American. Indeed, one of Holy’s selling points of the Holy Church of Christ Without Christ is that there is “nothing foreign connected with it” (CW 86). Even charging a dollar to join his church would validate Holy in the eyes of some followers, as it shows his commitment to capitalism (Bacon 64). Both would have been great concerns in O’Connor’s time. Bacon points out how frequently religious leaders were accused of harboring Communist sympathies. In a famous incident, Bishop G. Bromley Oxnam appeared before the House Un-American Activities Committee to answer charges that his work on behalf of the poor signaled an alliance with Communists in the United States (Bacon 68-72). At roughly the same time, J.B. Matthews penned an article for *American Mercury* claiming the Protestant clergy constituted the “largest single group supporting the Communist apparatus in the United States today” (qtd in Bacon 69). While many in the political class, including President Eisenhower, were quick to dismiss such suspicions, there remained a popular sense that many religious leaders were not sufficiently American. When she first hears of Motes’s Church Without Christ, for example, Mrs. Flood believes it sounds like “something foreign” and initially refuses to rent him a room. When the peeler salesman confronts

Asa and Sabbath Hawks, he calls them both “damn Jesus fanatics” and “goddamn Communist foreigners” (21). Clearly, O’Connor sees a popular belief that the wrong kind of religion is un-American. Implicit in this suspicion is the idea that there is an appropriately American religion, likely something resembling Onnie Jay Holy’s consumer-friendly theology. To a Catholic like O’Connor, whose faith mandates she “look at the worst” and find God (*HB* 148), the elevation of the self and happiness and ends to be pursued with religious zeal must both be denied out of hand.

O’Connor clearly finds the new model of faith that locates meaning in consumption and the totalizing claims of American identity problematic. Still, they arise in response to the destabilizing effects of global conflict that disembed meaning from location, substituting American identity for Southern difference and consumerism for mystery. For all their problems, in other words, they are logical responses to a globalizing age. So what is O’Connor’s alternative? How is one to respond to changes wrought under the auspices of globalizing modernity if not in the ways promoted by Onnie Jay Holy, the potato peeler salesman, and Mrs. Flood? O’Connor’s challenge is to imitate Hazel Motes.

“Where you come from is gone, where you thought you were going to never was there,” Motes bellows from atop his car roughly halfway through his time in Taulkinham, “and where you are is no good unless you can get away from it. Where is there a place for you to be? No place” (*CW* 93). He voices his own experience of globalization: the home he left is gone, the future he imagined is impossible, the place he inhabits only makes him want to leave again. Motes’s Church of Christ Without Christ is certainly not one O’Connor believes appropriate for any age, let alone one as challenging as hers.

Nonetheless, she contrasts Motes's fervent, angry preaching with Asa Hawks's mournful pleas for repentance and Onnie Jay Holy's opportunistic invocations of sweetness. In this regard, O'Connor shows preference for his nihilism. This should not prove altogether surprising. As Wood notes, O'Connor "admired Sartre and Nietzsche because they took God seriously enough to deny his reality" (31). In the same manner, O'Connor calls us to admire Motes's church, not for its particular teachings, but because Motes is the only preacher who takes the questions of faith, redemption, and salvation seriously. Approached from a different perspective, in an age when consumerism and patriotism are the measures of faith, only Motes cares enough about the truth to hold it as the standard of his church. The radical nihilism of his preaching insists his audience take seriously that which they can see and experience:

You needn't to look at the sky because it's not going to open up and show no place behind it. You needn't to search for any hole in the ground to look through into somewhere else. You can't go neither forwards nor backwards into your daddy's time nor your children's if you have them. In yourself right now is all the place you've got. If there was any Fall, look there, if there was any Redemption, look there, and if you expect any Judgment, look there, because they all three will have to be in your time and your body and where in your time and your body can they be? (CW 93)

Motes's call – and I would argue O'Connor's call – is to root belief in the truths one can properly apprehend.¹² In addition to being a direct refutation of Holy's "sweetness within," Motes's preaching calls for a new theology rooted in neither history nor eschatology.¹³ From O'Connor's perspective, any new model of this type must resist the

¹² Note the parallels between Motes's justification for his own nihilism and O'Connor's explanation of the role of the Catholic writer: "If the Catholic writer hopes to reveal mysteries, he will have to do it by describing truthfully what he sees from where he is" (*MM* 150). For both, accessing truth (mysterious or otherwise) begins with what one can see for oneself.

¹³ One might call this, qua O'Gorman, a "theology of the here-and-now."

abstractions of patriotism and the emptiness of consumerism. To do so, it must begin, as does Motes's church, with seeing the world properly.

Vision, of course, is a crucial motif in *Wise Blood*. The culmination of Motes's search for meaning in the aftermath of global war is the preacher blinding himself with quicklime. How to make sense of the preacher who has just lost his pulpit (Motes's car is destroyed by an angry police officer) intentionally destroying his vision while wrapping himself in barbed wire and walking with rocks in his shoes is, to put it mildly, a difficult task. What in his experiences merits inflicting such violence on himself? More importantly, in what schema is such violence appropriate? Giannone argues that Motes's self-mortification enables a turn to the interior world in the manner of ascetics who make vows of silence or penitents who self-flagellate. Motes can only fight the demons that reside within once he shuts the external world out. As penance for his sins of will, "Motes repents by going back over his actions to replace self-deceptions with clear-sightedness. This correction involves a turn away from the visible to the invisible world. To make this turn permanent, Motes sacrifices his eyes to his new obedience" (Giannone 60). It is tempting to see Motes's actions as a turn within; however, given O'Connor's treatment of Onnie Jay Holy and Solace Layfield, the prophets of the world within, it seems unlikely she would offer such a path as redemptive in itself. In a similar vein, Ralph Wood argues that Motes's acts of *acesis* are not sacrifices meant to save him but "radical penance offered in gratitude for the salvation that has already been won for him at the Place of the Skull" (169). Wood implies that Motes becomes an *imitatio Christi*, though in what way this constitutes gratitude is not clear.

It seems to me incomplete to explain Motes's self-mortification entirely in terms of penance, whether as introspection or as gratitude. To be sure, Motes believes his pain is necessary "to pay" (*CW* 125). It is his penance. However, Motes's routine also makes him into a symbol of defiance in the modern era. Where the self is elevated and material comfort valued above all, Motes refuses to be comfortable in his own skin. More importantly, where the modern global world manipulates vision to hide the truth, Motes refuses to be manipulated. The advertisements that ring Taulkinham can no longer affect him (*Bacon* 116). He can no longer be tempted by a "new Jesus" or the justifications of a "good car." It seems to me that Giannone is right when he reads Motes as going back over his actions to repair his self-deceptions. However, Motes apparently decides it is better not to see than to see poorly or incorrectly.

The mangled body that spends most of the day sitting on Mrs. Flood's porch warns passersby who see it (as it warns O'Connor's readers) that the pursuit of truth requires radically separating oneself from the delusions that obscure it. For the soldier returning home from global war, however, there is no firm place to stand as an alternative – he cannot retreat into history nor embrace the optimism of his neighbors. Motes's "true country" is the "no place" of his preaching. He can only "see" the truth when he both knows his world and is exiled from it. By withdrawing from Taulkinham without leaving it, he embodies presence and absence, transcendence and alienation. He is there and not there, but he can go nowhere else. "There's no other house nor no other city," he tells Mrs. Flood in his final words in the novel (129). From O'Connor's perspective, seeing properly in the modern era is a dangerous task, yet one made necessary by the loss at the heart of modernity and the disembedding shifts at its end.

The Signs of Foreign Places

A very different body presents a very different symbol of global modernity in “Parker’s Back.” Composed during the final months of O’Connor’s short life, the story concerns a former sailor obsessed with tattoos who covers his back, the last area of bare skin on his body, with an image of the Byzantine Christ to try to please his Bible-thumbing wife. Like Hazel Motes, O.E. Parker serves abroad before returning to the “country air” of his Southern home. Unlike Motes, who sees it as his moral duty to resist the temptations of the military and foreign lands, Parker openly embraces the trappings of movement to new places. More importantly, he publicly wears the marks of those experiences – “Everywhere he went he picked up more tattoos” (CW 659). Part of Parker’s greater level of comfort with the itinerancy and amorality of 20th century military life surely grows from the circumstances that led him to the Navy. Whereas Motes seems reluctant to leave Eastrod and always determined to return to his home and family, Parker runs away from home and lies about his age to enlist when his mother “dragged him off to a tent revival” (CW 658). In a real sense, Parker prefers the rootlessness of the global warrior to the religious roots of his home. The military life is an escape. It should not be surprising, then, that he so fully embraces it. O’Connor’s description of Parker’s time in the Navy reveals how totally it subsumes his identity, with one important exception:

After a month or two in the navy, his moth ceased to hang open. His features hardened into the features of a man. He stayed in the navy five years and seemed a natural part of the grey mechanical ship, *except for his eyes*, which were the same pale slate-color as the ocean and reflected the immense spaces around him as if they were a microcosm of the mysterious sea. (658-59, emphasis mine)

The navy cannot co-opt Parker's vision. O'Connor here signals a crucial difference between Parker and Hazel Motes. Motes resists the temptations of military life except the temptation to study his soul to determine he had none. The only thing the Army changes is Motes's inner vision. Conversely, the Navy changes everything about Parker except his vision. Why the distinction? In "Parker's Back," O'Connor offers a very different narrative of the Southern global soldier's experience of familiarity and alienation, one that complements rather than counters the version of global modernity present in *Wise Blood*.

As with Motes, Parker's experience of alienation and transcendence manifests on his body. Tellingly, the tattoos that cover the front of his body transcend any single location. When he first describes his tattoos, Parker begins with their sources: "I got most of my other ones in foreign parts... These here I mostly got in the United States" (CW 657). Parker thinks of his tattoos in terms of where he got them - they represent where he's been. As Patricia Yaeger notes, Parker's body comes to symbolize the intersection of the global and the local (496). Moreover, his "American" tattoos grow from his military experience and represent a particularly nationalistic sympathy. On his hand "emblazoned in red and blue was a tattooed eagle perched on a cannon. [...] Above the eagle a serpent was coiled about a shield and in the spaces between the eagle and the serpent there were hearts, some with arrows through them" (CW 657). On his stomach, Parker has tattoos of Queen Elizabeth II and Philip (CW 659). Elsewhere are images of Buddha done in Japan and "in Burma, a little brown root of a man had made a peacock on each of his knees" (CW 668). For Yaeger, the presence of these images on the same body as the more thoroughly patriotic American images "reveals the ways in which local,

national, and international occupations inflect [O'Connor's] fictional world" (494). In a real way, Parker's body comes to symbolize the networks of exchange and movement that define global modernity. He carries both local and global with him at all times. In the South, Yaeger argues, this quality ensures Parker's difference – his foreign images mark him as alien more than his patriotic tattoos mark his Americanness (498). For the purposes here, it is more important to note how Parker carries and represents both what is alien and what is familiar on the surface of his skin. It is only from that nexus, O'Connor seems to assert, that proper vision is possible. To see the potential for mystery requires seeing sameness and difference together.

It must be noted that the only character who really sees Parker's tattoos in this way is Parker himself. Indeed, Parker's tattoos seem to have no performative quality whatsoever. They are not meant to signify to anyone other than Parker. Their full effect is only clear "whenever a decent-sized mirror was available" for Parker to examine them himself. He resists tattooing his back because, "He had no desire for one anywhere he could not readily see it himself" (*CW* 659). Parker's tattooing is not expressive. He does not mark himself to communicate some inner truth to the public world. Instead, Parker gets new tattoos "whenever he couldn't stand the way he felt" (663). Sarah Gordon notes the very real sense that Parker is attempting to fill in some spiritual emptiness by covering every last inch of visible (to him) skin – as though he is not whole without more tattoos (250). Making himself whole, in other words, requires Parker see himself differently. His vision remains refined enough to see his own incompleteness, even if he is unsure how to calm the "peculiar unease [that] settled in him" as a young man (*CW* 658). In covering Parker in tattoos, O'Connor literalizes his attempts to change the man

he sees in the mirror. His vision – in both concrete and abstract sense of the term – recognizes an absence that needs filling. That Parker tries to fill that space with symbols of both his local home and foreign lands signifies the necessity of engaging both what is familiar and what is alien when seeking a vision of the whole self in the global era.

The most important symbol in Parker's narrative is the tattoo of the Byzantine Christ he has done on his back over the course of two days. Both the location and the subject signal shifts in how Parker thinks of the uses of his skin. Located on his back, the tattoo will not serve the same purpose as his others. It will not become part of the self-image he sees in the mirror. The tattooed Christ is the only tattoo Parker gets with another in mind. It is the only one with an audience other than himself. Here again, though, the need for a tattoo grows from a sense of incompleteness: "Dissatisfaction began to grow so great in Parker that there was no containing it outside of a tattoo. It had to be his back. There was no help for it. A dim half-formed inspiration began to work in his mind. He visualized having a tattoo put there that Sarah Ruth would not be able to resist" (664). What Sarah Ruth cannot resist, of course, is "a religious subject." When he imagines what kind of religious image would make for an appropriately appealing tattoo, Parker rejects the Bible, knowing Sarah would see it as an abstraction unmoored from the whole of scripture. O'Connor portrays Parker's choice of image as a moment of mystery. He first settles on an image of God in the midst of a farming accident, yelling "GOD ABOVE!" in a voice he does not recognize as he flies through the air (665). In the aftermath of this experience, Parker's need for the tattoo is wrested from his control. "There had been a great change in his life," O'Connor writes, "a leap forward into a worse unknown, and there was nothing he could do about it" (666). When Parker passes

the image of the Byzantine Christ in the tattooist's catalogue, his heart stops and he hears in the "absolute silence" a voice saying "GO BACK" (CW 667). Parker has lost control of his tattoo project. He can no longer presume to be able to fill what he lacks by force of will. The dissatisfaction he wants to abate can only be quelled from without by the presence of mystery and grace.

Still, Parker's choice of the Byzantine Christ is unusual. O'Connor attributes Parker's attraction to the image to its "all-demanding eyes" (CW 667), positioning Parker as one to be seen, not just see. More importantly, as Yaeger notes, the image presents a radically different version of God than Parker would find in his mother's tent revivals or Sarah Ruth's "straight Gospel" study. It is the experience of its alienation that causes his heart to "slowly beat again as if it were being brought to life by a subtle power" (CW 667). For Yaeger, this is a subject on which O'Connor is to be criticized. She argues that O'Connor reinscribes Orientalist conceptions of the East as site of radical otherness that requires Western appropriation to be made meaningful (499). Yaeger is right to caution against reading the Byzantine Christ as a symbol of otherness the encounter with which enables transcendence. However, she does not give a full accounting of the circumstances in which the tattoo becomes meaningful. While much of the power of the image derives from its foreignness, Parker encounters it in an environment known well to him. He is in a tattoo parlor where he's been many times. He stays the night at the Haven of Light Christian Mission, a place he's stayed before. Yet, after seeing the "all-demanding eyes" of the Byzantine Christ, these places feel unfamiliar to Parker. Though usually so comfortable in the tattooist's chair that he falls asleep, this time "he remained awake, every muscle taut." At the Mission, "all night he lay awake," unable to escape

his thoughts of “those eyes” (CW 668-69). Parker’s experience of mystery, therefore, is somewhat more complex than the explanation Yaeger offers. He does not merely encounter radical difference and submit to its mystery; instead, the mystery of his encounter lies in its transformation of his familiar surroundings into something alien and other. Being made subject to divine vision changes Parker’s vision. He sees differently in the aftermath of the encounter. Moreover, the special “publicness” of this tattoo – it lies outside Parker’s vision, after all – transforms Parker into a symbol of the mystery that inhabits the intersection of the familiar and the alien. It positions him as a challenge to the vision of others who cannot or will not see mystery in their familiar surroundings.

Chief among those who cannot see properly is Sarah Ruth. O’Connor indicates the problems with Sarah Ruth’s vision immediately upon Parker’s return. She does not recognize him when he comes to the door. Moreover, when she challenges Parker to identify himself, Sarah Ruth follows up by saying, “I don’t know no O.E” (CW 673). Her vision is already ill formed. When Parker shows her the tattoo of the Byzantine Christ, she says, “It ain’t anybody I know” (CW 674). Parker’s explanation is met with a furious response: “God? God don’t look like that! [...] He don’t *look*. He’s a spirit. No man shall see his face” (CW 674). In her charges of idolatry, Sarah Ruth not only refuses to see correctly, she refuses to see at all. O’Connor presents her piety as an obstacle to encountering the mystery Parker carries on his back. She beats Parker until “large welts had formed on the face of the tattooed Christ,” performing her disapproval of the body and the created world (Gordon 251). When she casts him out, Sarah Ruth’s “eyes hardened still more,” rendering her unable to see Parker as a potential vessel for mystery. Instead, she sees him “crying like a baby.” In this final image, O’Connor

reveals both the extent to which Sarah Ruth's pride and piety cloud her vision and the correlation between Parker's experience of mystery and his experience of loss. While Sarah Ruth rejects any connection between the world of the body and the world of the spirit, Parker cries with the knowledge that, in seeking to be made whole, much of his world will be taken from him by the power at the heart of his encounter with mystery. By taking it upon himself to become an image of God, Parker also takes up the pains of violence and loss that often greet such images.

To Hazel Motes and O.E. Parker, both veterans of global war, it becomes necessary to use their bodies to signify the mystery of the encounter with that which is alien in the presence of that which is familiar. O'Connor positions them both as unwelcome in a South that becomes unrecognizable, no matter how refined their vision. She also demonstrates that proper apprehension requires seeing mystery where the alien and common meet, no matter how painful inhabiting that nexus may be. For Hazel Motes, this involves defying the illusions of the modern global world by blinding himself to its manipulations. For O.E. Parker, seeing properly requires accepting a power from outside himself to complete a new image, one that presents a God unknown in his part of the world. The ability of these characters to inhabit and represent this mystery (to both their contexts and the audience) is amplified by their status as soldiers in a time of global war. They are men who have traveled the world, seen foreign lands, and return to the homes they have longed for to find them lost or radically changed. As soldiers, they had been willing to sacrifice their bodies in the service of their nation. Now, O'Connor shows them using their bodies to challenge the way their homeland sees and represents

the world. Only those who can see what is alien in what is familiar and vice versa can properly apprehend the mystery latent in the modern world.

Tremendous Frontiers

Of course, an era of global conflict affects lives beyond the military ranks. Particularly in the first half of the 20th century, war disrupts and displaces the lives of countless people from all over the world, often permanently removing them from the contexts they have called home. Migrancy, exile, diaspora, and similar states become increasingly common when, as Giannone has it, “the planet was a killing field” (127). Within this context, encounters with foreign bodies moving into familiar terrain become opportunities for conflict, both physical and ideological. Nowhere is the presence of the alien element in the South made more important than in “The Displaced Person,” the last and longest story in O’Connor’s first collection. Its Southern characters are the intellectual cousins of those Milledgeville residents decrying the United Nations in bright red paint. In “The Displaced Person,” O’Connor brings them into contact with the internationalism of the day. The titular displaced person, a Polish immigrant named Mr. Guizac, brings his family to a farm run by the widow Mrs. McIntyre. The family, Catholic survivors of the Holocaust, does not fit into the economic and social systems that govern farm life. When Mr. Guizac dies while making normal repairs to a tractor, everyone on the farm is implicated in his death, and the farm falls into disrepair and financial ruin. The foreigners invade the idyllic (to its inhabitants) pastoral scene and bring about its downfall.¹⁴

¹⁴ Bacon finds the story following a model O’Connor establishes earlier in *A Good Man is Hard to Find* of strangers, almost exclusively male, violently interrupting the day-to-day operations of a matriarchal

The Guizacs bring with them new ideas of religion, race, and work that destabilize the relationship Mrs. McIntyre, her hired help Mr. and Mrs. Shortley, and others have to the land of the South. As Bacon notes, the ideological conflict with the Guizacs on the otherwise calm Southern farm is a microcosm of the political reality confronting the South at mid-century. Outside the view of the exploding suburban middle-class, small farm owners struggled to survive on meager crop profits. Socialist author Michael Harrington wrote of “40 to 50 million” Americans, concentrated primarily in the rural South, who were “slipping out of the very experience and consciousness of the nation” (qtd. in Bacon 35). Before long those farmers and farm workers whose labor left them tenuously clinging to the American dream had competition in the form of European workers exiled by the destruction of World War II. Those exiles who, like the Guizacs, settled in the agrarian South brought with them religious and social codes radically different from those of their new neighbors.¹⁵ In doing so, they disrupt the assumed equivalence of location with belief, a form of disembedding. This is particularly threatening to Mrs. Shortley, who assumes identification with the land from the story’s outset. with the initial description of Mrs.

Southern farm. He terms this motif “the invaded pastoral” (8). Of course, for the characters of “The Displaced Person,” invasion is an actual fear.

¹⁵ I do not intend to treat the threat presented by the Guizacs’ Catholic faith at any length here. However, it must be noted that antipathy toward Catholic immigrant labor reached its peak in the years O’Connor was composing “The Displaced Person” (Bacon 79). Postwar resettlement efforts had made Southerners wary of the potential for political subversion. Congressmen from the South decried plans to settle European refugees in their states, claiming the exiles were coming “to infiltrate this country and to serve alien causes” (qtd. in Bacon 79). The fears of foreign subversion took on particular urgency when the exiles in question were, like the Guizacs, Catholic. American Protestants have long been wary of influxes of Catholic immigrants. The postwar resettlement of Polish and German Catholics in the rural South amplified the fears of foreign influence in American affairs. Popular consciousness conflated Communist invasion and Catholic subversion and mapped both onto the recently arriving European refugees (Bacon 80). Mr. Shortley complains, “I ain’t going to have the Pope of Rome tell me how to run no dairy” (CW 292).

Shortley, the paranoid wife of the farm's lone white laborer. The story's first sentence reads, "The peacock was following Mrs. Shortley up the road to the hill where she meant to stand" (CW 285). Before anything else, Mrs. Shortley is in a location. More importantly, she is walking to the top of a hill, symbolically claiming the location by mounting its highest point. "Her arms were folded as she mounted the prominence, she might have been the giant wife of the countryside... She stood on two tremendous legs, with the grand self-confidence of a mountain" (CW 285). Mrs. Shortley identifies so strongly with the landscape surrounding the McIntyre farm that she takes on its characteristics while expressing her dominance of it. When Mr. Guizac arrives, she warns the black farmhands that more foreigners will come and "tell the Negroes that they would have to find another place" (CW 291). Unable to see beyond the foreignness of the Guizacs Mrs. Shortley treats them and their ideas as invasive and, more importantly, unrooted from the land of the McIntyre farm.

The most threatening of the Guizacs' ideas concern race, the fundamental dialectic on which Southern difference is built. Mr. Guizac in particular represents a strain of racial thinking that is simply not tolerated in Mrs. McIntyre's version of the South, and so he must lose his life for it. He strikes a deal with Sulk, a black farmhand, to bring a young cousin – a concentration camp survivor – to the United States. In their arrangement, Sulk will pay Mr. Guizac a fee every week in exchange for the right to marry the sixteen-year-old girl once she emigrates (CW 311). Predictably, Mrs. McIntyre is incensed once she learns of the plan. She confronts Mr. Guizac, angrily chastising him for making such an immoral arrangement. Tellingly, she concludes not with an invocation of racial segregation, but with a claim of ownership. "This is my

place,” she says, “I say who will come here and who won’t” (314). Violating Southern racial codes is an unforgivable offense. Doing so while encouraging additional European immigration is a capital crime. Mr. Guizac’s alien understanding of race cannot survive in the American South.

Of course, nowhere do O’Connor’s Southern natives consider the context from which Mr. Guizac’s ideas grow or the experiences that have brought his family to their farm. The only Southerner to have experienced war is Mr. Shortley, and he marshals his combat experience to authorize further his distrust of the Guizacs: “Mr. Shortley said he never had cared for foreigners since he had been in the first word’s war and seen what they were like” (CW 318). Mr. Shortley could reasonably be expected to appreciate, in some small way, what the Guizacs have experienced. Instead, he indicts them in his experience of war:

He said he had seen all kinds then but that none of them were like us. He said he recalled the face of one man who had thrown a hand-grenade at him and that the man had had little round eye-glasses exactly like Mr. Guizac’s.

“But Mr. Guizac is a Pole, he’s not a German,” Mrs. McIntyre said.

“It ain’t a great deal of difference in them two kinds,” Mr. Shortley had explained. (CW 312-19)

Even those who have experienced war cannot appreciate the political conflicts that dislocate the Guizac family. There is no reason to believe that Mr. Guizac was on the same World War I battlefield as Mr. Shortley. By connecting the two foreigners, however, Mr. Shortley is able to locate his distaste for Mr. Guizac in a particular instance of violence (Bolton 98). The confusion of a Polish Holocaust survivor with a German

soldier merely reinforces Mr. Shortley's failure to grasp the realities of his historical moment.

For other characters, Europe and global war are little more than abstractions that provide a general impression of the Guizacs' world. Mrs. Shortley demonstrates precisely how not to apprehend the new global era when she tries to imagine what the Guizacs are escaping. Shortly after the family arrives, Mrs. Shortley recalls her only exposure to World War II:

Mrs. Shortley recalled a newsreel she had seen once of a small room piled high with bodies of dead naked people all in a heap, their arms and legs tangled together, a head thrust in here, a head there, a foot, a knee, a part that should have been covered up sticking out, a hand raised clutching nothing. Before you could realize that it was real and take it into your head, the picture changed and a hollow-sounding voice was saying, "Time marches on!" This was the kind of thing that was happening every day in Europe where they had not advanced as in this country. (287)

Mrs. Shortley's only experience of the horrors lived by the Guizacs is a brief newsreel containing footage of the aftermath of the war. Being an American, her access to war is mediated. The effects of mediation are dramatic. In an article entitled "Placing Violence, Embodying Grace," Betsy Bolton argues that the technology that brings images of the war to the home front disorients rather than informs viewers. "The newsreel first freezes the violence of the Second World War into a static picture, then makes that picture disappear before its meaning can be grasped" (91). Mrs. Shortley misapprehends what she sees, translating the images of fragmented and disfigured body parts into an indictment of the people to whom they once belonged. She then transposes that indictment onto those who survived the horrors, the Guizacs. "If they had come from where that kind of thing was done to them, who was to say they were not the kind that

would also do it to others? The width and breadth of this question nearly shook her” (287). Mrs. Shortley cannot understand the Guizacs’ presence on the farm because she cannot properly understand the violence that has displaced them.

If I appear to be building a case against the Shortley’s, it is because O’Connor seems resolved to use them to show how dangerous it is to see in the foreign or the alien nothing worth embracing as an opportunity for transcendence.¹⁶ At every turn, they refuse to recalibrate their vision of the world in a way that accommodates both the ideas that have taken root in the South and the disembedded ideology of the Guizacs. O’Connor does not seem to be making the case that Southerners are hopelessly provincial and lack basic empathy; rather, the point is that war and the subsequent mass emigration of refugees and exiles produce social and spiritual needs unable to be satisfied by twentieth-century theologies of comfort. The residents of Mrs. McIntyre’s farm cannot begin to understand their new neighbors’ needs, let alone satisfy them. Their range of available remedies is narrow and incompatible with the historical moment in which they live. The racial codes by which the Shortley’s buttress their social position make no sense to a family recently witness to racial violence. Mrs. McIntyre’s Southern pieties likely seem inconsequential to the man who has seen the worst evil modernity has known. These first-world social and religious codes are incompatible with the

¹⁶ To be sure, others do not fare much better. Mrs. McIntyre, for example, reveals a profound misapprehension in her efforts to understand the Guizacs’ experience of war. Discussing the new family with Astor, an elderly black farmhand who has seen many families arrive on the farm and eventually leave, she explains that things would be different because she could now hire people who needed to work. “Times are changing,” she explains, “Do you know what’s happening to this world? It’s swelling up. It’s getting so full of people that only the smart thrifty energetic ones are going to survive” (CW 307). When Astor asks why the world is getting so full, Mrs. McIntyre blames basic selfishness – people have too many children, she claims (CW 308). Of course, the world’s population has nothing to do with the Guizacs’ dislocation. Mrs. McIntyre ignores the role of war entirely. She does not even have Mrs. Shortley’s mediated understanding of war. Her religious mode reduces complex political conflict to basic impiety.

experience of systemic violence, no matter where its victims now call home. Those dispossessed by war find no comfort in the embrace of piety or nationalism.

In the face of the social and theological challenge presented by the Guizacs, O'Connor's Southerners only recourse is to ownership and domination of the land. When even that is threatened – Mrs. Shortley overhears Mrs. McIntyre plot to fire her husband in light of Mr. Guizac's productivity – the land can no longer hold them. When the Shortley's flee the McIntyre farm under cover of darkness, they experience their own version of displacement. The shock of being suddenly separated from the land with which she had equated herself, Mrs. Shortley goes into violent convulsions:

[T]here was a peculiar lack of light in her icy blue eyes. All the vision in them might have been turned around, looking inside her. She suddenly grabbed Mr. Shortley's elbow and Sarah Mae's foot at the same time and began to tug and pull on them as if she were trying to fit the two extra limbs onto herself [...] She thrashed forward and backward, clutching at everything she could get her hands on and hugging it to herself. (CW 304-305)

In her final moments, Mrs. Shortley's vision turns inward and, like both Hazel Motes and O.E. Parker, she sees the absence or lack within. Clutching at her daughters' extra limbs recalls the Holocaust newsreel footage of "arms and legs tangled together, a head thrust in here, a head there, a foot, a knee, a part that should have been covered up sticking out, a hand raised clutching nothing" (CW 287). Displaced from a location she could pretend to understand, Mrs. Shortley performs the role of the displaced person, trying to complete herself with whatever familiar fragments are at hand (Giannone 134).

Moreover, it is revealing that as she clutches her family, dying, Mrs. Shortley "seemed to contemplate for the first time the tremendous frontiers of her true country" (305). She does not seek or consider what lies at the heart of her true country; she

contemplates its borders. O'Connor has Mrs. Shortley focus on frontiers – the liminal, yet to be explored boundary areas separating nations and religions. One's true country – in both its political and religious meanings – can only be accessed by contemplating and exploring the points where it encounters other, more foreign lands. These tremendous frontiers hold the potential for a modern spirituality in the wake of global political and social violence.

How then to access this potential? What does it mean to contemplate the frontiers of one's true country in moments other than the brink of death? O'Connor provides a model in Mrs. McIntyre – one that parallels her vision of the global future. Having learned of Mr. Guizac's arrangement with Sulk, Mrs. McIntyre confronts Fr. Flynn, insisting that the Guizac family leave her farm. When the priest tries to direct the conversation to religious matters, she responds, "Father Flynn! I want to talk to you about something serious! As far as I'm concerned, Christ was just another D.P" (*CW* 320). In addition to foreshadowing Mr. Guizac's imminent death, the pronouncement reveals the dynamic conception of displacement Mrs. McIntyre is developing. She is simultaneously drawn to Mr. Guizac's industriousness and repelled by his contravention of Southern social codes concerning race. Comparing him with Christ signifies an unspoken power in this combination of what is known and unknowable. For this reason, "When the visit was over, she felt let down, though she had clearly triumphed over him [Fr. Flynn]" (*CW* 321). There is a level of profound discomfort with her decision to reject the displaced family, though Mrs. McIntyre cannot name it. It remains covered by a mystery she does not yet see.

After Mr. Guizac has died and her farm has fallen into ruin, Mrs. McIntyre continues to meet regularly with Fr. Flynn.¹⁷ He feeds her and her peacock and attempts to instruct her on the doctrines of the Catholic Church (*CW* 326-27). Fr. Flynn visits in the spirit of charity and to fulfill his vocational obligations. More importantly, he also comes in the spirit of transnational ecumenism. Long after the titular displaced person has died and his family moved away, an Irish priest and a Southern lady discuss dogma over lunch once a week. Their conversation is a fitting end to O'Connor's first collection. It serves as an example of the kind of exchanges made necessary by a century of global war and transnational exile. More importantly, it offers hope that the events of the historical moment can be made spiritually edifying in spite of their unparalleled tragedy. To do so requires recognizing the story's two deaths as consequences, not of displacement, but of the inability to apprehend fully the potential for mystery and transcendence in the liminal spaces between what is familiar and what is alien. Inhabiting those spaces requires engaged conversations – speaking to one another about what is shared, what is not, and what truths one can still hope to apprehend despite being surrounded by loss and decay.

A 1955 editorial in *Life* magazine sought to define the American way of life and, in the process, asked of American culture, “Who speaks for America today?” Its authors found among the literature of the period no “joy of life itself” to correspond to the rise of American political power and prosperity. In “The Fiction Writer and His Country,”

¹⁷ O'Connor contrasts Mrs. McIntyre's reaction to Mr. Guizac's death with the other Southern characters. Mr. Shortley leaves without notice. Sulk “was taken with a sudden desire to see more of the world and set off for the southern part of the state” (*CW* 326). No one, other than Fr. Flynn, comes to the McIntyre farm anymore. Confined to her bed, Mrs. McIntyre experiences a different form of displacement – she has lost her farm without going anywhere and the only conversation she gets comes from an Irish priest obsessed with her peacocks.

O'Connor rejects any relationship between good literature and the comforts of America at mid-century. To the Catholic writer, "the fact that we are the most powerful and the wealthiest nation in the world doesn't mean a thing in any positive sense. The sharper the light of faith the more glaring are apt to be the distortions the writer sees in the life around him" (HB 25-30). Moreover, in "The Catholic Novelist in the South," O'Connor claims, "Certainly Catholicism is opposed to the bourgeois mind" (CW 862). What we find in her fiction as well as her occasional prose is O'Connor witnessing America's rise with horror. Her religious imagination views the comforts of America at the beginning of the global era as impediments to spiritual development. To go beyond those comforts, O'Connor looks beyond the familiar landscape of the South or the comfortable habits of thought of bourgeois America. Of course, her commitment to realism will not allow O'Connor to take her readers to far off lands on romantic voyages of discovery. Instead, she brings the foreign and the alien to the South and shows characters whose vision and judgment respond in wildly divergent ways. Only those who can see in the alien something that is common and, conversely, see in the familiar something foreign and uncomfortable, can properly apprehend the reality of mystery in the modern global world. Seeing in this manner requires more than transforming oneself into a symbol of the pains of the search for truth or the presence of the Divine. It requires instruction, conversation, and first appreciating human relationships in the context of the "larger universe" of the Christian writer. Understanding difference in this way does not reduce its power, but renders it secondary to greater, more consequential formulations. O'Connor's "true country," therefore, exists where foreign and familiar collide, revealing both to be imperfect imitations of a world beyond our comprehension.

CHAPTER FIVE

SHUSAKU ENDO'S MANY FACES

I could not shake the gnawing feeling that a great gulf lay between them and myself. Each time I read their accounts of their religious conversions, I got the impression that they felt they had 'returned home' when they accepted Christianity. Being Japanese, though, I could not feel inside myself that embracing Christianity was any kind of homecoming. And none of the writers I studied had anything to say about the agony endured by the stranger to Christianity. The more I studied Christian literature, the wider the gap between me and these writers grew. It was not simply a feeling of distance from Christianity, but a distance from the entire culture of a foreign country.

— Shusaku Endo on studying French Catholic literature, 1973

If a Christian dialogues with a Buddhist, he need not lose his faith, nor must he convert. He must first try to understand. There must be an arena of openness and expression. Once this takes place, one can rediscover one's own roots. This of all things modern civilization needs to do. We are eroding at the roots.

— G.W. Houston, *The Cross and the Lotus*

It seems to me that Catholicism is not a solo, but a symphony. It fits, of course, man's sinless side, but unless a religion can find a place for man's sinful side in the ensemble, it is a false religion. If I have trust in Catholicism, it is because I find in it much more possibility than in any other religion for presenting the full symphony of humanity. The other religions have almost no fullness; they have but solo parts.

— Shusaku Endo, 1967 interview

Assessing the Catholic literary revival of the 20th Century in terms of its global development requires going beyond the Anglo-American axis along which much of literary studies continues to be organized. The disjunctures and flows that define globalizing late modernity complicate narratives of literary development that reduce

non-Western literatures to peripheral or ancillary concerns.¹ Nonetheless, the particular trajectory of Catholic literary modernism can be traced out of Europe (especially France), through Britain, and to the rest of the world. The aesthetic and thematic preoccupations at the core of the movement arrive in the non-West having been shaped to a great deal by their circulation among many Western writers and writing communities. Graham Greene's adaptation of the French revivalists' analogical forms to a dialectical cultural context defined by global war is one development. Flannery O'Connor's efforts to fix existential Catholicism in the American South constitute another. At each turn, writers with Catholic concerns appropriate elements of the Catholic literary tradition necessary for their particular cultural scene. In doing so, they shape the tradition that gets further promulgated through the channels that characterize global cultural flows. Those in the non-West, such as Japanese Catholic writer Shusaku Endo, who engage this tradition from their particular cultural standpoints do so aware of the influences of its various "stops" in the Western world.

In turning to Endo and Japan at this point in this study, my aim is to highlight the extent to which the global character of Catholic literary modernism encompasses multiple forms of cross-cultural contact and engagement. Although Greene and O'Connor both write as Catholics in places where their faith is a minority religion, the Christian cultural heritage that characterizes England and the United States makes their sense of difference primarily a religious one. Consequently, their versions of global modernity are premised on changes in disposition rooted in Catholic thought -

¹ Of course, forcefully asserting this fact has been the project of postcolonial studies from the time of *The Empire Writes Back* through the research of archivists and contemporary theorists. Without their efforts, a project such as this one would not be possible.

appreciating the commonality of suffering and expanding moral horizons for Greene, inhabiting one's true country as both transcendence and alienation for O'Connor. For Endo, living in a country where all Christian faiths combined still only form a very small minority means a distinctive appreciation of Catholic difference, one in which the boundaries separating cultures and religions are largely the same. Imagining a global future in such a context requires different ideas of cross-cultural engagement that go beyond changes in disposition. It necessitates new ways of being in the world as much as new ways of thinking. It raises questions of how one can maintain religious commitments whose history is foreign to the local environment. In Endo's case, the question becomes, "How can one be both Christian and Japanese?"

To be sure, for all that has been and will be said about Endo's debt to Western Christian theology and the European tradition of literature by Catholic writers, his work retains an identifiably Japanese character. Specifically, Endo's work participates in the movement of postwar Japanese literature referred to as *Daisan no shinjin* ("third generation of new authors"). Critic and biographer Mark B. Williams identifies this generation of writers as primarily concerned with a "vision of the divided self" arising from the "discovery of interiority" in Japanese literature (4-5). Writers like Yasuoka Shōtarō, Shōno Junzō, and Yoshiuki Junnosuke expand and complicate the turn to interiority that characterizes the work of Meiji-era writers of the later 19th century. They explore the bifurcated, fractured senses of self previous generations of writers had presumed whole and uncomplicated (6-7). For a writer like Endo whose identity is shaped by both Japanese and Catholic traditions, this movement offers an appealing

understanding of the Japanese psyche.² More importantly, it provides a Japanese cultural sensibility appropriate for a time of global change.

Endo's life and literary career span a period of great historical consequence for Japan. Born in 1923 and dying in 1996, Endo witnessed his nation's fall from empire, its shame in global war, and its development into a postmodern hub of global commerce. Early in life, Endo's family moved to Chinese Manchuria, then under Japanese colonial occupation. Living the life of the colonist for seven years, Endo moved to live with his mother's family in Kobe when she divorced his father in 1933. His mother became a Catholic shortly after returning to Japan and arranged for her son to be baptized into her new faith in 1934. For the rest of his life, Endo would negotiate his twin identification as both Christian and Japanese. It was not a comfortable combination. This discomfort was not merely a later realization, though. Endo traces it to the moment of his baptism:

I was baptized along with several other children from the neighborhood on Easter Sunday. Or more precisely, since this was not an act taken of my own free will, perhaps I should say that I was forced into baptism[...] When the French priest came to that part of the baptism service in which he asked, 'Do you believe in God?', I felt no compunction in following the lead set by the other boys and replied, 'I do.' It was as though we were engaged in conversation in a foreign language in which my reply to the question, 'Do you want to eat this sweet?' was 'I do.' ("Ill-Fitting" 375)

The foreignness of Endo's faith would create significant problems during Japan's war years. While at Keio University in the 1940s, Endo studied under Christian philosopher Yoshimitsu Yoshihiko and lived in a Catholic-run dormitory. Of those years, Endo

² This is not to say Endo is always planted firmly among the *Daisan no shinjin*. Okubo Fusao, a well respected critic and contemporary of Endo's, would not list him among the movement's best exemplars: "Endo is slightly different, isn't he? He writes of Jesus Christ. The typical *daisan no shinjin* author doesn't write of such great and powerful beings" (qtd. in Williams 222). The irony in Okubo's assessment, as we shall see, is that Endo's version of Jesus Christ is neither great nor powerful.

recalls daily taunts from drill instructors and student colleagues preparing for war.³

“With Japan at war, how can you go on believing in an enemy religion?’ or ‘Whom do you revere more, the Emperor or your God?’” he would later remember students calling to him (qtd. in Gessel 20). From early in life, then, Endo was keenly aware of the difference that marked his faith from his culture.

As we shall see, the conflict between Japan’s cultural pride and Catholicism’s claims to universality is a significant source of dramatic energy in Endo’s fiction. The extent to which it was also a personal issue for Endo reveals both the depths of his religious convictions and the profoundness of his identification with Japanese traditions. In a well-known metaphor introduced in a 1967 article, Endo refers to Christianity as an “ill-fitting suit” imported from the West and in need of tailoring to fit his Japanese contours. “I tried several times to remove the suit,” he writes, “but in the end I was unable to do so[...] Later I decided not to try to remove the suit. Instead I would try to refashion it into Japanese style clothing that would fit me” (“Ill-fitting” 374). Two elements of this metaphor merit attention. The first is the identification of the suit of Christianity as identifiably Western. Its proportions are based on the outlines of the Western body. Transferring it to a Japanese context leaves “parts of it baggy, other parts too short” (374). Here, Endo highlights East/West difference as a cause of his discomfort. Religion, like clothes, produced in the West will not “fit” in the East. A second element of Endo’s metaphor worth noting is his insistence that it is the suit that must be tailored to fit him. He asserts that Western Christianity must be “refashioned” into an appropriate

³ Endo was excused from military service due to persistent lung problems, one of the many health issues that would recur throughout his life (Williams 19).

form and style so as to better correspond to the needs of a Japanese adherent. What emerges from this metaphor, then, is a version of Endo's lifelong struggle: to mold a version of Catholicism compatible with his Japanese identity.

Appropriately enough, Endo uses a similar metaphor to describe his understanding of the craft of fiction. "To stand naked and find a set of clothes for yourself, to make that choice on your own – that is literature," he writes. "But I came to feel that literature also exists in the lifelong effort to take a suit of baggy clothes that someone has given you and tailor it to fit your own body" (qtd. in Gessel 20). Here again, Endo concerns himself with making that which does not "fit" correspond to the shapes and habits of mind that define him. As with his orientation toward his Christian faith, Endo's thoughts on writing begin with the recognition of difference and the need to reconcile foreign concepts with local patterns of thought. Perhaps it should not be surprising that here, too, Endo's concerns arise from an encounter with Western ideas - in this case literary ones. Much of Endo's engagement with Western literature – and the Catholic literary revival in particular – begins with his studies in France in the 1950s. Studying Mauriac and Bernanos at Keio initiated Endo's interest in work by French Catholic writers. Presented with one of the first opportunities to study in France offered to Japanese students after World War II, Endo chose to study French Catholic literature at the University of Lyons. In his two years there (1950-52), Endo studied Mauriac earnestly with additional interest in writers such as Julien Greene, Paul Bourget, and Henri Bourdeaux (Williams 36). What these writers share, Endo's writing from the time reveals, is the experience of the conflict between "the desire, as author, to scrutinize human beings" and "the Christian yearning for purity" ("Francois Mauriac" 94). His

studies at Lyons (and briefly at Paris) led Endo to reconsider the tension between his Christian faith and his Japanese identity – a conflict he had previously thought of as unique to those from his background – as part of this much more widespread conflict between the demands of temporal culture and the orientation of the person of faith. He comes to realize, as John Netland puts it, “that all Christians are citizens of two worlds” (179). The challenge for the Catholic writer lies in representing this duality without resorting to proselytization or despair (Williams 37).

To make the baggy clothes of the Catholic literary tradition fit his Japanese mind, Endo turned primarily to Mauriac. As he was for Greene, Mauriac serves Endo as a model for the Catholic writer whose focus is the “creation of living human beings” and whose interest is “to understand not only the characters’ psyche and personality, but also their true flavor, their pains and struggles, everything about them” (“Religion and Literature” 119). In Mauriac, he finds twin emphases on restraint and realism. “Catholic literature involves not a literary portrayal of God and angels, but must limit itself to scrutiny of human beings,” Endo writes in “The Problems Confronting the Catholic Author” (20-21). By restraining himself to the world of the human present, Endo, like Mauriac and Greene before him, participates in the Catholic literary tradition of seeing “godless man as human beings” (23). This commitment to realism fixes Endo squarely within the aesthetic orthodoxy of the Catholic literary revival.

Endo’s aesthetic strategies do not derive exclusively from the French, however. Greene’s influence on Endo is so profound that references to “the Japanese Graham

Greene” have become pervasive in Endo criticism.⁴ Endo’s widow Junko recalls the one time her husband met Greene in London, saying he “leapt for joy” and that “he told Greene how greatly he had been influenced by his works and that he might even not have been a novelist had he not read his novels” (Bull). In Greene, Endo finds an aesthetic strategy that marries the realism of Mauriac and his French Catholic colleagues to a dialectical sensibility that highlights the consequentiality of sin and faith. In “The Problems Confronting the Catholic Author,” Endo distills his view of the Catholic writer’s dual commitments to realism and mystery:

The Catholic author views this world as a shadow of the supernatural world, and, even whilst observing human psychology, he will detect, behind the second dimension psychology of Freud, Bergson, and Proust, the ‘third dimension’ of which Jacques Riviere happened to make mention. As a result, the Catholic writer can conceive as reality the introduction of the supernatural world into the world of human interaction, even if the non-Catholic reader is apt to misrepresent this as a distortion of reality. (27)

This explanation parallels Greene’s formulation of what he finds admirable in Mauriac: a “visible world” whose characters exist alongside “the forces of Good and Evil” (*Reflections* 113). Both writers choose aesthetic strategies that emphasize dialectical environments occasionally transcended by analogical moments. On this point Endo critic and translator Van Gessel highlights *The Power and the Glory* as having an especially profound effect on Endo. He notes, as have many critics, the parallels between *The Power and the Glory* and *Silence*. More importantly, he points to a larger aesthetic strategy common to the work of both writers. “The plots are secular, the

⁴ See, for example, Gessel, Williams, Hoffer, and Netland. Interestingly, each of these critics go to great lengths to trouble this designation, pointing to the influences of other writers, both Catholic and Japanese. There seems to be a sense among many critics that referring to Endo in this way is reductive or ignores his Japanese heritage, despite ‘Japanese’ appearing in the phrase.

discourse celestial” is Gessel’s formulation (239). Both Endo and Greene “trap their characters in a neutral zone between concerns of the flesh and those of the spirit” and there “impel them to battle” (239).⁵ In the language of David Tracy’s theory of the Catholic imagination, Endo takes from Greene an aesthetic strategy that draws dramatic energy from the tension between dialectical reality and the analogical experiences of central characters. Bates Hoffer goes even farther, claiming that both authors structure their analogical moments around sin and vice (132).⁶ What is most important to take away from both Gessel and Hoffer is the influence Greene’s dialectical sense of place wields over Endo’s novels.

The picture of Endo painted here is, as it was with both Greene and O’Connor, a decidedly transnational one. He conceives of his work in transcultural terms – of adapting Western Christianity for the Japanese mind. His aesthetic influences originate in both French and English literatures. He studies the Catholic literary tradition while one of the first Japanese students in Europe after World War II. Perhaps more so than Catholic authors from the Anglo-American context, Endo’s life and work reflect the increasingly global character of the second half of the 20th century. His work inhabits the intersection of traditional Japanese culture and the aesthetic and thematic concerns of the Catholic literary tradition. For the critic concerned with global cultural flows, Endo’s movements, both intellectual and literal, through various stations in the development of

⁵Gessel’s interpretation recalls what Bosco calls “the conflict between the corrupt flesh and the transcendent spirit.” Such tension, he argues, is one of the characteristics of modern Catholic literature.

⁶ Hoffer’s argument is more complex than this, of course. His reading of the influence of *The Power and the Glory* on the structure of *Silence* asserts that Endo takes Greene’s exploration of sin and reverses it, so that Rodrigues, unlike the whiskey priest, ends with the ultimate sin of despair, abandoning the community he’s come to serve at the same time.

Catholic literary modernism signify the transnational character at the core of this movement. Examining how Endo “refashions” the suit of the Catholic literary tradition to fit his Japanese context reveals a different approach to the question taken up by each author in this study: namely, what does a Catholic response to globalizing modernity look like? Deciphering Endo’s answer requires resisting the temptation of a conventionally postcolonial critical rubric.

The global character of Endo’s life and work – existing in both Eastern and Western traditions – means any critical analysis must be rooted in the context of the transnational turn. In an article for a 1999 special issue of *Christianity & Literature* dedicated to Endo, John Netland argues for a particular interpretation of the author’s work rooted in postcolonial theory.

Netland pairs a discussion of Endo’s suiting metaphor with a critical apparatus derived from “post-oppositional” postcolonial critics like Homi Bhabha and the later work of Edward Said. He finds the emphases on hybridity and liminality that characterize later postcolonial theory uniquely suited to Endo’s situation. Out of the oppositional tensions of the colonial encounter (a historical phenomenon Netland concedes is not the best model of Endo’s Japan), postcolonial critics of this orientation direct their attention to “the liminality of postcolonial experience—that is, the often permeable boundaries marking the amorphous spaces in which contrasting cultures meet” (181). Netland argues that Endo locates meaning not only in the tense cross-cultural encounters evident in novels like *Silence*, but in “a complex, three-dimensional conjunction of Christianity and Asian and European cultures” (181). In the language of liminality – the discourse of the spaces in between – Netland fuses Endo’s concerns with

cross-cultural contact and spiritual awareness. “It is in these ambiguous spaces that Endo explores the complexity of Christian identity within and beyond human cultures,” Netland argues. “Endo's spiritually displaced characters find themselves longing to find an identity within not only the liminal spaces marking the boundaries between Asian and Western cultures but also the spiritual spaces in which their temporal and eternal natures meet” (182). Postcolonial theory’s treatment of hybridity and liminality allows critics like Netland to “map” the intersection of Endo’s religious and political concerns. In this view, refashioning the ill-fitting suit of Western Christianity requires giving up some degree of one’s cultural identity, of inhabiting the borders between cultures as much as the spiritual dimension separating the human and divine. Indeed, Netland reads Endo’s novels and finds their “most powerful epiphanies through images of cultural emptying, of identification with the culturally dispossessed.” By “emptying themselves” of culture, he argues, Endo’s characters manifest culturally the kenotic emptying of the cross (192-93).

While Netland’s argument is to be lauded for exploring the connection between Endo’s spiritual concerns and the realities of transnational cultural politics, his emphasis on the language of postcolonial criticism is, it seems to me, misguided. Despite his invocation of “a complex, three-dimensional conjunction” of East, West, and Christianity, in his readings of *Silence*, *The Samurai*, and *Deep River*, Netland retreats into the most fundamental binaries of postcolonial criticism. Thus, Endo’s narratives and characters are “hybrid” insofar as they “subordinate the politics of cultural difference to a complex web of culture, religion, and power. What complicates this cross-cultural motif is the presence of Christianity, which transforms the simple binarisms of East versus West into two sets of polarities whose relationships are defined not by absolute antitheses but by

the liminal spaces between these poles” (179). What the critic with more global concerns will notice first about Netland’s formulation is that his “complex web” is not all that complicated. East and West remain monolithic, irreconcilably distinct cultural entities. While Netland is right to point out Endo’s concern with the liminal spaces between cultures, his reading here reinscribes the postcolonial dialectic at the same moment it claims to subordinate the politics of cultural difference. Endo’s characters inhabit the space between East and West- a position here cast as transgressive - but the border separating the two remains untroubled. Netland simply shifts critical attention to spheres of contact between East and West without attending to the ways Endo troubles these cultural designations. Endo is not interested in trying on Western clothes and ideas but in refashioning and reshaping them to the needs of the Japanese.

Moreover, Netland’s postcolonial reading of Endo’s work reduces its complex cultural heritage to a hybrid of East and West. The history of the Catholic literary revival, while unfolding primarily in the West, is not broadly “Western.” It is, as we have seen, a circulation of forms and concerns out of France through Britain to America and beyond. This is a rather circumscribed trajectory. More importantly, at every stage of its development into a coherent literary movement, the Catholic literary revival represents a minority position. Hence, Endo appreciates Greene not for his Englishness but for his Catholic preoccupations. He does not study the larger tradition of French literature, but the work of contemporary French Catholic writers specifically. Endo’s interests are not with the West but with a particular strain in Western thought and literature. In positioning Endo in the liminal spaces between East and West, postcolonial analysis also ignores the very specific history Endo inhabits. As the child of Japan’s colonial

ambitions in Manchuria who came of age in a country waging war with enemies both Asian and Western, Endo seems dubious about a monolithic Eastern identity.⁷ He rarely refers to himself as Eastern or to an Eastern habit of mind. He remains keenly aware that his cultural heritage is specifically Japanese, not part of a generalized Eastern tradition. Hence his desire is to refashion Western Christianity, not for the larger East, but into a “Japanese style.”

The political reality assumed in this chapter is one that involves a much more complicated network of transnational and non-national cross-cultural contact in which East/West difference is only one boundary among many transgressed. In examining such crossings, we cannot lose sight of the various, multipolar axes along which difference is articulated in Endo’s work or the significant power inherited culture retains. Whereas Netland’s postcolonial analysis figures Endo’s work as advocating cultural emptying as imitative of Christic kenosis, the argument here is that Endo sees local culture as in some measure inescapable. Neither he nor his characters can cease being Japanese. It is not something of which he can empty himself. In what sense are his interests transnational or global, then? Here again we must return to the suiting metaphor and Endo’s insistence that his project is to refashion Western Christianity. Such a project is by definition transnational, involving as it does influences and audiences across several points on the globe. However, it does not involve beginning from some sort of cultural non-position in between and apart from existing national cultures. Instead, what we find in Endo’s work

⁷ On his journey to France in 1950, Endo and his classmates were detained and questioned in several ports along the route. The most aggressive of these interrogations was not in Europe, but in the newly independent Philippines, where atrocities during World War II, most famously the Bataan Death March, branded the Japanese as war criminals. They received similarly icy treatment in Hong Kong, where the Japanese travelers were not allowed to disembark (Gessel 29).

are characters who immerse themselves totally in cultural practices foreign to them while refusing to abandon their own cultural heritages and identities. It is at this intersection of familiar and foreign, local and global that Endo locates the analogical encounter. What type of global culture emerges from this dynamic? It is one not based in the commonality of human suffering, as in Greene, or in the need for proper vision, as in O'Connor. Instead what we find in Endo's narratives is a version of global culture rooted in humble engagement with the lived experiences of a cultural other. This is not hybridity of the type postcolonial critics describe. What I am sketching here is akin to the dynamic Appadurai describes as "culturalism." By culturalism, Appadurai means the "conscious mobilization of cultural differences in the service of a larger national or transnational politics" (15). This is not to say that Endo's interests are narrowly political. I am saying that Endo's version of global modernity is one that recalls culturalism, where affinity is not assumed to be the result of primordial sameness but something to be worked out and negotiated as diverse populations "annex the global into their own practices of the modern" (4). In this formulation, local cultural heritages retain their currency even as individuals and communities consciously engage in non-local cultural practices in ways they take to be meaningful. In this process such traditions are changed – or, perhaps more appropriately, refashioned. For Fr. Rodrigues in *Silence*, this means submitting to the harsh demands of the Tokugawa shogunate refashions his understanding of his Christian faith. For Naruse Mitsuko of *Deep River*, it means changing what it means to be Japanese in light of a spiritual experience in India. Throughout his work, Endo emphasizes cultural practice as the proper location for transcultural, non-national engagements in the spirit of analogical faith. Only by

consciously and humbly engaging in such practices, he says, can something like a global culture be made possible.

It must be noted here that this vision of globalization rooted in transcultural practice does not simply arise from Endo's particular cultural and political position. It is just as much a product of his religious commitments. Crystallized most concisely in 1973's *A Life of Jesus*, Endo's interpretation of the Catholic theological tradition begins, as does O'Connor's, with the doctrine of the Incarnation. Whereas for O'Connor the Incarnation demands a suffering, grotesque Christ hanging from the cross, Endo's incarnate Christ suffers, but, more importantly, he exercises free will. This is especially significant given Endo's stated purpose in writing *A Life of Jesus*. From the "Preface to the American Edition":

I wrote this book for the benefit of Japanese readers who have no Christian tradition of their own and who know almost nothing about Jesus. What is more, I was determined to highlight the particular aspect of love in his personality precisely in order to make Jesus understandable in terms of the religious psychology of my non-Christian countrymen and thus to demonstrate that Jesus is not alien to their religious sensibilities. (1)

In adapting the Christian narrative to a Japanese audience, Endo begins with the picture of a human Jesus who chooses, decides, experiences ambivalence, and otherwise exercises free will. Japanese religious sentiments have "little tolerance for any kind of transcendent being who judges humans harshly, then punishes them" (1). Consequently, Endo's Christ is one whose most significant choices align him with the poor, the downcast, the oppressed, and the lonely. His Jesus is one whose teachings place him at odds with political power and whose miracles are largely "ineffectual" (79). Fumitaka Matsuoka argues, "Endo's Christology appeals to the contemporary Japanese because of

the depiction of Jesus as participating fully in the human condition of vulnerability. So Christianity is the story of one who failed, was rejected and alienated” (298). So how does the ineffectual failure called Jesus become the “Christ of Glory?” (296). Endo’s answer seems to lie in a paradox. Only by participating in the lives of the oppressed – by “laying his head” among them – does the embodiment of human weakness transcend human limitations.⁸ For example, Endo’s *Life of Jesus* connects the Christian mystery with Jesus living among lepers rather than with healing them (73). What we find in Endo’s interpretation of Catholic theology is a fundamental connection between transgressing social boundaries and transcending human frailty. The “fact of the resurrection,” Endo argues, is only significant because it involves a “carpenter who grew up in the back country of a weak nation” (177). The Christ who chooses weakness does so by participating in the lives of those with whom he would be least expected to identify.

For both cultural and religious reasons, then, Endo maintains a special interest in transgressing borders through cultural practice. This is a motif that recurs throughout his work. What follows are extended readings of two of Endo’s best known novels – 1966’s *Silence* and 1993’s *Deep River* – with special emphasis on their depictions of transnational contact as means to analogical experience. Both novels share a dialectical sensibility in which cultural difference and religious difference are coterminous and their boundaries are maintained by powerful interests both local and foreign. Into this world Endo injects characters whose participation in the practices of a cultural other challenges

⁸ In its formulation of spiritual uplift only being possible by descent into materiality and poverty, Endo’s Christology parallels William Lynch’s conception of the “generative finite.” There is no record I can find of Endo writing about Lynch or his ideas. Still, even if no direct influence exists, the similar formulations originating in different parts of the globe speak to a common intellectual heritage that transgresses national and cultural borders.

their conceptions of these religious and cultural borders. Of course, these experiences are not without difficulty. They also reflect a common Endo theme that Gessel calls “the agony of the stranger” (240). It is in the sometimes painful and always humbling experiences of submitting to unfamiliar cultural practices that Endo locates the potential for the global, non-national affinities on which sustainable global communities can be built.

That Man's Face

Nowhere else in Endo's oeuvre is the conflict between Christianity and Japanese culture more tense than in the 1966 novel *Silence*. The novel tells the story of 17th century Portuguese Jesuit missionaries sent to Japan to evangelize and serve the country's secret Christian communities. At this moment in history, Christianity is forbidden by the ruling Tokugawa shogunate and adherents are persecuted, tortured, and killed. The novel's two main characters, Frs. Sebastian Rodrigues and Francisco Garrpe, travel to Japan regardless, inspired by stories of glorified and sanctified martyrs. Indeed, the threat of torture and martyrdom pervades the novel as the priests secretively move between underground faith communities throughout the Japanese countryside. The Japanese Christian community tells many stories of their own martyrs as well as tales of those who could not withstand the terrors of the state and publicly apostatized. At each stop, the priests hear confessions, celebrate the mass, and perform the pastoral obligations they believe will make life under oppression more tolerable for their co-religionists. Their presence does not go unnoticed by the agents of the much-feared Lord Chikugo. Events force Rodrigues and Garrpe apart. While travelling alone, Rodrigues is captured when a Japanese Judas figure named Kichijiro betrays his location to

administrators. Much of the second half of the novel follows Rodrigues's experiences in custody as various representatives of the shogunate, eventually including Lord Chikugo himself, attempt to force Rodrigues to apostatize. They verify one of Rodrigues's worst fears – that the stories he had heard of the apostasy of his mentor Fr. Ferreira are true. As a final form of torture, his captors bring Rodrigues to meet Fr. Ferreira who, after publicly disavowing Christianity, is living as a Japanese, complete with a wife and children. He tells Rodrigues that Christianity cannot take root in Japan and that those who have martyred themselves did so needlessly. Largely under the influence of Ferreira, Rodrigues himself apostatizes shortly thereafter. The novel concludes with Rodrigues attempting to reconcile intellectually and spiritually the actions he has undertaken with the faith he claims to continue to profess.

Even from this brief summary, two tensions should be clear. The first concerns possible responses to torture, suffering, and oppression. Rodrigues and Garrpe believe their faith will make them strong enough to choose martyrdom over its alternative, apostasy. The second tension – between Japan and Christianity – unfolds over a much longer historical backdrop. Nonetheless, within the frame of Endo's novel, both Portuguese and Japanese characters come to affirm that Japanese culture and Christian faith are irreconcilable. In likely the most famous passage from the novel, the apostate Ferreira says, "This country is a swamp. In time you will come to see that for yourself. This country is a more terrible swamp than you can imagine. Whenever you plant a sapling in this swamp the roots begin to rot; the leaves grow yellow and wither. And we have planted the sapling of Christianity in this swamp" (147). Ferreira's metaphor implies a great deal about Japanese culture, much of which will be taken up momentarily.

For the time being, however, what is worth noting is that the impossibility of a Japanese version of an authentic Christianity is not voiced only by the authoritarian regime of the state, but by a European one-time priest.

Clearly, *Silence* dramatizes in the starkest terms possible the cultural tension Endo takes as an interest throughout his life. Seeking to understand where a narrative such as this originates requires uncovering Endo's reading of Japanese history. As William Cavanaugh points out in a review of the novel for *Commonweal*, "Ferreira's apostasy is a historical fact" (10). Cristavo Ferreira, a Portuguese missionary and leader of secret Christian communities in Japan, apostatized under intense public torture in 1632. As a result, Endo notes in *A Novel I Have Loved*, the history of Christianity in Japan is largely silent for several centuries afterward (154). This silence stands in glaring contrast to the abundance of glorifying martyrdom narratives from the preceding decades. Studying this history, Endo came to wonder about stories like Ferreira's that would not be told or recorded, the stories of those who could not withstand the terrors of the shogunate and who publicly disavowed their faith. In the early 1960s, he made several trips to the Nagasaki district of Kyushu, site of the most famous executions in Japanese Christian history, to research the circumstances surrounding the centuries of martyrdom and apostasy. As Williams notes, his interests were not exclusively intellectual. He quotes from a 1970 essay for *Japan Christian Quarterly*, in which Endo laments, "If [the Christians of this era] were to be divided into the weak and the strong, I would be among the former" (106). Endo's sympathy for the weak whose faith could not ensure them a place in the history of Japanese Christianity only grew as his research continued. "With each visit to Nagasaki and, in particular to the various sites associated with the

suppression of Christianity during the early part of the seventeenth century,” Williams argues, “Endo’s tendency to empathize with the *Kakure* [hidden Christian] psychologically intensified, but as he admits in a subsequent essay, it was the chance examination of a *fumie* statue on display in a Nagasaki museum that was to determine the form his literary investigation of the issue would subsequently assume” (106). The *fumie* – in this case an image of Jesus’s face carved by Japanese artisans – was central to the rituals of public apostasy by which the shogunate exercised power over Christian communities. To step on or deface the *fumie* symbolized the ultimate rejection of Christianity. It was the final, public act of apostasy.

Ritualized public apostasy (*efumi*) was an annual experience for many of Japan’s Christians during the early centuries of the Edo period. The first decades of the Tokugawa shogunate were marked by efforts geared toward politically unifying what had been a network of warring city-states spread across Japan. Part of fostering a new nationalist spirit among the Japanese involved expelling foreign influences, including Western Christianity. The first Christian missionaries in Japan, mostly Spanish and Portuguese Jesuits, arrived in the middle of the 16th century when the Dutch and Spanish began trading with Japanese textile makers. At the time, feudal rulers (*daimyo*) viewed opening their lands to Catholic proselytizing as ways of currying favor with the European crowns who sponsored them. By granting permission to the Jesuits, each hoped to bring traders to his territory rather than the neighbors with whom he was likely at war. Following the unification of much of Japan under the Tokugawa family in 1603,

Christianity was formally banned as unwelcome European meddling in Japanese affairs.⁹ The tension between Japanese cultural identity and the Christian churches of Europe arises not from irreconcilable philosophical disputes but from the efforts to centralize administrative power under a single ruling family. It is telling, then, that Jesuits were expelled from the country following the establishment of the shogunate, but traders from Holland and other European powers were allowed to remain in Japanese ports. There is no doubt Endo is aware of this history. As he notes in the first chapter of *Silence*, despite dozens of Dutch vessels anchored in Japanese ports, “Portuguese ships were forbidden to enter the harbors of Japan” (11). The question, of course, is what was so threatening about European Christianity? What did Catholic missionaries carry with them in their forbidden ships that made them a threat to Japanese sovereignty while Dutch traders were welcomed openly? More importantly for this study, how does Endo repurpose the history of the reign of terror by which his faith was largely expelled from his country?

Within the world of *Silence*, apostasy in the form of trampling on the *fumie* symbolizes the despair of those who could no longer tolerate the tortures of the shogunate. For the local Japanese Christians, it is the only path out of the pains inflicted by the fearsome Lord Chikugo and his underlings. The most feared of these tortures, referred to by locals only as “the pit,” involves hanging by one’s ankles and being slowly bled over several days. A man with brown scars behind his ears explains the torture to Rodrigues, “they bind you in such a way that you can move neither hands nor feet; and then they hang you upside down in a pit[...] These little openings are made behind the

⁹ Much of this comes from Brett L. Walker’s study of Japan’s relations with the rest of the world in the Sengoku and early Edo periods, entitled “Foreign Affairs and Frontiers in Early Modern Japan.”

ears so that you won't die immediately. The blood trickles out drop by drop" (145).¹⁰ Throughout the novel, Rodrigues imagines his journey will end with him either hanging in the pit or trampling on the *fumie*. His choices lead to martyrdom or apostasy. For many early commentators as well as contemporary critics, these options seem strange ones for a Catholic author like Endo. Why tell the story of one who despaired? Why valorize apostasy? The view implicit in these questions is one Endo sought to correct in many of his contemporary critics. One critic, a professor at Doshisha University, asserts that Endo has not written a story of faith but a narrative of men whose faith is an illusion. "The martyrs heard the voice of Christ," he asserts, "but for Ferreira and Rodrigues God was silent. Does this not mean that from the beginning those priests had no faith?" (qtd. in Johnston xvii)¹¹ As Endo acknowledges, a reading such as this makes sense if one believes that Rodrigues's act of apostasy is the culmination of the novel. Of course, he steps on the *fumie* at the end of the eighth chapter. In a later postscript, Endo emphasizes the fact that there are still two chapters following Rodrigues's apostasy (qtd. in Williams 109). Apostasy, then, is not the end Rodrigues believed it to be or the finale many critics assumed it must be. Instead, it is a conduit to something else. As many critics concerned

¹⁰ Williams notes that this torture is not simply the product of Endo's creative energies. Like the public rituals of apostasy, the horrors of the pit have analogues in the early years of the Edo period. The shogunate had had little success in terrifying Christians into apostasy until someone happened upon a torture once used by a Lord Inoue against his political enemies. The torture is as described in *Silence*, though the tortured was often hung over the rising sea or a pit of human waste (110).

¹¹ *Silence* was highly controversial in Japanese Christian circles from the earliest days after its release. In the postscript mentioned above, Endo reassures Catholic readers that, though Rodrigues's faith appears "close to Protestantism" and will "obviously induce criticism in theological circles," he remains committed to refashioning Catholicism to Japan (qtd. in Williams 251). These comments were largely spurred by academic criticism, such as that leveled by Professor Yanaihara of Doshisa, and by conversations Endo had with Church leaders in Japan. In a little known episode, Endo appeared at Sophia University with representatives of the Japanese Catholic Church for a conversation about *Silence*. While the religious leaders asked questions born of their suspicions of Endo, his answers won him great support with the audience (Junko Endo 146).

with Catholic literature have pointed out, what Endo presents is a new form of faith stripped of Rodrigues's many delusions.¹² The priest who had been obsessed with martyrdom and angered by God's silence in the face of so much suffering among "His people" embraces a new faith drained of Western pride and unconcerned with making suffering and death something glorious or religiously edifying. By performing "the most painful act of love that has ever been performed" (170), Rodrigues comes to believe, "I know that my Lord is different from the God that is preached in the Churches" (175). As numerous critics have pointed out, the version of faith Endo presents in these final chapters is decidedly at odds with European Christianity and corresponds in meaningful ways with the Christian narrative in *A Life of Jesus*.¹³ In the paradox of finding faith in one's weakest moments, Endo begins to shape the Catholic tradition to the demands of Japan.

My point here is not to validate or refute this reading of the novel's theological paradoxes. Instead, what I want to comment on are the cultural dimensions of Rodrigues's experience of apostasy and the possibilities for cross-cultural engagement Endo presents in this narrative. Within the historical moment in which the novel unfolds, public rituals of apostasy served as deterrents against unwelcome foreign influence. They were part of a larger effort to centralize administrative power and foster a coherent Japanese cultural identity. Endo highlights this in a key passage in which Rodrigues, having been captured, dialogues with Lord Chikugo concerning the place of the Christian

¹² Here I have in mind readings produced by Netland, Higgins, and Gaughan. Many others examine Rodrigues in the aftermath of his apostasy, but few assert as these do the unusual position that Endo presents apostasy as a path to a more authentic faith.

¹³ See Netland, Gessel, Higgins, Williams, and Matsuoka, among others.

church in Japan. Chikugo recounts a story he has heard of a man with four concubines, each violently jealous of the other three. “Spain, Portugal, Holland, England and such – like women keep whispering jealous tales of slander into the ear of the man called Japan,” he states. Rodrigues responds by retreating into Catholic doctrine, saying, “Our Church teaches monogamy. If a man has a lawful wife, I wonder if it is a wise thing to let himself be burdened with concubines. What if Japan were to choose one lawful wife from among these four?” Chikugo responds that it would be “better for this man called Japan to stop thinking about women from foreign countries and to be united with a woman born in the same country, a woman who has sympathy for his way of thinking” (122). In this exchange, Chikugo, the most feared administrator of the new state apparatus, gives voice to a sense of radical cultural difference. He extends the metaphor, explaining that the Japanese believe the love of an ugly or barren woman is insufficient to make her a suitable wife (123). The metaphor says a great deal about how Endo views Japanese resistance to European Christianity. In calling Christianity ugly and barren, Lord Chikugo positions Japanese culture as concerned with the status that accompanies attractiveness and productivity. By extension, the Japanese state is interested in foreign relationships that elevate its status – or perhaps more precisely that reinforce its perception of its elevated status – through productive engagement, usually in economic exchange. Concern with status and productivity make the Japanese open to trade with the Dutch but hostile to the evangelizing the Portuguese bring. Chikugo’s – and by extension the state’s - sense of cultural difference arises from a Japanese self-conception that leaves no room for the corrective efforts of foreign missionaries.¹⁴ Christianity must

¹⁴Jurgis Elisonas historicizes this conflict in somewhat different terms. He argues that the earliest

be banished from Japan because it does not comport with the people's or the state's ideas of who they are.

The cultural pride implicit in Chikugo's responses to Rodrigues is not his alone, nor is it exclusively Japanese. As noted earlier, the act of apostasy generates in Rodrigues a new form of faith divorced from his previous pride and obsession with the glories of martyrdom. What effects this profound change in the faith of the priest? An answer takes shape when examining the descriptions of the *fumie* and its emotional impact on Rodrigues. Throughout the novel, Rodrigues is haunted by the face of Jesus staring at him silently. His first night imprisoned by the shogunate, Rodrigues contemplates the image:

From childhood the face of Christ had been for him the fulfillment of his every dream and ideal. The face of Christ as he preached to the crowd the Sermon on the Mount. The face of Christ as he passed over the Lake of Galilee at dusk. Even in its moments of terrible torture this face had never lost its beauty. Those soft, clear eyes which pierced to the very core of a man's being were now fixed upon him. When the vision of this face came before him, fear and trembling seemed to vanish like the tiny ripples that are quietly sucked up by the sand of the sea-shore. (103)

Over the course of his imprisonment and mental anguish, however, Rodrigues's vision of Jesus's face transforms into something decidedly less comforting and helpful.

Witnessing Japanese Christians trample the *fumie*, he imagines "the face of Christ, wet with tears. When the gentle eyes looked straight into his, the priest was filled with shame" (116). Believing other Christians will be executed the following day because he

missionaries to Japan, including St. Francis Xavier, mistranslated key terms from Latin into concepts drawn from pantheistic Buddhist teachings (304). Ferreira references this mistake in his exchange with Rodrigues (148). However, Endo's use of organic metaphors – the barren mother, the muddy swamp – suggests he believes something other than language accounts for Japan's hostility to European Christianity. When Ferreira claims, "the Japanese are not able to think of God completely divorced from man; the Japanese cannot think of an existence that transcends the human" (150), he indicts the pride at the heart of Japan's self-conception.

will not apostatize, he sees “the face now before his eyes. Hundreds and hundreds of times it had appeared in his dreams; but why was it that only now did the suffering, perspiring face seem so far away?” (137). When Ferreira tells him that he has apostatized, “that face seemed close beside him. At first it was silent, but pierced him with a glance that was filled with sorrow” (161). In these episodes, Endo charts a profound change in how Rodrigues interprets the Christian drama. As a child he had focused on the face that performed miracles, pronounced great sermons, and comforted the pained. Faced with actual danger and suffering, Rodrigues shifts his attention to the Jesus who suffers and experiences sorrow. Perhaps it should be expected, then, that the face he tramples on in his moment of apostasy is not the beautiful, comforting face of his previously naïve European faith. With the *fumie* at his feet, “Before him is the ugly face of Christ, crowned with thorns and the thin outstretched arms. Eyes dimmed and confused the priest silently looks down at the face which he now meets for the first time since coming to this country” (170). As he steps on the *fumie*, the face commands, “Trample! Trample! It was to be trampled on by men that I was born into this world!” (170)¹⁵ The transformation of the face of Christ from source of comfort and beauty to abused image demanding further mistreatment marks the culmination of Rodrigues’s evolving vision of his faith.

Of course, what we cannot lose sight of is the role of cultural difference in effecting this transformation. Jean Higgins conceives of this change as the difference between the former “Rodrigues of the West” and the new “Rodrigues of the East.’ The

¹⁵ With the novel’s emphasis on faces, it cannot be coincidental that Endo begins *A Life of Jesus* with, “We have never seen his face. We have never heard his voice. We do not really know what he looked like” (7).

Western Rodrigues is characterized as “the young missionary who comes to Japan with dedicated aggressiveness, bearing in heart and mind the image of a transcendent God of power and might. The image of Christ constantly before his mind's eye is that of the risen Christ, serene in conquest; a Christ of glory, whose example calls for heroism in his followers, for fidelity unto death, even in martyrdom” (421). His faith is triumphalist, conquering, and universal. What “Rodrigues of the East” finds in the face of the *fumie*, conversely, is “a kenotic God[...] a weak and powerless Christ who shows himself understanding of the weak, who has compassion with the betrayer, who knows well the pain in the foot of the apostate who tramples upon his face” (421). While I would certainly quibble with Higgins’s use of “East” and “West” as totalizing categories, and while I agree with Netland that this formulation too easily elides the emphasis on kenosis in many Western Christian traditions (185), I find it useful to conceive of Rodrigues’s evolving religious imagination in terms of his locality. The longer he spends in Japan, the more his vision of Christ changes. Put another way, the more Rodrigues experiences the life of a Japanese Christian – complete with torture, oppression, and demands of apostasy – the more Japanese his interpretation of Christianity becomes. When Endo says in *A Life of Jesus* that the Japanese mind is amenable to a God “who suffers with us” and “allows for our weakness,” the image on the *fumie* is what he has in mind (1). Rodrigues comes to this view in the end when, reflecting on his apostasy, he has a final vision of Christ’s face saying, “I was not silent. I suffered beside you” (190).

Van Gessel conceives of the tension in *Silence* in terms of cultural portability. In the argument between Rodrigues and Ferreira he finds that “the irresistible surge of a fluid, malleable culture has run into the immovable doctrines of an unbending,

‘universal’ church” (255). What Endo appears to be presenting in the many faces of Jesus is a different sense of a ‘universal’ church – one that does, in fact, bend to the needs of a particular location in such a way that both locals and those who come to inhabit it from abroad can understand and appreciate it as an authentic iteration of the Catholic tradition.¹⁶ The key question, of course, concerns how this happens. How does a devout Portuguese Catholic priest come to embrace a Japanese Christ? Conversely, and more importantly to Endo, how can the Japanese embrace the Christian tradition in a way commensurate with the realities of Japanese cultural pressures? Here Endo emphasizes what I have been calling cross-cultural practice. Only by participating humbly and authentically in the practices of the cultural other can the stranger transform himself into something new and more globally integrated. In the aftermath of his apostasy, Rodrigues lives the life of a Japanese intellectual. He is given a Japanese wife and family, as well as a Japanese name. Despite appearances, he retains a robust faith life, though one organized around the reconfigured vision of a weakened Christ discussed above. This is, Rodrigues thinks, the real culmination of his journey. “When in Portugal

¹⁶ Indeed, the malleability of the Catholic tradition appears to be precisely what Endo hopes to highlight in his novel’s appeal to a Japanese audience. Following Rodrigues’s apostasy, Lord Chikugo returns to explain why the shogunate no longer needs to persecute the Christians they know still inhabit Japan. He says Christianity has been “defeated by this swamp of Japan.” Even if it remains in name, what those in the countryside practice is not Christianity. He compares the Christian doctrine of salvation with the Buddhist one: “[I]n Japan salvation is from the mercy of the Buddha upon whom people depend out of their hopeless weakness [...] Christian salvation is not just a question of relying on God – in addition the believer must retain with all his might a strength of heart. But it is precisely in this point that the teaching has slowly been twisted and changed in this swamp called Japan” (187). While Chikugo is correct that Japan has “twisted and changed” Christianity until it resembles something more like the Buddhist teachings he describes, Rodrigues (and Endo) is adamant that this is still Christianity. He wants to shout that “Christianity is not what you take it to be!” (187) The ability of his religion to bend to the realities of his surroundings to the extent that an act of apostasy serves as a path to a deeper faith confirms its truth for Rodrigues. For Endo, it must be noted, this malleability is a particularly Catholic trait. Only in the “symphony” of Catholicism, he believes, is there “a part that corresponds to Japan’s mudswamp” (qtd. in Williams 32). Other Christian traditions are simply too narrowly defined, too thoroughly products of the European intellectual tradition to be open to the processes of indigenization in which Endo is interested.

he had thought that to become a missionary was to come to belong to that country,” he says, “He had intended to go to Japan and to lead the same life as the Japanese Christians. Whatever about that, now it was indeed so” (188). Outwardly Japanese, privately Christian – this is the life Rodrigues comes to inhabit. How does this happen? How does he come to live the life of a Japanese Christian? It is only possible, Endo shows, once he performs the public apostasy ritual. Only by stepping on the *fumie* – an ordeal more spiritually taxing than the pit or other tortures – can Rodrigues live the life of the Japanese Christian. Of course, stepping on the *fumie* is a uniquely Japanese practice, developed by the shogunate to embarrass Japanese Christians. To participate fully in the burgeoning Japanese culture requires trampling the *fumie*. It is, therefore, culturally bound and localized, intimately tied to what it means to be Japanese in this time and place. To access the life of the Japanese Christian, Rodrigues must subject himself to this local practice authentically and humbly. He must do so authentically, despite the admonitions of the magistrates and other officials present at the ritual that “it is only a formality” and he must “only go through with the exterior form of trampling” (171). Rodrigues must experience the pains of public apostasy here literalized as pain in his foot. He cannot merely perform the ritual as though it is of no significance. Only by trampling meaningfully and sincerely, Endo shows, does Rodrigues come to know fully a different face of Christ appropriate to the Japanese context.

What of the Japanese side? How are they to participate in the Christian tradition in a way that does not deny their cultural heritage? I believe Endo offers two models, one specific and one general, that demonstrate the difficulties and possibilities of reconciling Christian faith with Japanese culture. The specific example is that of

Kichijiro, the Judas-like figure whose betrayal of Rodrigues leads to his imprisonment. In the final scene in the novel, Kichijiro comes to Rodrigues in secrecy and asks to have his confession heard. “I betrayed you,” he cries, “I trampled on the picture of Christ.” More importantly, he ascribes his sins to his own weakness: “In this world are the strong and the weak. The strong never yield to torture, and they go to Paradise; but what about those, like myself, who are born weak, those who, when tortured and ordered to trample on the sacred image...” (190). Briefly wondering if he can hear a confession as a fallen priest, Rodrigues relents and provides absolution. Matsuoka makes the point that confession of this type is alien to Japan, that transforming the anguish of one’s sins into virtue is the traditional Japanese response to immorality. Moreover, he notes that this process is an entirely private matter unlike the spoken quality of the sacrament of confession (297). Here, then, Endo provides one example of a Japanese Christian seeking the rituals of his adopted faith no matter the immanent dangers. At the same time, Kichijiro remains undeniably Japanese. He seeks mercy for his weaknesses. He has served the interests of the shogunate on many occasions. The only way Kichijiro can reconcile the tension between his religious and cultural identities is by participating authentically and humbly in the foreign ritual of confession. He must embrace the dimension of his faith most alien to his culture. After doing so, he “wept softly; then he left the house” (191).

Beyond the specific example of Kichijiro is another example of Japanese cross-cultural practice that has gone largely unremarked upon in critical commentary. It connects to the title of the novel. Initial criticism of the novel took “silence” to refer to God remaining silent in the face of human suffering. For this reason, many early

responses to the novel considered it an indictment of indifference in European Christianity.¹⁷ Endo, of course, was quick to quell this interpretation, insisting that, just as the novel documents the paradox of finding strength in weakness, it also insists on the need to “hear God’s voice in the silence” of one who suffers with the oppressed and the pained (Gessel 1999; 149). Gessel goes one step further, asserting that what Rodrigues requires in order to experience a renewal of faith in line with his new cultural context is the “silencing” of his ego. Otherwise, he cannot hear the unique voice with which the Divine speaks in Japan (152). I do not intend to disagree with any of these interpretations of the title of *Silence*, as they are all in one form or another validated by the text. To them I would simply like to add the silent suffering of the secret Christian communities of Japan. Other than Kichijiro, native Christians almost never speak within the pages of the novel. They are talked to, ministered to, and talked about, but they never themselves speak of their faith. Those whose faith is secret dare not speak of it for fear of torture. Those who have publicly apostatized but remain secretly faithful, do so in order to maintain the appearance of the proper apostate. They silently maintain their faith through the practices and rituals brought to them from abroad. In their silence, these communities present another model of cross-cultural practice. Theirs is one that eschews public proclamations of faith or identity in favor of the quiet lived experiences of the cultures they inhabit. While agents of the Japanese state assert their faith is incompatible with their Japanese heritage, they do not argue but continue to practice the rituals of their faith. When European Christians present views incompatible with Japanese thought, they do not empty themselves of their Japanese heritage to embrace

¹⁷Gessel summarizes many of these early responses in his chapter on Endo in *The Sting of Life* (254).

their faith more fully, as Netland would likely argue, but quietly adapt the Christian message to their context. Perhaps most importantly, when the history of their era is written, these communities will not be part of it. As Endo found in his research, only heroes, saints, and martyrs speak in the history of Japanese Christianity. His task in *Silence* is not to give them voice, but to present the circumstances that explain their silence in a manner that makes their suffering understandable to both Christian and Japanese audiences.¹⁸

Finally we come to the question that hangs over each of these discussions of literature by Catholic writers: of what consequence is this for a Catholic vision of globalization? What imagined worlds does *Silence* show to be possible? Endo's vision begins with the proper role of nations. In the conversation where Chikugo introduces the metaphor of the barren wife, Rodrigues asserts that Japan must choose one lawful wife rather than toy with its many potential suitors. Chikugo's response – "And by this lawful wife you mean Portugal?" – reveals the role nations play in his understanding of the globe. Rodrigues's retort – "No, no! I mean our Church!" – shows him thinking beyond nationalism (122). The vision of the globe Endo presents here is one where nations are not the primary arbiters of cross-cultural engagement. Japan can choose to partner with the Catholic Church just as it could with the Dutch, Portuguese, or English. This is not to say that Endo envisions a postnational future or advocates cross-cultural engagement in the liminal spaces between national cultures. Indeed, within *Silence*, national cultures retain a great deal of currency. Kichijiro never ceases to be Japanese, for example.

¹⁸ From "Concerning the Novel *Silence*": "History knows their sufferings: I believed it was the task of a novelist to listen to their sufferings" (101).

However, nations and national cultures must be drained of their obsessions with status and productivity, just as Rodrigues is drained of his European pride. The personified Japan cannot think only another of its kind is a suitable or appropriate partner. So on what basis can national cultures engage humbly? The temptation is to read Endo as offering Catholicism as a prerequisite for such contact. However, the experiences of Garrpe, Ferreira, and Rodrigues betray Endo's deep suspicions of proselytization and evangelism.¹⁹ Transnational engagement will not arise from programs aimed at expanding one faith, no matter how malleable to a given context it may be. Instead, as I have been arguing, Endo's concern is with the methods by which individuals and communities transgress cultural and national boundaries. Only by participating in and understanding the lived culture of the other can individuals form connections across borders. Rodrigues must apostatize to experience the life of a Japanese Christian. Kichijiro must seek confession and absolution to understand the views of European Christianity. In *Silence*, Endo shows that if cross-cultural, transnational communities are to be formed in an imagined global future, they will not begin with recognizing a universal basis of human experience (e.g. suffering), but in the transgressive act of humbly submitting to an other's lived cultural practices.

God Has Many Faces

Endo's struggles to refashion his ill-fitting suit are not confined to filling in the silences of history. In one of the last works published in his lifetime, 1993's *Deep River*, Endo presents a still more radical view of the adaptability of his Catholic faith to various

¹⁹ There is a sense of futility in much of how Endo describes the proselytizing work of the Jesuits. At one point Ferreira describes himself as "a missionary defeated by missionary work" (146).

points on the globe than the one set out in *Silence*. He presents this view in several narratives of Japanese tourists visiting India to tour sites holy to Buddhism. As Robert Coles points out, each character joins the tour in search of something missing from their modern secular lives. “All of these cases,” he says referring to the tourists, “have tried to live conventional, reasonably successful secular lives and have failed [...] Their muffled cries of vague apprehension betray a despair they don’t even know, never mind acknowledge” (21). Endo focuses on four particular members of the tour group, each searching for fulfillment or validation necessitated by great loss. Mr. Numada, a writer of children’s stories featuring fantastical talking animals, seeks a deeper connection with the natural world following a near-death experience during a lung operation. A veteran named Mr. Kiguchi desires to hold a ceremony at a Buddhist holy site to honor those he fought with and against along Burma’s “highway of death” in World War II. Mr. Isobe, a stereotypical middle-aged salaryman, searches the slums and villages surround Varanasi for his reincarnated wife, even though he believes in nothing of the sort. A fourth tourist, who serves as the protagonist of the novel, is Miss Naruse Mitsuko. Initially appearing in the novel *Scandal*, the Mitsuko of *Deep River* seeks an inner peace – she conceives of it as “something missing” from “the darkness in her own heart” (58) – that she cannot find in youthful debauchery, marriage, or the literature of Mauriac or Julien Greene. The novel follows each of these characters as they search India for certainties and comforts they never find. What they do find reveals a great deal about how Endo formulates the relationship between the human and the divine.

Two other characters are worth mentioning at this point. The first, named Mr. Enami, is the group’s guide through India. A Japanese national, he studied in India

before agreeing to serve as a tour guide for a company targeting Japanese Buddhists (106). His explanations guide the tourists through the various rituals associated with the holy places of India and guide the reader through Endo's interpretations of the country. The final main character is an unusual man named Otsu. A Japanese Catholic, he studies in France to become a priest, lives for a time as a *kibbutz*nik in the Holy Land, and, by the time of the tourists' visit to India, is living in an ashram with Hindu ascetics serving the untouchables whose bodies litter the streets of Varanasi.²⁰ Otsu, who enters the seminary following cruel treatment from Mitsuko while in college, undergoes a true world tour of religious and cultural experience. The views he comes to by the end of the novel represent a challenge to the inertia of many world theologies, including Endo's Catholicism.

The unusual setting, structure, and thematic concerns of *Deep River* may seem like digressions from Endo's life-long concern with fitting Christianity to the Japanese cultural context. However, examining the origins of the novel reveals it to be squarely within this project and, in many ways, its ultimate fulfillment. Mark Williams points to several biographical events as providing source material for *Deep River*. The most significant were several trips Endo took to India in the late 1980s and early 1990s. In particular, the author was taken with the rituals and symbolism associated with the holy city of Varanasi, located at the confluence of the Ganges and Yamuna Rivers. Of the Ganges, he writes, "It is a great river in which life and death live side by side. Going to India, you come to sense the existence of another great world of a different dimension

²⁰ Otsu is but the final in a long line of unorthodox priests who travel outside their comfortable homes in Endo's novels. Gessel traces this lineage from Rodrigues through the novels *Scandal*, *The Sea and Poison*, *The Girl I Left Behind* and others in an article entitled "Hearing God in Silence."

that coexists with our world” (qtd. in Williams 193). In comments like these, Williams finds Endo in search of “an echo of the collective unconscious,” seeking in the flow of the great river the origins of a faith that “transcends sectarianism” (192, 195).

My sense is that Williams is misreading Endo’s theological concerns here. While Endo did refer to “India, land of the unconscious” in a 1990 article (“India” 186), the consciousness of his own religious faith throughout his life would likely not allow Endo the comfort to pursue religious truth in terms of the unconscious. Even when not a choice, religion is a conscious negotiation for Endo. More importantly, Williams’s appreciation of the theological moment from which the novel arises is partial. He points out that in his notes on the composition of the novel, Endo admits to being greatly influenced by a translation of John Hick’s *Problems of Religious Pluralism* (255n.9). As Anri Morimoto notes, Hick’s version of religious pluralism argues for the truth of all faiths. It offers a model for multi-religious society that would greatly appeal to a Japanese person of faith like Endo (164). However, as Morimoto also notes, Hick effectively argues for the sameness of all religious faiths, that pluralism demands traditions give up their claims to uniqueness. This is a position Morimoto finds untenable (165f.). Is Hick’s view Endo’s, as Williams and others seem to imply? In a 1994 conversation with Jesuit theologian (and one-time Endo translator) William Johnston, Endo seems to say otherwise. Discussing the subject of Catholic dialogue with Buddhism, he takes as the starting point a “commitment to Christ,” not to principles that may underlie both traditions (18). In a more direct refutation of Hick and Williams, he speaks derisively of seemingly syncretic religions that float freely, unmoored in any of the world’s religious traditions:

But in the West, particularly in California, people are fascinated by oriental thought. They are interested in Zen, in esoteric Buddhism and in the Buddhist description of the Great Source of Life. When I read their books I see little commitment to Christ. They are creating sects that have little in common with Buddhism or Christianity or Islam...something that transcends the traditional religions. (19)

The spirit of such syncretic projects seems to appeal to Endo (and Johnston), but their lack of commitments of any kind makes them little more than explorations of oriental thought. Endo seems less interested in creating a “third faith” (Williams’s term) that transcends East and West than in interrogating how religious differences can be made meaningful to existing faith traditions.

This view is why I argue Williams’s interpretation of Endo’s theological concerns is only partial. To be sure, Endo is influenced by Hick’s commitment to the truth of all faiths, but he is not willing to insist that faith traditions give up their claims to uniqueness.²¹ How, then, to understand the theological context from which *Deep River* originates? One need not leave Endo’s Catholic tradition for an answer. By the early 1990s, the hue of Catholic theology had greatly changed from the paternalism Endo often resented as a younger man.²² As the ecclesial, theological, intellectual, and cultural consequences of the Second Vatican Council spread throughout global Catholicism in the closing decades of the 20th century, attentive thinkers and writers (including those

²¹ For example, when conversing with Johnston, Endo is unsure that what Japanese Buddhists call the “Great Source of Life” is the same as the Christian Holy Spirit or that the experiences of Zen transcendence are the same as those of Christian mystics like John of the Cross (20).

²² In the preface to *A Life of Jesus*, he writes of Japanese Christians, “the Japanese tend to seek in their gods and Buddhas a warm-hearted mother rather than a stern father. With this fact always in mind I tried not so much to depict God in the father-image that tends to characterize Christianity, but rather to depict the kind-hearted maternal aspect of God revealed to us in the personality of Jesus” (2).

covered in this study) reformulated their views in kind.²³ The Council's spirit of *aggiornamento* signified a new openness to the realities of the modern world. More importantly, it encouraged the engagement of Catholic institutions and communities with those of other faith traditions and cultures. In particular, three of the Council's most important documents - *Gaudium et Spes*, *Ad Gentes*, and *Dignitatis Humane* - conceived of cross-cultural and interfaith dialogue as central to the Catholic reinterpretation of Christianity for the modern world. *Gaudium et Spes* attributes the need for cross-cultural engagement to the technologies accelerating global integration:

One of the salient features of the modern world is the growing interdependence of men one on the other, a development promoted chiefly by modern technical advances. Nevertheless brotherly dialogue among men does not reach its perfection on the level of technical progress, but on the deeper level of interpersonal relationships. These demand a mutual respect for the full spiritual dignity of the person. (*Gaudium et Spes*, par. 23)

Dignitatis Humanae bases its argument for religious liberty in the fact that "Men of different cultures and religions are being brought together in closer relationships" (par. 15). Dealing specifically with forms of cross-cultural communication required by missionary work, *Ad Gentes* insists on the importance of maintaining local cultural forms even while "planting" and "growing" the local church (*plantation ecclesiae*). The proper disposition of the missionary church is to seek first to understand the cultural context into which it is entering (par. 22). This spirit of openness and cross-cultural dialogue in the

²³Bosco's *Graham Greene's Catholic Imagination* traces the renewal of Greene's Catholic aesthetic in light of Vatican II thought. Similarly, Michael P. Murphy's *A Theology of Criticism* treats Flannery O'Connor's work in terms of Hans Urs von Balthasar's theological emphasis on the imagination in its third chapter.

context of globalizing modernity had profound effects on the course of the development of Catholic culture and literature.²⁴

It also held great significance for Endo. He writes admirably of the effects of the Council, saying, “There was a stage in the Japanese church when we thought we had to avoid all risks. But you seem to have done away with that idea [...] because of the Second Vatican Council (18). The renewal of Catholic theology in light of the exigencies of globalizing late modernity is just as significant a part of the theological context from which *Deep River* arises as Hick’s interpretation of religious pluralism. This is not to say, however, that the novel models itself on the teachings of the Council. Endo is neither that dogmatically orthodox nor interested in echoing Rome to his Japanese audience. While his later writing certainly welcomes the openness of the Church to the truths contained in all cultures and faith traditions, Endo seems dubious about the methodologies the post-Vatican Church advocates for cross-cultural engagement. *Dignitatis Humanae* advocates reasonable dialogue, saying, “Truth, however, is to be sought after in a manner proper to the dignity of the human person and his social nature. The inquiry is to be free [...] in the course of which men explain to one another the truth they have discovered, or think they have discovered, in order thus to assist one another in the quest for truth” (par. 3). Within the world of *Deep River*, however, Endo is highly critical of the Church’s obsession with dialogue. Arguing with his instructors at the seminary about the meaning of dialogue, Otsu contends, “Christianity does not regard other religions as equal to itself. A European scholar once

²⁴ For a rough treatment of these changes, see the fifth chapter of Andrew Greeley’s *The Catholic Imagination*. For an examination within a specifically literary context, see Mary Reichardt’s introduction to *Between Human and Divine*.

remarked that the noble people of other faiths were actually Christians driving without a license, but you can hardly call this a dialogue among equals” (122). Here, Endo gives voice to ambivalence about the possibilities of fruitful dialogue between participants who assume unequal access to truth. Drawing on *Ad Gentes*, he shows that conversations across cultural and religious boundaries cannot provide an adequate starting point for engagement when pride and perceptions of power dynamics interfere. This is a view that will have significant ramifications for the imagined world the novel offers as possible.

The world of *Deep River* examines this view in the context of a specific locality, the holy city of Varanasi at the confluence of the Ganges and Yamuna rivers. The tour guide Enami explains that “the confluence of two rivers is considered a sacred spot in Hindusim.” Holy does not equate with cleanliness or purity, however. “From the Japanese point of view, they couldn’t be called clear-flowing rivers in even the polite sense of the term,” Enami points out. “The Ganga is yellow, and the Yamuna flows grey, and when the two merge, the water turns the colour of milky tea. But there is a difference in this country between things that are pretty and things that are holy” (107). The presence of human waste and ashes of cremated bodies in a river where penitents bathe is especially troubling to the Japanese tour group (140). Throughout the novel, Endo’s descriptions of the river and the city on its banks reinforce feelings of death, dirtiness, decay, and stench. The city is portrayed as overcrowded, hot, and suffering crushing poverty. The construction of locality in the novel is decidedly dialectical. Luke Reinsma reads Endo’s treatment of the natural world in *Deep River* as a return to a “father God” after several treatments of the God of “maternal love” (205). Of course, Reinsma is quick to note that Endo pairs the dialectical father God of Varanasi with

literal mother-gods within the caves and hidden places of the holy city (207). Mitsuko in particular is taken with the goddesses Chāmundā and Kāli, handmaidens of Shiva, in whom she finds the tensions of India’s beauty and harshness, its fertility and poverty held in balance. “She has contracted every illness they have suffered through the years. She has tolerated the poison of cobras and snakes,” Enami says, describing a particularly striking image of Chāmundā. “Despite it all, she... as she pants for breath, she offers milk to mankind from her shriveled breasts. This is India” (140). Reinsma argues that placing this image of maternal care in the heart of a suffering world despised by a vengeful father God is the central contradiction to which Enami refers when he calls Varanasi “a unique realm” (Reinsma 207).

Reinsma goes further, arguing that the uniqueness of Varanasi and the holy river arises also from its radical difference. He points to Enami’s description of it as “a realm utterly removed from Europe or Japan” (108). Only in this land of radical difference, where reincarnation is an assumed fact of life and man and animal live together peaceably, can the various “chasms” separating the various members of the tour group from each other and their loved ones be transgressed. Similarly, only in India, halfway between Japan and Europe, can East and West be reconciled and the tensions between the father God of European Christianity and the maternal co-sufferer of the East be resolved (Reinsma 206-209). Of course, this reading is premised on an incomplete consideration of how Enami describes the holy city. He implores the tourists, “But since you’re here in India, please make the effort to enter into this unique world, a realm utterly removed from Europe or Japan. *No, that’s not correct. Let me rephrase that. We’re about to enter into a unique world that we once knew but have now forgotten.*

That's the attitude I'd like you to have as we travel through India" (108, emphasis mine). From the group's first moments along the river, then, Endo is not emphasizing the radical difference of India from Europe and Japan. The novel does not treat its locality as a kind of 'third space' between the poles of East and West. Instead it bears a common heritage to be rediscovered in the negotiation of various forms of difference and cross-cultural engagement.

In a very real sense, however, the river and Varanasi do figure as a realized global community. This is not to say that it models Endo's ideals of a global future, but the transformations both social and spiritual that take place in this setting do reveal something about the conditions he believes are necessary for meaningful transcultural engagement. Chief among these conditions is a recognition of suffering akin to the basis for community Greene offers in *The Power and the Glory*. However, Endo figures suffering in slightly different terms in the context of Varanasi. For the characters with whom he is concerned, loss is the primary experience of suffering necessary for the dissolution of borders and boundaries. In *Deep River*, each Japanese tourist experiences loss as both the trauma that sends them on their search and in the failure to find what they seek. Isobe loses his wife and fails to find her in reincarnated form. Numada loses one of his closest animal companions then fails to find the communion with nature he seeks in India. Kiguchi loses his war comrade and fails to make peace with his warrior past. What these doubled experiences of loss accomplish, Endo shows, is the debasement of hubris and ego. Coles refers to this as Endo taking his characters out of "a secular world of comfort and unease, of self-assurance and apprehension, boredom, disappointment, and melancholy" (21). More significantly, these experiences of loss lead

each character to ask the proper questions or to give up their professed search in lieu of seeking something more meaningful. As point of contrast, Endo provides the Sanjos, a newly married couple traveling to India on their honeymoon, who complain about the “wretched country” and find the rites associated with the Ganges “horrifying” (105, 140). They are younger and less world-weary than the rest of the tour group and hence have not experienced loss to the same extent. This informs their disdain for the river and the people who live near it. In order to appreciate the experience and wisdom Varanasi represents, one must be stripped of this type of pride through great loss.

However, Endo does not merely ape Greene in presenting suffering and loss as prerequisites for global community. Instead, Endo figures the experience of suffering as part of a larger challenge to the cultural pride of his Japanese characters. The most significant of these experiences is that of Mitsuko. Since her college days, Mitsuko has imagined herself in a conflict with God over Otsu’s affections. “What would you think if I stole this fellow away from you?” she asks the crucifix hanging in the chapel where Otsu prays daily (44). After a moment of intimacy, she thinks, “The pleasure she took from Otsu derived not from anything even remotely carnal, but from Otsu’s rejection of that man” (48). More importantly, Mitsuko thinks of her competition with God in cultural terms. She refers to Christianity as a “stale religion” (49). Otsu’s religious teacher is “in his heart of hearts... still a European” (48). She tells Otsu, “It makes my teeth stand on edge just to think of you as a Japanese believing in this European Christianity nonsense” (64). Like Lord Chikugo before her, Mitsuko imagines Christianity and Japanese culture to be essentially irreconcilable. When Otsu enters the priesthood and despite his unorthodoxies remains a Christian priest, Mitsuko experiences

a greater sense of loss than when her marriage failed (180-81). More importantly, losing her contest with God leaves Mitsuko “with the little pride she had left in her heart” while recognizing that “a certain span of tranquility had opened up in his” (184-85). She can no longer speak as though her Japanese cultural heritage supersedes Otsu’s Christian faith. Here, then, Endo does not figure suffering and loss as foundations for community but as experiences necessary to drain oneself of the ego and pride that prevent the formation of any authentic relationships, cross-cultural or otherwise.²⁵

The loss of cultural pride should not be taken as an indication that the global vision Endo imagines is one of undifferentiated cultural and religious uniformity. Characters who subsume their national and cultural identities to larger schemes of meaning do not cease to identify with those communities. In this regard what does *not* happen is as indicative of the type of imagined worlds *Deep River* presents as possible as what does. By this I mean that losing pride in one’s culture is not tantamount to submitting to a single global community. Indeed, by setting *Deep River* at the time of the assassination of Indira Gandhi and the accompanying ethnic tensions, Endo represents the continued pull of nationalist and cultural allegiances even in an era of significant transnational contact.

More importantly, figuring loss in the manner Endo does is not advocating losing one’s culture. Unfortunately, this is precisely the claim Netland makes. In an article entitled “From Resistance to Kenosis,” he traces the development of Endo’s treatment of

²⁵Netland conceives of this as part of a much larger theological project. Endo, he argues, “continually presents us with characters who must be disabused of their illusions in the promise of temporal success, power, and security in order to perceive their desperate need of God’s grace” (189). In this regard, Endo’s larger project mirrors O’Connor’s in meaningful ways.

the intersection of theology and culture. Beginning with *Silence*, Netland argues, Endo's views evolve from an emphasis on conflict to one of larger cultural rapprochement in *Deep River*. This latter development is only possible, Netland argues, through a cultural version of kenosis – an emptying of one's cultural attachments in favor of a syncretic, hybrid faith formed in the liminal spaces between Eastern and Western faith traditions (181). "To a greater degree than in either *Silence* or *The Samurai*," he argues, "*Deep River* presents spiritual fulfillment in the context of a cultural emptying" (192). Netland reads Mitsuko's decision to participate in the rites of the Ganges in terms of "abandoning" her "Japanese norms." He reads Otsu as "a Japanese Christian dispossessed of his own culture" (192-93). However, as I have been arguing, Endo does not seem interested in models of cultural practice that require abandoning one culture for another. Refashioning the suit of Christianity does not mean Endo ceases being Japanese. Similarly, Mitsuko spiritually cleansing herself in the Ganges does not signify abandonment of her Japanese identity. This is clearest when, immediately following her swim in the Ganges, Mitsuko yells at Otsu, who has been injured in a small riot, in a voice that echoes her earlier admonitions rooted in Japanese culture: "You're a fool. You're really a fool! [...] You've been chased out of every place you've been, and now in the end you break your neck and get carried away on a litter. When it comes down to it, you've been completely powerless!" (212) Mitsuko then pounds her fists futilely on the steps leading to the river. Whatever else this event is, it is certainly not a moment of cultural self-emptying. Mitsuko clearly retains some skepticism toward Christianity born

of her Japanese heritage, here again represented by Endo in the rhetoric of power and powerlessness.²⁶

Similarly, Otsu's narrative does not fit the cultural model of kenosis for which Netland argues. This is largely because Otsu does not identify with any single culture of which to be emptied. From his first introduction into the narrative, he occupies multiple cultural positions – Japanese, European, Indian, Christian, pantheist, heretic, priest, outcast, sadhu, etc. His cultural identity is decidedly complex and, more importantly to this study, transnational. When at the novel's conclusion, Otsu is living in a Hindu ashram and transporting those too poor or sick to make it to the holy river on their own, he does so not by emptying himself of his Christian faith or his Japanese identity. Instead, on his private bookshelf he keeps “a prayer-book; the Upanishad; a book by Mother Theresa [...] a book of sayings by Mahatma Gandhi” next to his Bible (190). He imagines the bearing of the dying to the river as a Christic act, imitative of carrying the cross (193). He tells Mitsuko the life of the sadhu is the life Jesus would assume had he lived in Varanasi (184). If participating in the life of the river requires Otsu to give up

²⁶ One could produce similar readings of all the characters on Endo's tour. Isobe's failed search for his wife leads him to a deeper appreciation for what she did for him in life, but he remains convinced “that a man's insistence on his own good intentions and the propriety of his actions was merely an attempt to gloss over his egoism” (188). Numada finds and frees a myna bird similar to one he lost while in hospital, but the experience fills him with despair at the insufficiency of his chosen life to deal adequately with the problems of the “world of human affairs.” Nonetheless, he does not intend to change: “When he returned home, he would most certainly write stories with birds and animals as their heroes once again” (204). Kiguchi seeks peace for his friends and his tortured memories of wartime by chanting the Buddhist sutras of his youth at the Hindu holy site. However, far from being absorbed into a vision of global harmony, he thinks instead of the birds in the jungles of Burma whose songs taunted the cries of dying soldiers (201). In each instance, the character who finds something other than what he is seeking does so not by escaping or abandoning Japanese culture, but through practices rooted in the location that surrounds him.

some aspect of his culture, it is not clear what he sacrifices.²⁷ When Netland refers to Otsu as the novel's clearest example of "cultural relinquishment" and a "cultural anomaly," he cites this "theological syncretism" as a signifier of his synthesis of East and West (193). Of course, this rhetoric of syncretism and hybridity arises from Netland's insistence that the novel be read in light of the insights of postcolonial theory. The problem, of course, is that Otsu's cultural heritage is much more complicated than the colonial dialectic which the language of hybridity is equipped to handle. He does not inhabit a world of opposite poles or of liminal spaces between two totalized cultural identities. From the outset, his identity negotiates multiple cultural spheres, both national and transnational. It is perhaps too simplistic, therefore, to say Otsu empties himself of an inherited culture in imitation of God's kenotic entrance into humanity through the Incarnation (Netland 193). He never ceases being the complicated figure he starts out as. Instead, Otsu represents the need for cross-cultural practice in an increasingly integrated globe.

The world *Deep River* inhabits is a complex one, criss-crossed by Hindu-Sikh tensions, tourists from all over the globe, and confused religious commitments. What responses to a world such as this does *Deep River* hold out as possible? On the exemplary presentation of Otsu, Netland, Williams, Reinsma, and I are in agreement. From the perspective of this study, however, Endo presents Otsu not as a symbol of the

²⁷ Moreover, it is rather clear that Endo does not think this type of thing is possible. In addition to the failures of Kichijiro and Ferreira to "empty themselves" of their faith or culture, Endo seems to think this is a very un-Christian endeavor. In his conversation with Johnston, he says, "There are vast differences between Buddhism and Christianity. Buddhism talks about abandoning the self. It talks about getting rid of all attachments and it even claims that love is a form of attachment. We can never say that" (19). National culture, whether an iteration of love or not, seems to be one of the attachments Endo is not sure Christians can easily abandon.

power of primeval spiritual experience (Williams), the need to reconcile the modern and natural (Reinsma), or the potentialities of hybrid faith and culture (Netland). As I have been arguing throughout this chapter, Endo places cross-cultural practice at the heart of his version of an imagined global future. Otsu models this centrality of practice when he makes the leap from religious relativism to active engagement with faiths other than his own. He explains to Mitsuko, “I’ve decided that my Onion²⁸ doesn’t live only within European Christianity. He can be found in Hinduism and in Buddhism as well. *This is no longer just an idea in my head, it’s a way of life I’ve chosen for myself*” (184, emphasis mine). How does Otsu make this way of life? He participates in the rites and rituals of a faith not entirely his own and does so with a spirit of openness and a humility. He carries those others will not care for to their final destination along the banks of the holy Ganges. In submitting himself to the service of those no one else will serve, Otsu validates the Hindu rituals as meaningful and reinterprets them in light of his Catholic commitments to the oppressed and needy.

So what does the imagined world *Deep River* makes possible look like? As in *Silence*, it is a world in which nations and national commitments are not eliminated. Each of the novel’s tourists remains identifiably Japanese, even if, like Mitsuko, they uncover a profound attachment to the India of the Ganges. Moreover, the political tensions that unfold around the characters reveal the resilience of national and cultural identifications. What Endo presents in *Deep River* is another model of cross-cultural engagement premised on practice rather than dialogue or new forms of community. This

²⁸ For those unfamiliar with the novel, “Onion” is the name Otsu agrees to call God when Mitsuko says the word “God” makes her uncomfortable. For a fuller consideration of the use of “onion” in this way, see Cole and Reinsma.

is an approach that recognizes and reveres cultural and religious difference while asserting that both can be meaningful to those from other contexts. For Endo, experiencing this meaning is a prerequisite for meaningful cross-cultural dialogue, engagement, or community. Otsu voices this in familiar religious terms. In the episode referenced earlier, where his superiors challenge Otsu on the need for dialogue among world religions, he posits that European Christianity assumes an access to truth unavailable to other cultures or religious traditions – “One can hardly call this a dialogue among equals,” he says. “Real dialogue,” Otsu argues, “takes place when you believe that God has many faces, and that he exists in all religions” (122). The invocation of “many faces” is very telling. Here, Otsu does not refer to God having one face seen many different ways, as Williams and Hick posit. Nor does he claim God’s face is an amalgam of many disparate faces, as Netland intimates. Instead, Endo, in the voice of Otsu, presents a vision of religious and ethnic pluralism that respects difference while insisting on a more fundamental analogical similarity. In this formulation, cross-cultural, interfaith, and transnational dialogue requires a commitment by all parties to the truths of the others. It is a precursor to meaningful engagement, not the result of it.

How does one arrive at this commitment? The experiences of Otsu and Mitsuko in *Deep River* reveal that accessing the truth of another culture requires participation in that culture. It cannot be appreciated by tourists wielding cameras or well-meaning viewers who find the lived experiences of a culture too repugnant to understand. Only by submerging herself in the river does Mitsuko understand its meaning – and, consequently, reconsider what she has been seeking. Only by carrying the corpses of the outcast to their final destination can Otsu understand the truths of Hinduism and more fully

appreciate the truths of his own faith tradition. The world *Deep River* holds out as possible is not one in which sectarian or ethnic violence is eliminated; indeed, the narrative tells us that at the precise moment Mitsuko plunges into the river, “hatred was spreading everywhere, blood was being spilled everywhere, wars were breaking out everywhere” (208). Hope for a global future, if such a thing is to be found in the novel, surfaces in its final pages. Here, Mitsuko expresses genuine concern for the injured Otsu and rushes to the hospital where “he took a sudden turn for the worse” (216). In her act of real compassion, Endo binds characters who, in many ways, inhabit different worlds, despite their shared ethnic identity. Such a connection is only possible when both come to the “river of humanity” and experience its truth firsthand.

Unlike the work of his American and English Catholic counterparts, Shusaku Endo’s novels represent theological and cultural difference as two dimensions of the same phenomenon of global integration. His vision of a global future, therefore, requires something more than proper vision or a renewed appreciation for the commonness of human suffering. Endo advocates action and practice to cross boundaries. Specifically, his life-long interest in “refashioning” his “ill-fitting suit” requires Endo to undertake explorations both political and spiritual. His characters transgress social divisions in the interest of understanding and appreciating the larger world from which their various faith traditions grow. Their interests are not greater rapprochement among their faiths or cultures but seeing each of the many faces they confront as one worthy of care. In this regard, Endo’s theology and literary imagination reflect a mind keenly attuned to the exigencies of globalizing late modernity.

EPILOGUE

THE GLOBAL PRESENT

When historians look back upon our years they may remember them not for the release of nuclear power nor the spread of Communism but as the time in which all the peoples of the world first had to take one another seriously.

— Huston Smith, *The Religions of Man*

Writing is a different kind of pulpit.

— Uwem Akpan, lecture at Loyola University Chicago, 2009

Each of the writers taken up in the three preceding chapters seeks to reconcile a commitment to the particular truths and practices of the Catholic faith with a world growing increasingly interconnected across national and cultural borders. The work of each reflects both the position in the emerging global network from which he or she writes and the particular exigencies of specific historical moments to which the Catholic imagination responds in familiar ways. Graham Greene's career documents the shifting role of England during and in the aftermath of global war. Flannery O'Connor's work reflects the new realities of the American South in an era of accelerating immigration and widespread existential anxieties. Shusaku Endo writes from the time and place of an emerging Japanese global power. In addition to the legacy of the Catholic literary revival, each also recognizes the rise of a new global order – what David Tracy calls “the proleptic concreteness of that future global humanity which the present suggests and the future demands” (449). For the authors treated here, globalization is in the foreseeable future but lies beyond the horizons of immediate influence. Its contours remain up for grabs, to be shaped and defined by writers with religious concerns to

serve their own visions. Hence, beginning with the second chapter of this project, I have attempted to examine what imagined worlds Catholic writers of the 20th century have thought to be possible. Their presentations of global affinity rooted in their various versions of the Catholic tradition are always anticipatory. They show what the Catholic imagination holds out as possible in an immanent global future.

Of course, their global future is, by and large, now our global present. The transnational exchanges that were just beginning to systematize in the middle decades to the 20th century are, at the close of the first decade of the 21st century, a common part of everyday life for people in many parts of the world. Globalization has reshaped culture in ways unimagined by earlier generations, even those who could see the future would be consumed by global concerns. We who inhabit this moment may find it difficult to imagine alternative versions of the global present, so familiar are the contours of the global reality we have inherited. Hence, the anxieties and concerns of those who think about globalization today are no longer anticipatory but focused on the present moment.¹

This shift to the contemporary horizons has also influenced contemporary writers with Catholic concerns. Interpreting the age of globalization through the Catholic literary tradition requires a different set of strategies than has the representations of imagined futures explored in the preceding chapters. These new strategies constitute an

¹ Arjun Appadurai opens *Modernity at Large* with a chapter entitled “Here and Now.” Conversely, only “Patriotism and Its Futures” looks beyond the present. Similarly, only one chapter of Malcolm Waters’s *Globalization* concerns the future, and its title is “The End of the World as We Know It.” The critical collection *Globalization Theory: Approaches and Controversies* does contain several essays that imagine alternative global futures, but they are not exactly optimistic about their realization. They have titles like “Reforming Global Governance: Apocalypse Soon or Reform!” and “The Liberal Peace, Democratic Accountability, and the Challenge of Globalization.” For contemporary critics of globalization, the dominant version of globalization is either too entrenched to be reformed or something that must be overthrown in order to establish new global structures. There is almost never a sense that what globalization looks like is yet to be determined or otherwise up for grabs.

aspect of the tradition in need of more critical inquiry. Here, I would simply like to sketch some of the more common elements I find in work by Catholic writers concerned with contemporary globalization. The primary difference between contemporary Catholic writers and their predecessors is that arguing for a Catholic version of globalization today takes on a very different form when there are countless competing versions of globalization being lived all over the world at the same time. Imagining a globe shaped by Catholic thought and tradition requires thinking less in terms of the development of global institutions or practices and more in terms of finding and exploring existing forms of cross cultural exchange that reveal alternative forms of globalization.² By this I mean that contemporary Catholic writers are much less concerned with demonstrating how Catholic teaching (on suffering, ethical responsibilities, or mystery) can provide the basis for transnational affinities than they are with seeking to find ways to reconcile the Catholic version of globalization with other competing versions. Indeed, this desire or searching, we shall see, is the characteristic tone of contemporary literature by Catholic writers. In this regard, their work is much more interested in dispositions than in practices.

This tonal shift mirrors other shifts in the Catholic literary tradition over the last couple decades. Bernard Bergonzi points out that the reformations of Vatican II flatten the Catholic novel. By this he means that Catholic writing in the closing decades of the 20th century came to focus increasingly on the day-to-day lives of ordinary Catholics (45).

² To be fair, Endo's emphasis on cross-cultural practice, particularly in *Deep River*, more closely resembles the concerns of contemporary Catholic writers than it does either Greene or O'Connor. Given his origins outside the European cradle of Catholic thought and the fact that most of career came after Vatican II, perhaps this should not be surprising.

Echoing Bergonzi, Daniel Lesnoski argues that contemporary Catholic fiction begins with the recognition, “Most of us do not live the desperate and dramatic lives of Catholic characters in so much pre-Vatican II Catholic fiction” (33). The dramatic narratives of Scobie, the whiskey-priest, and Fr. Rodrigues manifest at the level of realism the interior conflicts of spirit with which their authors are concerned. Even in the best work by contemporary Catholic writers – and here I have in mind figures like David Lodge and Mary Gordon – these desperate dramas are replaced by quieter though no less potent anxieties of run-of-the-mill characters recognizable to common readers.

What this development produces are interior conflicts characterized by familiar longings or yearnings. In her introduction to *Between Human and Divine*, Mary Reichardt describes one theme of contemporary Catholic literature in this way:

[T]here is a pronounced theme in much of this work of loss and of the need to regain and renew a sense of the sacred and an authentic spiritual integrity of the human person. Whether it uses postmodern techniques or not, today’s Catholic literature shows itself still in search of meaning, discontent with reductionist theories of human nature, and in quest of that which can transform and restore what has been broken. (6)

While I do not entirely share Reichardt’s conviction that the search she discusses is for something lost or in need of reconstruction, I believe she is entirely correct that this yearning for some sense of wholeness or completeness in the face of postmodern fragmentation is an identifiable theme in this body of literature. Moreover, by locating these yearnings in the minds of, as Reichardt calls them, “more-or-less ordinary folk,” contemporary writers reformulate the Catholic literary tradition in light of postmodern suspicions about institutional teachings and heroic narratives (7).

This flattening of Catholic fiction parallels the experience of globalization – at least as it is experienced in much of the West. The homogenizing effects of the dominant version of capital-driven global integration mute signifiers of difference, both cultural and religious. In much of the world where the Catholic literary tradition remains vibrant, it makes sense that the dialectical conflicts that produce dramatic tension would turn to interiority. Public negotiations of religious anxieties are largely unwelcome in a global order organized around production and consumption. How, then, do Catholic writers imagine alternative forms of globalization? And what is to be done by critics interested in the intersections, explored throughout this study, between religious vision and global cultural integration? Answers to both questions take shape in parts of the world where globalization creates, rather than silences, the kind of existential anxieties in which the Catholic imagination does its most potent work. These are regions, most just entering the networks that define globalization in significant number, where global pressures amplify questions of religious and cultural affinity. Future analyses should examine the role of the Catholic imagination in contemporary formulations of global culture in response to these questions. This will require a focus on areas outside the cultural center where Catholic thought has nonetheless pervaded the culture. In these regions – especially Latin America and Africa – the future meanings of globalization are still up for grabs, and the literature by Catholic writers there reflects communities and individuals attempting to imagine new possible worlds even after the rise of the current global order. In the remaining pages, I would like to discuss briefly work by two authors undertaking this task.

The novels of Cuban-American author Oscar Hijuelos deal with the longings born of the disorienting experiences of immigration. While Hijuelos himself was born in New York in 1951, his work consistently returns to the experiences of immigrants (like his parents) as well as the search for meaning often undertaken by children of the second generation. His best known work, *The Mambo Kings Play Songs of Love*, published in 1989, was the first by a Latino author to win a Pulitzer Prize. It tells the story of two working musician brothers, Cesar and Nestor Castillo, whose performances blend experiences of analogical mystery with a search for the cultural roots of their music. The brothers' most popular song, "Beautiful Maria of My Soul," goes through dozens of versions, its evolution signaling the immigrant's need to adapt constantly to new demands from an unfamiliar audience. In one moving performance, the Castillos play the song with Desi Arnaz's big band on an episode of *I Love Lucy*. Their experiences are described by Eugenio, Nestor's son, who yearns to understand his father and uncle with the same fervor they save for Castro's regime in Cuba. The multi-generational narrative fuses the desire for roots in a rootless global culture with the yearnings for spiritual edification familiar to critics of contemporary Catholic literature. Similar yearnings drive the titular protagonist of Hijuelos's 1995 novel, *Mr. Ives' Christmas*. Here Hijuelos represents the dialectical world of the cosmopolitan city center but infuses it with moments and coincidences designed to reveal an analogical presence. Specifically, important moments in the life of Edward Ives always take place on Christmas Eve, and he constantly references Dickens' *A Christmas Carol*. When a young Puerto Rican boy kills his son one Christmas Eve, Ives sets out to build a relationship with and rehabilitate the murderer. The bulk of the novel focuses on the various ways Ives strives to build this

relationship and others while suffering the grief of a father who has lost a son. That this all unfolds amidst the ethnic tensions of New York – Ives' Cuban friends call him Eduardo and warn him not to trust the Puerto Rican boy – reveals the extent to which Hijuelos finds analogical possibilities in a world where everyone is from somewhere else. Both novels, along with much of the rest of Hijuelos's work, present the yearnings of Latin American immigrants to understand and represent themselves in a new way for a new country in dramatic tension with the similar yearnings at the core of the postmodern Catholic imagination.

Born in Lagos in 1971, the Nigerian writer Uwem Akpan produced a stunning debut collection of short stories in 2008. American educated and an ordained Jesuit priest, Akpan writes from the perspective of an African well versed in life outside Africa. This awareness of the inequities of globalization lurks everywhere in the stories of *Say You're One of Them*. In five stories, Akpan produces stories of eight African nations, recounting in each the anxieties of contemporary Africa. Most interestingly, every story is told from the perspective of children. Criss-crossing the continent through the eyes of its children highlights the dialectical world in which Akpan's stories unfold. The best story in the collection, titled "An Ex-Mas Feast," tells of the experience of the holidays for a poor Christian family in Kenya. The family's entire "budget" for Christmas gifts comes from begging and prostituting its oldest daughter (all of twelve) to traveling businessmen visiting Nairobi. Their most prized present is a large container of glue to sniff when hunger pangs become overwhelming. Here, Akpan dissolves any distinction contemporary critics might make between "dramatic lives" and the day-to-day lives of ordinary Catholics. To survive to see the holidays is a heroic act. In "An Ex-Mas

Feast,” to do so requires participating in the global economic order in whatever way one can, even if it involves sin and pain unimaginable in other parts of the world. Another standout story in the collection, “What Language is That?” centers on two young girls living in urban Ethiopia. Despite coming from different religious backgrounds – one is Christian, the other Muslim – the two are best friends and regularly refer to each other as such. As ethnic and religious tensions literally flare up – the protagonist’s home is burned by Muslim rioters – the girls’ families decide to separate them. At the story’s close, each girl stands at her bedroom window, facing her friend across a literal and figurative chasm dividing them. Unable to communicate verbally, they quickly develop a way to talk using their hands. Akpan writes they “had discovered a new language” (185) that allowed them to communicate across the religious border. What Akpan’s stories of Africa’s children reveal are the challenges globalization presents to the “more-or-less ordinary folk” in this part of the world. Africa’s entry into the global networks of the 21st century creates new opportunities for the Catholic imagination to envision alternative models of the global present. Such models may begin by finding virtue where we tend to see only sin and developing new “languages” for talking across borders. Clearly, the meaning of globalization is still up for grabs here.

If one of the stated goals of this project is to understand how changes in the distribution of power in the 20th century affected writers with visions shaped by the Catholic intellectual and aesthetic tradition, the further entrenching of new architectures of power in the 21st century will produce still newer and more complicated responses from those who maintain that tradition. Critics who attend to the themes and strategies highlighted in this study would do well to attend to those places where they are most

resilient in spite of the pressures of the current stage of globalization. What the work of Uwem Akpan and Oscar Hijuelos – as well as that of their British and American contemporaries like David Lodge and Mary Gordon – reveals is that the expansion of the Catholic literary revival that grew out of Europe at the dawn of the last century continues in new places and new forms. The global present is an exciting time for those of us who study transnational cultural exchange. It should also provide new avenues of analysis for critics of the Catholic literary tradition.

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